

OUTDOORS



Tiny Duck Unharmed By Unsheduled Trip

I got my first duck of the season the other day. But, relax game enforcement officers, it was entirely by accident.

The McAndrew tribe were just about to sit down to supper when the kids ran in to announce that our pup dog had caught something over in the ditch in front of the cottage.

By the time we got out on the front lawn old pup dog was trotting towards us with something or other in his mouth, a something or other which he dutifully dropped at our feet, and a something or other which turned out to be a very tiny and very terrified new born duckling.

The little fellow was about three inches long with feet of about the same length, and as he made an attempt to get away he rocked back and forth on the oversize brogans like a six-year-old in a pair of size 12 cavalry boots.

The dog hadn't hurt him at all, and so with due ceremony and despatch the kids and I took him down the road about a quarter of a mile and set him loose in the pond from where I suppose he began his adventure into the outside world.

He took off through the reeds like a tiny tugboat, and that's the last we saw of him. Just off-shore an adult black was circling around giving forth with what sounded like some very un-duck-like language, and I hope it was Momma welcoming the prodigal home.

The pond is one which lies between the road and the dunes at Stanhope and it's harboring at least a half a dozen pairs of nesting ducks this summer. A little vision I've only been able to spot one brood, but it was a sizeable one, steaming across the placid water in flotilla formation.

It was quite a trip for the little fellow. As I said earlier the pond is about a quarter of a mile away from the cottage, and he would have had to cross the main highway to get to our place. He must have been one mighty confused little duckling when he came face to face with the dog, and was unceremoniously picked-up by the scruff of the neck.

It's a stroke of good fortune that he'll never realize, that the dog happened to be a retriever, and a very soft mouthed one at that.

RARE TYPE ANIMAL

That's one of the good things about the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever (so help me that's the full name of the breed) a pretty rare sort of animal developed along the southwestern shore of Nova Scotia.

There are only three or four recognized breeders of Tollers (that's the common name for them) and they aren't very well known outside Nova Scotia. It's too bad, because they are an ideal little retriever with another very special use.

Down on the southwestern shore the toller is actually used to lure ducks to the blind, and there's quite a story behind it all.

It seems that foxes have been observed in the wild working in pairs to get themselves a duck

dinner. One fox will lie in wait at the shoreline, well hidden from view, while the other will run up and down the shore, bounding about, jumping up and down, and generally acting in a manner designed to arouse the interest of ducks sitting off-shore.

For reasons best known to the ducks, they find this performance an irresistible lure, and they'll swim in to see what the heck is going on. As soon as they get within pouncing range, the fox lying in wait makes his move and more often than not there's duck for dinner.

HUNTER THROWS STICK

Once the birds settle the hunter begins throwing a stick out from the blind for the dog to retrieve, and this is kept up until the ducks have caught sight of the dog jumping and bounding around as he brings the stick back to the blind again, and again.

I should mention here that the Toller is about the size of a red fox, and a reddish golden color. In other words they are bred to resemble a fox as closely as possible. As they retrieve the stick the long feathered tail waves back and forth and from a distance I suppose the resemblance to a fox is a pretty accurate one.

It works almost every time, and once the ducks begin to come in to satisfy their curiosity, it's almost as though they are locked on some kind of radio beam.

I've seen tollers bring ducks in to within 25 feet of the blind, and it's one of the most fascinating things I've ever watched.

6 The Guardian, Charlottetown, Mon., July 4, 1966

Then it's up to the hunter to jump the birds and bring down what he can before sending the Toller out to retrieve the downed birds.

At this point, I imagine that a good many readers are convinced that I've been indulging in a pretty good leg-pull, either that or I've been to the keg once too often.

But it's all true and it really works, honest it does. See you next week.

reasons why the countries of the world can not agree on disarmament, but one of the principal barriers is public apathy.

Speaking to the English-speaking Union of Montreal, Lord Chalfont said politicians and the people who elect them do not really care enough about disarmament.

Lord Chalfont cited as three main factors which might eventually destroy the balance of nuclear power: The rapid growth of China as a military power; the growing danger of nuclear weapons spread and the possibility of technological breakthrough which might upset the existing stalemate between offence and defence.

Apathy Delays Disarmament

MONTREAL (CP)—Lord Chalfont, British minister of state for foreign affairs, said there are many

STRIKE ALL FLAGS alongside those of the other seven countries taking part, but Britain does not recognize East Germany. The problem was solved by flying no national flags at all.

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