

April to 14th May—over thirty sitting hen pheasants and a few early sitting partridges were known to have been killed. When the litter was found the earth was a shambles of pheasants' wings, remnants of domestic fowl and one hare. The landowner told me that the vixen was on the hunt at all hours of the day and was very bold in face of danger.

The seven cubs were big, strong specimens when I found them. Whilst watching the litter one evening I saw an enterprising tawny owl visit the earth and search for remnants. It came three times during my watch and was quite annoyed at my presence.

Quite as many stoats and weasels have been with us as ever. Though they are mostly living on wood mice and house mice, they have been troublesome with the game chicks. A family of weasels—dog, bitch and five young—suddenly found paradise in one corner of the rearing field *via* a mole-run and accounted for twenty-seven chicks two to four weeks old before we caught the last of them. This was a tricky job with so much tall grass about. Both stoats and weasels have normally raided birds' nests so there is nothing new in that, except that they may have done a bit more of it.

There has been no lessening of the rat population through myxomatosis for neither foxes nor stoats like the larger adult rats, though they will take the very young if they can get at them. It may disappoint many people but it is a fact that foxes do not relish either adult rat-meat or moles any more than humans like dog.

One thing in conclusion—poaching cats in the game-chick season are a menace which requires removing, or your game crop will soon go down. Dogs, on the other hand, have given no trouble since their favourite quarry, the rabbit, went.

NOTES ON ROE DEER

By F. J. TAYLOR PAGE

AN UNUSUAL ROE DEER RING

The ring shown in the accompanying photograph was made in mid-July by a roe doe and her twin fawns. The site chosen for their play was an old flint excavation near Brandon in Suffolk. During the early nineteenth century individual miners extracted flint by digging vertical shafts which were later filled in. A large number of crater-like pits and mounds of excavated

earth remain and it was around the rim of one of these pits and its nearby mound that the deer chose to train its young. They were observed on several occasions circling rapidly. So frequent were these amazing displays of agility that a track was worn down to the chalky soil.

By climbing a pine tree which stood at one end of the mound and taking three overlapping photographs from a height of 15 feet, it has been possible to produce an aerial view of the complete ring round the mound. Part of this ring lies inside the crater of the pit and involved a steep descent on the one hand and an equally steep climb on the other. The ring ceased to be used for this play training towards the end of July; it may have been used also by the buck and doe as a rutting ring. Unfortunately the latter activity was not observed and it may well have taken place at a different spot which was never found.

TOLERANCE OF MAN

Despite the general opinion that roe deer are timid and avoid the presence of human beings, it remains true that they do not avoid areas of the forests where human activity is pronounced, and they are not necessarily found only where there is little interference.

For a number of years now roe have been most regular inhabitants of portions of Thetford Chase within very short distance of farms and forest cottages. The noise of traffic also appears to have little effect upon them for they are frequently found close to the roads. As they seem unafraid of a car, such a vehicle provides an excellent means of close approach.

Their curiosity is surprising. A tractor at work or other forest operations in progress will bring a roe deer quite close at times, and it will stand and gaze as though attracted by the noise. Even behind a rifle range where one would least expect to find them, the signs of constant activity on the part of deer are to be found in profusion. They appear to be quite oblivious of the noise and unexpectedly regardless of danger. On one occasion known to me, a roe deer lay for a whole day about 100 yards from a target under fire, and was only flushed as the party was leaving.