

# Kingfisher is Most Expert Fisherman

DEC. 25, 1936

*Outdoor Life*

By W. L. Finley and Ed F. Averill

"The poor fish have enemies enough," says Izaak Walton, "the cormorant, the bittern, the osprey, the seagull, the heron, the kingfisher, the gorara, the puet, the swan, the goose, the duck, and the crabber, which some call the waterrat; against all which any honest man may make a just quarrel—but I will not; I will leave them to be quarellled with and killed by others; for I am not of a cruel nature: I love to kill nothing but fish."

Surely the fish have many enemies, for among the tribes of men there are many who love to angle and many who live by fishing. So also we find among the mammals and

birds many species that are fishers. Among the various ways of catching fish from the rivers, lakes and oceans, the methods employed by birds are almost as ingenious as those used by man.

Penguins, murres, grebes and loons pursue the fish in the open water. By using both feet and wings, these birds literally fly under the surface and capture their prey. The white pelican goes fishing with a net, as it were, for he scoops into a school of fish, taking in water and all, then, straining out the liquid, swallows his catch.

The kingfisher watches patiently from some branch overhanging the water, from which he dives and

catches fish in his bill. The osprey sails up and down the river or over the lake, stalking his prey. He drops like a plummet, but, instead of head first like the kingfisher, he goes feet first, seizing his prey in his talons. Cormorants surround a school of fish in a half-circle and drive them shoreward into the shallow water where they catch them with ease. Gulls generally catch their fish second-hand by watching a chance to steal from the pelicans and other skillful fishers of the sea. The heron is a "still-fisher," for he stands about in the shallow water as stent and motionless as an old stick, his eye watching the water below and his spear-like bill poised for the strike.

Long ago the Chinese learned how expert the cormorants were, and they made a business of raising and training these birds to catch their fish. The young cormorants were taken and fed with a mixture of beancurd and raw eel's flesh. Later when they were about grown, a string was tied to one leg and the other end of it fastened to the bank of a pond or canal. They were kept on short allowance of food and soon learned to pounce greedily upon the small fish thrown to them. By means of the string, they were taught to obey a whistle call. Later the birds were trained from a boat, and in due time the string was dispensed with. A small ring of hemp was tied around the neck of each bird to prevent it from swallowing larger fish.

They were as well trained as good retrieving dogs, for they would dive from the edge of the boat and return with the fish firmly held in their hooked beaks.

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**Recreational Resources Topic—**  
 Recreational resources of Oregon will be the general topic discussion by speakers at the members' forum of Portland Chamber of Commerce next Monday noon. Speakers and their subjects will include: John Yeon, "Highways, Mountaineering and Wilderness Area"; Will R. Lewis, "Fishing"; William L. Finley, "Wild Life"; C. P. Keyser, "Rivers and Parks," and Frank Branch Riley, "Oregon the Beautiful." Captain Alfred P. Kelley, chairman of the chamber's recreational resources committee, will introduce the speakers.

PORTLAND, OREGON, DECEMBER 26, 1936

## M E M B E R S F O R U M

Chamber of Commerce Building, Monday Noon, December 28, 1936

### OREGON'S RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Speakers presented by

**ALFRED P. KELLEY**

Chairman of the Chamber's Recreational Resources Committee

Highways, Mountaineering and Wilderness Areas... JOHN YEON  
 Fishing ..... WILL R. LEWIS  
 Wild Life ..... WILLIAM L. FINLEY  
 Rivers and Parks ..... C. P. KEYSER  
 Oregon, the Beautiful ..... FRANK BRANCH RILEY

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