



Mid-South OUTDOORS



From The Wilderness Arose A Most Unusual Duck Club —Bill Byers' Hunter Layout

By HENRY REYNOLDS
Outdoors Editor

HUNTER, Ark., Nov. 22.—Four years ago a jolly rice farmer by the name of Bill Byers decided he wanted a duck club where he and his friends could hunt without going too far from home.

So he carved out of a nearby wilderness the Hunter Club, which today is one of the most unusual duck clubs in the world.

By careful planning and wise management, the Hunter Club with its 1,800 acres of flooded timber became one of the hottest duck spots in Arkansas and Bill was swamped with requests to hunt his land.

Hands Back Fees

Bill decided to open the club to the public on a day-shooting basis. In three years he has entertained thousands of gumbooters, including many from afar.

Every dollar taken in goes back into the Hunter Club for improvements which aid the hunter and his undying desire to kill ducks.

Bill tells you when you visit the club that he's not in the duck club business. "I like people and I enjoy seeing them shoot ducks. If the ducks don't fly, you don't owe me a penny," he tells them.

Last season, this writer was a guest of Bill's and the ducks didn't fly too well. When he came in, the daily list was taken down and Bill handed \$260 back to 26 paying guests.

I have never been in a club that was more friendlier than the Hunter Club. Bill wants everyone to have a good time and he goes out of his way to see that they do.

On the House

Many of his close friends come loaded with lunch meats, cheese, pickles, canned goods, beer and numerous other things to eat and drink.

When the hunt is over, everything is on the house. The only stipulation is that you have to fix what you want to eat. Bill's no chef. You have a pass to the refrigerator and if you don't use it, that's your fault.

Bill has hunted as high as 50 men a day and everyone got the limit. He sets up the parties, assigns good callers to each group and lays out the hunting territory so everyone will get good shooting.

When you leave the clubhouse he reminds you that you are on your own and that the principles of good sportsmanship should prevail at all times. His club is highly respected by game wardens of the area and officials of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

One of The Boys

To see Bill Byers, his short, stocky frame fitted into a pair of waders, you'd think he was just another hunter. And, real

ly, that's all he is. Just one of the boys.

Bill entertains a lot of celebrities at his club each season, yet he'll tell you he enjoys seeing a plain old Joe get ducks more than the gilt-edged hunter.

The Hunter Club also is famous for its hot coffee, brewed fresh throughout the morning by Bill's father, who comes from California to serve as host each year. It's his duty to keep the coffee pot filled and to assist Bill with the hunters.

Mourner's Room

Bill has added on to the clubhouse each year. This season he has a mourner's room. If a guy comes in cold, duckless and drooping, he's ushered into this little room.

There he finds the four walls papered with pinups from Playboy Magazine. A couple of minutes in this room and most guys forget all about duck hunting.

I've never met a duck hunter who has been to the Hunter Club and doesn't like it. The friendly atmosphere and the seemingly unlimited supply of mallards makes them want to come back for more.

Bill Byers has put Hunter on the map. Wherever ducks are talked, his little community is mentioned right along with Stuttgart and Weiner.



BYERS