

are in no danger except in about three widely scattered particular areas. In the rest of the country, they manage nicely—even easily in some areas, where kind farmers do not mind the deer getting “easy pickings” from haystacks.

CARIBOU

Two of the most important steps in barren ground caribou management occurred this year in Saskatchewan. The first was a meeting held in Saskatoon in the fall of 1955 comprised of game administrators and research personnel from all government agencies concerned with caribou. At this meeting a Senior Caribou Committee was recommended which would judge research findings and take appropriate unified action. In addition, a Technical Caribou Committee was appointed, which was to unify research, gather facts and provide them to the Senior Caribou Committee.

The second step was the first fall meeting of the Technical Caribou Committee in Prince Albert on January 26th, 1956. At this meeting technicians and field men from Northwest Territories, Indian Affairs, Canadian Wildlife Service, Alberta Game Branch, Manitoba Game Branch, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests and Saskatchewan Game Branch were represented. The meeting was much enhanced by the presence of Dr. Doug Clarke, (Ontario representative) who has the advantage of years of experience and a background of very able work conducted in the Northwest Territories. At the conference, plans were laid to conduct an aerial survey of caribou presently in Saskatchewan. This survey will give needed data on sex and age ratios, range conditions and herd distribution. The survey will be on a co-operative basis and participants will be John Kelsall (Canadian Wildlife Service) and T. A. Harper and R. A. Ruttan (Saskatchewan Game Branch, Biological Division). All three are extremely capable men and also tough enough to withstand the very rigorous climate and ground conditions. Other problems discussed at the meeting were: range studies, wolf control assessment and improvement, means of obtaining accurate native kill figures, standardization of methods of collecting data, improvement of

aerial survey techniques and plans for an over-all aerial survey to begin next spring.

The caribou population has dwindled steadily over the past several years until the present when only some 300,000 animals make up the mainland caribou population. Every effort is being made to find the cause of the reduction. Having once found the cause, the effort will then be directed to the correction of the situation. So far, we know that neither predation nor human utilization were the sole factors causing the loss in caribou—though of course they helped. We cannot stop human utilization of caribou unless we wish to starve the humans presently using caribou. We hope that we can eliminate wastage by education and enforcement. It is only by the sincere inter-government co-operation presently found in the Caribou Committee that we have any hope of collecting and transposing facts into action for caribou management.

RACCOONS IN SASKATCHEWAN

S. A. Mann reports an unusual occurrence from the Cypress Hills District — four Raccoons taken in the early winter on Bear Creek. Joyce Gunn from Spirit Lake also reports a Raccoon that arrived in their yard January 21, taking refuge in the garage. When she wrote on January 26, the Raccoon was still sheltering in the garage, thriving on a diet of fish, table scraps and bread and milk. The Gunn family settled at Good Spirit Lake in 1887, and this is the first record that they have of a Raccoon in the district.

UNSEASONABLE ACTIVITY OF SKUNK

Although we do not usually see skunks after the cold weather has set in, Joyce Gunn (Spirit Lake) reports that a family of four has been visiting their yard this winter on the average of once every ten days. The smallest one of the four took a liking to the dog's box and stays behind after the rest of the family leaves to have a “cat-nap” in his box. The dog sits back at a safe distance and waits for it to leave — he has learnt it is much easier to let it come out on its own than go in after it!