

THE SOUTHERN SPORTSMAN

FEBRUARY, 1942 ^R 4

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VOICE OF THE OUTDOOR SOUTH



JACOB BATES ABBOTT

ONE MINUTE AFTER TWELVE —

By Dr. Richard L. Sutton

THE SOUTHERN SPORTSMAN

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with which is combined

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SOMETIME ago I had a rather enthusiastic report on the VEC leader in *Southern Sportsman*. I may mention that most of my experiments were made with it in the ten pound test size, in fact, I used some sixteen pound test VEC for trolling purposes. The ten pound test VEC I used for bait casting leaders. Not only did they possess the required strength (which of course is very essential), but so far as invisibility in the water is concerned they have proved second to none. My fear at first was that this leader would show up bright like a silver wire in the water. That it did nothing of the sort is rather proof of its leadership in the field. In many ways we would rather use this than the best silk worm gut. The composition raw silk leaders that have flooded the market are quite useless in comparison. For one thing they fray out, even get white in color and show up in the water like a house on fire.

I have mentioned in the above that I previously used this VEC only in its heavier grades. Judge Vern Ledgerwood, famous southern angler, introduced me to the use of the two and four pound test VEC leaders in the taking of bream and other panfish. I may state that I haven't found a finer leader to use on panfish, such as bream, than the two pound VEC. The four pound test is also good. The limpness of this leader and its ability to give action to the lure, makes it, by far, one of the best for use with the small flies. This past summer when the Judge and I fished throughout Glacier National Park and the Yellowstone we used these light leaders on trout. They lived up to everything we expected.



This summer I have tried out for the first time some rubber-legged bugs, imitation crickets, spiders, etc., made by the Fly Fish Kit Company, of which W. H. Schumann is president. Here again Judge Ledgerwood was a means to the introduction. We used them on panfish. After we had taken something like 60 of the sunfish (bream) on these rubber bugs I definitely came to the conclusion that they were one of the most deadly lures ever introduced in the South.

Don't get me wrong about these rubber bugs. There are rubber bugs and rubber bugs. There are bugs pressed out of soft rubber that imitate helgramite, frogs, crabs, crickets, grasshoppers, etc. They are lifelike to look at, purely as a lifelike imitation, but they lack that most essential thing of all, something that puts action into them. Because the majority of these rubber creations fail to attract the fish by action, they lose value in due proportion.

The Schumann rubber bugs are different. They are made of sponge rubber

and have legs made of sensitive rubber, so sensitive in fact, that as the slightest breeze touches the rubber legs, they move. In the water this movement of the legs is surprisingly carried out. It is this movement that brings the fish out and takes the best of them. In Glacier National Park and Yellowstone, Judge Ledgerwood and I caught many trout on these bugs. They are so deadly that henceforth I would not think of going on a trout expedition without them. So great has been the demand for these bugs that at the forepart of the season this company was between 75,000 and 100,000 bugs behind orders. In a letter late last summer Mr. Schumann writes: "From all indications this will be a banner year for our product. In past years our business began to taper off about the first of August, but this season our orders are still running between 150 to 200 dozen per day."

—ss—

One of the great surprises of last year, was the merger of Max Weesner's Cincinnati Bait Company and Frank Cross' company which has been making the justly famous Weezel Bait. I did not know until Mr. Weesner told me so that he was the originator of the Weezel lure. He sold out the Weezel Company in 1935 and founded the present Cincinnati Bait Company. Now, with the two companies merged, we should see great forward progress.

The Weezel lure has made a very great name for itself. It is now to be had in the fly rod size, the regulation bass casting size and a large size Weezel that can be used on muskellunge and saltwater fish. We took sea trout, snook, Spanish mackerel and many other varieties of saltwater fish, this spring, on the large-sized Weezel. The regulation bass size Weezel will catch saltwater fish almost as easily. The bait caster in salt water shouldn't be without a few of these Weezels. The fly rod Weezel can't be beat when fishing for bass or trout in fast water and in the pools below rapids. This fall I am taking along a number of the large size Weezels when I go on a muskellunge trip into the wilds of western Ontario. I miss my guess if it does not produce a record-breaker. The Weezel can be said to be an all-round lure in that it will take so many varieties of fish.

One of the foremost lures that Max Weesner has been pushing is the so-called Rex spoon. Max calls this "the answer to a fisherman's prayer." It is all of that. Southern fishermen know that some of the toughest bass water is to be found below the Mason and Dixon line, or its equivalent. There are bass in there, lots of them, but get a bait that will clear through that mess of weeds, pads, or

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Machos Mexicanos

or, Bucks Below the Border

By Rob F. Sanderson

OLD SOL had sunk beyond the mountain-studded desert horizon when Chuck and I turned off the graded Nogales-Guaymas road. We passed the obscure turn-off three times before our searchlight located the landmark, a peculiar volcanic rock which had grounded the car's differential in December, three months before.

Our gas buggy bobbed, bumped, twined, and jumped. Steep arroyos scraped our rear bumper as we dived in and out. Jackrabbits galloped confusedly before our headlamps. Once a little gray fox zipped nimbly across the road. Branches of wizened desert trees slapped at the car as we ground by in second or low gear.

Presently a dull light showed over the eastern mountains, a Mexican desert moon—big, round, and red. It silhouetted volcanic peaks on the horizon and grotesque saguaro cacti on the near hills. For twenty-five miles further we followed that will-o'-the-wisp road.

Leaving Tucson at 2:30 P. M. and driving 180 miles into Mexico off the main road over unmarked trails by night, is a feat for only the imprudent. But this was the last week of the long Sonoran deer season, and our only chance to make a long-awaited trip. Chuck and I planned to use that last chance.

At the road's end we crossed the bubbling little creek on stepping stones, and walked under the high sycamores and cottonwoods which laced moonlight unevenly across the trail. The night was very still. Suddenly dogs barked, and ahead in the moonlight we saw the dobe house.

My Mexicano friends were sleeping outdoors on the ground. Early February though it was, these men had been sleeping comfortably under a single saddle blanket apiece, heads cradled in their saddle seats and not even boots removed.

"We wish to go hunting," I explained when the salutary courtesies were done. "Can you give us horses?"

"The horses," Pedro apologized, "are far off in the hills. Perhaps midday when we find them."

"Whenever you are ready," I agreed, knowing better than to hurry a Mexican. We departed in a chorus of "Buenos noches, amigos."

Our sleeping bags were spread where the car shadowed the moonlight. A coyote wailed somewhere in the lonesome foothills. We slept soundly until dawn.

At nine next morning a loud clatter of hooves sounded along the creek and the remuda crossed amid much splashing. We saddled at once, strapped on our rifle scabbards, and were off at a brisk trot. Chuck rode a sedate rawboned buckskin, Pedro a jittery brown three-year-old, and I rode a bay bronc of unpredictable age and disposition.

We crossed the hills into a canyon and rode back into the cacti-mantled mountains. Pedro showed me a crude cross chopped into an oak trunk, in memory of a guerrilla fighter killed by federal troops back in 1918.

The day met the standard Sonoran winter specifications: 60 to 70 degrees in

the sun, 15 degrees cooler in the shade. We watched carefully for deer. Pedro was taking us back to a deep valley in the mountains where, as Pedro himself stated, "There are many deer — sometimes."

Soon we were joined by Ramon, our other guide. He and I separated from the others so that we might cover more ground the first day and ascertain where the principal deer range was.

Until afternoon I did not see a buck. About two o'clock Ramon and I were working up opposite sides of a low mountain, on foot. I jumped a bedded animal and managed a quick snap shot. Finding no blood, I chalked up a clean miss. The buck pulled a complete disappearance.

ABOUT four o'clock I saw a doe. Apparently bedded nearby had been a buck, for I saw him slipping away out of a canyon and up another hill about two hundred and fifty yards distant. Dropping to one knee, I fired. Three consecutive bullets struck two yards to the left and I realized my sights were out of alignment.

This was odd, as only three days ago I had tested the sights and they were dead center. Taking six shots at a distant rock I worked the windage knob back to the proper adjustment, and slipped the newly-centered gun back into my scabbard. As I did so I noticed the tightly-fitting scabbard rolled the windage knob. This occurrence had likely cost me a deer, if not two. I resolved to obtain a new receiver sight or a scope before my next trip.

That night in camp we compared notes. Chuck had seen more deer than I, mostly does. Having heard my shooting when I targeted my sights in, he had fully expected warm liver in camp and was disappointed not to have at least one deer hung up the first night.

Next day we worked into lower country, thinking that the recent rain filling the water holes would have caused the deer to work down off the mountain where the grazing was good but where there had been no good water since Christmas. However, the deer hadn't thought of this.

"This is no better than Arizona," Charlie commented in camp that night. We had both failed to connect with our bucks north of the border that fall, and had planned to get our export limit of two whitetail bucks on this trip. Although I had taken out two whitetails at Christmas time, I could take out two more now as this was a different trip. The blacktail season had closed December 31, but the

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Top: A typical Mexican road—pretty bad but passable. Center top: Looking the country over for game. In the distance are the Sierras Negras (Black Mountains). Center: Chuck and his guide take a squint from a foothill summit. Lower center: MUCHACHOS (kids) are excellent skinners. With skin off, flesh quickly forms a thick dry crust in this arid climate—a crust impervious to blowflies and dust. Bottom: My buck, about a ninety pounder, had a good rack.



MACHOS MEXICANOS
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whitetail season continued until February 15.

My friends and I find Mexican hunting a most convenient privilege, as luck often doesn't accompany the short United States seasons. Many hunters like Chuck and myself are so busy with their business or profession during the late fall and pre-Christmas season that their hunting time is severely limited, although after the new year plenty of time is available.

The third day we set out to investigate the country high on the mountain flanks. Three miles upward from camp we hit fresh deer sign. It looked like we had hit the deer range at last!

Separating into two parties, we rode opposite sides of the ridge, hoping to drive deer across to each other. Hardly had we started when I glimpsed a deer sneaking ahead of me in the brush. I called to my vaquero companion riding below me. At once we dismounted and started afoot.

I climbed the slope hurriedly. Eastward along the rising ridgecrest a white flag bobbed above the brush. I spied horns, raised my .270 and fired.

After the shot I saw nothing. I found the track but no blood. The track entered thick brush, I circled to pick it up, and found it coming out in a saddle and crossing to the other ridge side. Below me I could see Chuck and Pedro.

"See a deer?" I shouted.
"No," he called, but even as he answered, Chuck fell to one knee, sighted his .30-06 (a special feature of this trip) and let go. WHAM! WHAM! the reports echoed along the ridge and rolled down into the canyon.

"Think I scored!" he yelled. I ran forward, scrambling for footing among the loose stones on the steep slope, and took the track. About a hundred yards and I came upon the buck. It was dead. Chuck had drilled it neatly through the heart.

CHUCK arrived, breathless from his speedy ascent, fondling the rifle. It was a two-hundred-yard running shot. "Sure glad I traded in the old blunderbuss for this trip," he grinned, reloading the magazine while Ramon dressed out the deer. Like many hunters accustomed to less rugged, more densely covered hunting country, Chuck had found from previous experience that his old standby couldn't produce the flat trajectories and long range smashing power demanded by this open southwestern country.

Pedro soon arrived with his horse, and laying the dressed deer across his saddle horn, rode down into the canyon where he hung it by the horns from a low oak. We would pick it up later.

Returning to the horses with Ramon, I had opportunity to peruse the deer tracks more carefully. Suddenly I discovered there had not been just one deer, but three! Another buck and a doe.

Following the ridge down to where it narrowed and lowered before climbing still higher, Ramon and I split, planning to converge at the summit a half mile distant. Half way to the top I heard a deer bucking the brush ahead. Striking out toward my right, I came to a steep arroyo leading down from the crest. Below, it grew to a canyon; above, it headed in a saddle. I started for the saddle.

Barely did I start before I heard a clatter of rocks from the saddle. Ramon had frightened the deer back down in my direction.

I froze motionless, gun with safety off, ready to shoot. Opposite me I saw a gray movement. In about a minute my chance came. Dropping to a sitting position, I raised for a careful bead. The buck

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Helpful Photographic Tips

By Henry H. Graham

THE CAMERA

SINCE it takes the picture, naturally the camera is of great importance. It should have a sharply-cutting lens, a fairly fast shutter and as many other refinements as one can afford. It pays to get as good an instrument as the pocketbook allows. Fast lenses, shutters, coupled range finders and similar gadgets are expensive, but worth all they cost.

No one should despair, however, if he cannot sink a lot of money into a camera. Some of the world's greatest pictures have been taken with inexpensive box cameras. The better machines, however, are more versatile, enabling the photographer to make shots in poor light, stop swiftly-moving action and so forth. For general picture-taking, speedy lenses and shutters are not necessary. This is especially true in pictorial photography.

Before acquiring any camera, a person should devote some thought to the matter and pick out an instrument that will best serve his needs. If he rarely cares to make snaps in dull light or get moving objects, a cheap camera will do nicely. These may be had from \$2 up. It is well, however, to get a camera that has at least an anastigmat f/6.3 lens and a maximum shutter speed of 1/100 seconds. Such a machine is inexpensive and will give greater satisfaction than a \$2 instrument which, of course, possesses only a meniscus lens and a fixed shutter tempo of about 1/30 second.

Miniature cameras are extremely popular nowadays. This is because they are small, light, and not bothersome to carry. They also use cheap film, permitting many more pictures to be taken for the same price as larger-size film. One can shoot as often as he wishes without the cost being exorbitant. Naturally, the more pictures one makes the more good ones will result, if care is used. Cameras using 35 millimeter film are in great vogue now. This can be purchased for as little as \$1 for 25 feet if bought in bulk and a person does his own loading. Miniature photography is certainly not costly at such a price. Of course, miniature negatives must be enlarged to good size in order to be worth while. And in order to get best results at reasonable cost one must learn to do his own developing and enlarging. This means acquisition of an enlarger, which costs all the way from \$5 to \$500, depending upon what one wants to pay. For about \$20, however, a machine that will give excellent results can be purchased. By doing one's own darkroom work cost of the finished product cannot only be cut but that part of the negative

that offers the most possibilities can be "blown up," eliminating unimportant and distracting details and ugly backgrounds. Half the fun of photography is doing one's own developing and printing or enlarging.

IF ONE does not care to finish his own pictures, but prefers to rely upon the commercial finisher, he should get a camera using a good film size. Number 120, which gives a picture 2½ by 3½ is excellent—large enough for contact prints and yet not too expensive. Sooner or later, however, the photographer is almost bound to go into the finishing work himself and then he will appreciate the handiness of the small camera and the cheapness of the film it uses. The larger the film, the more expensive it is and most people cannot afford to take many pictures using a size as big as 3½x5½. The smaller sizes will do just as well and are far cheaper.

An expert can get better pictures with a box camera than a novice or a careless person can with such a wonderful instrument as a Leica or a Contax, two of the best and most expensive on the market. But, of course, there is no substitute for quality and the Leica or Contax in the hands of an expert will do infinitely better work than the box type.

Whatever camera one buys he should learn everything possible about it so as to realize all of its possibilities. The box camera will not stop the action in a hundred yard dash or a horse race as will the Leica or Contax but it is capable of giving excellent results in good light where only slow action is involved. If he wishes,

the novice may acquire a cheap camera, gradually progressing to more elaborate and more costly machines as his knowledge increases and as need for them arises.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a regular department. Watch for it from now on.

—ss—

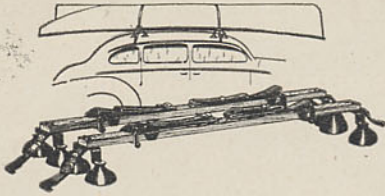
Sea Pony

One of the strangest of salt water creatures is the sea horse which swims standing up, with his body vertical, and moves steadily and quite rapidly by means of a funny little fin on the middle of his back. This moves so swiftly that it seems to revolve and appears exactly like a screw propeller, so that the little creature has the effect of being driven along by means of an outboard motor attached to his back. Then, when he wishes to rest or to remain in one spot, he anchors himself by twisting his funny, curly, monkey-like tail about some seaweed, stone, or other object.



—Photo by V. H. Jernigan

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MACHOS MEXICANOS

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slipped behind a clump of brush — and stopped. In a flash I realized he had winded me. Positive he was behind a certain brush, I could not make out his outline. But I resolved to shoot before he boited. Would the .270 carry through?

Adjusting my sitting position, my favorite stance for careful downhill shots, I drew careful aim, held my breath, and squeezed off the trigger.

The rifle roared. I felt the punch of recoil. For a moment there was no movement. Had my eyes played tricks on me? Thirty seconds passed; a minute. Everything was so quiet I wanted to yell. Then something collapsed behind the bushes.

Puffing up the other slope, I came upon the buck. He had a nice rack. His hide was peppered with shrapnel that had split off the bullet as it hit the brush. Lying a kerchief to a palo verde to mark the carcass, I signaled to Ramon for a horse. Together we dressed and loaded the buck.

That night in camp we had plenty of fried liver. The fire from the hard desert wood was hot and left good coals. Soon we were very, very full of liver, frijoles, and canned peaches.

"Next season we'll have to come down again," Chuck suggested as he threw the peach can away after shaking the last drop of juice into his mouth.

"It's a deal," I quickly agreed, "whether we get a U. S. A. buck or not."

So we plan to go this winter again, and we talk about it a lot. Sometimes our friends hear us and cut in with, "Well, I'd like to hunt down in Old Mexico myself, but I can't afford it."

"Can't afford it?" we challenge. Then we go on to enumerate: hunting license for thirty days, obtainable from the federal building at your border port of entry, ten dollars; firearms permit, obtainable from the district military office, same town, four-sixty; car permit and tourist permit, obtainable at the regular customs office, sixty and eighty-odd cents respectively. A grand total of less than seventeen dollars.

Our food we take down with us, figuring fifty cents per day per person. Horses we rent for three pesos a day, and a guide with his horse will go with us for two more pesos per day. This makes slightly over a dollar for hunting expenses per member per day. For a ten-day trip, the total is thirty-one American bucks for everything mentioned so far. The only additional expense will be transportation, cartridges, and other equipment.

To bring game into the U. S. A., merely stop at the federal building where you bought your license on the way down, and get an export permit listing the game you wish to take out. You trade this to the American customs for an import permit which you can wave in the face of any curious game warden who sees you driving homeward with a couple of nice bucks on your fenders during the local closed season.

In addition to deer you may hunt bear, lion, javelinas, wild turkeys, and with

the necessary extra permits obtainable only from Mexico City, mountain sheep and antelope. Small game is plentiful everywhere.

ANY recent regulations resulting from the present emergency, you ask? Well, this past fall the Mexican federal government started to clamp down but met such a protest from their citizens who profit from American sportsmen that the ban was lifted.

However, it is well to state that the regulations are variable, and that you ought to keep in touch with the chamber of commerce of the border city where you plan to cross the border. The three best places to cross at are Laredo, Texas, El Paso, Texas, and Nogales, Arizona. If you try to cross at jerk-water ports you will be apt to meet with delay and red tape, and may wind up having to go through the ports I mention.

Once across the border, you find splendid hunting within less than a day's drive from the U. S. You can go further if you wish added isolation, but it is not necessary in order to find abundant game. Game is very plentiful and hunters are very scarce in Mexico. There is a much higher percentage of bucks to does than you find in the United States.

For some reason Mexico has been portrayed in thrilling narratives as the land of cut-throat outlaw gangs. Garrisons of soldiers have been plentifully distributed for some years and for over twenty years Mexico has been a peaceful country. Instead of marauding bands of outlaws you may expect to meet interior residents who are helpful, courteous, and hospitable to a degree seldom found in our native land.

If, when you're down there, somebody tells you about "dos cazadores Americano, de Arizona y Texas," that means Chuck and me—so drop over to our camp and look us up!

SS

BIG BAD WOLF AND THE RAZORBACK HOG

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mals were so stuffed with venison they turned in immediately after eating. I began feeling sorry for myself.

"Now why in heck couldn't I have had sense enough to use that ready-made bait?" I berated.

"Why not make wolf stew out of those bones?"

Back I went. I planted my traps among the bones. And then another inspiration walloped me: "Why not bundle those bones up and put them in a tree out of reach of Sir Wolf? Why not make a sure thing out of my bait?"

Accordingly, up a tree went the bones. About 18 inches from the foot of the tree, I buried the traps. Just far enough out from the bole of the tree so that an inquisitive wolf would be forced to step in one as he investigated the manna in the branches. Another variation of my small stick idea.

Sunday morning. I had another captive! This time, ambition spurred me to take my sharp-toothed friend home alive, but lacking the necessary materials, I killed the wolf, going on to Corrigan, where the local philosophers vociferously expressed their appreciation.

Now, at last, I set traps on Sand Branch. I was sure to have a sell-out business now. I not only had Kendrick's word for it, but the wolf signs were plentiful. As Kendrick advised, I baited each trap with a buried swamp rabbit, took all other necessary precautions and then went home to await results.

Next morning, I set out with gun, ax, and rope, ready for anything. That is, anything but what happened.