



NEWSY NOTES

By AGRICOLA

NATURE NOTES

By the courtesy of the Dominion Entomologist I am enabled to add the name of another Arachnid to our Island list. I noticed a large, rough-looking spider, while working in the garden, and imprisoned it till I could make a drawing. The markings on its body—which was of a dull brown, like most spiders—were three black crescent-shaped spots on each side, and a short white mark down the centre. On each side of the body was a "shoulder-hump." I sent the drawing to Ottawa, where it was identified by the Senior Entomologist, Mr. W. F. Brown, as *Epeira angulata* Clerck. This spider, says Mr. Brown, is very variable, and it usually spins on trees. It occurs in the United States, southern Canada, and Europe. I gather that it has no popular name, but as "angulatus" refers to the "corners" of the body where the humps are, we may call it the "Two-shoulder Spider."

There was recently brought in from the shore, a dark brown pod-like object, two inches long, and one-and-a-quarter inches across. From each corner projected a leathery cord, slightly tapering, nearly three inches long; two projected forward and two backward. The bearer thought it was of vegetable origin, but it had been a sea-urchin; it was, however, an egg of one of the shark family of fishes, probably that of a dogfish (*Squalus*).

Another object picked up on the shore, was the shell of a sea-urchin; some species of urchin, Francis Barn found two species on our shores, one of which he calls the Cake Urchin, by reason of its flat shell. (The other, he says, has a globular form.) This was a "Cake Urchin" being round, and only slightly arched; marked with radiating lines of tubercles to which the spines have been attached. When living it has been a very hard and knobby object, but the waves had knocked off all the spines, leaving only the calcified hollow shell.

Sea-urchins had an attraction for the classical writers, and are mentioned by Aristophanes, Horace, Martial and others. At that time the Echinus was considered a dainty morsel, and in some parts of Europe it is still eaten, especially in spring, when its ova (eggs) are maturing. In England, according to Sir Thomas Browne (1606-82), the notion was formerly current, that the spines of the echinus were a remedy for the stone and for "films in horses' eyes." Another writer tells of the spines being used as snake-venom; some of the spines, I presume, as they are short.

What does the echinus live on? Naturalists say that it is able to move about under water "eating" seaweed, small shell-fish and crustaceans.

There is little to note in the garden now; the Bluebells of Scotland were the very last blooms to "go under," and they had some very frosty frosts before doing so. It will be remembered that I advised shearing the plants closely when the first bloom is past; this induces them to bear a crop of flowers. I notice that several annual rocky plants, *Geranium lucidum*, and *Sedum caeruleum*, have scattered seeds which have germinated, and it will be interesting to see whether the seedlings survive the long hard winter. Some seedlings do, and are then classed as "winter annuals."

In a state of nature the dead stems of the plantaceous species collect the snow which blankets their roots against the cold. For various reasons the gardener shears off these stems, so that the roots are not so protected. A few spruce boughs stuck in here and there, are a very good substitute.

Bannockburn (2)

To understand the events which led up to Edward the First's invasion of Scotland, it is necessary to briefly survey the state of the English border. For some hundreds of years the inhabitants of the border country had led a precarious existence, for even when there was no actual state of war, they were subjected to raids by parties of moss-troopers, who sacked and burned the towns and villages, enslaved the women and children and carried off the sheep and cattle. These occurrences must have been very offensive to a King who had the happiness of his people at heart and who moreover loved order and justice. Scotland itself was in confusion since, on the death of the heiress to the throne, thirteen claimants aspired to the royal crown. To avoid a civil war, each agreed to submit his claim to Edward, who decided in favour of John Balliol, Earl of Galloway, a descendant of David, brother of King William of Scotland. Balliol was to do homage to Edward "for" the whole kingdom of Scotland, but though he professed to be Edward's vassal, he resented that monarch's interference in Scottish affairs, and allied himself with France, with whom Edward was at war.

The English King promptly

marched into Scotland, (1296), defeated a Scottish army at Dunbar, and banished Balliol to France. William Wallace, another brave and patriotic Scot, took up arms, attacked and defeated Earl Warenne, whom Edward had made Governor of Scotland; and a year later, was defeated himself at Falkirk (1305), by Edward, and for five years Scotland was "fairly peaceably" another brave Scot, Robert Bruce, now came to the fore, and was proclaimed King at Scone, in 1306. Edward again marched north, but—on a Black Day for England—he died at Burgh-on-Sands, near Carlisle, on July 7th, 1307. His personal motto was "Keep faith!" Edward I was the greatest of the Plantagenets; merciful, even in that rough day, when an offender showed penitence. What autocrat of the present day would have dealt as leniently with Lewellyn and Balliol? His treatment of the latter is often called barbarous, but we must not forget that the Scottish patriot refused to throw himself on Edward's mercy and that the sentence of death was pronounced by the English Parliament.

When dying, the resolute old King ordered his body to be carried at the head of the army when it crossed into Scotland. A doubtful legend was long current in the Northern Counties, that his body was reduced in a cauldron of boiling water, and the bones only were placed in a coffin of lead and carried as he directed. This seems unlikely, what we know to be true is that the Earl of Pembroke led the army forward into Scotland and as Green, the historian, tells us "found himself master of the country without a blow." Bruce sought safety in the wild inaccessible Highlands; but found himself in as much danger from the hostile clans as from the impetuous Edward, and many a dangerous adventure was his lot ere he was able to resume the warfare against his southern foe. Now was the time when that off-spring spider taught him the value of perseverance, and after a victory over the Earl of Buchan—who favored the English—an accession of followers enabled him to take the field again.

Edinburgh, Rosburgh, Perth, and most of the Scottish fortresses fell one by one into King Robert's hands, and at last he was strong enough to besiege Sirling Castle, the key of Scotland. He laughed him the value of perseverance, and after a victory over the Earl of Buchan—who favored the English—an accession of followers enabled him to take the field again.

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CONSERVATION

A WEEKLY COLUMN OF PRACTICAL OPINIONS OF THE VITAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE USES AND ABUSES OF NATURAL RESOURCES BY MR. LUDLOW JENKINS, MARSFIELD.

WILDLIFE REFUGES PAY

(By W. E. Scott, Superintendent, Refuge Section, Wisconsin Conservation Department)

Wisconsin has at the present time more than one hundred and fifty game refuges and sanctuaries for waterfowl, big game, birds and fur-bearing animals. These units, which include more than 500,000 acres of land and water, constitute one of the most comprehensive programs of wildlife protection in the middle West.

Although many of these areas are specifically established to save the seed stock of resident animals, migratory aquatic birds also find their conveniences in them. This is evident from a recent survey, which found that one hundred and forty two lakes and two hundred and sixty miles of rivers and streams are included within the refuge boundaries.

Newcastle Hirings

In the agricultural life of the Northern Counties, the Hiring Fairs, usually abbreviated to the "Hirings," played a great part in the good old times, and were eagerly looked forward to, as an escape from the monotony incidental to farm life—even if the farm laborer had no thought of changing his "master." Now-a-days, in the fall, the newspapers carry a couple of columns daily, filled with ads. from farmers and laborers, the former wanting help, and the latter—both men and women—seeking jobs, so the Hirings have lost their usefulness in this respect, and where they still survive, they are mere simulacra or shadowy likenesses of their former glory.

Fifty or sixty years ago, on the day of the Hirings, all trains to Newcastle were crowded with farmers, their wives, and numbers of farm workers, male and female. So great was the influx of "hiring trains" followed the "ordinaries," and the noise and laughter on these occasions beggared description! To the greater number of the passengers (who had no idea of the lovely hill-farms for the previous year) it was the one day that promised the excitement of a glimpse of town life, as well as a renewal of old acquaintances, and they made the most of it. On arriving at the "toon" (town as it was then; it is a city now) all made for the vicinity of the Corn Exchange. The young fellows sang and chatted, and the girls munched as a signal that he was looking for work, lined the kerb, while the farmers, mostly portly old men with a kind of humorous look, sauntered about, chatting and interviewing the applicants. Experience had made them pretty artful and they were skilful in sizing up the character of the would-be hired hands, and the "what for?" did he want to change? And lastly what wage did he want? When these and many other questions had been satisfactorily answered, the farmer transformed and faked his handsel money, to bind the bargain. (If my memory serves, they called this "jilling" money.) A former generation would have exacted a signature, and another from the worker, but the practice had become obsolete. However, this rough and ready method worked well, and the farmer very seldom regretted the "being in" notes.

At noon, all these weighty arrangements being completed, the "hiring" for the "being in" notes, the farmers to their favorite dining rooms in hotels, (for they generally visited town once a week for market), and he hired help to the most central stalls in the great "open" market in the centre of the town. These stalls or booths, specialized in "steak and kidney pie," a favorite Northumbrian dish, of a very rich kind. Roughly described, the steak and kidney were cut into gobbets, placed in a round pie-dish lined with pie-crust seasoned, and the whole covered with crust; this was enclosed in a "pudding-poke" and "baked" all "in one" "enough." The result was delicious.

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refuge boundaries. Besides this, the United States Biological Survey's Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge extends over about two hundred miles of Wisconsin's western boundary, giving additional protection to migratory waterfowl as well as to resident fur-bearers.

The full meaning of this refuge and sanctuary program cannot really be expressed in figures. Of course, by far the largest part of the state is open to hunting in stipulated seasons. The importance of the program, however, rests in the fact that on all state refuges no gun of any kind may be carried, unless it is knocked down or otherwise rendered inoperative. This is a carrying case. Moreover, trapping of any kind is strictly prohibited. In this connection it has been gratifying to note that hunters and trappers respect these refuges unflinchingly.

As some of these areas have been under this type of protection for more than fifteen years, wildlife population has increased in the localities until it has actually exceeded a food and damage problem. Among the resident species, deer, beavers, muskrats, pheasants and rabbits have increased notably. It is found that these animals overflow into the surrounding territory and afford a continual source of supply. Of importance is the fact that animals and refuge quickly during an open season. For instance, after an open season on forked-horn bucks, the population in a deer refuge will have increased to twice the number of deer outside, and also have twice as many bucks or more. Pheasants and ducks are found to stay in a refuge, even if shooting is in progress, less than one hundred yards away.

In addition to its own state program, Wisconsin has cooperated with the Federal Soil Conservation Service in the establishment of game birds. This assures a prolonged closed season on about 100,000 acres of land in southwestern Wisconsin. Similar cooperation with the U. S. Forest Service has maintained the Nicolet and Chequamegon National Forests, which include more than two million acres of land and water, as refuges for deer and other animals. This arrangement has been in effect for three years, with the result that there has been a marked increase of fur-bearers in these vast wild areas of the state. In fact, wolves are increasing so rapidly that it was found necessary to open the season to twice the number of deer each year to reduce their numbers.

Experience with these protective measures has proved the refuge and sanctuary program to be the most valuable and dependable method of increasing wildlife. Wisconsin is therefore, planning to extend its system with the addition of numerous small sanctuaries, especially for pheasants and muskrats. It is found that each year the population of these resident animals is materially reduced by hunting and trapping. To prevent this, sanctuaries are being established in areas affording the best cover to assure the saving of sufficient breeding stock.

Thus it is evident that Wisconsin has taken definite steps to protect and maintain its wildlife resources. With one hundred and forty lakes and two hundred and sixty miles of rivers and streams in refuge, migratory waterfowl and resident deer, beaver, muskrat, mink and other have found many sunless and trapless areas. Of sufficient significance is the protection of fur-bearing animals in the National Forests, for these animals have for hundreds of years suffered from the steel trap, the dead-end and the snare. Now they can live and multiply to fill vacant territory with a maximum population.

In this regard there is more that can be done, and more that will be done, as it is at least a foundation in protective management that is worthy of mention and proof of conservation progress.

NATURE PRESERVES A DUCK'S NEST

(By Myrtle J. Broley)

A wild duck has many things to be thankful for, but surely her ducklings safely hatched by ducks are the eggs; marsh fires sweeping across the dry reeds and grasses, destroy many nests with their eggs; cold, blizzards, too much rain, all are hazards. Surely no duck, however, ever met with harder luck than to have eggs and nest turn to stone!

A sub-fossil nest was picked up by a farmer at Ebor, Manitoba.

WEEKLY LIVESTOCK MARKET REPORT

OTTAWA, December 7, 1939

SUMMARY

Price changes in the cattle market were very few and mostly of a minor nature during the week. Trade, however, was of a listless character and only the light offering on hand prevented more severe declines. Calves were active and firm sellers, while hogs made some slight gains on generally firm trading. Lambs were again a good trade, moving out at firm to stronger rates.

Eastern Cattle Steady

With a light run of cattle, the Toronto market was barely steady and trading slow. Demand for all classes was limited and about 100 head remained unsold. Weighty steers sold up to a top of \$7.50, but most sales were from \$7.25, with only a few making \$7.50. A light run of stockers sold between \$8 and \$7. Cattle were steady to just a shade firmer at Montreal, where some 100 head were sold. The Toronto market was barely steady and trading slow. Demand for all classes was limited and about 100 head remained unsold. Weighty steers sold up to a top of \$7.50, but most sales were from \$7.25, with only a few making \$7.50. A light run of stockers sold between \$8 and \$7. Cattle were steady to just a shade firmer at Montreal, where some 100 head were sold.

Western Cattle Steady to Weaker

Buying orders were limited at Winnipeg creating an indifferent demand with the result that the market was a disappointing one. Prices turned considerably softer on some killing classes and heifers finished off 25c to 50c below last week's high and plain to medium cows were fully 25c off. There was a fair outlet for handweight killing steers between \$6 and \$7. The better grades of cows were absorbed for shipment to the south around \$4.75. Demand was restricted for stockers and feeders and the better grades went to fill a few orders at \$5.25 to \$6. Calgary fair action with steers up to \$6.50 and similar conditions with a similar top price prevailed at Edmonton. The high at Prince Albert was \$6. Moose Jaw \$5.25, Saskatoon \$6.75, Regina \$6.50, and Vancouver \$7.

U. S. Market Steady to Strong

For the second week in succession there were no Canadian cattle sold at Buffalo, St. Paul, however, quoted Canadian cows between \$5.50 and \$6.25 and bulls from \$6 to \$6.75.

Announcement was made on December 1st that the same allocation of the quota on heavy cattle would apply in 1940 as was the case in the last three quarters of this year. The allocation gives Canada 88.2 per cent of the total quota of 2,500 head of eligible to enter the reduced tariff conditions. This means that Canada's share for the year will be 193,950 head of which not more than 51,720 may be imported in any one quarter.

Official figures issued by the United States Treasury Department show imports of heavy Canadian cattle from October 1st to December 2nd, inclusive, totaling 33,472 head, representing 2.58 per cent of the fourth quarterly quota.

Exports to the United States during the week consisted of only 1,114 beef cattle, 301 dairy, and 332 calves, making the totals to date this year 176,620 beef, 12,442 dairy, and 79,367 calves. Exports in the same period last year were 76,877 beef, 11,394 dairy, and 45,956 calves.

Exports from October 1st to December 7th, inclusive, for the fourth quarterly quota were 35,819.

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TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming

OTTAWA, December 7, 1939

Chinchilla ranching which started in Wyoming just four years ago with two pairs of the valuable South American animals has now grown to a \$150,000 industry with 90 chinchillas valued at \$1,600 each.

Silver Fox occupied the spotlight on all fronts in the various world fur markets the past week. In London last Monday the Hudson's Bay Company commenced their sale of 18,874 silver fox pelts and some 60 per cent were sold, prices being estimated as rather easier than November. There was only a modest attendance with small United States buyers, London and Italy being the principal purchasers. On Saturday, December 9th, 3,100 silver fox pelts were offered at auction in Oslo, Norway, 75 per cent were sold at prices slightly easier than Oslo's November prices. The sale was limited for some 50,000 skins were catalogued and the general impression was that prices would be about 20 per cent below last season. One thousand platinum foxes were reserved for the New York Auction Company of New York and a Belgium offer of \$889 for a single platinum skin was refused. Rather peculiarly it was announced that buyers from Germany and Bohemia—Moravia—were among the best purchasers. Those in the know said that they planned to spend about \$120,000 at the auction.

A fair amount of buying and a good attendance were features of the Soudak Fur Auction Sales, Ltd., at Winnipeg last Monday. Ranch mink, of which 13,000 were offered, sold at a decrease of 25 per cent from last year's opening prices. Extra darks and darks brought \$14.00 to \$15.00, browns \$8.00 to \$10.00, regular average lots \$8.00 and \$9.00. One thousand wild mink were all sold at a decline of 10 per cent from prices at opening sale last year. Average prices were \$10.00 to \$12.00. Sixty hundred silver foxes were 50 per cent sold at a decline of 20 per cent from last year's opening prices. Pells brought \$25.00 to \$30.00, halves and three-quarters \$20.00 to \$25.00, quarters \$10.00 to \$12.00, black \$7.00 to \$8.00, inferior types \$5.00 to \$10.00, regular average lots \$16.00 to \$20.00. They were a rather good collection.

In Montreal, the Canadian Fur Auction Company's sale at which 22,000 silvers were offered was quite successful in that a large proportion of the pelts were sold at figures showing a decline of some 20 per cent or more according to colorings and qualities from the same date last season. It is noticed that some 50 per cent of the purchases of full silvers and three-quarters were made for United States accounts.

Mink which formerly were caught in great quantities in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, are rapidly becoming extinct. At the Canadian Fur Auction this week comment was made on the great scarcity of wild mink from these provinces.

The silver fox collection in Montreal was described as a very representative one by a relative of the province in the Dominion, mostly full silvers of different phases.

The New York Auction Company's sale of Herbert A. Nisman & Company's silver fox pelts closed with a good demand for three-quarters and half silvers. Ninety per cent of the entire offering was sold. Prices were between 10 to 15 per cent below the November sale and about 20 to 25 per cent below last year at this time. The three-quarter silvers which were the strongest priced of all color phases. For example the three-quarters averaged about \$23.00 and the half silvers averaged \$30. The full silvers were almost all sold but the prices seemed a little softer than on the three-quarters and halves. The above is taken from the Women's Wear Daily, New York, December 11th.

Wellington McNeill, Southport, has sold two female and one male pups of his white faced, ring necked platinum foxes to Robert Humphrey, Kensington, and Ernest Mills, Mills Point. We understand that Mr. Mills has recently sold over 100 silver fox pups to a Prince County foxman.

Mr. J. D. J. Forbes, formerly of the London Fur Sales and prior to that manager of the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouse in London but now adviser to the Department of Agriculture on matters connected with the marketing of furs, spent Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in Charlottetown in consultation with the fur market-

ing organizations at Summerside and Charlottetown. Arrangements were made whereby the agricultural products Co-operative Marketing act will go into effect and fox ranchers will be able to get an advance on their furs this year or beginning of next to the amount of 50 per cent of the value of the pelt as based on prices received for last season's crop. The full 50 per cent will not be received by the rancher, however, until the fur has been graded and that grade passed upon by the Dominion Inspector for the Province, W. Fred Burke, Provincial Fox Fieldman.

In the event of falling prices or any other unforeseen circumstances which would result in the receipts for any fur not covering the estimated 50 per cent of the value of the producer plus expenses, the Dominion Government will make good the loss. The furs will be graded and placed in groups according to their grades, formerly when they received an advance on all furs from one shipment in a group have been sold. The above arrangement will protect the producer in that whereas formerly he became liable through a note or other arrangement to pay back any loss incurred in the disposal of his fur. The valuations are also based on last year's prices which were 20 to 25 per cent above those prevailing this year so there is a margin there in favor of the producer. All the fur houses, here, namely, Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders' Association, the P. E. I. Fur Pool, the Dominion Fur Sales, Ltd., and the Charlottetown Fur Sales Ltd. will operate under the marketing act.

We have just received a booklet of the Prince Edward Island Silver Fox Pelt Show which will be held in the Hotel Charlottetown, December 18th to 22nd, inclusive. Monday, December 18th when the furs must be in the hands of the Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders' Association at Summerside for cleaning, grading and judging on Tuesday, December 19th. They will be brought back to Charlottetown on Wednesday morning so as to be placed on display racks for afternoon inspection. Wednesday evening, December 20th, there will be a banquet at the Hotel Charlottetown and all day Thursday and Thursday evening the pelts will be on show. It is understood that a number of pelts have been entered with the various fur houses and a successful show is assured. Any person desiring further particulars can obtain same from the Secretary, W. R. Shaw, Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

Representatives of the American government are expected to meet the Dominion Government very shortly in an endeavor to make a new arrangement re the duty on silver fox pelts entering the United States. There has been a very big howl from Canadian breeders and others deprecating the change in duty from 50 per cent to 37 1/2 per cent. It is really wonderful what a case these gentlemen can make out for themselves and when one comes to consider it, it is very absurd indeed. I believe I am correct in stating that for every dollar Canada sells the United States we buy two dollars worth of their products. That is a very unfair proportion but the Canadians have never raised much cry about it. However, touch any pampered part of American business and they do cry like a wounded animal. In the present case the duty of 37 1/2 per cent is more than ample to protect any fox farmer in the United States and if it is not sufficient protection he should not be raising foxes because the quality of his animals must be very low indeed.

In addition to having this wall of protection about him he is in a position to buy his furs very much cheaper than he can in Canada. For instance Fromm Bros. have access to thousands of horses which are bought at a few dollars per head. Cereals are also much cheaper in the United States and as the foxes are run on ranges there is no expenditure in feeding. It is not surprising that they can produce very much cheaper than the Canadian rancher.

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There is another matter in connection with American pelts that has been over-looked and that is the dumping of the dark varieties and culls on the London market. These we understand run into thousands annually and he a major competition more severe for our pelts, which recently were specifically denied access to the American market. Silver fox fur in the raw state, as far as we know, is not except the United States. In fact fur furs go free of duty into all countries and silver fox alone was

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Nicholson's Fox Health

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