Tin Cans Won’t Replace Wild Ducks

BY ED SUMMERS

Ever been hunting? Like most Houstonians, we just assumed everyone went hunting; we have been informed, however, that a lot of people who are from out of town at Rice either do not hunt or have not hunted in a long time.

We are, of course, talking about game hunting. We are aware of another kind of hunting participated in by most all Rice people, with widely varying (usually from bad to worse) degrees of success.

Mud Hens and Tin Cans

Game hunting this time of year is generally done for ducks and geese. Other good targets are mud hens, blackbirds, windmills, tree trunks, and tin cans — both moving and stationary.

A week or so back we went on a hunting trip to shoot some ducks. Rainy, cold weather is required to make the ducks come in off the bay and settle in rice (small R) paddies to feed, so the weather the morning we went hunting was bright and sunny.

They Were Brave

Two of our three roommates and our brother were brave enough to accompany us. We left in the dark and got to a town near our hunting spot before dawn. After a hot breakfast, during which we seriously considered calling our other roommate long distance collect and asking for ourselves strictly to wake him up, we drove out to the spot selected for the hunt.

This happened to be an artificial lake of moderate extent with only one blind. This blind on that morning came complete with hunters, duck calls, and, it later seemed, machine shotguns.

Way Out Decoys

We settled down by the bank of a rice water canal and set out our decoys — much farther out, we discovered, than we could have in after them.

Unfortunately, a person can go to a sporting goods store and buy everything he needs for duck hunting, except ducks. These must go out and wait for squatted on his haunches in waist-deep salt marsh grass that is sopping wet and very cold.

And, no matter how long he waits, he is never guaranteed they will ven oblige him by coming.

Under Fire

These people out, on the lake had apparently made a pact with the devil, or something, because shortly after we got there some ducks came in and settled in their decoys. As soon as they got clear of the water the artillery in the blind cut loose with a dramatic if ineffectual barrage.

As the uncathed birds soared high over our heads we came under with spent buckshot dropping down all around us.

The Black Bird Phase

By 8 o’clock nothing much had come close enough to shoot at, so we passed into the blackbird-hunting phase of duck hunting, thence to the tin-can phase of blackbird hunting. Shortly thereafter we departed.

We gave our friends one scare. Our only clear shot at a couple of geese, we were attempting to place the shells in the gun up-side down when one of our roommates asked if we were nervous.

“Of course not!” we yelled, pointing the now-loaded gun at the lad’s head. “Just goose down so I can get a shot at that stoop over there...!”

All this is fun to talk about, but next week we are going to do a story on a serious issue — professionalism in intramural athletics. We will feature an interview with a noted personage on this campus popularly known as “Bear.”