

# Georgia Outdoors

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With full support from state sportsmen's organizations, both the House and the Senate passed the license increase bill with whopping majorities, as it sailed through the General Assembly with only 18 dissenting votes.



Shepherding the wildlife conservation fund measure through the House, Administration Floor Leader George D. Busbee of Albany painted out that the one dollar increase in fees would be used primarily to operate new public hunting and fishing areas.

## Hunting and Fishing License Fees Raised

By Jim Morrison

Governor Carl Sanders has signed into law a bill to increase the price of hunting and fishing license fees.

The Administration-backed measure sailed through both houses of the General Assembly with whopping majorities. The House passed the increase 122-17, while the Senate voted 36-1 for its passage.

A supplemental appropriation bill was immediately introduced and passed with Administration support to give the State Game and Fish Commission an additional \$300,000 during the current fiscal year, plus an additional \$900,000 beginning July 1, giving the Commission a total of slightly over three million dollars for the coming fiscal year, including federal aid funds.

Under the new law, fishing licenses in effect April 1 will go up from \$1.25 to \$2.25, hunting from \$2.25 to \$3.25, and the combination license from \$3.25 to \$5.25. Increases were also made in non-resident fees.

A large part of the additional funds will be used to hire additional personnel and pay operating expenses associated with the acquisition of new public hunting and fishing areas by the Commission, most of which are leased on a rent-free basis from large private landowners. A new program of boat launching ramp construction will also be initiated on good fishing and boating waters which are not now easily accessible to sportsmen.

### Sufficient Funds

While signing House Bill Number Three, Governor Sanders said that the increase would give Georgia "the finest wildlife conservation program anywhere in this country".

"This bill will give us sufficient funds in our Game and Fish Department to

provide all of Georgia's citizens, and especially every boy and girl who wants to, the wonderful opportunity of hunting and fishing," Sanders said.

"I also want to pay particular tribute to the wonderful members of the Game and Fish Commission, as well as to the leadership of the very able director and staff that we now have in the Department," Sanders said. "Without their help, and their support, we could not have passed this bill," he said.

"We of the Game and Fish Commission are deeply grateful to the House and the Senate for their action in passing our license bill," said Commission Director Rosser Malone. "Governor Sanders has made it plain that with these funds, we will do the job that is expected of us by the sportsmen of Georgia," he said.

### Full Support

The license increase proposal received the full support of the Georgia Sportsman's Federation, the Izaak Walton League, and many other individual hunting, fishing, and boating organizations over the State. It was also one of the major recommendations of the study made of the Game and Fish Department's operations in 1964 by the Governor's Efficiency Commission.

In addition to Governor Sanders, the bill had the support of Lt. Governor Peter Zack Geer, and was initially introduced in the House by Speaker George T. Smith, Speaker Pro Tem Maddox Hale, Floor Leader George D. Busbee, and Assistant Floor Leader Robin Harris.



The action of the General Assembly was praised by both Game and Fish Commission Director Rosser Malone and by Governor Carl Sanders, who immediately signed the bill into law. The new rates take effect April 1.



# Game and Fish Sponsors Rabbit

By Dean Wohlgemuth

Rabbits are going to the University of Georgia at the rate of 100 cottontails per month.

The rabbits are not learning anything. In fact, they're DOA—dead on arrival. But some of the professors there hope they will learn a great deal from the rabbits.

The Department of Zoology and the School of Forestry are doing a study on rabbits in cooperation with the State Game and Fish Commission. The study is a Pittman-Robertson (Federal aid) project.

Mike Pelton, a graduate student working on his PhD, is doing most of the actual work, under supervision of Dr. Ernie Provost, associate professor of wildlife and zoology, and Dr. Jim Jenkins, Professor of wildlife management in the school of forestry.

Dr. Provost said the study is being made to discover why rabbit populations in Georgia are no higher than they are. "We're trying to learn what the limiting factor is as far as rabbit populations are concerned in the Piedmont section of Georgia," he said. He explained that each wildlife species has a limiting factor, that is, a factor that limits populations from becoming higher.

## Study Reproduction

To begin with, the study is looking into reproduction. "One of the first things we have to know in studying any population is, what kind of reproduction we are getting," Provost said. "After determining that, we are concerned with mortality, since the limiting factor of any population, naturally, is how many are being added to a population, and how many are being lost."

Work so far is mostly in the Piedmont, according to Dr. Jenkins. "However, we are doing some work in South Georgia. The problem in management, as far as rabbits are concerned, seems to exist mostly in the Piedmont, Appalachian Valley and mountain areas. We seem to be at a rather low point in population in these sections," he said, and the reasons why are not certain.

"We are also trying to look into a few other factors," besides population studies, said Jenkins. "We are looking into food conditions and parasites and diseases."

## Began in October

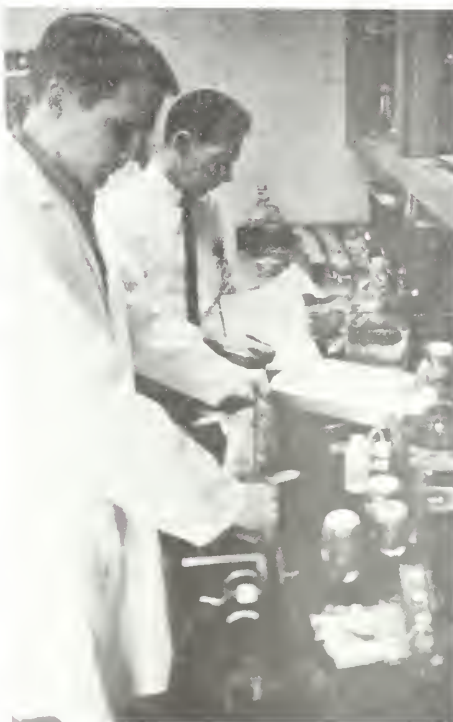
The study began in October and is scheduled, according to the agreement between the University and the Game and Fish Commission, to continue for two full years. However, Jenkins indi-



This speeding bunny shows only a puff of cottontail as he dives into the brush. But, the hunter has downed a quick bead and will likely have rabbit stew in the pot tonight. Targets this good are becoming scarce in the Piedmont and mountain regions.



Rabbit hunting with trained beagle hounds is traditionally a popular sport in middle and north Georgia, and is becoming more common in south Georgia as quail hunting becomes increasingly difficult. Notionally, the rabbit is rated the number one game species.



An apparent decline in the rabbit population has prompted the Game and Fish Commission to sponsor a study conducted by the University of Georgia. Mike Pelton, foreground, a graduate student, examines a rabbit while Dr. Ernie Provost, supervisor of the study, records technical data.



# h Commission bit Research

y of Georgia at the rate of about 16 new

cated that another student may continue the study longer.

"We have to go through at least two annual cycles to really learn anything," Jenkins said.

The study has just begun so far, and nothing has as yet been determined. "Right now, we're mainly concerned with obtaining rabbits," said Pelton. "We have an objective of getting 16 rabbits per month. So far this has been successful. By getting this sample, we can get a good indication of reproduction of rabbits over a year's period." Rabbits are obtained by live trapping and by hunting.

"The rabbits are brought into the laboratory" at the university in Athens, "dissected, and various organs collected and preserved for future studies," Pelton said. "So far the main portion of rabbits have come from the Game and Fish Commission's game management area on the Piedmont Experiment Station near Eatonton, a small number came from around Athens, and a few came from the coastal plain. We use those from the other areas for comparison studies. We check the spleen for possible tularemia, take bone marrow for nutrition work and the eye lens are used for telling the age of the cottontail."

## Taken from Piedmont

Reason for taking rabbits from the Piedmont Experiment Station Area, Jenkins explained, is because it is a game management area. "It is important to know about populations on management areas, so we'll know how to regulate hunters. This is where we should be doing extensive management work," Jenkins said.

Jenkins said the study was prompted because of a problem of low populations in rabbits above the fall line. He added that while rabbits generally are not considered "very high class game" in South Georgia or the coastal plain, a lower population than normal has been noted even in that area.

"So we are trying to find out why rabbit populations are low, so that we will be in a position to take management steps to correct the problem," Jenkins said.

The number of rabbit hunters in the state between June 1, 1960, and May 31, 1961, was 154,000, just a few thousand less than those hunting the most popular game, which is squirrels. There were 165,000 squirrel hunters. There were 2,014,000 rabbits killed in 1,513,000 man-days of hunting.



Like most wild animals, rabbits are often bothered by parasites. Since parasites can have a definite effect on rabbits, Pelton looks for them on this live rabbit, trapped at the Piedmont Experiment Station near Eatonton, by Game & Fish biologists.



Many of the rabbits used in the study are being trapped in box traps. The rabbit is lured into the box by scent placed there by the trapper. Pelton collected this one at the Piedmont Experiment Station.



Why so much interest in the little bunny? This most wide-spread of small game animals is the target of more hunters than any other animal. In addition, he makes mighty fine eating.

Photos by Dan Keever



# Conservation Scholarships Available to Teachers

Scholarships are now available for teachers to attend the two 1966 Georgia Natural Resource Use Workshops this summer.

The duplicate college-credit workshops are designed to give teachers an introduction to natural resource use and conservation principles in a manner which can be passed on to students in the classroom.

The workshops will be open to 25 teachers each. Shorter and Berry Colleges will co-host the first workshop at Rome, June 13 — July 1, 1966. Valdosta State will host the second workshop at Valdosta, July 25-Aug. 12, 1966.

## Fundamentals

The three-week course will include instruction in the fundamentals of natural resource use and conservation education techniques in geology, soil and water conservation, water pollution, forestry, wildlife conservation, and outdoor recreation.

The workshops are being sponsored by the three host institutions, the State Department of Education, and the Georgia Natural Resource Education Council, which is composed of all 12 major state and federal conservation agencies

in Georgia.

## Outdoor Classes

One-fourth of the instructional time will actually be spent outdoors on seven field trips during the 15-day course, which will qualify teachers for undergraduate credit of 3 1/3 semester hours from either Shorter or Berry Colleges, or five credit-hours from Valdosta State.

Workshop instructors are Miss Lewis Lipps at Shorter and Dr. Clyde Connel at Valdosta, two well-known ecologists. In addition, guest lecturers will be extensively used from the various conservation agencies, as well as from the University of Georgia and other educational institutions, along with several noted national conservation leaders.

## Scholarships

The \$150 scholarships available for



Plans for the new Natural Resource Use Workshop to be held this summer are discussed by members of the Georgia Natural Resource Education Council. From left to right, they are Jim Morrison, coordinator of information and education, Georgia Game and Fish Commission, chairman of the Council; Dr. Clyde Connel, chairman, department of biology, Valdosta State College; Dr. Phillip Greeor, chairman, department of biology, Shorter College; and Frank Croven, chief of forest education, Georgia Forestry Commission. Photo by Georgia Forestry Commission.

## WINTER CATCH!



Five pounds and two ounces of native brown trout is an ormfal for young Glod Anderson of Dohlonego. Anderson's fother, Glod Anderson, caught the 26 inch monster in the portion of the Chestotee River which is open oll year long for trout fishing, using o number 2 Mepps spinner. (The big fish was londed December 28, 1965.)

the two workshops include full costs of room, board, tuition, and field trip expenses. Scholarships are being provided from a number of sources, including sportsmen's clubs, garden clubs, women's groups, business foundations, and other groups. Organizations such as PTA's, civic clubs, and business firms including banks, manufacturing corporations, etc. who wish to sponsor a scholarship for a teacher in their local school system may still do so by contacting the chairman of the Council. The superintendent of the school system so designated would then select the teacher to receive the scholarship.

## Applications

A limited number of scholarships are available now on a state-wide basis to teachers making individual application to the Council. Teachers who would like to receive an application blank or scholarship should contact Jim Morrison, Chairman, Georgia Natural Resource Education Council, care of the State Game and Fish Commission, 401 State Capitol, Atlanta, Ga., 30334.

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