

ARE SKUNKS SCAVENGERS?

By C. C. Shaw

While driving near Shell River, Manitoba, during September, we were surprised to see a skunk eating a rabbit which had been killed on the highway. Needless to say, we did not stop to form a closer acquaintance but we would have liked to ask Mr. Skunk if scavenging was a family trait.

Perhaps some reader can enlighten us. We have read that skunks are fond of living mice and insects, especially grasshoppers, but this was the first time we have seen one dining on rabbit. The skunk paid scant attention to the heavy traffic, and only moved back a few feet to the shoulder of the road as the cars passed him.

- - - - -

TWO COUGARS NEAR YORKTON

Two cougars were seen three miles south of Yorkton early this fall, but the efforts of four mounted policemen to locate the animals were unsuccessful.

Bill Harris and his 14-year-old daughter, Myrna, saw the animals at close range as they were walking along a road near their farm home. Judging from their color, Mr. Harris at first mistook them for coyotes, but on approaching to within about 100 feet, saw the distinct features of the huge cats. He immediately returned home and phoned police, but by the time Sgt. Bennett, with four men, arrived, the cougars had disappeared, although one set of tracks was seen heading east along the railway line.

There have been several reports of cougars in the district throughout the summer. In the Norquay district one was credited with killing several sheep and a 450-pound cow. The cow was found with its neck slashed open and the flank chewed away.

- - - - -

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

By M. B. Runyan

Muskrats, which for many years were a curiosity in these dry parts, have taken up residence in the sloughs which have been filled during the heavy summer rains. Where did the rats come from? Many of the farmers hadn't seen one for twenty years, until about 1948 when a few took up residence in new water dug-outs.

- - - - -

CYANIDE GUNS INEFFECTIVE

The cyanide bombs laid for coyotes proved completely ineffective in the Punnichy district. A dozen were set out in our neighborhood, but not one was touched. The wily coyotes continued their ravages. Now we eagerly await the arrival of the hunter who will put out the poisoned meat. As sheep farmers that is our last hope.

The little fawns fell easy prey to the coyote hordes, and few appear to have survived.

- - - - -

RECAPTURE PRACTISEBy S. P. Jordan,
Saskatoon.

The coyote, with all his faults, is admired by many for the daring which he exhibits. Certainly there is one such individual in the vicinity of Saskatoon, for, on the morning of September 1, one of the often-called sneaky species, boldly walked up to a hen-house in the town of Sutherland, picked up a fat Plymouth Rock hen, carried her to an open grain field and there, as far as my friend could see, played a game which might be called in coyote lingo, "recapture practise." Satisfied with his skill, he then headed for the Saskatchewan River and disappeared from sight.

- - - - -

BEAVER AT SASKATOON

Coming from the non-beaver country of Regina (Have you ever walked down the Wascana Valley? ED.), it is quite a thrill for me to see beaver within the city limits of Saskatoon.

Such was my privilege on September 3, for I saw a pair of those mighty "timber-topplers" just below the 25th St. Bridge. Whether this particular pair was responsible or not, is difficult to say, but recently, upon walking along the river bank by the same bridge, I discovered a great deal of "beaver-lumbering" had been done, from old poplars, 30 to 40 years old, down to bushes near the water which appeared to be severed by one clamp of his mighty teeth.

I could find no evidence of storage and yet it seems incredible that such a vast amount could have been eaten. Food, nevertheless, must have been their motive, because there was evidence of much eating, and the construction of a dam at this point of the river would be an absolute impossibility.

- - - - -

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

A beautiful Silver Fox has managed to exist for two years while roaming within sight of the look-out tower of a neighboring fox farm. His home, so to speak, is a Saskatoon golf course and some of his food very likely comes from the disposal ground of this city's exhibition plant.

How he has managed to live in the face of such great odds is amazing to me. One would think that the dogs or the guns would have killed him long ago. Needless to say, it was wonderful to see him loping through the bushes just as stealthily as his truly wild ancestors had done before him.

I saw this treasured gentleman while playing golf on September 26.

- - - - -