OUTDOORS

Many Problems Posed When Killing Predators

By JACK McANDREW

This matter of predators is probably the topic that will get you the hottest argument amongst any given group of jaspers who care anything at all about wild critters. I guess the reason is that it's a matter of what critter is being a nuisance to what kind of animal that somebody has a special interest in. The fact of the matter is that any animal can get into the nuisance category under any given set of conditions.

Take the Sandhill Crane. This is a fine graceful bird who doesn't do any particular harm to anybody. . . except people who grow grain. So naturally the Sandhill Crane becomes a nuisance and has to be controlled by shooting or the grain farmers in the West would be out of business. But the key word is "control", not exterminate.

Take the black bear or the mountain lion. About 90 percent of black bears and mountain lions are ordinary peace - loving citizens who kill enough to eat and avoid people like the plague. But every once in a while one or two will develop a taste for nice fat sheep, and then brother, look out.

Right away the animal becomes a nuisance and a predator to anybody in the sheep business, and an object to be done away with, the fastest way possible.

The trouble is that you could easily kill four or five animals before you get to the one that's bothering your sheep.

And when an animal gets labelled as a perpetual nuisance it's often only a matter of time before you almost exterminate them completely.

BOUNTY SYSTEM

What's the answer? Well I guess there isn't any complete answer. Bounties don't always work, that's for sure. A couple of years ago a study was made of the effect the bounty system had on the varmint population here on the Island, and the general impression you get from it was that it was a pretty futile business as far as control was concerned.

After spending $80,000 over a period of years, there were more foxes and skunks and raccoons than ever.

It's a complicated business, and part of an overall picture. Once man begins to meddle with the natural process of nature he is always in trouble. What happens is that the balance and order of things gets out of whack and you get hard pressed to plug all the holes.

By overkilling some predators you can permit other nuisances to get a hold and cause a good deal of damage. By changing the face of the land you change breeding and living conditions, making it tough for some kinds to live, and helping others who might be the very ones that will give you more trouble in the long run of things.

If you kill off hawks and foxes that may take a few chickens here and there but eat mice as a regular practice you may end up the loser when the mice start to overrun the place.

If you aren't too careful with pesticides and bug killers you may kill off a good many songbirds who are natures best bug exterminators all by themselves.

LOOK BEYOND

What I'm really saying is that you sometimes have got to look beyond the immediate problem to see that the solution you have in mind doesn't cause you more trouble over the long haul.

Otherwise you're kind of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Some of the Fish and Game boys in Queen's County have got a commendable project underway in the placing of nesting boxes for wood ducks on several sanctuary ponds around the province.

The department of Fish and Wildlife plans to bring in about 40 of the handsome little birds, and the Fish and Game boys decided to help out with a housing project.

Wood ducks generally nest in hollow trees a dozen or more feet off the water, but it's been proven in other places that they will take to more citified quarters as well.

The nesting boxes are made of wood and attached to a long pole which is driven into the bottom of the pond. Naturally they are easier to put up while the ice is still in, so it's been a race against the mild weather these last few weeks to get all the houses installed.

Several have been placed down at Moore's Sanctuary, at Black Pond, in ponds in the National Park, and some out in one of Spur Jenkins' ponds.

Because the ducks will be wing clipped when they are brought in, the boys have also had to place ladders up to the entrances so the birds can get into their temporary quarters.

Nelson Hurry was telling me that one box he installed was taken over by unwanted tenants who claimed squatters rights soon after it was put in place.

He went up to it to have a look-see on another trip to the same location, and out came a half dozen flying squirrels.

I guess people aren't the only ones with a housing shortage after all.

If you happen to be around any of the ponds that have had the nesting boxes installed it would probably be a good idea not to come too close over the next few months.

After all, I never knew a couple setting up housekeeping yet who wanted to be bothered by a bunch of nosy strangers during the first settling down period. . .

I'll be back next week. . .

ELLERSLIE

Mr. and Mrs. Shermon Hutchinson and family, Summerside were recent visitors of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Grant and Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hutchinson.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Wallace, Cascumpec were recent visitors of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Willard MacAusland.

Mrs. Emerson Barlow is home again after being a patient in Prince County Hospital.

Joan Burleigh, student nurse Summerside was a recent visitor of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Burton Burleigh.

Mr. and Mrs. John Williams, Halifax, N.S., were recent visitors of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Williams.

Lemuel Day, Summerside, was a weekend visitor of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Millar.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Ellis, O'Leary were recent visitors of her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. James Burleigh.

Karen England was a winner on "Razzle Dazzle", TV program.

BRISTOL

The postal services for the combined offices has moved into their new building in Morell, only a few hundred yards from the old site. Some of the older residents here recall when the office was located in a small building near the railway station with the late Bert McGrath as post master. Still others remember when the late Frank Coffin, was post master and the office was on the corner of Church street in the old Coffin home where Mr. and Mrs. Grover Coffin now reside.

How many remember when there was a post office at Cane's corner in Morell Rear where the late Ambrose Hughes resided? And how many recall the late Ham McEwen, the first rural mail driver here long, long ago with his home made, covered-in sleigh and his route was just around the Harbour Block. Those were the days when people went to Charlottetown by horse and wagon in summer and down the ice in winter time; those were the days when you could stop at the Widow's for a drink and another at the Ten Mile House; those were the days when horses were shod for 30 cents and you brought your own nails along; Those were the days when Bristol had a large trotting park and high-wheeled road carts were used and hard liquor drinking and bare knuckle fighting raged at the election polls over open voting. Wood hauling frolics were the order of the day and lobsters were 99 cents a 100 or less, regardless of size.

The old Bristol trotting park is still here with a couple of homes on it. Some farming has been done on it but we think the old circle can still be seen on the southwest side near the old railway station site.

Another old race track at Marie is the place where James Conohan had his ear bit off in a fight during one of the events many, many years ago. Jim is still with us, retired now. Those were the old days around Bristol. Remember them?

SMUGGLER BEGAN IT

Ghana's cocoa industry began when a farmhand smuggled some cocoa beans off a nearby island in 1879.

NOTICE

Beginning April 1st the following prices will be in effect:

Adults Haircuts	$1.25
Adults Brush Cuts	1.50
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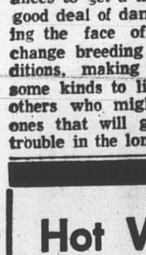

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