



Some Idea of the Results of an Alliance Between Hunters, Guns, Dogs and Automobile May Be Had from This Photograph.

Hunters in Autos Exterminating Big Game

Unless Law Prevents Slaughter by "Sportsmen" in Motor Cars Our Wild Game Will Disappear, Says William T. Hornaday

OUR grandfathers hunted elk and buffalo until there were none; our fathers pursued antelope and mountain sheep until they were shot out; this generation is hunting deer and birds from automobiles. What will the next generation hunt? Rabbits?" and William T. Hornaday, with his brown eyes blazing wrathfully, pointed an accusing forefinger at his questioner. Mr. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park, was discussing his pet topic, game conservation and the utter unwisdom of the lawmakers in permitting the use of automobiles in hunting.

"There is not the slightest doubt," he said, "that if things are allowed to remain for the next three years as they have been during the last three, there will be no wild game left excepting wolves and coyotes, skunk, and weasels." This deplorable state of things is due, according to Mr. Hornaday, to crude and ineffective game laws, which allow ridiculously liberal bag limits, open seasons which are nothing less than exterminatory, the use of automatic and pump guns, and worst of all, the automobile, swift, silent, and terrible in its efficacy as a destroying agent.

"Two years ago," he continued, "I drove up through the White Mountains. The second day of the open season I met an automobile coming out as we were going in, with four deer draped on it. Three years ago last Fall, fifty-three male deer were taken out of a territory within a radius of five miles from a so-called wilderness camp in the Adirondacks. More than 250 hunters had gathered there, and one drive was made with thirty-one men working together. The next year the number of deer taken was twenty-six, the following twenty-three, and last Fall, during the first six weeks, two specimens were brought in.

"There's an example of what is happening to game of all kinds all over the United States. With the exception of North Dakota and New York, where the sportsmen have waked up to its diabolical efficiency, the automobile is used universally, and it is working particular havoc

with the grouse and quail of the West. It is in great favor with the elephant hunters of India, and is of inestimable service in the wholesale slaughter of kangaroos in Australia. It's wrong, and it should be stopped. And if our lawmakers don't stop it soon, nature will, for in a few years there will be nothing left for automobiles to go after.

"Men who used to go on a hunting expedition over the week-end would drive in a buggy for hours after their train ride from the city, then walk on into the woods carrying their tents and paraphernalia with them. It took a whole day to arrive at their camping place and another to return, and left one day to shoot, with a double-barreled shotgun. They usually brought home a few woodcock, quail, or rabbits, possibly if they had good luck, a deer, and considered that the outing had been a glorious success, and so it had, measured rightly by the standards of good sportsmanship and looked at as a health-giving change, a little recreation in the open, and not a riot of blood shedding.

"Nowadays a hunter decides to go out for an orgy, and he calls up three or four friends. They start out in his high-powered motor, and in a few hours drive over a hundred miles—the auto has brought good roads with it—saving a day or two in transportation. Then they pile out of the car, beat up the brush, shooting whatever rises with their deadly automatics, and when the field is exhausted hop aboard the car and zip off another fifty miles.

"Sometimes the law as to bag limits is observed, often not. But when a State allows a man to take twenty-five grouse, two good-sized flocks, as South Dakota does, for instance, and there are five men in the party, and the open season is a whole month, what show do the grouse stand? Or, if a man may shoot ten birds a day every day for seven months in the year as he may in Nevada, or twenty, as early as Aug. 1, when the birds are just little chicks hardly able to fly, as is the case in Colorado, is it to be wondered at that North American game is becoming annihilated?

"Every one knows the story of the

bison, how they disappeared in 1884 and never came back. The millions of passenger pigeons went the same way, so quickly that no one realized that they were in danger until it was too late. The heath hen, or eastern pinnated grouse, that used to thrive on the open plains of New York, Long Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, was a bird of the open country, and so was easily found and killed until it is now wiped out everywhere excepting on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Here Massachusetts established a State hen reservation in 1907 with a stock of twenty-one birds. They thrived until in 1915 the number was thought to be about 2,000. But last Spring a destructive fire swept the 2,000-acre preserve and burned them all up with the exception of, perhaps, a hundred.

"The grouse is fast becoming extirpated. The great auk was shot out years ago for its paltry supply of oil. The Carolina parakeet was killed by farmers because it ate fruit and because its brilliant plumage was available for millinery purposes. The antelope is so far gone that the United States has proclaimed a close season for ten years, but it is too late. The animals are delicate and have many natural enemies, among them wolves, and they are too few to survive.

"By the way, why don't some of these men who go out in autos armed with guns that spit out five shots in four seconds, hunt down wolves? A wolf is a wary creature and dangerous, and if a man kills for the love of killing only, a good, savage wolf will give him just as much of a thrill as a frightened antelope. Besides, that would be a real benefit to the community. A man who goes out with a gun which is loaded and cocked by its own recoil, and has his picture taken on his return, sitting in his automobile with two or three hundred little carcasses grouped around him, reminds me of a mink, or a skunk that kills just for the love of it.

"It is a good thing for the youth of our country to learn to shoot straight, camp out, and take care of themselves

outdoors, but at the same time they should be taught the priceless value of the nation's game resources, and that it is unsportsmanlike to do more than their share of shooting. These things will have to be drilled into the coming generation unless our grouse, quail, and partridge are to become as extinct as the dodo. Let them be taught moderation and the need of adequate laws, with less liberal bag limits and longer close seasons.

"Varieties of wild animals and birds which have been decimated cannot recuperate and no re-stocking is possible after they are gone. The grouse is doomed to the route taken by the heath hen unless the various States where it abounds legislate for its protection. The quail also needs to be looked after, for it is the farmer's best feathered friend. It has a marvelous taste and capacity for the smaller pests of the farm, including 145 kinds of bad insects and the seeds of 129 troublesome weeds.

"This country is responsible for turning 3,000,000 hunters loose on the remnant of game we have left, with an absurdly small number of Game Wardens to watch them. The grouse, particularly the sage grouse, have reached a stage where they cannot stand another open season. Even with a six-year close season it will be hard enough for them to come back. The heath hen failed to do it in all localities, save one, where the twenty-one survivors were treated like so many sick children.

"But we are going to fight for a six-year close season for them. The Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund has been established to help the country's sportsmen to save our vanishing game from the game hogs. We are about to launch a campaign, a great drive, covering eighteen States, all of those west of the Mississippi excepting Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa. Some of the things we are going after are, a total open season of only two weeks, to begin six years after March 1, 1917; a bag limit of two grouse per day, or four quail; no use of pump or automatic guns, and no use of automobiles in hunting."