

Curtis Prock fills me in; I hold my .30/06

Lion acts too jumpy, so I move in for a shot



The big fellow was a splash of tawny yellow, staring eyes, and spitting mouth

Curtis and I put steel tape on my cat, and it measures surprising 96 inches



Lions Almost Anytime

If you want off-season hunting adventure, try Arizona for mountain lion. I did it, and I ended up with a record cougar

By IRENE MORDEN

THIS WAS the first hunting trip I had ever made on my own, and now it looked as if I were going home skunked. This was hard to take.

My hunting experience is fairly young, although I am a grandmother. All of it up to the time of this hunt had been in Africa where my late husband William J. Morden and I had conducted expeditions for the American Museum of Natural History and later for the Peabody Museum of Yale University. Only once had I tried shooting in North America, and that was an unsuccessful hunt for a Kodiak bear in Alaska. Still ahead lay the thrill of another adventure I was to describe in *OUTDOOR LIFE* (see "I Hunted in Russia," February, 1960).

Now stories of the West stirred me to

plan an Arizona shoot for mountain lion. I made arrangements to hunt in September.

Friends in New York warned me that this was the wrong season for such a hunt. They said that dogs cannot follow scent in hot weather and that rain will ruin a track.

They also said I'd never get a lion without riding for him. "It may mean 12 hours a day in the saddle," they warned.

I don't ride. My only try had been 30 years ago on a riding-school horse with an English saddle. I hadn't liked the experience.

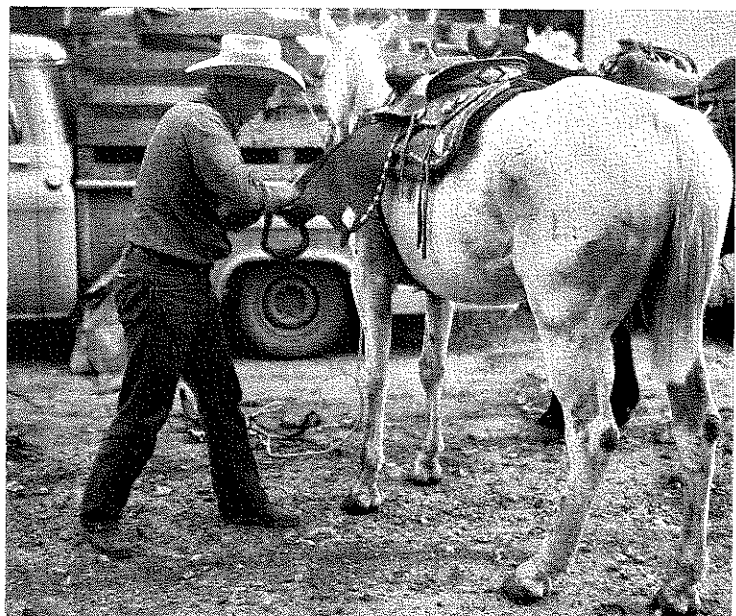
I hoped to prove them wrong on all counts, of course, but in spite of a beautiful camp, good equipment, and the combined efforts of three excellent guides to

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GENE GROVES

Curtis and assorted lion dogs. Note mule in trailer



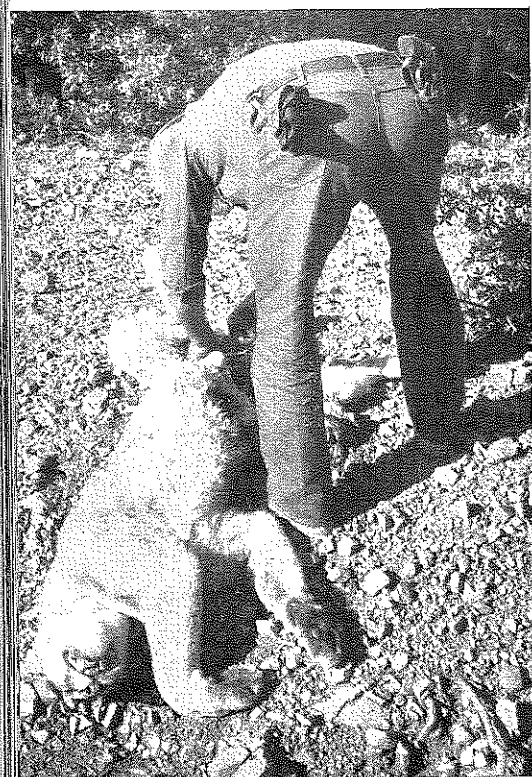
For those rough and rocky mountain trails, Curtis adjusts stirrups



Lions Almost Anytime *continued*



Roar of pet lion Sally startles visitors



With "frog-sticker," Curtis skins trophy

find lion, we just could not locate any tracks. My guides said there was less lion sign than at any other time they'd hunted. Sad news for me.

It seemed, too, that we would be washed out by daily storms. Results were not guaranteed. I liked my guides, but there seemed no point in continuing the chase. The guides agreed with me, and we drove back to Phoenix.

That night was my low point. Sitting in my comfortable but lonely hotel room, surrounded by limp duffel and with my rifle stacked in the corner, I thought of the friends back East who might say to me, "I told you so."

Then I got mad! It had cost me plenty to get to Arizona. This was Monday night, and my return ticket on American Airlines was dated Wednesday. That gave me 24 hours of grace. Why quit? Why not one more try for a trophy? With a sudden burst of energy, I gathered up my dirty camp clothes for quick laundry service. Then I began making plans.

Tuesday morning I picked up a copy of Arizona Wildlife Sportsman bought at the hotel newsstand, and noted the advertisement of one Jeff Sievers, a taxidermist who arranged lion hunts.

It didn't take long to get him on the phone. Sure, he knew of a good hunter who was free. He had just finished a hunt and brought in a

beautiful lion for the client. That was the man for me!

Then Jeff said, "Say, didn't you have a story in *OUTDOOR LIFE* (see "Yellow Fire," August, 1958*) on African lions? It was swell."

That was just the boost my morale needed.

"Yes," I said, "and I hope to do a yarn on American lions if you can get me a guide who can find me a lion."

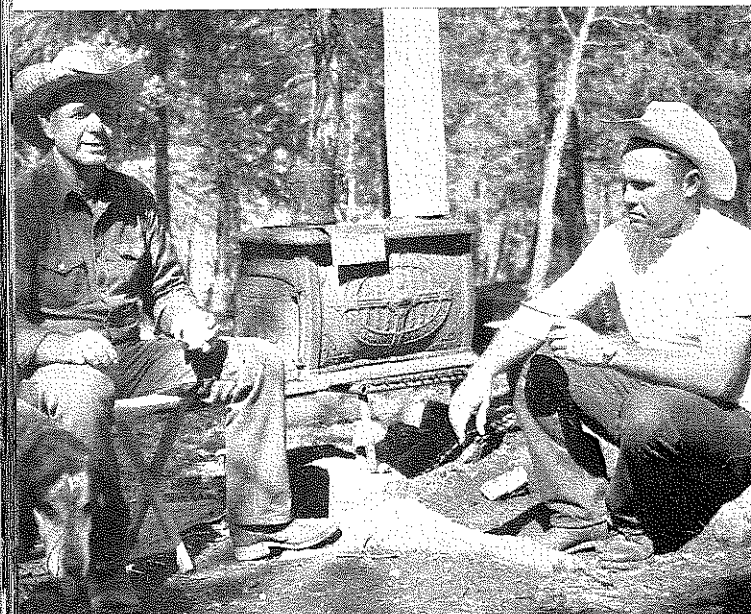
Jeff laughed. "Of course I can. We can't have you leaving Arizona without what you came for."

So, off went the laundry, and over to Bell's Sporting Goods Store I went for a general license with a bear tag, just in case. I already had my license for lion.

At Jeff's studio I saw an amazing quantity of work was in progress. On the walls were specimens of lion, bear, bobcat, javelina, antelope, bison, and elk, as well as many small varieties unknown to me. Jeff's lion-shooting advice was to use a shoulder or throat shot to avoid damaging the trophy.

Then I met my guide, Curtis Prock, a former three-term sheriff at Eloy, Arizona. He is a stocky, good-looking man with smiling blue eyes and a Texas drawl. Born near Dallas, he came to Arizona in 1936, but he still carried the Lone Star brand on him. This good-natured Westerner in sport shirt, Levis, boots, and a big Stetson generated confidence as he offered

*New edition of Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* places Mrs. Morden's lion 16th in list of 33. Same volume places her springbok 20th in group of 38.



Lion-hunt strategy is discussed by Curtis (left) and Leroy



Peggy Johnson presides with authority in our camp's kitchen

me a guaranteed hunt: No lion, no pay. This did not seem possible, but Curtis told me he spent most of his time in the mountains studying the cats. He even admitted he was kind of an authority on their habits and said he tried to think like a cat. With some 300 mountain lions to his credit, he should know how they think and act. He even had a pet lion, Sally, with which he liked to startle guests (see photo on opposite page).

Yes, he had some fine dogs. One, old Sara, he wouldn't sell for \$1,000. I was amazed at the prices paid for these hound mixtures. The value of a good dog is not always in his pedigree; it may be in his training.

Finally Jeff located a photographer for us. I was getting more enthusiastic by the minute.

The airlines readily changed my reservation. And on Wednesday—instead of winging back to New York—I was met at the hotel by Mrs. Prock, a pretty redhead, in the family station wagon. Her husband had gone ahead in his pickup truck with the dogs, and accompanied by friends Peggy and Leroy Johnson. The Johnsons had a few dogs they wanted to train for lion, and hoped their pack would see action with us. Leroy is in the sand and gravel business, keeps lion hounds for sport, and has an intense desire to hunt wild turkeys. His wife Peggy, a cute blonde, agreed to help out with the camp cooking.

Mrs. Prock, Ohio born but Arizona happy, drove us up above Payson on the Beeline Highway through saguaro and red desert country to Woods Canyon Lake. Gene Groves, the Phoenix commercial photographer, was with us. Gene, tall and blond, is an ex-Marine who did photographic work during the Korean war, and he was eager to specialize in wild-animal photography.

My first sight of the camp near Mormon's Crossing was somewhat disappointing as it was surrounded by a sea of mud puddles due to recent rains. Mrs. Prock, who longed to stay with us, had to return to Phoenix at once, so Peggy and I set about getting ourselves organized.

As client and elder member, I was awarded the only tent. It was adequate, even if my bedroll did protrude six inches outside the door. I unrolled my sleeping bag and converted a grocery carton into a night table. We had all the comforts of home.

A half-hearted fire was burning, and little dry firewood was available. The thermometer had read 109 in the shade when we left Phoenix, but here in the mountains at about 8,000 feet the air was chilly. We stamped through muck trying to get our camp in shape before darkness shut out the lake, towering pines, blue spruce, and white-stemmed aspens.

Curtis got his horses tethered, and Leroy tied up his white mule. This was a short-tempered animal that hated women and showed it. But Leroy loved the critter.

Stew out of a can and hot coffee

tasted good. Camp coffee, as Leroy made it, was a few good-size dabs of coffee in a can of boiling water. He said that if you start making it this way, coffee gets stronger as you get older, because the dabs get bigger as your hand gets larger. We wasted no time standing around in the cold, and the hunters, one and all, soon sought the shelter of their sleeping bags.

Was it morning? Leroy was chopping wood, but my tent was dark, and the little clock said 4 a.m. But that was time to pull on your boots in Curtis' lion-hunting camp. A quick breakfast by the fire, dogs in the truck, horses saddled, mule in the trailer, and we were ready.

But our start was delayed by a strange dog. It had a horrible wound in its head which, the men concluded, had been inflicted by a bear. One eye was almost closed, and the tear was infested with screw worms. Curtis watered, fed, and gently doctored the animal.

We set out in the predawn chill, driving over a winding, stony road through the pine woods to a suitable parking place. The men donned chaps to protect their legs from thorns and brambles. Curtis and Gene mounted the horses, and Leroy got on his beautiful but spooky white mule. The dogs ran wildly for a few minutes, sniffing and yelping, then buckled down to business and accompanied the riders as they splayed out into the brush. The Prock and Johnson dogs were an assortment of breeds—long-eared black and tan, redbone, bluetick, Walker, and even Airedale.

As the sun came up, Peggy and I settled down to wait, perhaps for hours. The men had been gone but half an hour when we heard a rustle in the bushes.

"Sounds like an animal," I remarked idly.

"Probably a bird," said Peggy.

Later, we decided to walk down the road a bit and look around. We had just rounded a curve when Peggy exclaimed, "Fresh lion tracks!"

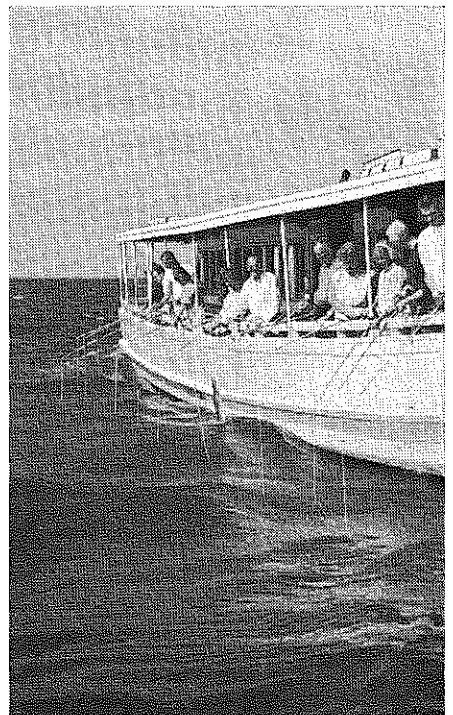
Her sharp eyes noticed that a lion had jumped from one side of the road to the middle, landing on all four feet. He must have been only a few yards from us as we sat in the truck. That was the noise we'd heard in the oak scrub. No doubt the dogs had started him up some distance away, and the lion had run toward us, headed for the deep canyon on our left.

We found more tracks in the damp sand. But after that, the lion was running on pine needles, and it took sharper eyes than ours to catch the sign.

Just a few seconds later, four of the dogs tore past us on the hot trail. And 15 minutes later, the other dogs and the riders appeared. They examined the track and waved to us as they continued after the lion.

One hour, two. We climbed the 150-foot fire tower nearby and looked over the treetops to the distant blue moun-

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many exceed 3½. That size motor will push a 14-foot boat with full load. Gas consumption is very low. Ice-scratchers are not built for speed, but a few go up to 25 miles an hour on bare ice or light snow. Most fishermen drive them at about half that speed, however.

So far as I have been able to find out, Pete Nelson, a La Crosse lawnmower repairman, was the originator of these unusual craft. At least he put together the first model seen in this area, in 1957, using a dismantled power mower. He removed the cutting reel and replaced the rubber tires with steel wheels with sharp studs welded around the rims. He built the rig, he explains, because he'd grown tired of pulling a fish shed long distances over the ice. Prior to that time, a few propeller-driven airboats had been used, powered by converted aircraft motors, but they proved impractical and even dangerous.

Nelson used only a three-quarter-h.p. motor on his first model, and deep snow proved too much for it. Other fishermen laughed at it, but it enabled him to travel to productive areas where few others fished. He has built eight scratchers since, working up to four-horse motors, and it wasn't long after his second model went into operation that he saw another like it traveling over the ice.

Among the winter-fishing enthusiasts who promptly took up the idea was Leo Stephens, a resort owner at Stoddard, 10 miles south of La Crosse. His homemade scratcher appeared on the ice in December, 1958, driven by a 19-inch circular saw blade. He still uses it, and its dimensions have been copied many times.

Scratchers appeared in numbers last winter for the first time, and several hundred are now in operation. Up to this season, all have been homemade, though a few were assembled for sale and found a ready market. One of the best models I have seen is being made by Ivan Rumsey, a local fisherman. It's a light plywood boat fitted with six-inch runners and is matched to the power unit.

A commercial model is scheduled to go into production this winter, a beefed-up design with aluminum castings to reduce weight (the entire power unit will weigh around 65 pounds), a floating drive assembly to compensate for snow up to 12 inches deep, a cast drive wheel, and an outboard-type bracket that will permit it to be clamped to any boat that has a 15-inch transom.

A few scratchers showed up last winter at Winona, Alma, Prairie du Chien, and other river towns, and more are in use this season. Fishermen from a number of Midwest states frequent the Mississippi backwaters, and their interest in the rigs is high. Word of them is spreading fast.

Wherever sportsmen travel over ice to fish, scratchers are the answer to a prayer. As local fishermen say with a grin when asked about their homemade models, "They may look funny, but it sure beats walking."

THE END

LIONS ANYTIME

(continued from page 49)

tains. There was no sound except the buzzing of insects and the harsh call of blue jays.

By 10 a.m. clouds were coming up on the horizon. Soon rain would obliterate any animal tracks. We were getting jittery. That lion must have gone far down into the rocky canyon. Could the horses follow? Could we? The reason we had to use this rather cumbersome plan of having the men scout on horseback while we waited for news was, as I have explained, that I do not ride a horse.

I figured those old cougars had to come out of the canyons sometime if they wanted a meal of fresh deer, colt, or calf. I'd been told that Arizona lions tend to follow a pattern, crossing always at the same points, even though their journey might take many days.

A survey of one lion showed that the cat covered 32 miles every 11 days. This run was checked by his scratches. A lion's scratch is his calling card, announcing to nearby females that he's within hailing distance. If a hunter could read sign correctly—and Curtis surely could—he could figure when to be at that crossing point with a rifle. I was counting on Curtis locating a lion somewhere in this vast country where I could get to it on foot.

A long time after they had left us, the hunters returned, bruised and scratched by their ride through the thick brush. The track was lost when the lion went down over the mountain rim. Anyhow, our hunt would have to be postponed again, because now the rain was heavy.

The rain continued all night. At 2:30 a.m., Curtis was up making coffee. He said he'd begun to trail the missing lion mentally at midnight, and just couldn't get back to sleep. I joined him over a cup of coffee, and we shivered in the cold downpour. A thick fog complicated matters, so I went back to lie down and await developments.

At 5:30, Curtis decided we'd hunt despite the hard rain. Gene was out from under his tarp now, thankful he'd had the foresight to put his camera gear in my tent to keep dry. It didn't seem, though, that we would ever get any kind of a picture.

We started out boldly, slithering from one side of the road to the other, and were soon stuck in a mudhole. While we tried to dig out, Curtis released the dogs for their morning run. Surprisingly, they struck a hot track and were off in full cry. Truck and mud were forgotten as the men rushed after the dogs.

The dogs had not gone far, to judge by their baying, when Gene came hurrying back.

"Congratulations," he said. "Your lion is treed."

I couldn't believe it. After one futile week, and hours of waiting since then, it just seemed impossible to have my lion treed all at once.


We followed Gene back about half a

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of the various .30 calibers on the Magnum case a bit grim, and some cannot do their best shooting with them. However, the 7 mm. Magnum, although no .222, isn't so punishing but that it can be shot by most hunters without groans and tears. To me, the absence of punishing recoil is as great an asset for a cartridge as a flat trajectory.

The 7 mm. Magnum, for my money, is just about ideal for the long shots the hunter sometimes has to take on elk in the mountains of Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, on caribou in big open basins above timberline, and on spooky mule and whitetail deer in open mountain country. I have already seen the 7 mm. Magnum referred to as a fine sheep and goat rifle. There is no law against hunting sheep and goats with it, but it has been my experience that the rough terrain in which sheep and goats are generally found usually allows a fairly close approach and that long shots are seldom necessary.

In the next few years, the 7 mm. Magnum should take its place as one of the most popular of big-game calibers. It is certainly an excellent killer on anything up to the size of elk and moose (as my experience on sable and kudu shows). The recoil is not unpleasant, even in a light rifle, and the Remington factory bullets are excellent. Custom gunsmiths report much interest in the cartridge, and at least one big manufacturer is planning to bring out another bolt-action rifle to handle it.

Despite the fact that I am gun-poor, I am having Al Biesen whittle a fancy handle for a 7 mm. Magnum out of an expensive hunk of French walnut. I'm looking forward to taking a pop at a moose with the 7 mm. Magnum—and maybe a grizzly. From the results on African game, I'd guess that one of those bullets wouldn't do either of them any particular good.—*Jack O'Connor.*

LIONS ANYTIME

(continued from page 51)

mile, and I thrilled to the deep and continued baying of 16 hounds. As we hurried through the piney woods, the noise broke like a giant cataract through the rain and fog.

Then, there he was—a young tom in the top of a pine, half hidden by greenery. He licked the branches nervously and shifted from side to side.

Peggy was dancing up and down in excitement, for this was her first lion hunt, too. Leroy was watching his dogs work, and Gene was determined to climb a tree for a close-up. I had thrown off my rain hat and coat, and was trying various stations for a shot, only afraid that one of the milling dogs would run between my legs at the critical moment.

In all this pandemonium, only Curtis was untroubled. He walked around, staring upward through the rain at the treed beast.

Gene managed to get halfway up a

dead tree, balancing his 210 pounds on a shaky limb while his big camera hung from his belt. We all called to him to come down, for the irritated lion had swung around, facing him, and was crouched to spring.

Unwillingly, Gene slid down, for he wanted that close-up. But he had to admit that the aggressive tom could have reached him in one good jump. If man and beast had tumbled together into a pack of maddened dogs, we couldn't have chanced a shot into the melee to save his life.

If a lion decides to fight on the ground, he can easily kill several hounds with his powerful paws and jaws. A good dog, taught to keep a wild animal in a tree, has been known to stay at his post three days without rest, and sometimes a pack will work in relays so they can eat.

A single dog can tree a lion. One time Curtis' pack treed a female and stayed under the tree barking, all except one dog that suddenly turned and ran. This was so unusual that Curtis shot the lioness and followed his missing dog. He found that the loner had treed a big tom.

Now my lion was ignoring the jumping, yelping hounds. It was looking across the treetops evidently with the idea of moving. I didn't want to wait longer. Besides, it was raining hard.

"Pictures or not," I said, "I'm going to shoot. This weather may get worse."

"You ain't kiddin'," agreed Curtis. "The weather sure is against us. Better take him from here."

There was no way to shoot except off shoulder with a sling. I took my time, lining up the iron sights and aiming for the throat so as not to damage the trophy.

Bang! That was the welcome, familiar blast from my faithful .30/06 Hoffman Mauser that had carried me through Africa. It was now being used on my first North American game, and my first shot through the throat had made a clean kill. I reloaded a 180-grain Silvertip automatically, even as I watched the cat fold up and tumble through the pine branches.

"He's dead," Curtis said quietly. Then the dogs had the inanimate form, growling as they mauled it.

"They'll ruin my trophy," I cried, running toward the mob. Leroy's old black and tan Hobo was at the lion's throat, getting the experience he came for.

"Won't harm it a bit," Curtis assured me. "This is their fun; let them have it. Once the hunt's over, and the lion's in the truck, they won't even touch him. You'll see." Later, when the 90-pound tom was piled into the truck, the dogs jumped in beside him, and not one even nosed the dead lion.

Back at camp, the skinning took a long time, not because Curtis was slow, but because of the rain. The sky was shaded from silver to black. Curtis had to do the job between showers, but he explained the skin wouldn't be lost due to wetness. It was finally salted and packed away.

By now, we were just about flooded out. Curtis suggested since all bedrolls were soaked, we move to a motel some 20 miles away for the night. We packed our soggy belongings and took off for civilization. I was satisfied. I had a lion, and that's what I'd come for.

We stopped at a motel called Strawberry Lodge and were well fed by owners Marge and Frank Parkinson.

While we ate, some men who knew Curtis came in. They told him of a big lion that had been seen in the area four times. Curtis looked at me expectantly, and I nodded. The Johnsons, with their dogs and spooky white mule, would have to leave next morning, but Gene agreed that he could stay a couple of days more if it meant getting up to another lion with the chance of pictures.

Next morning we were up at 4:30 for a hunting session that produced no lion. We returned to the motel for a few hours' rest. Then the sun came out. We put our bedrolls out to dry and went off again to check a new report on that great lion.

The men asked me if I was afraid to stay alone for an hour while they scouted around. It was still sunny, although getting a little late. I had a paperback mystery book handy, so I settled down in the truck.

Suddenly I realized that I must have been reading quite a while. The sun had nearly set, and there was no sign of Curtis and Gene. I wondered if I should start a campfire. Arizona can be lonely when the dark comes. I got out of the truck and began to look for dry kindling.

Most of the wood was wet, but I found a few dry pieces and supplemented them with pine cones. There was only one small packet of matches and no flashlight. Besides, I reflected as I struggled to get the fire going, the truck battery might be old, so it won't pay to use the headlights too much.

I sacrificed the pages of my little book, crumpling them up to get a blaze. Then I hallooed to the four winds. No response.

I switched on the lights so I could find more pine cones, then quickly turned them off. I thought of sounding the truck horn, and blew it three times every 10 minutes.

Finally it was 8 o'clock and pitch black. The woods were silent, not even an owl's cry. I loaded my rifle and laid it across the seat. What was I doing out here all alone? Why didn't I stay home like a sensible old lady? Well, there was just one answer to that—I liked it.

Somewhere near 9 p.m. by my wrist watch, there came a faint call from over the ridge. About half an hour later, men and dogs came in. The dogs had treed a bear far down in a canyon where the men could not get to it. They had tried to get the dogs off. Most of them had come up, but old Sara and Major wouldn't leave their quarry. Counting noses, Curtis found he was short two more dogs.

We put out the campfire, and he

tossed his jacket on the ground beside the ashes. "If they come here, they'll know I'm coming back," he said.

Next morning we were off early to look for lion tracks, and then try to find the missing hounds. With the rest of the dogs in the truck, we were off. Curtis wanted to investigate another spot in the Strawberry area from which the lion had been reported.

The dogs hit a track at once. We rushed to their starting point, and saw an enormous pad mark showing the claws, which Curtis said was most unusual. We couldn't keep pace with the dogs as they tore across the road and down a narrow pass into the pine woods. By the time we reached them, the dogs had treed a lion, the big fellow we'd been looking for.

About 15 feet above us in the thickly branched tree was a big splash of tawny yellow, staring eyes, and spitting mouth. Looking up, we could see the cushions of his huge paws and his creamy underbody. He was stretched out full length, front feet on one branch and powerful hindquarters supported by a lower branch. The black tip of his thick tail twitched.

The dogs yelped and jumped, trying to climb that tree after their enemy.

This animal presented a better target than my first lion. He didn't move much, looking down on us in seeming scorn. Gene took pictures while I waited impatiently, having promised him to hold fire until the sun was bright enough for some color photographs, which we'd been unable to get so far. The dogs continued their clamor.

Suddenly our lion had enough. He shifted his big body, and my easy target was shielded by sheitering branches.

"Gene," I cried, "this is one trophy I can't lose for pictures. I'm going to take him now."

There was no tree on which I could rest my rifle, but this shot had to be good. If that monster fell wounded among the dogs, he would certainly kill a few. You can kill a mountain lion with a pistol—if you know how—but the nonprofessional is better off with a sufficiently heavy rifle with a Sunday punch.

Wham! My bullet hit, and the lion fell. He was dead before he hit the ground. The bullet had passed through his throat and along the spine. Immediately the dogs lit into the carcass, and I marveled at how they could savage it without breaking skin.

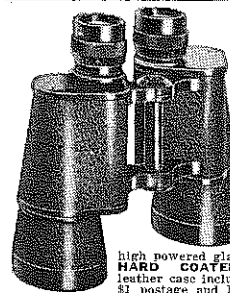
Curtis, Gene, and I looked at the big lion in awe. Curtis guessed his weight at 190 pounds—double the size of the average Arizona lion. The head was very broad, and we knew that we had some kind of a record.

Curtis hoisted the animal onto his back and staggered out to a spot near the road. Only a superman could have performed the feat. There he gutted the brute with his "frog-sticker," and we measured the long body with steel tape. The tape said 96 inches.

By early evening, all four of the missing dogs had been recovered, and we were back in Phoenix. We had tele-

USE 30 DAYS AT OUR RISK!

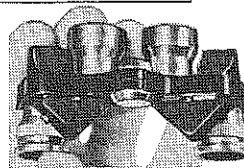
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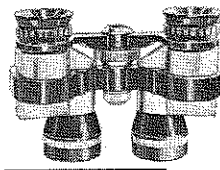
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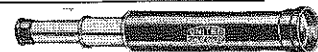
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phoned Jeff Sievers, the taxidermist, and he was waiting eagerly. He was thrilled with the magnificent specimen and said it was a real whopper for Arizona. I decided to have it full mount to match my full-mount African leopard, a trophy that hadn't given me nearly so much trouble to collect.

Next morning, Gene and his lovely dark-haired wife, Zoëanne, drove me to the airport. In spite of all the well-meant but slightly pessimistic advice from friends, the bad weather, and other unpredictables, I had my lion. I was happy as I waved goodbye to my friends and stepped aboard the airplane.

The skull of my lion, after the required 60-day drying period, measured 15 2/16 inches (greatest length without lower jaw, plus greatest width). This, as we had anticipated, puts it high in the all-time records of cougars. Better yet, my lion was the biggest ever shot up to that time in Arizona. A slightly bigger lion has since been shot in Arizona by a man, but mine is still the biggest ever shot anywhere by a woman.

In Arizona, the old mountain lions are there all the time, roaming around and looking for trouble. Except in severe winter weather, when deep snow covers the trails, and roads become impassable, you can hunt. A good guide with good dogs can lead you to the proper area. After that, it's up to you and Lady Luck.

So, if you're longing for a good off-season hunt, try Arizona. You can hunt lions there almost anytime. THE END

material. The three pieces were then glued together and painted a dull black. No sanding or filing is needed on a decoy of this type. It is a good idea to make them oversize, though, so they will show up better. To make a stand with which to stick the bird into the snow, you can drill a small hole in the bottom of the block, then insert and glue a straight piece of coat hanger. These decoys don't cost much to make and they work well. Their big disadvantage, however, is their weight, so we use them only when we want a big spread.

Another type of decoy we were using was the papier-mâché type, which can be bought in a sporting goods store. A practical improvement can be made on these by drilling a small hole in the neck of each decoy and inserting the hooked end of a coat hanger. These factory-made blocks usually have a hole about two inches in diameter in the bottom which makes it easy to slide them on the end of a long pole and lift them into tree branches where the coat-hanger hooks will hold them. At high altitudes, in dead trees, these decoys can be seen from far away, and they greatly increase the chances of bringing more crows into gun range.

Our last type of decoy was the crows already shot. The dead birds were mixed in with the artificial ones. In summer and fall, we also use the stuffed owl trick, but at a feeding location it doesn't work too well.

For calling, I prefer a call that has a deep, raucous tone, and when I sound off at a dining spot I use the greeting call. It is composed of from three to five short caws when the birds have been sighted, and it will make a sucker out of any crow. The black pirate can't seem to resist hearing about the tempting tidbits his comrades are enjoying, so he tries to muscle in for his share.

In the summer, we use a system called woods hopping or bush jumping, because the crows are scattered over wide areas during the late spring and hot summer months. Stopping every few miles along groves of woods and calling them in is the only effective way to kill them consistently during that time of year. We scatter four to six decoys in the trees every few yards, and set up one or two great horned owls so they will be visible to the black marauders that are sure to answer the fighting call, which is a series of high-pitched caws. Oncoming crows will invariably believe that one of their clan has found an enemy or a victim to tease and annoy. We use one caller for several seconds and then chime in with one or more calls at regular intervals.

Camouflage is one of the most important factors in successful crow hunting. Besides his personal clothing, which should always blend with the natural background, a hunter's face and hands should also be disguised. When shooting in areas where the forest undergrowth emerges into shades of green, we wear clothing to match. We also streak our faces and hands with oil paints to break up the light

CROWS A LA CARTE

(continued from page 27)

from the garbage holes is piled. The freezing winter weather makes it impossible to cover the long rows of refuse, and for years crows have been dining on it.

Our shooting set-up was shaped like a triangle, and my position was the apex because I was the caller. My blind was a natural one—piles of snow stacked up by bulldozers.

Jim was in a white blind about 50 yards in front and to the left of mine. Brady was hidden in a weedy thicket to my right about the same distance away.

We were facing the west. The crows, following the river to the dump, would leave the river at a sharp bend and fly over the woods about 100 yards in front of us. The boys on either side of me would shoot the ones that veered to the sides, and the birds coming into the triangle near my end were mine.

Our three kinds of decoys were spread in a semicircle in front of us on the snow and on the earth mounds. One type I made in the woodworking shop at school. To make each one, I first traced the size bird I wanted on a piece of three-quarter-inch basswood, and after cutting out the rough pattern with a coping saw I fashioned two small, egg-shaped wings from the same