



A record-player set up in an Eastern Shore blind to lure wild geese by broadcasting their food calls.



John Price, of Stillpond, Md., directs a player's loud-speaker at a flock of flying geese in hopes of drawing them within range of his gun.

Maryland Gunners
Are Trying Out a
New Decoy Trick
These Days; It's—

Phonograph Records for Geese

SOME of Maryland's most pampered tourists—the wild geese coming annually from the Canadian barrens—are being received now as never before. Eastern Shore hunters are playing "music" for them.

The reception, a ruse, is all for free.

Long annoyed by the honkers' ability at self-preservation, hunters have devised numerous tricks in efforts to lure them within shotgun range. Most have fallen below expectations.

The latest, however—playing recordings of real geese calls—has brought some success. Its are

By Tom McNally

sets have become so common in Eastern Shore goose-hunting blinds that geese already are indicating an awareness that calls they hear are not the McCoy.

FLOCKS rising from Chesapeake resting places at dawn for flights to corn and wheat fields are immediately greeted by loud, wailful honkings. There is some realism to the calls, but in some instances there is also a scratching or humming sound—caused by a worn needle, a faulty player, or a defective horn. And often a record ends at just the crucial moment. In addition, there are player-an-

the direction of the nearest recording, circle the blind on a low inspection of the decoys, perhaps get shot at, then fly on. They approach another blind, and another recording starts up. The geese investigate, not quite so low this time, and likely pass on. Leaving that farm for another the ritual is resumed, and resumed, and resumed.

Eventually the geese are

Music for Wild Geese

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two years ago a Chestertown sportsman with a flock of tame Canada geese hit on the idea of canning their squawlings at feeding time.

He then took a record player, an auto battery, wiring and an amplifier, and rigged them in his blind. It was in a corn field and was surrounded by dozens of realistic decoys. The record was played when a wedge of Canadas appeared, and the geese came down believing the decoys were inviting them to a feast.

THE enterprising hunter promptly took his legal limit and decided to market the recording. That was a mistake. Competitors arose and recordings are now common.

Still, many feel it is a nude blind that is not equipped with an amplifying set. The recordings continue to arouse curiosity in wild geese—just as do decoys which the birds have seen for years. With amplifying mechanisms, recorded goose-talk carries for about a mile—much better than a hunter can do by voice using a tubelike call.

The usual technique is to play recordings full blast when flocks are seen at a distance. As the geese approach, the player is tuned softly, but the megaphone is constantly directed toward them. When the geese are close the hunters stay out of sight, guns ready, while the recording is played very low or shut off.

Invariably the birds fly silently, investigating, and they may or may not come within range. Most often they complete inspections just beyond range, decide that all is not well, and fly off.

Actually, the silly goose is

not so silly as many suppose. In fact, some hunters are sillier than some geese. Some employ a recording that is more damaging than helpful. Made by a farmer hoping to get a portion of mounting record sales, it will scare geese rather than attract them.

While operating his recorder, this man had trouble getting his tame geese to gabble appealingly. So he ran through the penned flock to make them honk—and the recording is one of dozens of geese yapping in alarm. No wild goose will ever be fooled by that. When the honks aren't

right, recordings are something of which wild geese will have no part.

With the goose crop so lush this season (there are an estimated 250,000 here), commercial blinds have multiplied. The best of them are rented at \$40 to \$60 daily for a party of four, and this may include the use of a record-playing outfit.

Records sell for about \$2 each, while complete units (records, player and amplifier) are \$100 to \$140. It's an odd type of goose shooting, with hunters handling "juke boxes" as well as scatter guns.