

I Hunted in Russia



I jumped at the chance to become the first American to shoot on a U.S.S.R. preserve. Little did I know how rugged the mountains would be, or how fleet those Crimean deer

By **IRENE MORDEN**

WITH AN INHUMAN scream and then a deep-throated roar, the Russian jet plane took off. We swung gently up from the Brussels airport and over the peaceful Belgian countryside with its red-roofed villages, patches of dark-green woods, and innumerable, neat little farms surrounded by pale-green fields. We were headed north to Moscow, and I was on my way to hunt in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Eager as I was to reach the Crimea where the hunt would take place, my plans included a certain amount of tourist travel to some of the leading cities, big zoos, and museums. I would get first hand knowledge of the Asian animals unfamiliar to me, and possibly a view of the Crimean deer, a subspecies which I hoped to collect for the Peabody Museum of Yale University.

How had this exciting adventure begun? My husband, the late William J. Morden, had hunted in Russia many years earlier, and long before we met had conducted expeditions to little-known areas of Asia. On his far journeys he had collected many rare and unusual animals for the American Museum of Natural History in New York.* Together we led expeditions to Africa in 1947 and 1953, and in 1956 we again traveled and hunted in Africa, this time for the Peabody Museum. In 1958 I wrote two stories about that trip for *OUTDOOR LIFE*, "I'm Not Mad at Rhinos Anymore," which appeared in March and "Yellow Fire," in August. My husband died in 1958, but I wished to continue with this work as long as I was physically able.

Although a grandmother, I am blessed with excellent health and a good share of initiative. When the opportunity arose to hunt in Russia, I grabbed it.

For the first time in its history the U.S.S.R. was advertising for hunting parties in the Crimea (*OUTDOOR LIFE*, August, 1959). The ad said, in part, "Famous Soviet Union game preserves now open to hunters for

*Col. William J. Morden conducted the Morden-Clark Expedition in 1926-27 from India through Kashmir and the Russian Pamirs to Sinkiang, Outer Mongolia, Siberia, and China; he traveled in the Black Sea area in 1928; he led the Morden-Graves North Asiatic Expedition in 1929-30 to Russian Turkistan and Siberia.

Here I am, all ready for a day's hunting from the Volga car. Road signs are above



I start for Russia. . . . and wind up in Scotland Yard

deer and roe." I was the first applicant, and permission for the trip was granted in short order. Through Intourist, the Soviet tourist organization, my itinerary as set up by Thomas Cook and Son's travel service was approved—by telephone to Moscow, incidentally—and at the end of August I was off.

The sea voyage across the Atlantic was delightful, and I was filled with anticipation, but the first snag in my plans came in Southampton, England, when we docked. There I ran afoul of British customs officials.

It had not been at all certain that my rifle would be admitted to Russia. If not permitted to have it when I reached Moscow, I had agreed to use a Russian rifle in the field but, naturally, much preferred to have my own .30/06 Springfield. It did not occur to me there would be any trouble getting the gun into England, and I felt like a fool for not knowing that an import license was required. I was really desperate when the young customs man said emphatically, "No, Mrs. Morden, you simply cannot bring a rifle into this country without a license."

"But I have to take it through to London airport," I wailed. "Taking this rifle into Russia is important to me. Isn't there some way to get a temporary permit to take it out of Southampton and into London?"

"No," he said flatly.

Well, there was nothing to do but leave my precious Springfield and its ammunition in the Queen's Warehouse until I could find out about a permit from London's Metropolitan Police. The drive to London gave me plenty of time to worry. Of course, it was my own fault. I should have inquired about British regulations when applying for my United States re-entry permit.

It was dark when we stopped at the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police. A sturdy officer on duty stared at the gray-haired woman who was mildly inquiring about bringing a rifle into the city. His dubious expression indicated he thought I ought to be home with my knitting, but he was too much of a gentleman to say so. Yes, a permit was needed. How to get it? I explained that the gun was not to be fired in England but was just in transit to Russia. He shook his head sadly over my ignorance.

"Now, Mrs. Morden, we can't have you walking up and down Bond Street with a military rifle slung over your shoulder, you know," he murmured gently. Another officer—by this time there were three giving advice—suggested Scotland Yard. I jumped at the chance.

Next morning Scotland Yard was the first port of call. I was awe-struck by the impressive gray stone buildings, and by the thought of all the famous, real-life crimes which had been solved there. I fully expected to meet grim-faced men, soft hats pulled down over their eagle eyes, striding purposefully along the corridors. Instead, I was greeted by a smiling policeman in uniform who listened to my story. I added that this was an impressive moment for me.

"Oh, this is a very dull sort of place, actually," he said humorously. "Nothing much going on around here. But I must say it is odd to me, madam, that you start out on a hunt to Russia and end up in Scotland Yard." He added that the firearms division had moved to an old building in a quiet little back street.

When I got there, an efficient young man listened to



I electrified the customs official by telling him I had my rifle with me. Then an Intourist man explained the situation



In billowing coat and light shoes, my city-bred interpreter slogged ahead



The game specialist eyed my Springfield with so much interest I invited him to try it

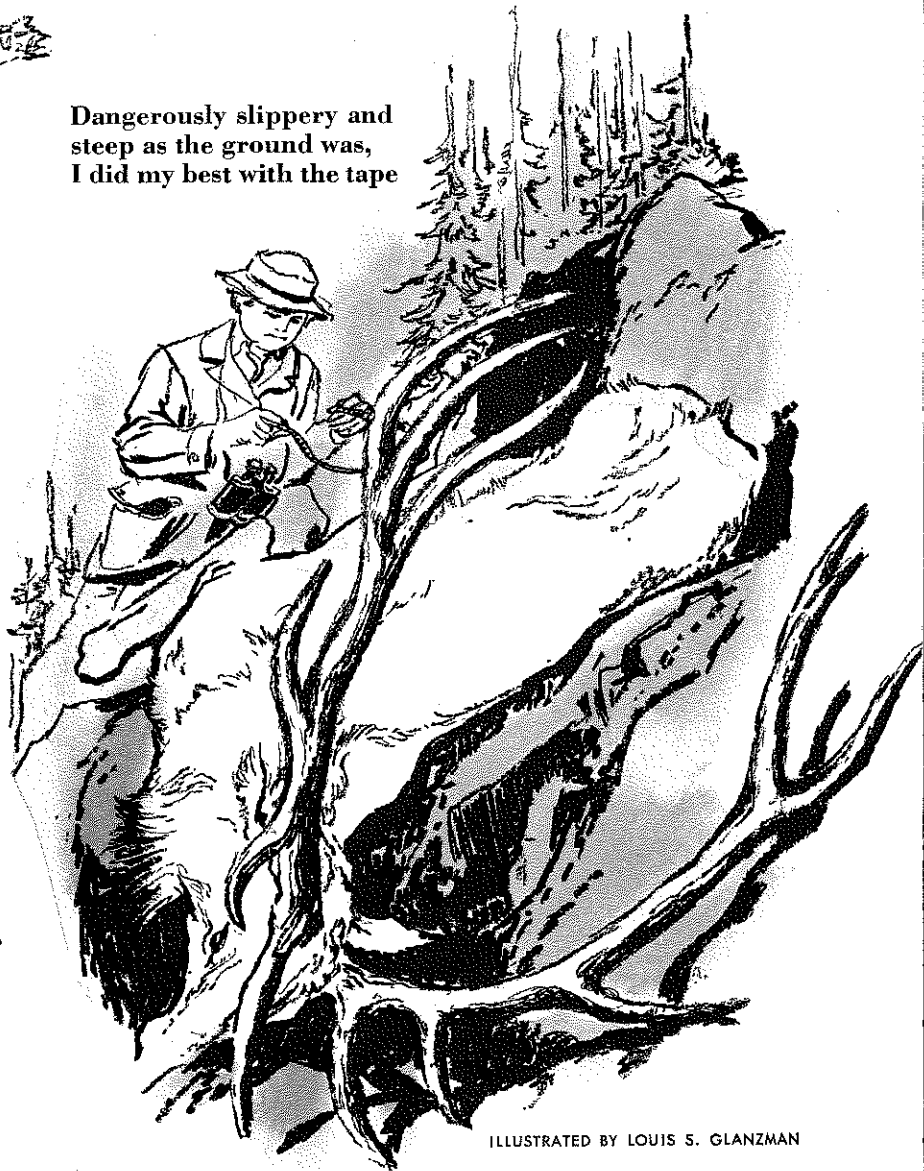


It was a nightmare ascent, but I struggled up behind my jaeger. Soon the fog closed in

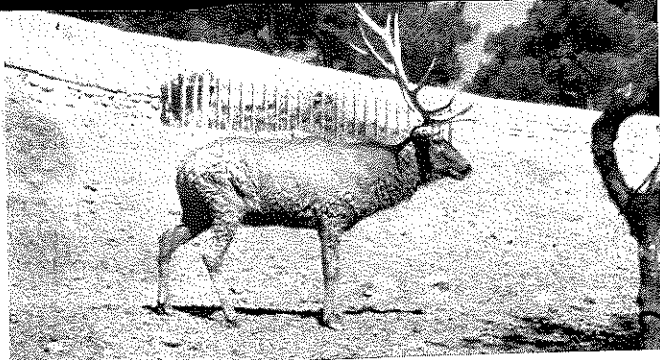


Dangerously slippery and steep as the ground was, I did my best with the tape

It was a standing shot, but the buck moved ahead a little as I fired



Everything went well with British customs until I airily mentioned a dead body



This zoo-kept, mud-caked buck has the kind of rack I wanted



There are 10 of these cottages for use of visiting sportsmen



My jaeger, M. I. Kosobrodov, examines some of my gear. He pointed out, followed up, and then later skinned, my trophy

I missed the first shots— and I wish I'd missed again

me as sympathetically as if he had nothing more important to do than take care of elderly ladies with gun troubles. He set the matter right with a few telephone calls.

It was arranged that Cook's man in Southampton would forward the rifle in bond to Purdey's, the well-known London gunsmiths, under the firm's blanket import license. They, in turn, would transfer it to London airport. I did not need a license after all, thanks to this arrangement, and I'd had an enjoyable experience with Scotland Yard.

This whole situation made me think again about the rifle's going into Russia. I had nothing in writing, but Cook's had advised me to go to the Russian Embassy and ask directly for some sort of written permission. This seemed like a good idea.

I drove into the circular driveway of the embassy in great style in a rented car. My driver, fascinated, whispered reassuringly as he parked the car, "I'll be waiting right here for you."

My request was heard by an official who assured me, as they had at the Intourist office in New York, that permission in writing was unnecessary, but by this time I was quite anxious. Since I insisted, he finally took my passport and disappeared. Returning with a smile, he handed over the green and gold-bound American document with permission written in, signed, and stamped. I imagine I'm the only American woman who, as a civilian, has the permission to carry a military rifle into the U.S.S.R. entered on her passport.

At London airport, while waiting to get on the plane for Brussels, I saw my precious gun case go aboard with my hunting clothes and the rest of the luggage. An hour or so later there was a change of planes at Brussels, and, with all of my things safely transferred, I was off on the three-hour flight to Moscow.

The plane arrived at 7 p.m. Moscow time, which is two hours later than London. Once in the airport, there was a mad scramble for luggage. I was mainly concerned about my rifle, and was much relieved when the long, brown-paper package emerged. My passport was stamped by immigration authorities and the usual form about money filled in. Then I electrified the cus-

My interpreter beside the GAS (Gorky Automotive) car. A city boy, Michael took all hardships like a good sport





The preserve has about 74,000 acres of this rough, mountainous terrain. Typical sheer slope is shown in right foreground

toms officer by answering "Yes" to the question about guns and ammunition. He was sure I must be wrong. No elderly American lady tourist would come into Russia carrying a rifle. There were many "Nyets" on his part and many "Da, Da's" on mine. We were at an impasse until an Intourist representative appeared and explained the situation.

Once cleared, I was placed in a big, black limousine for the long but pleasant drive into the city. Lights were shining everywhere through the darkness. The apartment windows were bright rectangles, and neon signs gleamed over shops along the way. The flood-lighting of important buildings added to the beauty of the Moscow evening.

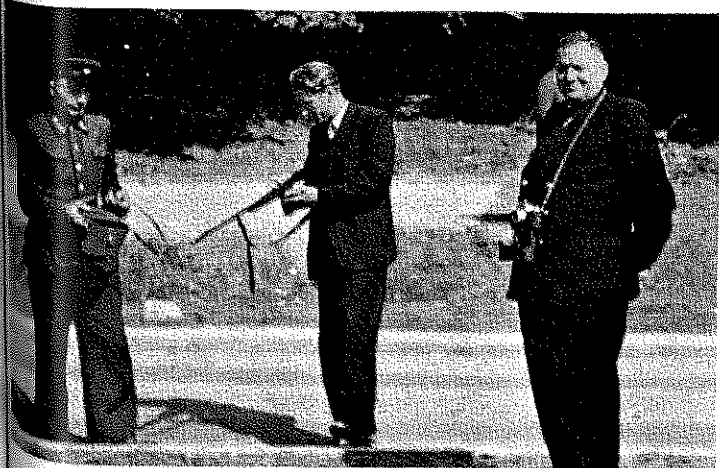
It was the Metropole Hotel for me, and at the Intourist office off the lobby I made arrangements for the next day when I would be given my coupons and an interpreter-guide. Vouchers and coupons are provided by Intourist for your stay in Russia. The vouchers take care of hotel and plane reservations; the coupons are for meals. The meal allowance of 65 rubles a day (de luxe) is so generous that no one uses up all his coupons for food. What's left over can be turned in for vodka, caviar, or chocolates at the end of the trip.

Without any trouble I cashed an American Express traveler's check at the hotel desk and took my first wad of rubles upstairs to give them a little study. I didn't want to give out a three or five-ruble note for a one (a ruble is 10¢ in tourist money). My worries were groundless. The Russians are *(continued on page 95)*



Kosobrodov holds the antlers of my 12-point Crimean stag

My cottage on right. All are simply furnished and have bath



The managing director of Crimean Intourist inspects my rifle. He is flanked by my jaeger, on the left, and a photographer

I HUNTED IN RUSSIA

(continued from page 37)

very honest—at least that was my experience—and on several occasions money was returned to me when I miscalculated and overpaid.

In the morning, after ordering tickets for the ballet, puppet show, and circus—all of which were marvelous—I went to the Moscow zoo. Besides the usual assortment of animals, I saw a giant panda, a Himalayan bear, various unfamiliar deer, and miscellaneous unknown ducks and wild birds. My guide and I then went to the zoological museum which is connected with Moscow University. There I presented to Professor Dementiev, the director, greetings and a letter of introduction from Dr. S. Dillon Ripley, curator and director of the Peabody Museum. We made a tour, and I was interested to see the cream-colored Prejvalsky's horse from the Gobi Desert plus many of the Asian animals my husband had once hunted.

Throughout my sightseeing days I went to the various zoos whenever I could. In Leningrad the director of the zoo kindly showed me a magnificent snow leopard. At the Kiev zoo it was interesting to see women keepers for dangerous animals, such as lions and tigers. They fondled their charges and treated them as house pets. As in all the other zoos I visited, the grounds were clean and well-kept, and the animals in good condition.

My guide and I were shown some live roebucks and big, red deer. The roe were small, but the deer were surprisingly large, and I knew then that I would have to use 180-grain bullets. At first, back in New York, I'd thought that 150 grains would be enough, but I could see that these big, husky animals with their powerful shoulder muscles would require a lot of lead.

The day after my trip to the Moscow zoo a scheduled meeting took place at the Intourist office, 1 Gorky Street. It was attended by the department head who looks after American and British tourists, my interpreter—newly assigned for the whole trip—two other men who were to cover various phases of the hunting problems, and myself. I was some 7,000 miles nearer my goal, yet the hunt was almost two weeks away. On the ship I had prepared a series of questions about Crimean hunting, and these were now answered fully or noted for further checking. The gentleman in charge was polished, charming, and cordial.

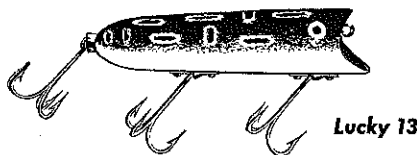
"We have a great many problems ourselves, Mrs. Morden, but we are putting them all aside in order to take care of you," he told me with a smile.

This was not just an idle compliment. The Russians are frankly eager to make a success of this new venture. Naturally, they hope many sportsmen will be attracted to their country, but they have to know what kind of information will be wanted and what American hunters expect from them. As



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Don't jump at conclusions. I'm not a manufacturer of any fancy new lure. I have no reels or lines to sell. I'm a professional man and make a good living in my profession. But my all-absorbing hobby is fishing. And, quite by accident, I've discovered how to go to waters that most fishermen say are fished out and come in with a good catch of the biggest bass that you ever saw. The savage old bass that got so big, because they were "wise" to every ordinary way of fishing.

This METHOD is NOT spinning, trolling, casting, fly fishing, trot line fishing, set line fishing, hand line fishing, live bait fishing, jugging, netting, trapping, or seining. No live bait or prepared bait is used. You can carry all of the equipment you need in one hand.

The whole method can be learned in twenty minutes—twenty minutes of fascinating reading. All the extra equipment you need, you can buy locally at a cost of less than a dollar. Yet with it, you can come in after an hour or two of the greatest excitement of your life, with a stringer full. Not one or two miserable 12 or 14 inch over-sized keepers—but five or six real beauties with real poundage behind them. The kind that don't need a word of explanation of the professional skill of the man who caught them. Absolutely legal, too—in every state.

This amazing method was developed by a little group of professional fishermen. Though they were public guides, they rarely divulged their method to their patrons. They used it only when fishing for their own tables. It is possible that no man on your waters has ever seen it, ever heard of it, or ever used it. And when you have given it the first trial, you will be as closed-mouthed as a man who has suddenly discovered a gold mine. Because with this method you can fish within a hundred feet of the best fishermen in the county

and pull in ferocious big ones while they come home empty handed. No special skill is required. The method is just as deadly in the hands of a novice as in the hands of an old timer. My method will be disclosed only to those men in each area who will give me their word of honor not to give the method to anyone else.

Send me your name. Let me tell you how you can try out this deadly method of bringing in big bass from your local waters. Let me tell you why I let you try out my unusual method for the whole fishing season without risking a penny of your money. Send your name for details of my money-back trial offer. There is no charge for this information, now or at any other time. Just your name is all I need. But I guarantee that the information I send you will make you a complete skeptic—until you decide to try my method! And then, your own catches will fill you with disbelief. Send your name, today. This will be fun.

ERIC P. FARE, Highland Park 18, Ill.

Eric P. Fare, Highland Park 18, Illinois

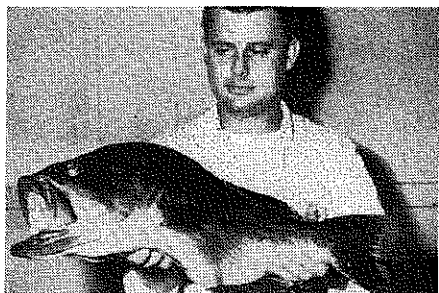
Dear Mr. Fare: Send me complete information without any charge and without the slightest obligation. Tell me how I can learn your method of catching big bass from waters many say are "fished out," even when the old timers are reporting "No Luck."

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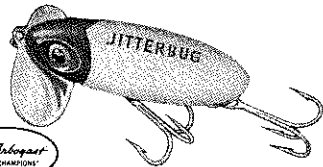
How to use Arbogast "Bait of Champions" to get the night feeders



Mr. Marion Dillard of Fredericksburg, Va., with 10 lb., 3 oz. bass caught on an Arbogast Jitterbug. "The dusk to dawn feeding lunkers really like those Jitterbugs," he says. "Great for day-time, too!"

It's funny how many fishermen there are who leave the lakes and streams as soon as the sun goes down. The real pros, like Mr. Dillard pictured above, know that's often when the big ones just start to feed.

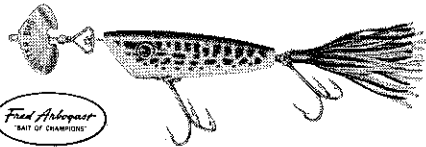
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Remember, in night fishing you can't see the lure. So always be ready to set the hooks as soon as you hear the strike.

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they are very keen on improving their standards, they proved to be most cooperative in all matters.

I was then referred to the Department of Hunting and Reserves at the Council of Ministers for the Russian Department. There the assistant chief, a pleasant and courteous official, gave considerable time to answering my questions. He spoke no English, so it was essential that my interpreter, Michael Ananyev, be present. There were also two hunting and firearms experts with us. I had taken a few Russian lessons in New York preparatory to my trip, and found even a small vocabulary a great help. However, with an interpreter—and mine was a good one—there is always a language barrier which is cumbersome. Pictures of sporting rifles currently in use were given to me, and one of the men explained that they liked a double barrel about equal to a 7 mm. for deer.

The Crimean deer is actually a maral, one of the red deer family typically of northern Persia. Although the color of its coat is a reddish-gray, faint spots can be seen in bright sunlight. It is massive and heavily built in comparison with our own whitetail and more closely resembles the wapiti, or American elk, to which it is related (see "The Elk" by Jack O'Connor, page 48). As these deer move along the trail, the oldest hind (adult doe) may lead and the biggest male will be last. They live in small herds, although you may see two or three hinds traveling together. These animals are basically forest dwellers in the Crimea.

The assistant chief of the Department of Hunting and Reserves told me the department supervises 22 reserves in the Russian Department. "Before the revolution," he continued, "there were only two reserves and hunting was prohibited. That means that 20 such areas have been opened since 1917. In a program worked out in accord with the Academy of Sciences, there will be 35 reserves by 1965. We have a local manager or director at each reserve with a staff of scientific members. Each member must have a degree as master of science. There are also other employees such as wardens and outside workers."

"What is the approximate size of the Crimean reserve?" I asked.

"About 30,000 hectares (74,130 acres) with a staff of about 50 workers," he replied. "There are some 2,600 deer in the forests, and this number will be maintained through planned shooting."

In the Crimea there has been a surplus of animals, and it was decided in 1957 to open this long-closed area—declared a reserve in 1923—for planned hunting by sportsmen of other countries. Ten bungalows were built, each having two rooms and bath. A separate building houses a restaurant where meals may be had at any time of day.

The hunting season is from September 1 to February 1, and an experienced gamekeeper, or so-called jaeger, accompanies the hunters. He does not

shoot or carry a gun unless requested to do so as there is no dangerous game. The jaeger, who doesn't pamper the hunter as much as the guides and stalkers of some other countries, leads you to the quarry and points it out. He will also track a wounded animal. He does the preliminary skinning and sees that the skin and antlers are taken care of by a taxidermist.

You may bring your own gun, or use one provided at the camp. As Russian guns are different from ours, I believe most Americans would prefer to use their own rifles. Trophies are measured on the spot and reported to the director of the reserve. A committee consisting of the director and two specialists passes on the animal and scores the trophy.

Payment for game is made on the basis of the antlers and size and weight of the deer. Price lists mention from \$200 to \$700 for deer (U. S. currency) and \$30 to \$110 for roe. Accommodations and travel are, of course, extra, and wounded animals must be paid for whether found or not.

It was further explained to me that all general rules pertaining to hunting are made by the Department of Hunting and Reserves, but local clubs may, to some extent, tailor the rules to suit local conditions. These clubs constitute a Hunters Union in which members hold cards and pay dues. They may have their own hunting or fishing stations or they may look for game on so-called hunting farms according to seasonal limitations. Club members have some special privileges, such as discount cards, at hunting-equipment shops. They are also responsible for excellent conservation work, and may make recommendations for the preservation of game.

After sightseeing in Leningrad and Kiev, we flew on to Odessa, an industrialized city on the main line for the Black Sea health resorts. Now our next stop was Simferopol in the Crimea, and, as the time drew near for actual hunting, I began to get impatient with sightseeing. We made a perfect take-off on a dirt runway, and I felt we were closing in on the most exciting adventure of all for me.

In less than two hours we were coming in on a gentle glide to the green fields and mountains of Krim. New runways were being built at Simferopol and we had to wait in the plane for a small truck to take us through the mud and broken ground to the airport. From there we got into a car and headed across the peninsula to Yalta.

As we traveled into the mountains over this historic ground, promise of autumn showed in the early reds and yellows. Half a mile up we could look back and see the Black Sea shining far below us. Then we were through the pass and starting down the other side for Yalta on the coast. Actually, the Black Sea was on both sides of us as the peninsula is almost entirely surrounded by water.

Yalta is the administrative center and leading health resort area of the

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Crimea. The soft creams and yellows of the houses are mellow in the sunshine, and there are quantities of flowers in bloom with tall, dark cypresses in the background. A semi-circle of mountains protects Yalta from northern winds and, in the subtropical climate, palms, acacias, magnolias, and oleanders flourish.

In the olden days the Czar and his entourage would come by train from Leningrad to Simferopol, then travel in relays by carriage to Yalta. At that time these mountains were an almost untouched game paradise because it was so difficult to reach them, even though it is said that the Tatars hunted there centuries ago.

There is now a definite program under way to enrich the fauna of the area. Wild pigs were added in 1957, and pheasants are being put in. I'm told there is excellent quail shooting in October. Some mouflon (wild sheep) were imported in 1913 and can still be seen on the high ridges, but they are protected by law. No hunting licenses are sold in the U.S.S.R., and the local people have to get special permission to shoot in the reserve.

I met G. A. Shakourov, managing director of Crimean Intourist, at the Oreanda Hotel. He was an attractive and sincere man very much interested in the success of this project.

"We are sending you up to camp today, Mrs. Morden," he said. "You want to get started, I know. There is a German up there shooting now."

This was a surprise—and a blow. I had hoped to be not only the first American and the first woman to hunt in the area, but actually the first foreign person to shoot there under the new hunting plan. However, thinking it over, I reasoned that this would be a good test of their facilities, provided the other hunter hadn't banged away too much and scared off all the game.

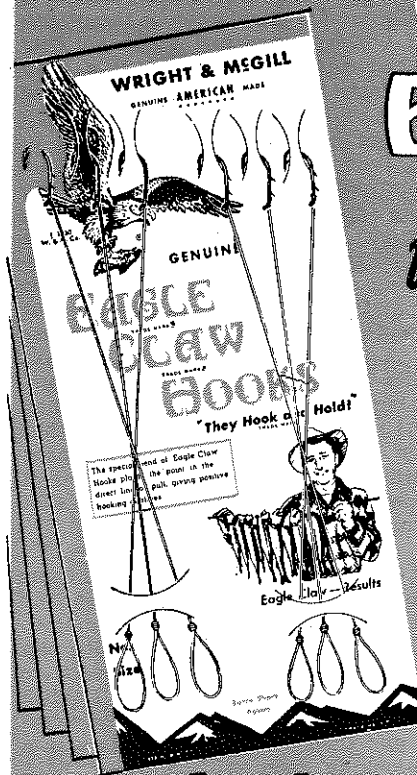
We were on our way in an hour. Our road led up into the green, forested depths of the magnificent Krimsky Mountains. Our big car took the hair-pin turns in high, but my driver nodded reassuringly when he heard me gasp.

At the entrance to the reserve was a sign reading Crimean State Game Preserves, and statues of a stag and hind. A winding road led to the fenced-in area of the campsite where 10 cottages of different colors looked like a bouquet of flowers amid the green of wide branching trees.

My little house was rose-colored. The hall was of the same shade with a built-in, green-tile wall stove about six feet high. One section of the stove faced into, and warmed, the bathroom as well as the hall. A maid came in to lay a wood fire in the bottom of the stove, and the warmth was welcome at that altitude. The bedroom walls were gray, there was a natural-wood clothes cabinet, a long mirror, comfortable bed, table, chair, and bedside lamp. The electricity went off about 10 p.m. The white-tile bathroom had tub, shower, toilet, and washbowl.

It was bitterly cold that night. I

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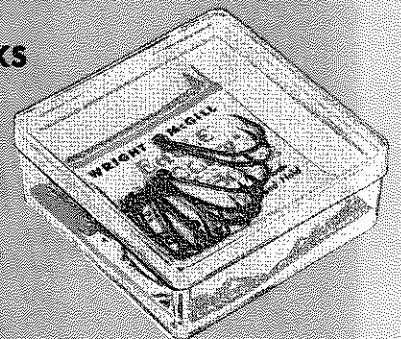
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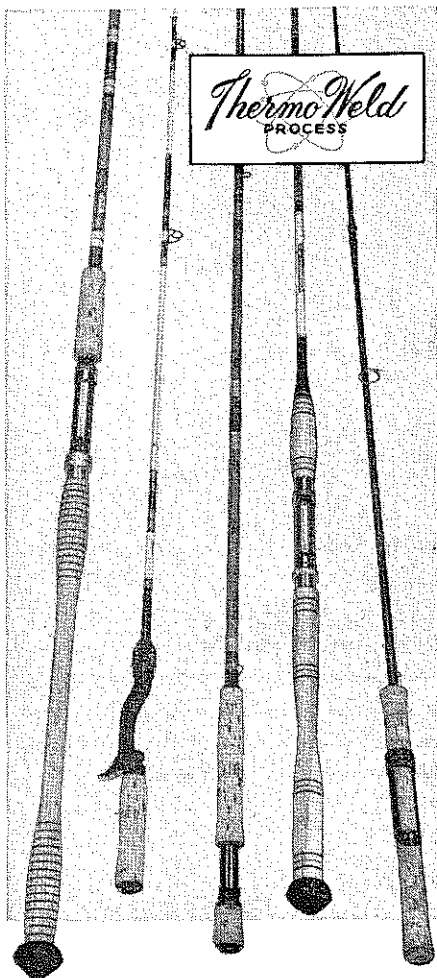
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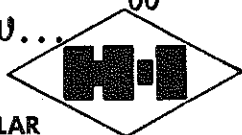
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wakened once to look out on ground, frost-covered and gleaming in the brilliant moonlight. It was still cold in the morning, and my teeth chattered as I dressed and trudged over to the octagonal, wood-paneled restaurant with its stylized animal drawings for a 6:15 breakfast. I hadn't yet seen my fellow hunter.

Before eating, I was introduced to L. S. Ivanov, the game specialist of the reserve who had come to meet me. He was a serious young man who told me, through Michael, that he had taken courses in the care and breeding of fur-bearing animals. He brought along his automatic B-9 rifle and said he thought an automatic good for deer because you don't have to bother with the bolt action. He would use a 7 or 6.5 mm. for big deer, he said, but added they could be killed with a .22. I knew that story of old with regard to elephant hunting in Africa, but I also knew it needed an expert to place a killing shot from such a small firearm.

The Intourist manager, who had come up with me, now introduced me to the local manager of the camp; to the chef, who wore a tall, white cap and later produced excellent meals; to the waiter, who spoke some English and took great pride in his good service, and then to my jaeger. He was a fine-looking man with graying hair, clear eyes, and keen vision. His name was M. I. Kosobrodov, and he wore a green uniform and cap. He examined my gun with interest, checked the ammunition, and passed an opinion that my boots were satisfactory for the slippery ground since they were not rubber-soled.

After breakfast, we set out on a lovely walk along God Save Us Road. This was so named because in the old days when the peasants walked along what was then a narrow path with a sharp drop-off on one side, they would murmur, "God save us." Now that the road has been widened, the invocation is unnecessary, but the name is remembered.

I picked samples of the leaves the deer feed on—oak, elm, and some from a red-berried bush named chepovnik. When we reached a proper spot, we stopped to target my rifle, which the jaeger was carrying. Being a lady hunter has certain advantages.

I wondered how my sporterized Springfield would behave after having been bumped around on docks and in airports. We made a target and stepped off about 100 yards. Fortunately, there was nothing to worry about. The game specialist was eyeing the rifle with so much interest that I invited him to use it after I had tried it out. He stood sideways with arm lifted high and fired a beautiful shot. All was well.

Back at camp, the photographer who had been engaged for me showed up. He was a pleasant man wearing the decoration of Lenin, a large red star. He took pictures around the camp but assured me there was no use accompanying me into the forest since we could not photograph animals there.

This was another blow, but having seen the dense growth and shadows, plus the gray sky, I had to agree with him. The weather was not in our favor.

When we went out at 5 p.m. in a small Volga car it was quite dark with gray clouds boiling up all around the horizon. We had a long, winding drive in the bronze forest but saw only does feeding. There was a quick glimpse of one buck, but he was out of sight in a flash. It was discouraging to see how fast these animals could move.

As we drove along, I'd been staring through the gray and black tree trunks growing closely together with thick, low brush between them. I was thinking how difficult it would be to spot a deer at all, let alone choose a point of impact in all that dark shadow, when we glimpsed a grayish animal with horns. The car door flew open and I was out in a second, but the deer had vanished.

On the way back it began to rain, and we could see the red eyes of many small animals through the gray veils of fog. By the time we finished dinner it was 10 o'clock, and I was to be up at 5:30 a.m.

I was awakened before that time by soft rainfall on the tile roof. There was fog outside, and on my way over to breakfast my flashlight could not pierce the gloom more than five feet ahead. In view of the shortness of my stay, this gray shroud was most discouraging. I knew by experience, however, that mountain fogs burn off.

I was told the German had got a small deer and that he planned to get two deer and two roebucks. I longed to be off on my hunt and have the use of the GAS car (Gorky Automobile)—something like our jeep or the English Land Rover—but the German had it. I was destined to hunt in the Volga, which did not seem sporting, somehow, but actually answered the purpose fairly well. There were two disadvantages. One was that I could not see up the steep mountainsides from inside the low-roofed car, and second, getting in and out of a small, four-passenger job in hunting clothes and holding a rifle is not a speedy operation. And with these critters, you have to be fast.

Leaving at 6:15 in spite of the heavy fog, we spied a few does in the deep ravines. There was a strong wind blowing the clouds of dense mist, and I have seldom had a more terrifying ride than on those wet, winding roads with great drop-offs. We went to the top of a mountain of brown soil and gray rock, almost barren except for bits of green moss and tufts of short, brown grass with a few small, yellow and white flowers. I was told the birds had all flown south and that some even cross the Black Sea.

"What kind of birds do that?" I inquired.

"The kind," Michael said slowly after a conference with my jaeger, "who are hunted and cry a lot." You try to figure that one out. He also advised me that "some little birds (quail I suppose) come here in October to be shot."

A sort of heaven-is-my-destination

After a time the sun tried to shine and the velvety green slopes studded with pine showed through the curtains of mist. My jaeger indicated that we should get out and climb one of those almost vertical slopes. There was no question but what the language difficulty was a great hindrance to understanding and quick action on my part. However, up the mountain I went with camera, binoculars, and gun. It was very muddy, and the ground was covered with wet, brown leaves. The wind took my breath away, and, as I struggled up behind the green-clad figure so far ahead, the mists closed down again. The ascent was a nightmare for me so far as footing was concerned, and I didn't dare look back to see where I'd been.

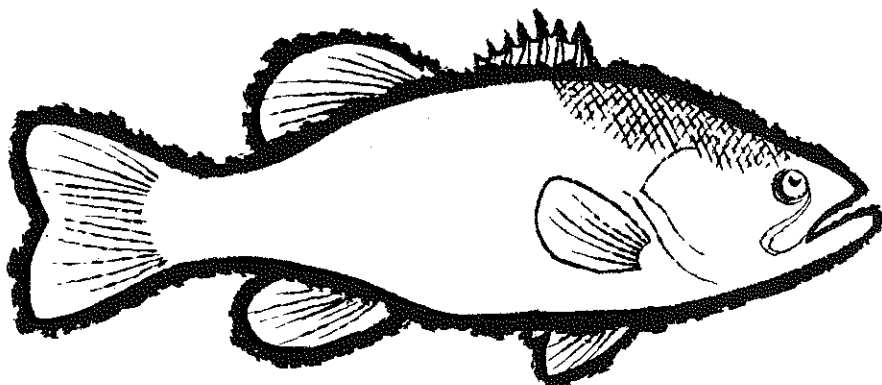
When we were nearly to the top my jaeger saw something and motioned me up. The only cover was a big boulder. I crouched beside it and strained my eyes to make out the figure of a medium-size deer feeding not far away. Still puffing from the climb, I fired too fast—and missed. There was a re-sounding boom in the wilderness, and the echo seemed to come from everywhere around me. I was sure the sound of my .30/06 could be heard in Yalta.

No more deer. We had to get back, but the jaeger led me down an old deer trail which was easier than the climb up. Into the Volga, and on the road again. Suddenly my jaeger pointed, and obediently I jumped out. I couldn't see a thing at first. Then, about 100 yards away, I made out a cluster of hinds. Just over a low rise appeared a pair of antlers—nothing spectacular—and as I lifted my rifle the deer rose. Again I fired too fast, and missed. They were off like the wind, and I stood there downcast, cold and unhappy—two shots and two misses in little over an hour.

Back in camp, I worked at repacking my suitcase and updating my notes, secretly convinced that no trophy would be mine. The deer were too fast, and the going was too strenuous for a grandmother, I whispered to myself.

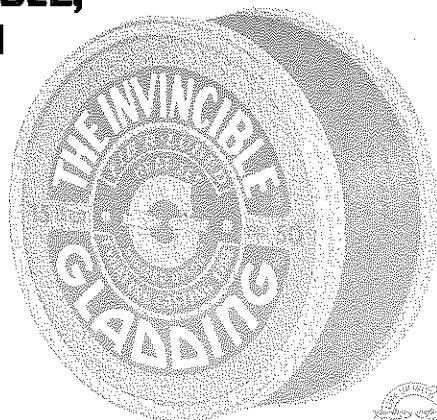
At 5 p.m. we started out again and saw many deer, but no particularly good heads. All at once my jaeger rolled down his window in the car, motioned me to move to his side, and pointed up the slope. He wanted me to try from the car. In Africa such shooting is considered unsporting and is prohibited. I deserved what was coming to me as, against my better judgment and training, I did quickly what no hunter should ever do. I fired at an animal without taking a good, long look. This rule that I broke applies especially to animals whose antlers or horns constitute the importance of the kill.

It was a hit. The animal ran off. We got out to follow, my jaeger moving ahead very fast and I going more slowly and falling frequently in the slippery mud. Michael and our driver forged ahead of me too. As I watched my city-bred interpreter in his billowing



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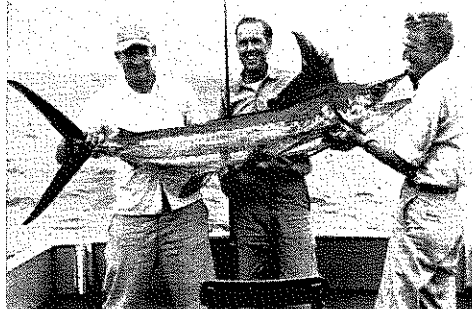


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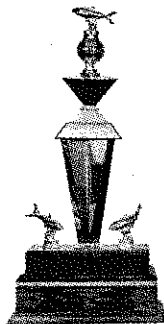
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raincoat literally swimming through the mud in his lightweight city shoes—and knowing he detested such activities—I decided he was a good sport. When we finally reached the spot where the animal had fallen, they congratulated me on getting a deer. But what a deer!

I gazed at it in horrified fascination, and groaned. It was a young animal with antlers in velvet. I shook my head and explained through Michael that this was not a good trophy. The jaeger said the buck had to be taken back and measured, anyway, so the men dragged it out and down the hill to the car. If it had been a good trophy such a trip over the stones and rough ground would have ruined it. The jaeger could not understand what was wrong. He thought I just wanted to shoot a deer. The language difficulty again.

We drove to camp and the director rushed out accompanied by the waiter and the chef, all ready to honor me. It was very embarrassing when they saw that deer and heard that I did not want it. It had to be paid for, of course, but that was the least of the matter. The director said I could shoot as many deer as I wanted, provided they were paid for, so we decided to start out again early in the morning for one more try.

It was bitterly cold. I dressed by torchlight and had breakfast at 5 a.m. We lugged out the gun case, the camera, the binoculars, and the small duffel bag which contained my notebook, pencils, steel tape measure, ammunition, and extra film. I had on a sleeveless wool under vest, khaki shirt, sleeveless wool sweater, down-filled jacket, cotton wind-breaker, cotton underpants, khaki trousers, wool socks, and boots. I was still cold. The windows of the Volga were solidly covered with heavy frost when we started out in the dark. We had the lights on even at 7 a.m. in the deeper parts of the forest. The deer were moving freely, and we saw many does but no bucks.

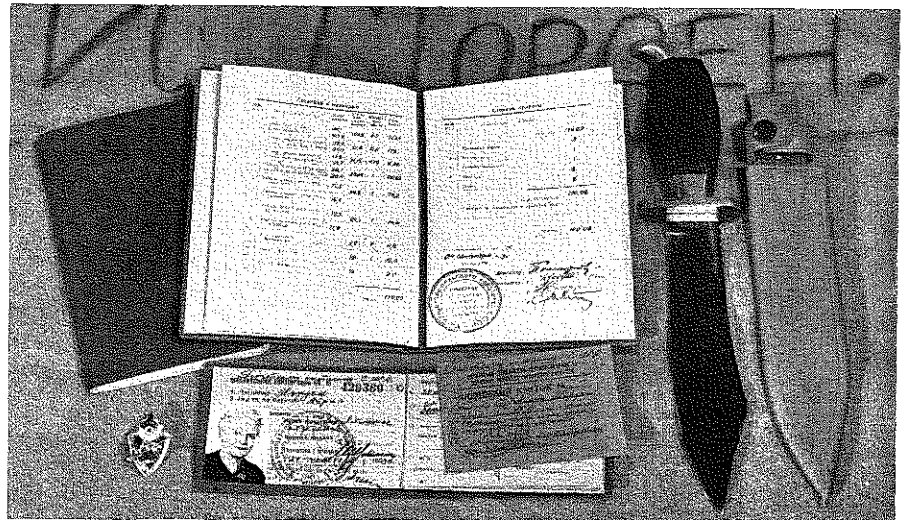
Before we left camp, I impressed two facts on my interpreter. One, I wanted to shoot only at a good trophy; two, no

more shooting from the car. On that last item I was firm, and the idea seemed to carry across to my jaeger. He lowered the car window several times listening for the distant belling of stags. This call is a long-drawn-out bellow, and later I heard one of the so-called roaring duels between two mature animals. This was rutting time when the males were loudly sounding off. The young would be born in May.

We had not gone far when the jaeger motioned the driver to stop the car and me to get out. I slipped out as quietly as possible on the far side from the animals I had not yet seen but the jaeger had. He followed and then pulled me along the road to where I could see a string of does walking slowly with a medium-size buck at the rear. It was a long shot, some 250 yards uphill. But the animal was not a bad trophy, and this was my last day of hunting. I had just raised my rifle to fire when a really beautiful stag strolled out of the bush. The biggest one was last, of course. My jaeger, suspecting how the animals would move, pulled me farther down the road. The deer had not noticed us below them.

It was a standing shot, and my trophy, which had stopped for just a moment, moved slowly ahead a little just as I fired. He jumped up on four legs and kicked back with head held low, sure sign of a stomach hit. I had aimed for the shoulder and the bullet struck a little far back due to his movement, but we could see it was a fatal shot. He staggered and went down twice, then was up and off over the ridge. The men suggested I stay in the car until they discovered where the animal had headed. That was fine with me as the two climbs the day before had de-starched me.

But I couldn't take the inactivity. After a while I climbed the ridge—partly on hands and knees. As I reached the top there was a hail from below. It was the driver, and he motioned me to come down. Was I mad! In spite of quantities of purple thistle with prickly leaves, I just sat down and



Mementos on burlap trophy wrapping addressed to me are a closed tourist manual, a booklet listing my stag's measurements, engraved hunting knife. Beside Crimean Hunting Society pin is a hunter's ticket with my picture and a conservation card

slid to where the driver could give me a helping hand. We jumped in the car and drove to where the jaeger and my interpreter were waiting.

A large pool of blood on the road indicated the animal had circled and come down at this point, continuing on into a heavily treed area. The jaeger suggested we wait until the animal had laid down and stiffened up a bit. I was familiar with this procedure from African hunting. In about an hour the jaeger left to do some tracking. He soon came back to say the deer had fallen.

This time the descent over wet leaves and gray stones was easier until we had to vertical down into a deep ravine. Then we climbed up the other side on a narrow game trail only a few inches wide to where my trophy lay in the shadows. He was a handsome buck, about eight years old, in prime condition. His reddish-gray coat was clean, and his antlers were very fine, symmetrical ones of six points each with a beautiful spread. He turned out to be what is called a royal—a stag with 12 points evenly distributed and including three surroyals on each antler.

I took some measurements, but we were standing on dangerously slippery ground on a steep slope, and it was difficult to step around the animal or even lean over it without falling. I did what I could with the steel tape and found the right antler to be about 41½ inches outside round and the left about 40 inches. Then I left him for the jaeger to skin out, after explaining that I wanted the whole skin and skull for a full mount.

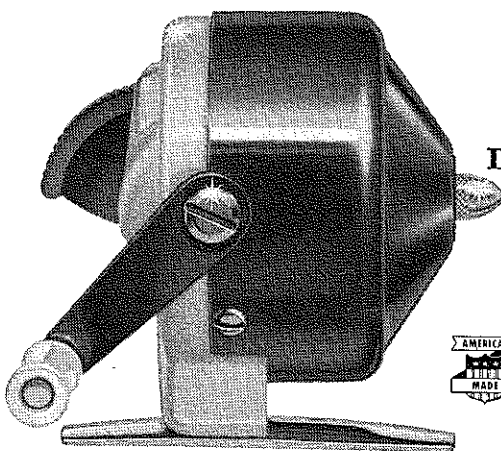
We drove back to camp and found the director of the reserve there. He looked very impressive in his green uniform and cap with gold, oak-leaf insignia and five gold stars on his coat. He had come to offer me the use of his GAS car for the afternoon. The German had come in too. He had a good stag and was leaving without going after the roebucks. We were told that roe live in high places this time of the year and are very hard to hunt.

We sent a truck back for the jaeger and the deer, and when he arrived I took a few pictures. All were pleased at the fine head, and now congratulations were really in order.

This, then, was the end of my hunt. It was an amazing adventure, and a dramatic first in the hunting fraternity. I breathed deeply of the sweet, clean air. As my rugged jaeger smiled at me and passed me a Russian cigarette and I extended my American pack, I thought of the bond between sportsmen the world over. It is a bond of peace and understanding over and beyond rumors of war and the barriers of language and custom.

The big Zim car came for Michael and me next morning, and I said goodbye to the excellent staff. At the Orenda Hotel in Yalta I met a local guide who took me for a walk along the sea front and then to the home of Anton Chekhov, the famous Russian writer, which is kept as a museum.

I had thought the excitement of my



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hunting experience was over, but it was not. I was invited to meet with the three top members of the Crimean Hunting Society in the office of the kind and helpful managing director of Crimean Intourist. They made me an honorary member of the society and presented me with a pin and a document in a red leather case which gave all the details of scoring my deer. I was also given a beautiful hunting knife of Russian steel in a leather sheath. The hilt bore an inscription with my name and the date. I paid my charges for the hunting expedition, and we parted the best of friends.

That evening I sent a cable to Bill Rae, editor of *OUTDOOR LIFE*: "Wonderful hunt. Fine trophy." Since coming home I have been notified that my deer head has been awarded a silver medal for excellence. Can you imagine how happy I am that I missed those first shots?

After several stop-overs we finally flew to Moscow on a Sunday. My Russian journey was almost over. At no time had there been any restrictions as to what I might or might not see and do.

Michael accompanied me to the airport next morning as his last duty. I knew that he, too, had enjoyed this excursion in spite of my persistent interest in zoos and animal lore.

My luggage was all in order, but the huge packing case containing the head and hide of my deer had arrived leaking blood! Customs wanted to open the box and have a look at the mysterious contents. Intourist representatives prevented that but warned me there might be trouble in London. There was.

I looked innocent enough as I walked up to the counter at London airport. The customs man marked up my baggage quickly, and then asked what was in the large package with my name on it in Russian.

"Only a dead body," I remarked airily.

He stared. "And could that be blood coming out?" he asked in a rather thin voice.

Just at this moment Gerald Best, an old friend who's president of Rowland Ward in London, a well-known firm of taxidermists, arrived (my deer is being mounted by Rowland Ward and will go to the Peabody Museum as part of a habitat group). Gerald is an old hand at receiving animal trophies, but usually they arrive as freight. Mine was accompanied baggage and presented new difficulties. He got on the telephone to the Minister of Agriculture and managed to obtain a release without opening the case in the airport waiting room. I am sure Gerald's request was met with popular and hearty endorsement by the customs officials who were looking at the box with deep distaste.

That matter was settled, and my customs man breathed a sigh of relief. "Now, is that all, madam?"

There was a moment of silence before I said regretfully, "Afraid not. There

is still my rifle. I haven't an import license, and I'm sailing for home in two days."

It all had to be done over again: the warehouse, bonding through Cook's, and so forth. I did not protest. The hunt was over, and the .30/06 could come home by itself. THE END

POOR MAN'S SALMON

(continued from page 55)

and broken concrete at the base of the foam-churned abutment known as Suicide Ledge. His light spinning rod was bent as much as it could bend, and his shad, a freshly hooked five-pounder, was rolling and flashing its silvery sides in the fast current 75 feet beyond him. The other shad, farther downstream, was almost spent, and one of the angler's neighbors was readying a long-handled net.

I couldn't blame Bill for getting excited. Almost everyone does when he stands on top of the abutment for the first time and watches the action in the water below. It was a breath-taking, bird's-eye view: the broad and wild river, the profusion of fishermen and their straining tackle, and the top-water acrobatics of battling shad—a fish many call the poor man's salmon. There were at least 350 anglers strung out about 750 yards from the base of the dam down the bank of the river to where it disappeared around a bend. At Enfield, fishing becomes a spectator as well as a participant sport.

While I was looking downstream for a likely spot where we could become participants, Bill let out a whoop, "Hey, another shad's been hooked. Look at him go!"

Bill had used the wrong gender. It was one of those big roes that shad anglers fondly call kissing cousins of the tarpon, the kind that often carry on like fanatics. This one tore 100 feet of monofilament off a reel that screamed loudly enough to be heard above the roar of the water. Then she did what comes naturally to the tarpon tribe—she leaped high and clear and fell back flat-sided. While the angler's rod tip bowed, his line angled up rapidly. Once more a patch of water blew skyward as the roe burst out with such violence that it seemed every one of her scales was rattling. But the fisherman met her sudden leaps and lunges skillfully, and soon landed her.

"Say, there aren't any feathers on his hook," said Bill after watching the angler land his prize. "All I see are some beads on the line above it. Do you think the feathers were chewed off?"

"No," I replied. "Bare, gold-finished hooks with two or three beads above them are the latest thing in shad lures around here."

"You mean shad'll strike an empty hook if there are beads above it?" asked Bill.

"That's right."
"But why?"