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OUTDOORSMAN



Wisconsin Game Co.

Edwin
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In this Issue **HOUNDS vs HARES**

HOUNDS

VS

Hares

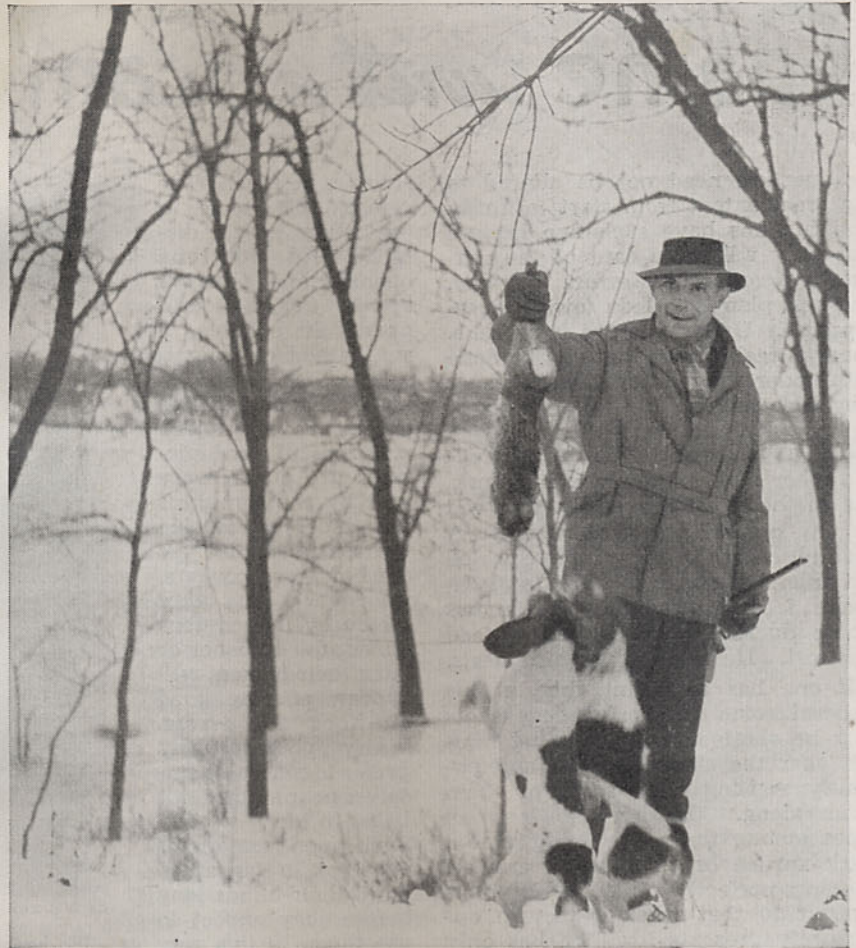
SOMEHOW as a small lad going afield with my father and uncle I came to associate hounds with rabbits just the way other people associate red leaves with October, turkey with Thanksgiving, and Santa Claus with Christmas. It's in my blood now, and I suppose it will ever be that way.

I'm no fancier of any particular breed or type of hunting dog. Neither do I care for the genealogy of my tail-thumping pal. As long as he has a high bunny efficiency, I'm happy. To me a rabbit is a rabbit, a good rabbit dog is a good rabbit dog, and a poor one is a liability and an humiliation. It's as simple as all that.

You and I both think it's pretty nice to be able to shoot a few rabbits whenever we wish, but we know too that a full pot is far from the real objective of the hunter-with-dogs. When game is plentiful and the little hound runs many rabbits by our stand, we do not fill them all with a load of shot. After we have collected enough for the table we get a great kick out of watching first the rabbit and then the dog come by. By doing this we learn things that we wouldn't otherwise know, too.

It is mighty pleasant and reassuring to feel that there is one sport you will have enough success at to make every excursion afield really fun. You feel this especially after a number of days spent in futile pursuit of a quarry that has more vagaries of habit and habitat. And if you're lazy like myself, I'm sure you feel the same about dogs as I do. For my part, I would much rather look at brush than tramp through it trying to frighten sitting bunnies, and as long as the dogs seem so happy scurrying around in the brush I feel I ought to be content where I am. I just go along to sort of fill in the gaps between the patches of brush.

When it comes right down to the best breed to select for rabbiting a



A hunter picks up a rabbit shot ahead of these two dogs. Always give the dogs a good whiff of all the game shot, so they will not follow the trails of game already killed.

just-minded dog man is hard put to give a fair recommendation. It is like asking, "What nationality makes the best shots?" The field of eligible breeds is conveniently limited by certain general physical qualifications that are advantageous to have in a rabbit dog.

Physically, the dog should be medium to small in height. Extremes, too large or too small, are ordinarily less effectual as hunters. Larger dogs are not necessary and almost invariably are too swift on the trail and on the dog biscuits, qualities which soon put both your rabbits and your pocketbook in the hole. Small dogs are great for worming through thick brush, but wear out quickly in heavy snow or other hard going. If your hunting is confined largely to small plots of dense brush and briars, choose one on the midget side; but if you cover quite a bit of rather open country when you hunt, better get a larger edition. Although larger dogs are apt to be harder drivers and hole the game frequently, it is also true that they cover more ground and rout more game.

The three breeds most frequently used on rabbits are beagles, bassets, and dachshunds. Observation in the field will show the beagles most popular. Sturdy, well proportioned little hounds weighing from twelve to twenty pounds, they measure from

twelve to fifteen inches at the shoulder. Bassets are heavier, longer-coupled, not quite as graceful, but are sturdy and make excellent rabbiters. Dachshunds are still lower slung, longer, slower, better for extremely thick briar jungles and den work, but tire more easily on strenuous hunts and appear to be generally more fragile than the other two breeds. All three are easily brought up and trained as pets.

WHILE these are the recognized breeds of rabbiters, there are nevertheless many first class bunny detectives of other breeds. Smaller individuals among the larger breeds of hounds often turn out pretty well, although usually rather fast. Occasionally a cross-bred dog of vague ancestry will develop into a crackerjack rabbit hunter. Among the five best rabbit dogs I ever knew was a funny looking mutt that appeared to be a cross between a weasel and a sheep. But he was an exception—generally ordinary dogs lack the necessary slowness and sureness of trailing.

If you are getting a pup to raise and train, be sure to get a good look at both parents, and if possible see them perform in the field. This is the most important step in acquiring a good rabbit hunter. The pup when grown will resemble his parents, not only in looks but also in hunting abil-

Observations on Hounds, Hares, and What it Takes to Make a Good Hunter

By **ROB F. SANDERSON**

ity. Of course, there are some dubs even in the best of families.

Rabbits, unlike most animals pursued by hounds, are perpetual putters and dilly-dalliers. A dog that tracks too fast will constantly run over for a loss, and then often circle too widely to pick up the trail quickly. A slow dog, well versed in the lore of rabbits, will stop as soon as he has overrun the track a yard, reverse, and wheel around until he is again in the exact tracks of the quarry.

A constant, not too savage trail bark is necessary to assure the rabbit that danger is far behind and pursuing at a slow speed that can be easily outrun. Thus the rabbit is content with a much smaller safety margin between himself and a slow dog, than he is with a fast dog. The trail cry of a steady trailer will be closer to the approaching game, and the game will run more slowly in a smaller circle. Cottontails will circle or figure-eight right around to where they were routed, if not pursued too swiftly or too badly frightened by encounters with dogs or hunters.

As soon as a cottontail is routed by a dog, the shooter makes sure which way the chase is headed and runs to intercept it at a fence line, open space or clearing, or selects a high knoll, stump or rock from which his scattergun can command a generous swath of land. Often the chase is headed away from the shooter; in this instance the plot is to get rabbit fur on the return trip. Sometimes

These two bunnies fled from a pursuing hound into the pattern of a 12-gauge shotgun. On snow a good dog is needed as rabbits will hole if not handled tactfully.

an elusive bunny will suddenly change his course of travel, requiring the hunter to change stands as quickly and quietly as possible. A rabbit moving slowly will detect cracking twigs or other subtle noises much more quickly than a rabbit on the run, and the experienced hunter allows for this difference.

A lot of shooting throughout the country is done ahead of compromise dogs. These dogs, while of infinitely less assistance than the dogs mentioned above, are far better than no help at all. They are the dogs that happen to be around, collies, farm dogs, fox terriers, springer spaniels, or what have you. Often excellent routers, covering a wide area and possessing a good sense of rabbit location, they chase their fugitive at break-neck speed by sight when they can, and if they aren't too far away at the time of rout the hunter can often get in a hurried snapshot. While the excitement is short and high pitched, the satisfaction of listening to and watching a well trained dog perform is lacking. Nevertheless, as rabbits often sit close and are reluctant to rout, these canines will pep up a hunting party in the absence of better dogs. Never mix common sight chasers with good hounds, or some good hounds are apt to be spoiled. Once sight chasing gets into a dog's blood, it's hard to take out.

The age a youngster is ready to start training is a matter of widely varying opinion. Remember that these little hounds mature much faster than the larger species, and I have had surprisingly consistent trailers at seven months. The sooner a dog learns to intelligently negotiate his way around the woods, the better.

THE most sugar-coated method to break in junior is to run him with an oldster who knows his rabbit psychology from years of experience. A pup soon copies from the older dog, and if allowed to run together frequently the young dog's personality quickly blossoms. An older dog is a good teacher, especially if he is slow and thorough, and doesn't set so fast a pace that the youngster has to develop slip-shod trailing habits to keep up. If the youngster begins to show too much dependence, let him work alone until he gets the knack of the harder angles for himself.

But few of us have a well-seasoned veteran to break our pup in with—if we did, likely we wouldn't bother with a new pup. So if some one of our friends or relatives doesn't have an A-1 rabbit we can borrow, the

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LYMAN TARGETSPOT CASE

THE Lyman Gunsight Corporation now supplies its reliable and time-tested Targetspot and Super Targetspot scopes in excellent hardwood cases, with felt covered rests for the scope, and easily locked hooks that clamp the lid down snug on the bottom of the case. A carrying handle completes the picture. These hardwood cases look like maple, are well constructed and are dust-proof. They are supplied with each new Targetspot or Super Targetspot at no additional cost and offer a perfect carrying case for the protection of these fine target scopes.

PACHMAYR GUNSHOP

THE Pachmayr Gunshop, being one of the pioneers in the development of super-accurate .45 Colt auto pistols, carries a staff of experts for the purpose of fitting up the Government service pistol for finest match work. There is no comparison between an issue .45 Colt auto, either Government or Colt, and one of these arms properly tuned up and adjusted for match work by Pachmayr. They also make and fit a most excellent short action to both Colt and S & W D. A. guns. My own .357 S & W Magnum was fitted with their short

action some four years ago, and has proved the fastest and finest action for target and game shooting I have yet seen on one of these guns.

Pachmayr also makes a business of changing the drop on both rifle and shotgun stocks without cutting away any material. When visiting there in 1937, we examined several rifles on which the stocks had been changed in drop. Most of these changes were of course upward, their owners wishing straighter stocks. The method used to so change the drop of stocks is a trade secret; suffice to say, anyone having a rifle or shotgun with too much or not enough drop should get in touch with Pachmayr. Formerly most outfits glued pieces of wood to top or bottom of stock and refitted the butt plate in order to make alterations when they involved as much as an inch, but Pachmayr has a system of permanently setting the wood to about any desired drop, and without mutilation of a fine gun stock.

HOUNDS vs. HARES

(Continued from page 13)

problem's not so simple. Remember, it is better to break in a young dog alone than with the assistance of a partly trained or faulty dog. A pup will learn poor lessons from a poor

teacher. Far better hunt the pup alone than with a potterer, fast trailer, or back trailer. Bad habits are easy enough for a dog to acquire without teaching them to him.

Before a pup enters the field, he should have a rudimentary yard breaking. He should come at call, heel, and lie down. Too much yard training tends to take away a dog's individuality. Some trainers teach their dogs to retrieve and a variety of other feats, but don't expect a young dog's mind to absorb too much at once. My own younger dog will retrieve if the circumstances warrant it—numerous times I have heard an unobliging hunter shoot a cottontail my hounds were driving, only a few minutes later to see Trump trotting toward me through the brush with a dead bunny dangling from his jaws.

During the woods training, don't forget that the only way your pup will learn to trail rabbits is by trailing them, just as you learned to shoot them by shooting at them. Give him as much time afield as you can manage. A high percentage of the top-notch dogs I have known were allowed to run at large in the country with an older dog during late summer and early fall. During the first part of summer roaming dogs destroy too many nests of young rabbits.

Don't be discouraged by summer performances. Your pup is young, has lots to learn, and often will spend weeks in the thick summer foliage before he really catches his first glimpse of the animal he is chasing. The first kill in the hunting season will do wonders to pep up his efforts, and after the heavy frosts have killed off the rank odors of the summer foliage, trailing will be easier.

ACCUSTOM the new recruit to gunfire before taking him afield. The heavy barrage of opening day, often at close range in thick rabbit cover, will startle and perhaps frighten a pup until he becomes used to hearing it. From my own experience, I know that only in cases of exceptionally timid dogs does the animal get gunshy except as a result of gross carelessness on the gunner's part. Avoid too many hunters and too many dogs on the first few outings, especially if they are strangers to your young dog. Do everything to build up his confidence and make him feel at ease.

Occasionally a rabbit dog will bother deer or fox. In my own hunting country a deer chaser will cause almost every rabbit hunt to end as a dog hunt, and eventually the mutt eats up his value in newspaper ads, rewards, and gasoline. Chasing fox is not as wayward a habit as chasing deer, as they neither run as far nor as fast, and if you get a shot at one the season is usually open—not the case with deer.

The only fool-proof way is to catch the habit when it first crops out. Intercept the culprit at a deer crossing, and right then and there proceed to



A fine custom-built double barrel shotgun, fabricated entirely from the smallest screw to the frame and barrels by August Pachmayr, father of Frank Pachmayr.

make his skin smart with a light, supple switch, vigorously applied (never use a club or chain) with careful avoidance of showing signs of rage. A dog is quick to sense emotional discipline and it is never as effective as the cool but stern type. Be sure to catch the canine in the act of trailing—never call him to you in order to dispense justice on him. A dog you can't catch or call is of less value than one that runs deer but comes to call. But most rabbit dogs leave deer pretty much alone unless they get into bad company. If sound switchings fail to deter the errant, smear deer musk on his muzzle daily for several weeks, and if this fails to dull his ardor, swap dogs.

WHEN you shoot a bunny, don't make the mistake of calling the young dog in immediately or you will soon have him responding to shot and not to call. This is a bad habit, as he will soon respond to strangers' shots, being unable to differentiate between your own and others' gunfire. Often you may be shooting at a rabbit other than the one the dog is after, and if

he leaves the trail it will likely be too cold to follow by the time you get him back on it again.

Nor is it well to do the opposite—pocket the deceased and trip off through the brush leaving Sport to figure out how the rabbit sprouted wings. Wait until the dog trails the rabbit up to where you plugged him. If he has a good whiff of every rabbit you drop, you won't find him hot on the trail of a corpse that has been in your game pocket for the past five minutes. If you want cooperation, give it out in the same measure.

With the scents of two seasons run through his sniffer, your young dog should be pretty well polished in his rabbit lore. You'll be a better hunter, too; my first dog taught me much more than I ever taught him about hunting. After season, you'll find yourself recollecting the sound of his bugle, the sight of his tail wagging his rear-end as he muzzles out a fresh trail through the brown grass and red sumac. These scenes and others you'll see clearly in your pipe smoke almost any evening you're home relaxing in the easy chair.

Don't Blame Your Guide

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There are a hundred kinks that may be employed by the guide in regards to finding and stalking game—different methods of hunting under varying weather conditions and seasonal changes in the habits of game—but every guide has his own style of hunting. Methods that bring the desired results in one section may or may not work out somewhere else. I would suggest that the sportsman outfit with a good guide and then leave it to the guide to find the game and stalk it.

There is another matter that is ever important to the big game guide, and that is a thorough knowledge of field taxidermy; that is, the care of the trophy in the field. Doing professional taxidermy in the winter and off seasons, I know just how limited is the knowledge of the average hunter along this line. Many a trophy that would be of exceptional quality otherwise has been ruined by failure to properly care for it in the field. Unless the taxidermist receives a trophy that is properly skinned out, it is apt to be useless for mounting.

The ears, especially, should be skinned out all the way to the tips and not just around the base. The lips should be split and the excess flesh cut therefrom, as well as away from the nostrils and eyelids. This, of course, should be done with great care so as not to cut and ruin the cape. All flesh should be removed from the neck and hide, especially if the animal is very fat. If the hide is dried, the guide should be very careful not to let the rays of the sun hit the flesh side, as this will invariably grease burn it and make it impossible to soften these spots when tanning. On

a bear hide the excess flesh should be removed, but it should not be scraped too closely as this would tend to dislodge the roots of the hair and cause it to slip.

As to his knowledge of firearms, the guide must be fairly well informed. He must be a good shot, in addition to a good hunter and stalker, and be able to bring down game with anything from the .30-30 up. A good guide knows the approximate drop in inches of most of the popular sporting calibers with a given weight of bullet when the rifle is sighted at a certain range, and is able to tell his hunters how to place their shots. Also, a guide knows what make, weight, and type point the bullet should have for the necessary penetration and shock on the game hunted.

ABOVE all, a guide must at all times be congenial and even tempered, and have a personality that takes well with the public. He must arrange and run his hunt with the utmost efficiency, and at the same time show his party every consideration and convenience in his power. Sometimes there are parties that tax the patience and good nature of even the best tempered guide.

When you are on a hunt, if you will always try to realize the strain and hardship your guide is undergoing, and act accordingly, things will run a lot smoother. Remember, it is up to you to be congenial and take the worst with a smile, just as much as it is to your guide. If you don't get all you went after, stop and look around before you condemn the guide. There is usually a reason; it is not always him.

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