

THE JOKE WAS ON THE KINGFISHER

Jack Horton of the United States Forestry Service tells a good joke on a kingfisher, a bird like the ordinary angler, who can't look at a fish in a stream without wanting him in his creel.

The Forester during spare moments had built a little rocky pool in his yard. It was an attractive home for a little school of goldfish. One day the golden glitter caught the eye of an old kingfisher cruising casually across the block. Like some people, he was always on the watch for an easy mark, and a slow swimming fish is easier game than a trout. Clicking, he drew up on a branch and sized up the situation at a glance. A headlong dive, a splash and a goldfish took his first and last ride in the feathered plane.

In a few days, Jack was bargaining for a new school of fish and laying plans to protect them. Soon after, the feathered angler, sailing over, caught a glimpse of the same pond and a new supply. In hunting, a moment's hesitation may mean an empty bag. So with a quick turn, the kingfisher headed like an arrow for the golden dinner. A foot above the surface he was flattened. His head went through the wire netting that Jack had spread above the pool, but his shoulders wedged. Mussed up and scared, he shot out of the yard leaving a trail of blue feathers. The goldfish in the pool now swim in contentment and safety.

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