

The Cottontail Rabbit Hunter

From year to year it is nip and tuck which species brings more hunters into the field in New York — the cottontail rabbit or the ring-necked pheasant. Over the last few years it has conveniently alternated. When it comes to which one produces the most recreational time in the field and the most successful hunts, the cottontail has the uncontested lead by about two to one for time afield and three to one for the number that end in the hunter's bag.

This may not make the cottontail rabbit king of the small game, but it certainly gives it two strong legs on the trophy.

During times of periodic lows in cottontail population there are usually a few sportsmen who sincerely fear that liberal regulations which apply to the cottontail might eventually lead to its downfall. Evidence shows that Mother Nature knew what she was doing when she drew up the plans of rabbits, for they seem to keep coming, sometime with quite a bit of fluctuation, regardless of type of season. The only major change in the season in the last quarter century occurred in the early '50's when the season was extended to the end of February. Since then rabbits have come and gone, and are again increasing rapidly.

To get allowable limit, one must have everything in his favor, for a study of over 3,000 hunts showed that less than three percent had party limits.

In spite of the long season about half the rabbit hunters don't get out more than six times, while only about one in five gets out more than a dozen times.

Maybe one reason that cottontails aren't affected much by gunning is that they don't roll over and play dead every time the hunter sees one. The hunter needs an alibi for about three out of five rabbits that he sees during a hunt.

A study of rabbit hunting some years ago by the Conservation Department revealed an interesting comparison between hunters with and without dogs. Hunters who used dogs spent longer hours in the field and came home with more

rabbits than those without dogs. This really wasn't surprising, for it is generally true that man and dog teamed together are more productive. However, reduced to the simple rabbits-per-hour basis, hunting without a dog was just as productive as hunting with one.

The ardent beagler wouldn't think of shooting a rabbit he jumped until his dog had brought it back to him. This extended time of anticipation while the hound is working equalizes the time it takes to get a rabbit. If rabbit hunting is for healthful outdoor relaxation, more than for meat in the pot, waiting at a crossing for the baying hound to bring back the rabbit is one of the rewards and satisfactions of the hunt.

If a comparison of time afield on each trip is an indication of the recreational value of the hunt, hunting with a dog has a marked edge. The hunter who tramps the brushpiles and investigates each little squatty pine on his own only spends about three-fourths as much time for each trip. One wag explained that it took that much

Births

Jan. 27: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ellsworth, Wellsville, a daughter.
Jan. 28: To Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hurd Bolivar, a daughter.
Jan. 28: To Mr. and Mrs. Alan Deck, Bolivar, a son.

longer to bring the dog to heel and head home.

Another interesting comparison is that the success of the hunter with a dog maintained a fairly constant level throughout the season. On the other hand, the hunter without a dog is apparently more handicapped by heavy vegetation in the early days of the season, and his success improved after snow had buried the cover.

It is the omnipresence of the cottontail throughout most of New York's agricultural land and brushland, readily available to most hunters, and its high reproductive ability making almost unlimited harvest possible, that make the cottontail the most sought after of our small game animals.

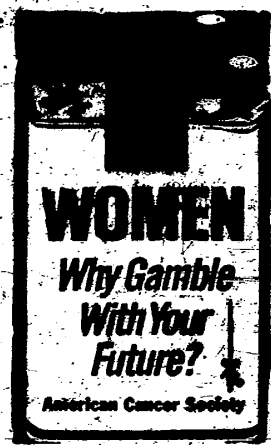
Jan. 29: To Mr. and Mrs. James Bartlett, Wellsville, a daughter.
Jan. 31: To Mr. and Mrs. John Crossman, Alma, a son.
Feb. 2: To Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Fanton, Wellsville, a daughter.

Marriages

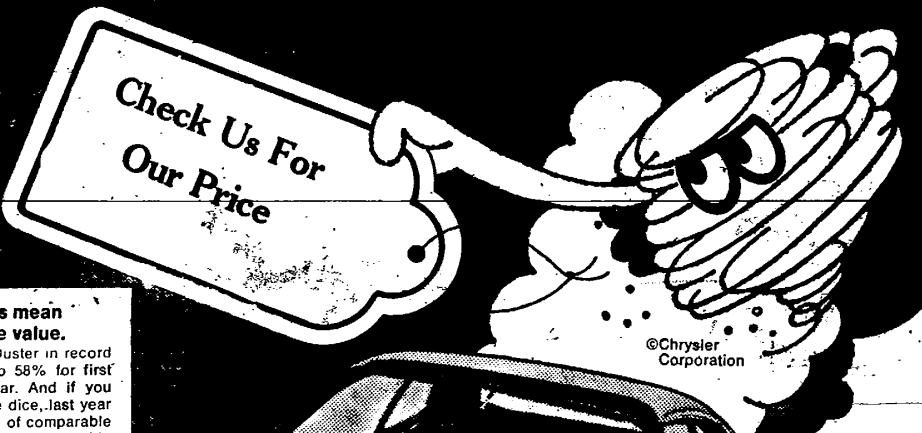
Jan. 20: Miss Cathryn M. Lowe, Belmont to Gary W. Ingalls, Wellsville.

Deaths

William P. Coots, 71, Wellsville Jan. 28. His widow and two sisters survive.
Sidney O. France, 73, Wellsville Feb. 1. His widow, several nieces and nephews survive.
Ella Taylor, 81, Wellsville, Feb. 1. No survivors listed.
Albert A. Atkinson, 56, Angelica Jan. 31. Two sons, a daughter, two grandchildren, a brother and four sisters survive.
Mrs. Robert Johannes, 82, Belmont, Feb. 1. A son, one granddaughter and four great grandchildren survive.



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Dates Claimed

Feb. 13: — Andover United Methodist Church Bake Sale.

Tax Notice

Beginning Monday, January 4, 1971, I will receive taxes at my home, 11 Maple Street, Andover, N. Y., on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for the months of January and February. After January 31st 1971 will be added to all taxes due. After March 1st 1 1/2% will be added to all taxes due.

RETA K. FOSTER, Collector

If you do not own property for which you have received a Tax Notice, please return Tax Notice to Reta Foster, immediately. 8

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