

CONSERVATION COMMENTS

By Paul M. Kelsey

DOG TRAINING

The reason that most sportsmen get a dog with which to hunt is to be more successful in bringing home game. The first or second day of the season, many of them come to the shocking realization that they would have been better off if they had left the dog at home and come by themselves. This doesn't mean that they had a poor dog, but more likely that they had not taken time to properly train the dog. A poorly trained dog in the field can be more of a nuisance than a help.

One key element in training a hunting dog is to give it all the time in the field, and under your control, as possible. Because this type of activity would have a direct conflict with the family responsibilities of small game, the Conservation Law prohibits the training of dogs afield, except in specified dog training areas, during the month of April, May, June and July. That leaves about two and a half months until the small game seasons get underway.

Unfortunately, too many dog owners write off August as too hot, and wait until after Labor Day to start working with their dog in the field. The first and foremost training, that of simple obedience can be done at any time and in any place, even if it is just teaching them to sit quietly on the kitchen floor. A dog that will not respond to the basic command cannot be expected to be an enjoyable and cooperative hunting companion.

August is too hot for very active dog training if your efforts are confined to the late hours of the day. Ground conditions are generally so dry that animal scent is not held well, and further, during the hot dry part of the day, most of the wildlife has been holed up in some cool and shaded spot, not moving around leaving scent for the dog to work.

By contrast, early morning in August is excellent for training dogs. The pheasants, grouse and cottontails have been out and about their morning feeding, leaving their scent on the dew laden

vegetation. The temperature is ideal for both man and beast to be exercising, so that the sweat is not running down your back.

In addition to excellent working conditions, the wildlife population is at its peak, with large numbers of young on which your dog can work. Even by the time the small game season opens in a few short weeks, the crest of this late summer population will have been reduced through many different natural causes.

Though the hunter may get a dog in hopes of bringing home more game, good dogs may in fact result in fewer animals actually killed. This paradoxical statement is based on the fact that with a dog the hunter will probably not leave as many cripples in the field as he would without.

There are two reasons for this. First, with a dog the hunter is prepared for the game when it is flushed, and is much more likely to make a clean kill. When the first warning is the whirr of wings, a quick snap shot is more apt to result in a cripple. A dog can be worth its weight in gold when it comes to retrieving wounded small game.

Good figures on crippling losses are hard to come by, but Fish and Wildlife Service records show that about one waterfowl is left crippled for every four to five in the hunter's bag. Every grouse hunter knows how hard it is to find even a clean-killed grouse that has fallen on the forest floor. One that has just enough life to move a few feet can become almost impossible to find without a good nose. A large percent of the improved take by hunters with dogs is made up of these recovered cripples. This is good conservation.

In addition to more game in the bag, less cripples left in the field the extra time spent in the field training your dog is a non-consumptive recreation of the highest caliber, helping you keep both your mind and your body in shape for the tensions of the day.

Veteran News

LISTEN VETERAN

STATE VETERAN COUNSELING CENTERS are open daily from 9:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M. to assist veterans, members of the armed forces, and their families. Stop in and visit your local State Veteran Counselor—he's "at your service."

COMPENSATION PAYMENTS
INCREASED Veterans receiving monthly compensation checks for service-incurred injuries will soon receive an increase in their checks. The increase averages about 12 percent. The increased payments are a result of the enactment of Public Law 94-71, and are retroactive to August 1, 1975. Under the new payment schedule a veteran rated as ten percent disabled and currently receiving \$32 monthly will be increased to \$35 monthly while the payment for a sixty percent rating increases from \$211 to \$236 monthly. Compensation is payable to veterans who suffered wounds, injuries or diseases while serving with the armed forces, the amount being determined by the severity of the disability. Veterans rated at fifty percent or more disabled also receive dependency allowances in direct proportion to

way.
The point is that I was fishing for fun, and the fish finder and electric motor helped pack more action into the allotted time. And that is why I consider myself a space age fisherman.

their disability. These allowances have also been increased. Veterans receiving compensation are urged to contact the local counseling center at the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs located at the Municipal Bldg., West Seneca, N. Y., on Tuesdays, and at the City Bldg., 108 Broadway, Horne, N. Y., on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays for counseling and information on all veterans benefits.

United Speedway News

Speedway Entertains Scouting

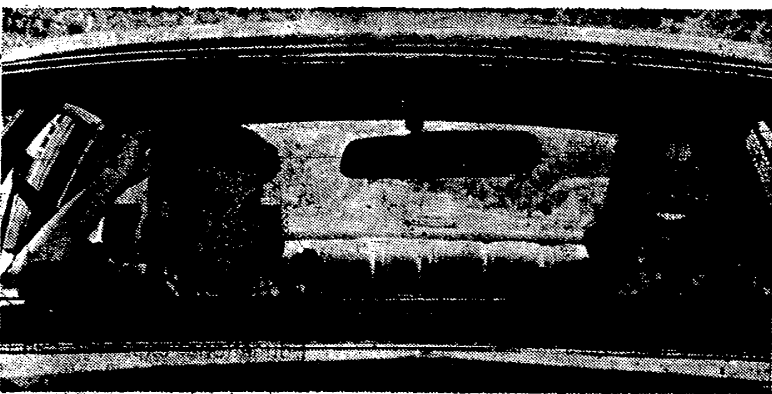
Holland Speedway will hold its first of 2 Scouting Nights at its Speedway in Holland, New York, Saturday evening. Over 1,000 Boy Scouts are expected to attend courtesy of the management. This annual affair attracts Scouts from councils throughout the Niagara Frontier. The Scouts will be treated to a 14 card racing program composed of Late Model Sportsman, Limited Sportsman and Challenger divisions. Added interest to the program will be the judging of model cars. Many youngsters spend many hours prior to the event in duplicating their favorite stock car. All cars are put on display and judged. Winners then have an opportunity to present their model car to their favorite driver on the Speedway and receive around the 3/4 miles with their favorite driver and car. Over 400 entries are expected.

With only four regular race programs remaining, Dick Flagg of Eggertsville has increased his lead over 1974 Champion Art Clark of West Seneca. Flagg gained considerable ground on August 2, when Clark was sidelined early in the feature event due to mechanical difficulty. After a disappointing 1974 season, the key to Flagg's success has been consistency. The veteran of many years has been able to finish high in each feature contest.

The 1974 Limited Sportsman Champion, Doug Hewitt of Perry, is in danger of losing his crown after having lead the division for a major portion of 1975. Lockport policeman, Charlie Neumann, of Buffalo, has edged out Hewitt for the lead in their seesaw battle. The Speedway's activities get underway with gates open at 5:30, practice at 6:00 and first race at 7:30.

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SPACE AGE FISHING

If you could have seen me the other day flyfishing for bass in one of my favorite lakes, you'd have thought I was trying to electrocute them. I was using some battery-powered fishing aids that are becoming commonplace in our electronic age — and they helped me find and catch some fish!

My tactic was to fish surface poppers along a shoreline where there are some drop-offs some 12 to 15 feet deep. Nothing unusual about that — except that I had to find the drop-offs. So, I turned on my fish finder, known affectionately as the little green box, and the flashing red band quickly determined the location of steep rocky areas.

Then, I flipped the switch on my electric motor, and effortlessly and quietly I began to move along the shore fishing the hotspots. I'd lay out a bug on the quiet water, let it lie for a minute or more, pop it a couple of times, continue to wait for a bass to swim up and investigate, then whammo. Fishing with that kind of electronic gear, the bass made more noise than I did.

Now this is not to say that you need all these space-age gadgets to go flyfishing for bass. I could have fished along the same shore blindly and caught some fish. Eventually, I would have learned the best places to cast, and wait for a lazy bass to find his way up to the surface. And, I could have quietly rowed my small boat along the shore — I've done it dozens of times. It is just that the new

electronic aids make it easier, and help you catch more fish.

Most of us need all the help we can get in catching fish today. There is a controversy going on right now out in the midwest about using electronic gear to locate salmon in the Great Lakes. As the salmon populations build up in Lake Ontario, and local fishermen learn how to find them, the same argument will be raised here. Do fish finders — even the sophisticated ones with print-outs — give anglers an unfair advantage? The advent of spinning did not catch all the trout in the world, and most observers believe that new techniques should be used to find and catch fish. If the fish are even at a disadvantage then the creel limit can be lowered. But sportsmen should have the freedom to seek and catch their quarry, and then release it if necessary.

A good example of combining sportsmanship with the new techniques was my trip for bass. Certainly I caught more fish than I could have unaided. But the population was not depleted — I returned them all with no more than a pinprick to their boney jaws. Any critter with the willingness to spar, and the dogged never-give-up spirit of our northern smallmouth bass, earns his freedom in my book.

My solution was to tie on a rubber spider and catch a couple dozen bluegills, and I still went home with a fish dinner. They are better eating than bass any