

CONSERVATION CORNER (Cont.)

season on James Bay. The Indian residents who act as guides, "talk goose" and, in uncanny fashion, can bring the birds within shotgun range.

A "survival expert" of the Royal Canadian Air Force, studying equipment to be included in survival packs, had this experience:

He had landed a float aircraft far up on the west bank of James Bay. With him was an oldtime Indian as guide.

"If we had no equipment and were forced down, how would we avoid starving to death?" he asked the Indian.

The Indian thought a moment. Then he picked up two stones, removed a string from his moccasin and tied the two stones together. He folded his hands over his mouth and began calling geese. Then the story goes, he twirled the stones around his head and let them fly. "He actually knocked a goose down," the expert reported.

Whether that is true or not, the fact still remains that the James Bay shooting is easy, except for conditions of the terrain. The shores are flat and muddy. The tide leaves wide stretches of mud when it goes out and it is usually cold, wet and windy.

Some officials of the Department are somewhat concerned about early reports of this year's hunt. "A disturbing feature, to date, has been the lack of this year's hatch in the bag," they say. "Juveniles of the blue goose are of a uniform colour, whereas the adults have a white head. One hunter from Albany reports juveniles running about one to 10 or 15 whiteheads there, so it may be that this is the situation all over.

"There may be two possible causes: If this year's hatch was a poor one, then there would be few young. Or the yearlings, which do not nest, and any adults which have lost their nest, start moving first, unencumbered by youngsters. That may account for the predominance of white heads. It is too early to strike an average, but if this is the picture, then the weight of the hunt will fall on those older age classes which make up next year's brooding stock."

Hunters who plan to go into James Bay area may heed a few words of warning from the Department. It suggests that guides should be used since the Bay country is flat and the absence of hills and other landmarks make map reading difficult.

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The tide is an added complication since the 20-foot canoes used on the Bay are not easy to move if stranded by an outgoing tide. On the other hand, an incoming tide and storm may swamp an anchored canoe.

Officials suggest, too, that dogs be taken to help retrieve crippled birds.

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BIG GAME HUNTING

The big game season is on and hunters are trekking to the bushlands. Many will return sadder but wiser in the ways of hunting and of hunting safety rules for Death and Tragedy oft stalk the hunter as well as the hunted when safety rules are disobeyed. Safety training officers of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, out of a wealth of experience, offer some advice:

Unless the hunter wears vivid coloured clothing he becomes indistinguishable from the prey being hunted and the trigger finger of a fellow hunter often reacts before his sense of sight. Bright scarlet or yellow cap and wearing apparel distinguishes the hunter from the prey. His handkerchief also should be red because of white handkerchief may be mistaken for the tail of a deer.

Although the hunter may travel with an experienced guide, he can become separated from his companion and lose his bearings. The smart hunter always carried a map of the area, an accurate compass and watch and knows how to use all three.

In case he becomes lost, he carries a good hunting knife, a pair of dry socks, matches in a waterproof case or a reliable lighter with plenty of fuel, some chocolate bars and raisins in addition to his lunch. As an added precaution should his rifle not work or he runs out of ammunition, a piece of snare wire is useful to trap game for food.

When setting out from camp, he does not depend entirely on the sun for bearings but keeps a check on the general direction in which he is travelling and the amount of time travelled in each direction and orients his position on the map frequently. He times his travelling distance from camp so that he will be able to return before dark overtakes him.

The hunter who follows the rules does not get lost. Unfortunately, there are many who become careless and lose

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