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There are openings here for men who understand the dairy business, done as it should be. Owing to the mild climate there is no long Winter feeding demand upon one's income. There is an increasing demand for milk and butter in all parts of the State. Some of the butter shipped here from the North is a venerable article. The Shakers make the butter they use for the table, and it's a palatable part of the menu to get good home-made bread and butter at one of their meals.

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HUNTING AND FISHING

South Florida a Paradise for Hunters and Fishermen.

By Ezra J. Stewart.

Now that St. Augustine is planning an exposition for 1913 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of Florida, renewed interest is awakened in the renowned discoverer, Ponce de Leon, and in the vast territory which he named either because of the day of his landing (flowery Easter) or of the great profusion of flowers which he beheld on every hand. Here, where this restless searcher after the mythical fountain of perpetual youth hoped to locate an eldorado, a land of fabulous wealth, was discovered in after years a large variety of game birds and other wild creatures, a never-failing source of enjoyment for sportsmen from northern latitudes.

In no section of Florida, perhaps, is the animal life more prolific or more interesting than in the southern portion of the State. Thruout the entire region designated as South Florida Nature has indeed been most liberal in stocking the woods and prairies, the low meadow lands, and the waters with numerous species of game birds and wild animals, with water-fowl and fish of many kinds. Along the St. Johns River and on the numerous lakes abound a variety of ducks, geese, coots, plovers, snipe, tatlers, curlews, brant, rails, the nigger-goose, several species of heron, mud hens, scrub birds, sand pipers, wood-cock, sandhill cranes, the water hen, besides plume birds of marvelous beauty and gregarious habits.

The Florida Duck.

Of ducks the most common is the Florida duck, being restricted to Florida and the Gulf Coast. The Cinnamon Teal, most abundant west of the

Rocky Mountains, is sometimes found in southern Florida. The Whooping Crane, a large, wary bird of great height, frequents the marshes and sloughs, where it feeds in pairs on minnows and other small fish. This fine bird is said to be excellent for table use, being larger than a good-sized turkey; its note is a loud, whooping scream, heard at a considerable distance. In flight cranes carry their neck outstretched to its full length, and can easily be distinguished from herons. These latter birds always carry their head drawn in against the shoulder, thus curving the neck below.

Famous Florida Heronries.

A large variety of herons abound in South Florida, where the heronries, built 'midst the large bushes and among the branches of tall trees, generally over water in the swamps, are visited by crowds of sightseers during the breeding season.

The Great White Heron is the largest heron in North America; its plumage is entirely white, with two white plumes on the back of the head. Adult Blue Herons, the most common in Florida, are very handsome birds; their nests are built in the tops of the tallest trees, and in some heronries trees have been found containing as many as 40 nests.

There are several varieties of Egret, a species of heron, which have plumage of such marvelous beauty that they have been ruthlessly slaughtered by "plume hunters" to gratify the desire of woman. The Snowy Heron, most beautiful of the Egrets, altho now protected by stringent laws, is threatened with extermination on account of the great desire of lawless men to obtain their plumage. The American Egret and the Reddish Egret are two species which formerly associated with their kind in large flocks, but are now found as stragglers, altho a few of their heronries are yet left, situated in the wilderness where man has not penetrated.

Wild Turkey and Quail.

The Florida Wild Turkey, somewhat smaller than those of the Northern States, are, nevertheless, fine, toothsome birds assiduously courted by Northern sportsman and native Floridian alike. They frequent the woodlands and along the borders of swamps, searching thru the underbrush for food during the day, lodging in the tall timber at night. Altho wild turkeys strut and gobble like their tame cousins in the barnyard, they are an extremely shy bird, and have good reasons for being.

Perhaps the most popular game bird in all Florida is the Quail, found

in great abundance thruout the southern portion of the State, where their clear whistle, "bob-white," "bob-bob-white," resounds thru the pine woods and over the prairie lands at all seasons of the year. In the lake region of Osceola County, in the vicinity of St. Cloud, one can scarcely walk or drive through the woodlands without encountering large coveys of these handsome birds hiding 'midst the underbrush, feeding upon insects and grass seeds. Often they will run along the road for a considerable distance, almost under the horses' feet, before taking flight.

At the Shaker Colony in strawberry season, just as the fruit is ripening, Mr. Quail becomes rather troublesome because of a decided predilection for the finest berries. With a series of low, clear whistles he gathers his numerous progeny together in preparation for a general clean-up of the strawberry beds. Scarecrows fail to daunt this intrepid marauder, and unless he be trapped or otherwise disposed of strawberry culture becomes a doubtful proposition. And, by the way, strawberries and quail in moderate doses is not very bad medicine to take.

Under Florida game laws turkey and quail may be hunted and killed for home use during four months of the year—from Nov. 1 to March 1. Wild ducks may be shot between the first day of April and the first day of October.

Deer, Bear and Other Wild Animals.

Wild deer may be lawfully hunted in Florida during the months of November, December and January, and are to be found in herds not many miles south and east of the St. Cloud Colony. Venison is a meat highly appreciated by natives of this State, who, being perfectly familiar with the lay of the land and the habits of deer, find both recreation and profit in deer hunting during the season. Experienced natives act as guides to hunting parties and individuals from the Northern States who come to Florida each year during the hunting season in constantly increasing numbers.

Small black bear are still found in this section, as well as wild cats, which inhabit the green-bay swamps. A small species of panther abounds to some extent in parts remote from human habitation, while the gray and black wolf, the fox, the cougar, and cotton-tail deer are each represented.

The raccoon, opossum and skunk are ever-present reminders of Dixieland. Tourists who have spent any length of time in the country districts of the South are more than likely to carry away pleasant recollections

of 'possum hunting on dark nights, and those who have witnessed the spectacle of a man climbing a tall tree after Mr. 'Coon say it is one of the most thrilling and interesting sights they have ever beheld; that the 'coon "won't do a thing" to the man is the expectation of all observers. However, it is more than likely that Mr. 'Coon will jump the tree only to fall a prey to the watchful dogs. In case there is water near by and only one dog on the job it is possible the raccoon may succeed in drowning his tormentor and making good his escape. Instances are known in which both man and raccoon have been precipitated simultaneously from their lofty perch, the man becoming a prey to the dogs (a case of mistaken identity), the 'coon hitting the ground only in high places as he escapes to parts unknown.

Squirrels are found to some extent in the pine woods, but in no such numbers as Bre'r Rabbit. Cottontails are quite numerous. Rabbit stew, baked 'possum and sweet 'taters, quail, and wild honey—all add to the joy of living and hunting in South Florida.

Hunting the Alligator.

Not many years ago alligators were quite numerous in and around the lakes of Osceola County, but persistent and continuous demand for hides teeth and claws has greatly diminished their number.

The alligator hunter equipped with search light attached to his forehead, repeating rifle, and small, light boat goes silently forth in the dark o' the moon to seek his prey. With muffled oars he rows about the lakes and rivers, flashing the search light hither and yon, hoping to catch Mr. 'Gator before he "gets on" to the game. Once located, alligators are easily dazzled with artificial light, and soon succumb to the wiles of the hunter. After being shot Mr. 'Gator is quickly dragged into the boat, before he has time to sink, and is soon landed on the bank, where his overcoat is dexterously removed by the hunter's accomplice.

A few years since, a Yankee from the State of Maine, who has spent 20 years, off and on, hunting 'gators in Florida, reported a total of 28 as the result of three nights' hunting in Clear Lake, Just south of Alligator Lake. Now, however, it is becoming a rare sight to see an alligator swimming leisurely down the lakes. Occasionally fishermen are annoyed by alligators getting into their Seines, where they play havoc with the webbing. A 10-foot gator is sometimes rounded up with fish in the pocket of a seine, and his hide goes to market to help pay damages.

Fishing on the Lakes.

Now that seine fishing is becoming a thing of the past in this section our lakes will be, more than ever; a mecca for devotees of hook-and-line. Thousands of confirmed anglers resort to Florida, where the salubrious climate and splendid fishing privileges hold them entranced during several months of the year.

Some fine perch and bream can be caught from the banks of the lakes and in Spring the negroes living close to the lakes spend a large portion of their time trying their luck with hook-and-line. Occasionally a negress, an unusually expert fisherwoman, may be seen fishing with two and even three rods, one in hand and one or two on the ground under foot. Sometimes a large catfish will make off with rod as well as hook-and-line, but more often she is kept busy hauling in the fish and rebaiting the hooks. At the close of a busy but very happy day a fine string of fish often rewards her strenuous efforts.

Recently one such successful angler observing the poor luck of a party of white fishermen remarked by way of consolation: "Ah reckon yo'all don't understan' these heah lil' perches." Taking launch or row boat the tourist fisherman in search of a day's catfishing repairs to the nearest canal, where, hiding among the lily pads in the murky waters, are black cats in plenty. Those who profess to know something of good fishing have said they never enjoyed so much fun in so short a time as when spending a few hours angling for catfish in the canals and on the lakes which form so attractive a feature of Osceola County.

Different Varieties of Fish.

Freshwater catfish are fine for table use, being especially valued for fish stews by Floridians in general. Black catfish when skinned might easily be taken for salmon, on account of their color; it is even whispered that canners often make this mistake. Black cats weighing 35 to 40 pounds are sometimes caught in these waters, but smaller fish—two to 15 pounds—are preferable for frying or even for baking.

Other varieties of catfish are the flathead, yellow cat, channel cat, and the beautiful speckled cat.

Trout or lake bass about a foot long (yearlings) are perhaps the finest-tasting fresh-water fish in Florida, altho larger trout are splendid when properly baked. They grow to about 15 pounds in size.

Perch of several kinds grow to be fine, large fish here; the shellcracker

perch is very handsome. Other varieties are the speckled perch, blue perch and the bluegill.

Perhaps the most gamy fish that swims the lakes is the pike, affording great sport to patient and skillful fishermen.

Bream resemble perch, altho lighter-colored. Then there are suckers and eels. Soft-shell and hard-shell turtles afford both steak and soup for many a hungry fish camp as well as for table d'hote.

Most people, including some hunters, who come to Florida inquire about snakes, thinking a semi-tropical country must necessarily contain a great many. The fact is however, that in many Northern and Western States they are much more in evidence. It's a good deal as the small boy wrote who was preparing an essay on snakes. After writing all that he knew on the subject, he wound up with the statement: "Some sarpents is pisen, but most kinds won't."

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Pineapples.

Florida enjoys a monopoly among American States in the growing of pineapples, one of the most delicious of known fruits. They do best in the south half of the State. The best varieties are produced in a fine, porous, sandy soil. The Shakers, whose colony adjoins St. Cloud, are very successful with them. Little cultivation is needed, except in proper use of fertilizers. They are now being successfully cultivated under cover, like fine grades of tobacco. The Shakers have shade. It grows from two to four feet high, and the individual plant produces only a single very fragrant and palatable fruit, which varies in size from four to 10 inches in diameter. It is a native of America, and was formerly cultivated under glass in Europe, until steamship shipping facilities made it impossible to compete with the outdoor growth of the countries on this side of the Atlantic. The State Experiment Station at Gainesville, Florida, will supply residents of the State with bulletins on the subject of pineapple culture, free of charge, on application.