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IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Mr. Snake Isn't The Villain Legend Paints Him

A rustle in the leaves, a metallic flash of yellow and black, a scream of "Snake!"—and 200-pound Mrs. Hucklebottom fainted dead away as the tiny garter-snake glided to safety in the long grass.

Uncontrollable fear of snakes is not uncommon, and the victim is to be pitied rather than laughed at. Reptilephobia is an affliction as real as hay fever. This fear has been communicated rather than inherited, as is commonly supposed. Extensive experiments with very young children have proved conclusively that there is no inborn snake fear. The tested babies in almost every instance preferred the harmless reptiles as playthings to inanimate toys.

More common than the paralyzing fear of snakes is, "I don't like snakes." This dislike probably comes from the fact that most people cannot tell poisonous species from the harmless ones and consequently dislike or fear them all, rather than because of the "fast one" the serpent pulled on Mother Eve and humanity in the Garden of Eden.

One of the most popular displays in the Fish and Game Building at the State Fair grounds each year is the extensive exhibit of Iowa reptiles. It is the common reaction among a large part of the visitors to wrinkle up their faces and exclaim, "Oooh! I don't like snakes!" but to view the entire exhibit with a kind of fascination, ending their study at the far end of the cages with the repeated exclamation, "I don't like snakes!"

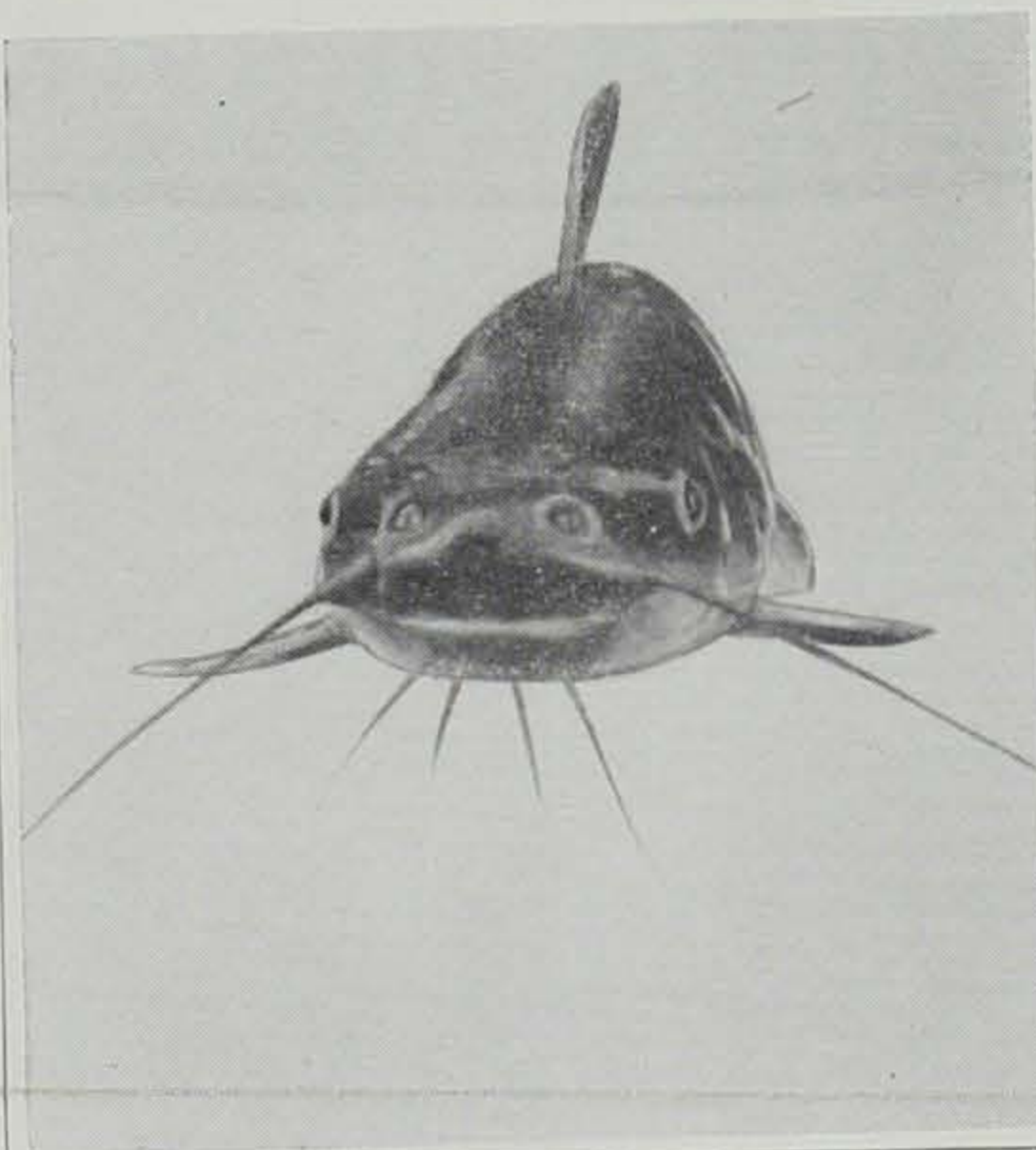
Let's look at the true story of snakes in Iowa and separate some of the facts from the fallacies.

A splendid book, now out of print, titled "The Snakes of Iowa", by the late J. E. Guthrie, states that there are 25 species

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Survey Of Conservation Officers Reveals Many Ways of Catching Catfish

Worms See Him This Way



Seen from
head on, Mr.
Catfish looks
like this to
the hapless
worm on
your hook.

Prairies Brightened By Spring Flowers

By ARTHUR E. RAPP

The Pentstemons are some of the earliest wild flowers not found in the woods, but in more open and exposed situations. Pentstemon grandiflorus prefers the extreme exposure of the westerly slopes of our Missouri River bluffs, but P. digitalis is often found at the edge of open thickets, where its bronze basal leaves remain attractive through the winter. The lesser white Pentstemon prefers clay soils and is not adverse to wet feet. P. co-bea, with large white or purplish flowers, is one of the most attractive of all Pentstemons but

rarely seen, even in the southern tier of counties, and only once have I seen it in quantity.

With the mechanization of farm equipment, prairie hay lands have rapidly disappeared, and with them have gone the Liatris, or gay-feathers, whose tall plumes stood well above the tallest of grasses. Field mice are very fond of the corms, and many a colony along a roadside has disappeared over winter for this reason. Tap-rooted Liatris, preferring the drier soil of hillsides, are still to be found in quantity in many parts of the state.

Iowa has a number of cone flowers belonging to different groups, such as Rudbeckias and Lepachys, all of which bloom for long periods during midsummer.

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Wily Fish Plentiful In Iowa Streams

Channel catfishing is THE sport for thousands of Iowans. In fact, it closely approaches bullhead fishing as the most popular fishing activity in this state. Catfish present problems for the tyro and the complete angler alike. King Cat may be caught still fishing with a willow pole and a chunk of liver (sometimes), or he may be taken on a flyrod and a spinner (sometimes), or he may be caught on pole and line by half a hundred methods in between these two extremes.

Catfish, like the carp and bullhead, have been able to stand rather well the changes in stream character caused by intensive agriculture that have been fatal to less hardy species of fish. Channel cats are found in suitable waters throughout the state, and their numbers are legion even in some of the smaller streams.

Devotees of channel catfishing claim for him first place in size (up to 30 pounds), in brains, in fight, and in palatability of flesh.

In order to get a picture of channel catfishing in Iowa, each of the 40 fish and game conservation officers were asked to list the favorite catfish streams and baits used, and to make any comment about catfishing they cared to make.

The catfishing waters, as named by the conservation officers, are drawn into the map accompanying this article and will be of help to catfishermen looking for new streams to conquer.

The bait used shows a tremendous variation and indicates the omnivorousness of catfish. Baits

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Catfish

(Continued from Page One)

listed in order of their popularity as reported by conservation officers follow: chicken blood, 21; minnows, 19; cheese bait, 19; chicken intestines, 17; shrimp, 15; crawfish, 14; worms and night crawlers, 12; clams, 9; frogs, 6; liver, 4; grasshoppers, 3; pickled carp, 3; chitterlings, 2; honorable mention—doughballs, mud puppies, mice, beefsteak, soap, chicken livers, leeches, sand-toads, smelt, and hellgrammites.

Comment by the various fish and game officers gives numerous catfishing sidelights:

"My catfishing waters in the order of their importance are: Iowa River through Tama County; north fork, Skunk River from Lynnvile to the Mahaska County line in Jasper and Poweshiek; south fork, Skunk River in Jasper County at certain times (This is a dredged river in the main); Wolf Creek, Tama County (also some nice small-mouth bass); Indian Creek, Jasper County; Sugar Creek on the Jasper-Poweshiek boundary.

"Universal bait around here is coagulated chicken blood. It comes in various stages of consistency. Some of the stuff is very hard to keep on the hook and is a strain on the temper of the user. There are a few who make it in a gum-like substance you could throw against a barn wall all day and still keep on the hook. Various types of commercial baits are used, from Uncle Willie's Special DeLuxe to Cousin Fud's Shur Catchem. Mainly full of old cheese and other highly odoriferous material, catching qualities from good to huh uh."—Conservation Officer Johnson, Grinnell.

"The story of channel cat in southern Iowa is indeed sad. Lucas County used to have two fine streams, Whitebreast River and Chariton River. Along came the drainage engineers, and both of the above streams are ruined and catfishing just a memory. The same can be said of Weldon River in Decatur County. Grand River, in the same county, at one time was an excellent catfish stream, but a drainage ditch of five miles

Umm-mm, Hot Catfish



Devotees
of the
Channel Catfish
claim first place
for it in
palatability
of flesh

on this side of the Missouri line and for 35 miles below has hurt the fishing. In spite of this, Grand River still has some fine catfishing.

"In the daytime the various baits are cast into deep holes around logs, drifts, and other spots. At night or early mornings, catfish are taken in the shallow water in or near the riffles. A good many scale four pounds or over. Anyone wishing to fish streams in my territory would be wise to ask for permission to enter upon the farm where they intend to fish."—Conservation Officer Youngblood, Osceola.

"In Henry County the Skunk River provides most of the channel catfishing, especially at Oakland Mills Park, where the hydro electric dam is located. In Des Moines County the Skunk and the Mississippi Rivers provide the best."—Conservation Officer Huff, Burlington.

"Most of the early catfish this year were of good size, up to four and a half pounds. The Iowa River has settled down, and good fishing is expected, providing warm weather continues and no more rain.

"The better known places in my territory on the Iowa River are: Marshall County — Center Street Dam (very good); Third Avenue Bridge (good); Riverview City Park and vicinity, in Marshalltown (fair to good); Nicholson Ford Bridge, three miles east of Marshalltown (good); Three Bridges and vicinity, one mile north of quarry (fair to good); Iowa River north of Soldiers'

Home (good to hit-and-miss); Tama County river bridge three miles east of LeGrand (fair). Hardin County, Iowa River—Railroad bridge east of Union one mile (good); Railroad bridge north of Secor (good); vicinity of Gifford (good); dam one mile southeast of Eldora (very good); dam, Steamboat Rock (very good); dam, Iowa Falls (fair to poor). These are the most prominent places.

"Fine catfishing may be found in the Iowa River by working up and down stream from these points. Story County and the Skunk River afford only mediocre catfishing. However, it has been improving steadily the past few years, and local fishermen have been able to work the holes with fair success.

"Baits: chicken and beef blood, fresh shrimp, cheese bait, sour soft fish, clams, chicken entrails, minnows, and worms."—Conservation Officer Harvey, Marshalltown.

"The Rock River is the best for channel cat. The Little Sioux River near Sutherland is good. Everything from chicken entrails to laundry soap is used as bait. The favorite one seems to be chicken blood. The recipe for the latter is as follows: Get a bucket of chicken blood at a produce house. Take a shallow pan and cut a piece of burlap sacking to fit loosely on the bottom. Pour the chicken blood on top of this, then salt the blood to keep it from spoiling. Set it out in the sun to harden, and when hard cut in strips and string these on your hook. This recipe is very

good. I have seen lots of fish caught on it."—Conservation Officer Gregory, Sheldon.

"The choice catfish rivers are Turkey River, Clayton County, Upper Iowa River, Allamakee County, Volga River, Clayton County, and the Mississippi River, Allamakee and Clayton Counties, in the order named.

"The Mississippi River ranks last because very few fishermen fish for cat in it, the large body of water making it hard to locate them. Another reason is that there are so many other species of fish that are so much easier to catch. Until the locks and dams were built, almost no one fished for catfish. Since that time there has been some very good fishing at certain times close to the structures; but now that the dams are restricted areas, there will be very little catfishing.

"The other streams are excellent channel catfishing streams. I have the first fisherman to see using mussels for bait on the inland streams in my territory. I would not say there were any best spots on these streams. They are good their full length."—Conservation Officer Kaufman, Lansing.

"There were more cat caught in my territory last year and more fishing for them than in any previous year. Very good catfishing in Cedar River in Floyd below Charles City. Good below Marble Rock in the Shellrock River, Cedar River, fair, southern half of Mitchell County. No catfishing in the northern part of Mitchell County or in Worth County.

"In midsummer, fresh chicken blood seems to be the best bait. To get the best results, this bait is floated downstream, using a large bobber so as to carry the line easily. Set the cork so the bait will clear the bottom nicely. No commercial baits used to any extent. Fresh chicken blood is really a killer diller when used properly."—Conservation Officer Yates, Osage.

"The Skunk River is best in my territory, Des Moines second. Minnows seem to be the best bait. Crawfish and angle worms are also used."—Conservation Officer Benson, Fort Madison.

"I suggest more fishermen fish the Des Moines River east of Des Moines. The disposal plant is working; the river has been cleaned out by high water, leaving clean bottom and odorless water free from oil and pollution. There is some nice water south of Runnells and Adelphi. There is good water on either side of any highway bridge north of Des Moines. The Raccoon from the entrance of Walnut Woods State Park to a mile and a half upstream is good. The area along

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Catfish

(Continued from Page Two)

the Polk and Dallas County line produces nice catches. Booneville and Adel are favorite locations.

"Good strings come from the vicinity of the Dallas County Farm. North of Adel a road runs near some very good spots. Chubs are good from July until November. For flatheads large gobs of worms are good. Shrimp has become very popular; crawfish are good, with the softshells best. Canned chicken blood has come on the market recently. This bait is very good, but a little difficult to handle.

"A triple hook is needed, and a long cane pole, as this bait cannot be cast as others can. Use a float and very little sinker so that this bait is within a foot or so of the bottom. Fish do not strike this bait like they do others, but suck it into their mouths. Another popular bait is chicken entrails. These should be picked over, removing all fat and discarding all but the whiter parts.

"For the angler who likes to use a flyrod on catfish, hellgrammites or Dobsons are good. These are very attractive to both catfish and bass. Use a gut leader, light sinker, and a small cork. Hook the hellgrammite through the light collar around its neck, with the point of the hook toward the head. This lets the hellgrammite work very freely when fished off the bottom and over rocky riffles or ledges. Fish strike at hellgrammites very hard.

"Frogs should not be forgotten at certain times of the year. Clams are another good bait. Cut the clam meats into convenient sizes, cover with corn meal, add a pint of milk to each gallon of meats, and let stand until soured. Cover so the flies don't blow. Place in a fruit jar, seal tight, and place in a cool place. Be sure and keep covered with meal when opened. Add more meal and seal back when through fishing. If this is not done, clams will turn brown and are not good bait. Large yellow grasshoppers are good bait in midsummer. Appetite cheese is another bait that is successfully used by many anglers." — Conservation Officer Adamson, Des Moines.

"Channel cat are taken on the following streams: Nodaway Rivers at Mt. Etna, Carbon, Corning, and Prescott; West 102 near the Missouri line; Platte from the Missouri line to Clearfield." — Conservation Officer Stempel, Bedford.

"The west fork of the Des Moines River, from Emmetsburg to the Minnesota line, has some very good catfish waters, the best from Estherville to the line. Many six to eight-pounders were taken

last year. Although the weather has been bad since May 1, several six-pounders have been seen on the stringers this year.

"The favorite bait is fresh shrimp. Prepared bait is also good. One that has been effective is a mixture of half limburger and half hamburger, using enough flour to make it sticky so that it stays on the hook well. If you don't catch fish, you can eat this bait." — Conservation Officer Wogen, Estherville.

"The Sioux River in Cherokee provides good fishing. Mill Creek in the same county furnishes nice catfishing when the water is not too low. Favorite bait is chicken entrails, chubs, and frogs. The Little Sioux, in Buena Vista County, is also good. Popular midsummer baits are minnows, clams, shrimp, and prepared baits. The best catfish water in Pocahontas County is the west branch of the Des Moines River, and the baits used are Kautsky's cheese bait, chicken blood, clams and frogs." — Conservation Officer Baggs, Alta.

"Catfishing in the streams is an art in itself. It requires skill in manipulation of the bait and a knowledge of the fish's characteristics and habits. One of the most important points to carry in mind is to fish slowly and quietly. Study stream conditions, and you will soon know why catfish use one part of a stream and not another.

"A few excellent baits are fresh shrimp, crawfish, minnows, pimento cheese, patented cheese baits, and chicken blood. I prefer minnows and pimento cheese. In using pimento cheese, it should be cut in half-inch squares and used on a single hook. I use minnows about one inch in length and prepare them by drying in the sun, being careful to cover them to keep flies away. String four or five on a single hook. Another method of curing minnows is to fill a fruit jar and cover the top with corn meal. Secure the lid so the jar is air-tight and let the bait sour before using.

"A cheese scrap recipe is a mixture of one-half cheese scraps, one-fourth oil meal, and one-fourth tankage, mixed into a stiff dough. A good way to fish catfish is by wading the stream and fishing down and across. In fishing snags, fish into them from across the stream so the bait will drift into the head of the snag. In using light tackle, only enough weight should be used to submerge the bait." — Conservation Officer Hyde, Jefferson.

"Popular baits are dressed carp, cheese bait, chicken blood, chicken entrails, and shrimp. All baits are about equal here as far as catching the fish is concerned. The good fishermen get their share as they always do, and the

"Hey, Skinny--- They're Biting"



Channel Catfish are found in suitable waters throughout the state, and their numbers are legion even in some of the smaller Iowa streams.

beginners do not do so well. Fishing is good from Fort Dodge north and fair from Fort Dodge south in Humboldt and Webster Counties on the Des Moines River." — Conservation Officer Leaverton, Humboldt.

"The best catfishing waters in this territory include Nodaway in Page, Seven Mile Creek in Montgomery, and the Nishnabotna in Fremont. Favorite midsummer baits are fresh shrimp and crawfish. Some fishermen use doughballs made of rye bread with a cheese mixture. Chicken blood on a treble hook seems to be gaining in favor, and the boys who use it seem to catch the most fish during the hot weather." — Conservation Officer J. Rector, Shenandoah.

"I believe I could carry on my back all the channel cat I have seen caught in this territory. Most of my channel cat fishermen go into the neighboring counties of Floyd, Chickasaw, Butler, Kosuth, and Humboldt. A hundred or so blue and mud cats running up to 20 pounds are taken out of Clear Lake each season, either on a gob of worms or dead chub. A man by the name of Eikelberger caught a 20-pound catfish on a flyrod in Clear Lake last year and landed it." — Conservation Officer Stevens, Clear Lake.

"The Cedar River in Black Hawk County is good catfish water, with the best spots near the dam at Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Also very good at Cedar Heights and Electric Park cut-off.

Lots of fishing done at all the bridges. Cannot get information on best way to clot blood. Grundy County poor for catfish generally, although some are taken." — Conservation Officer Jago, Waterloo.

"There is excellent catfishing in the Des Moines River in both Warren and Marion Counties, with the preference seeming to be in the vicinity of Ford in Warren County and near Red Rock in Marion County. The Cedar River, from the mouth up to above Maryville, is fair water and heavily fished, as is the Skunk in northeast Marion County. Flyrod addicts use live grasshoppers in the late summer, floating them over the rock riffles." — Conservation Officer Shaffer, Indianola.

"The Big Sioux, Little Sioux, and Missouri Rivers are all three very good catfish streams. Both the Sioux Rivers produce fish on grasshoppers, minnows, and canned bait. In the Missouri River it is different. Canned bait is not used due to the swift water, the principal bait being sandtoads and chitterlings, with some chicken entrails used. It is a problem to keep bait on the hook in the fast water. There is very little of what you could call bank fishing. The best fish are caught with set lines placed on the reefs on the lower end of the sandbars. The fishermen wade out on these and make their sets with a heavy weight on lines tied onto a willow pole. The pole is shoved into the sand. They all carry dip nets when fishing in this manner because the fish are always very good sized, no fiddlers.

"The average fishermen are afraid to venture out on these reefs, so only the experienced fishermen enjoy this kind of fishing. There is not much danger if a man is cautious. I have used fishing in the Missouri River as the topic in a number of talks given to sportsmen's groups." — Conservation Officer Trusell, Sioux City.

"There is very little stream catfishing in Dickinson and Osceola Counties. There are, however, quite a number of large catfish caught in the Dickinson County lakes." — Conservation Officer Starr, Arnolds Park.

"Channel catfishing is good in the Chariton River, although the weather conditions have not been favorable. The bait almost entirely used is the dew-worm, more often called night crawlers." — Conservation Officer Graham, Centerville.

"Both the South and Middle Raccoon in Guthrie County are fairly good catfishing waters. The bait used is crawfish, shrimp, 'Charles Catfish Bait', and chick-

(Continued to Page 4, Column 1)

Catfish

(Continued from Page Three)

en blood."—Conservation Officer Sjoström, Stuart.

"The Raccoon River through Sac County and Calhoun County produces very, very good catfishing. The bait used is sour clam, chicken entrails, shrimp, and prepared catfish bait." — Conservation Officer Lille, Lake View.

"The Little Sioux in Clay County is the best river in my territory and is heavily fished in the Peterson, Linn Grove, and Sioux Rapids area. It produces good fishing as far north as Spencer and Everly. The largest catfish I have seen here weighed 10 pounds and four ounces.

"The west branch of the Des Moines River in Palo Alto County is not fished very much, but the few who do fish it for catfish have fine sport. One man I know caught 127 in one month last summer. The best stretch is from Rodman north through Emmetsburg and Graettinger. In the Des Moines River, clams are the favorite bait. Chicken blood is very successful here but is not used very much because it is hard to handle and is one of the better fly attractors of the smelly bait kind.

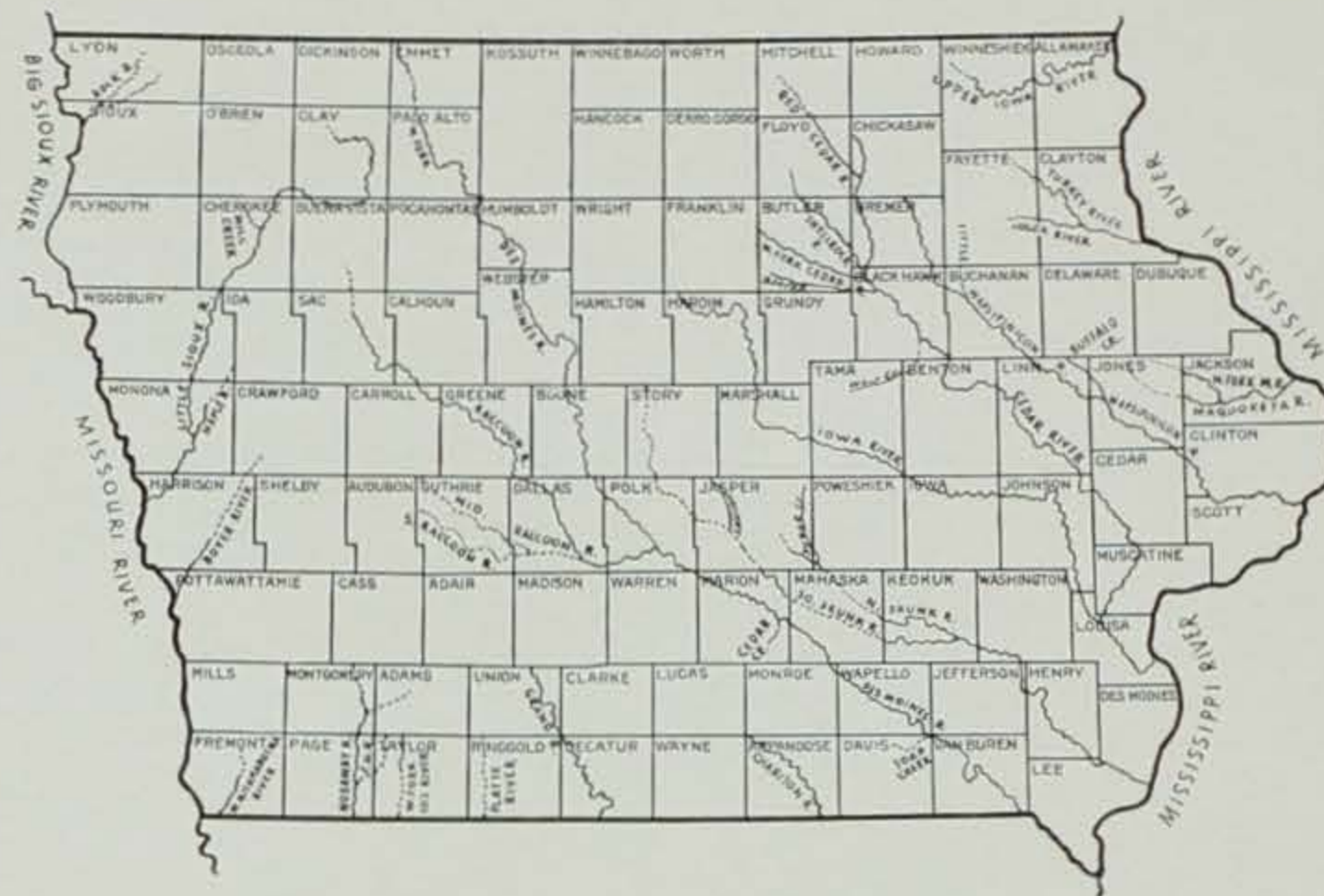
"A channel catfish on light tackle is a worthy opponent. In shallow water they frequently leap clear when hooked, and their rushes to free themselves must be experienced to be appreciated."—Conservation Officer Severson, Ruthven.

"Many times the individuals working in the packing houses use the intestinal works from hogs for bait. The best catfish are caught near the dams at Ottumwa and on the riffles. Fishing was very good until the high water recently." — Conservation Officer Scherf, Ottumwa.

"Many fellows have good luck by softening limburger cheese with hot water, adding an equal amount of hamburger. This bait is best when five to seven days old. Best catfishing is in Lake Hurst above the dam at Maquoketa. However, both the Wapsie and Maquoketa Rivers from the mouth through Clinton and Jackson Counties are very good."—Conservation Officer Banes, Maquoketa.

"Seven Mile Dam and Fourteen Mile Dam below Decorah are good; in fact, in the Decorah vicinity all the upper Iowa is good. The Big Cedar in Chickasaw County below the dam at Nashua, and the Little Cedar at the old Chickasaw Dam produce good catfishing. Congealed chicken blood is used mostly. The fisherman carries a small bucket of

Catfish Streams of Iowa



Iowa's principal catfish waters as reported by the fish and game conservation officers. Solid lines represent permanent catfish streams. Broken lines indicate excellent catfishing when water conditions are good.

blood fastened by a rope over his shoulder, uses a long Calcutta pole with reel and very large cork. Fisherman wades middle of stream, letting bait float 100 to 200 feet ahead of him downstream. The cork keeps the bait off the bottom and enables him to see his strikes. This is a sure fish getter."—Conservation Officer Baer, Cresco.

"The Wapsipinicon River through Buchanan County and the Cedar through Benton are both excellent streams for catfish. Chicken blood and intestines seem to be the most popular bait, with crawfish and minnows next in order. Very little prepared bait is used here."—Conservation Officer H. Rector, Independence.

"The best catfish streams in the order named in Butler County are: The Shellrock, below Greene, West Fork, and Beaver Creek, below Parkersburg. In Bremer County, the Cedar and Wapsie. In Fayette County, the Turkey River below Clermont. Chicken blood seems to be the best early bait, with sour clam the July and August favorite."—Conservation Officer Logan, Waverly.

"Catfishing is practically confined to the Sioux and Missouri Rivers in my territory. The Missouri is not as good as formerly since there has been so much work done there. The best fishing in it is during late July and August. The June rise usually spoils it until July. Unless fishing from a boat, the best spots are found at the tips of the pilings in the swift current. When conditions are right, fishing is good all along the Sioux and also in the ditch. A few cat are caught in the Upper Boyer and Maple River just south of Mapleton. The most popular bait seems to be pre-

pared bait. It consists of cheese skimmings with a little pimento mixed in. A treble hook is used."—Conservation Officer Rich, Dunlap.

"I am sending you the information wanted on catfishing waters. They are the Wapsipinicon and Cedar Rivers. Bait: Majority use live minnows. Have no recipes."—Conservation Officer Klinge, Davenport.

"Catfishing in my three rivers last year was poor. However, bullheads were abundant. This year the fishermen are having a lot better luck. The Skunk River in Washington County and the Iowa River in Johnson and Iowa Counties should provide good fishing if the water does not get too low."—Conservation Officer Sybil, Iowa City.

"The Wapsipinicon is the best catfish river in Linn County. The Cedar River is also good and is popular. The last couple of seasons fishing has not been as successful as in former years. In Linn County the Buffalo provides some catfishing. However, this stream is better for small-mouth bass. The Wapsipinicon and Maquoketa Rivers, as well as the north fork of the Maquoketa and the Buffalo, furnish some good catfishing in Jones County. We have two bait dealers here in Cedar Rapids who have sold nothing but clam for bait the last two seasons."—Conservation Officer Beckman, Cedar Rapids.

Fishing is the largest sports industry in the U. S., with hunting next, then golf, skating, tennis, baseball, skiing, and basketball. Fishermen spent \$875,000,000 for their sport in 1940.

Lizards have eyelids and ear openings; snakes do not,

Wars Come And Go But Fishin' Stays Forever

Wars come and go, nations rise and fall, but the fishing season goes on just the same.

If our present civilization should fade out of sight, men would still fish.

So, as the season comes around, we can be sure that millions of men will be tramping up and down the rivers and skimming over the lakes in the pursuit of the elusive finny tribe.

There is an ancient tradition that Seth, who according to the Biblical story of Genesis, was the son of Adam, taught the art of fishing to his sons. It was said that he engraved instructions about fishing on pillars, on which was also inscribed knowledge about mathematics, music, etc.

Hence, knowledge of these arts was preserved, and not wiped out by the flood, which once overwhelmed the world.

This modern, skeptical age may not believe such stories. But one of the world's most famous fishermen, Izaak Walton, in his noted book, "The Complete Angler", talks about fishing as a fine art. He says that a fish is more sharp sighted than any hawk, and watchful and timorous to an extreme degree. Also that to be a good fisherman takes hope and patience and natural gifts.

Fishing seems a very good pursuit for this restless age, because of this quality of patience which it develops. The good fisherman has to learn to wait. He has to acquire a quiet philosophy, which is willing to keep calm for a time until the fish get ready to bite. He learns to overcome his disappointment when the fish are not interested, and return at some future day with the same enthusiasm and a hope that they have changed their mood.

If our modern hurrying age could learn the fisherman's patient philosophy, it would control many habits that now cause trouble and grief. — The Mapleton Press.

Many dog authorities discourage summer clipping of long-haired dogs. A dog's coat protects him from sun and insects. Use a brush and comb instead of clippers.

Dogs perspire through the pads of their feet and the bare portions of their noses. They decrease body heat by drawing cool, fresh air into their lungs by rapid breathing.

The Llewellyn setter is a strain of English setter whose breeding traces back to R. Purcell Llewellyn of Shrewsbury, England,



By HAROLD B. BJORNSON
Assistant State Forester

This spring you have planted your new windbreak. In a few years it will look like your neighbor's—even, beautiful, healthy trees. It will shelter your home from icy blasts and give you a comforting sense of security. It will attract to your door gay-feathered birds. It will sing you the song of the pines during long winter nights.

Will it? Not if you let it fight for existence unaided.

The failure of many tree plantings, whether windbreak, woodlot, orchard, or other types, is traceable directly to the lack of a little attention at the proper time. A farmer cannot plant corn and then wait for it to mature. He must cultivate his fields thoroughly in order to eliminate the weeds and grasses that compete with his corn for food, moisture, and sunlight. The same principle must be kept in mind when caring for trees. If they are to survive and make their best growth, they must have little competition from grasses and weeds.

Careful cultivation is one good method of eliminating this competition. If the trees are on a slope, cultivation should be done at right angles to the slope in order to prevent erosion, and it must be done in such a manner that the roots of the trees are not disturbed.

The most desirable method of eliminating competition to young trees is by use of mulch. Mulch will prevent the growth of competitive vegetation and, in addition, will hold moisture. Several inches of old straw, hay, or similar material is satisfactory. It should be removed in the fall so that it will not harbor field mice, which might damage the young trees during the winter, and it should be replaced in the spring. Mulch is favored over cultivation on slopes, which are apt to erode if cultivated.

Trees must be protected from livestock. Adult trees are damaged and young trees are destroyed when livestock is allowed access to them. Trees must be protected from fire at all times.

If the weather is normal and your young trees are properly protected and cared for, you may expect good survival and growth. It is well to remember that a tree is similar to a corn plant, and it must be cared for until it can carry on without help.

Wild Flowers Thrive On Rocky Soil



A Blazing
Star on
the rocky
prairie land of
Gitchie
Manitou
State
Park

Flowers

(Continued from Page One)

All are often called Black-eyed Susans.

To these might be added the *Petalostemons*, whose tall, graceful stems terminating by a slender finger encircled by a ring of tiny white or purple flowers can often be seen on roadside banks or forgotten fence corners. The pink *Gaura* is a tall biennial blooming in late August along the edges of fields. Its flowers are not large, nor are they robust, but when seen in great numbers in the early morning, they are very pleasing.

No one in Iowa needs to be told about sunflowers, for while sunflowers can and do grow on poor soil in times of great drouth, they have a pronounced preference for what Iowa has plenty of—namely, rich soil and sufficient moisture during summer.

There seems to be a preference for orange rather than yellow, and perhaps for this reason *Asclepias tuberosa*, or butterfly weed, has been welcomed to our gardens. Of great endurance, it can stand anything but cultivation, which is true of many of our wild flowers. From *Asclepias* to the bonesets, or thoroughworts, is but a step, but most of these prefer moister locations.

While many of our prairie wild flowers are very robust, not all are of this nature. Probably the closed gentian could at one time be found quite easily in parts of

Iowa, but only occasionally does one exist on the right of way of some remote branch line. The downy gentian, *G. Puberula*, which is so hard to transplant without taking a lot of territory along with it, prefers clay soil very dry in midsummer. Practically none of the very attractive relatives of the gentians that live back east can be found in Iowa.

Only a few of the *Baptisias* are natives of Iowa, and these are confined to the south central counties. Both the white and cream-colored varieties can be found on clay soils. Don't try to dig one out, as you will be late for lunch, but seeds are freely produced. There are still plenty of wild *Delphiniums* to be found, with the white preferring dry soil and the purple a more moist situation. Neither make good garden subjects.

Iowa does have a rather wide range of prairie wild flowers, but unfortunately there is not available an informative piece of literature, such as Gates' "The Wild Flowers of Kansas", so that we might know them better. While our prairie wild flowers have marked persistence in maintaining themselves under varying and adverse conditions, the conditions under which a variety can perpetuate its stand are not very favorable. As a result, colonies of wild flowers often disappear quite mysteriously, and sometimes they suddenly appear in the same mysterious fashion. Keep an eye open for prairie wild flowers.

Snakes

(Continued from Page One)

native to Iowa, three of which are poisonous, all three belonging to the rattlesnake family. Since this booklet was written in 1926, another poisonous species, the copperhead, has been found at least four times. Guthrie listed the prairie rattlesnake among the poisonous species. It is doubtful if this snake exists in the state at the present time.

Guthrie listed three poisonous species, the massasauga (rare), a rattlesnake; the prairie rattler (of doubtful occurrence at the present time); and the banded rattlesnake, or timber rattlesnake (most common poisonous species)—and we must now include in the poisonous list the copperhead.

The harmless ones included: Arny's ring-neck snake; common hog-nose snake, spreading adder, or blowing viper (also called by many other fear-inspiring names); Western hog-nose snake; blue racer; black-snake; fox-snake; pilot black-snake; bull-snake; Say's king-snake; milk-snake; Graham's water-snake, common water snake; DeKay's snake; red-bellied snake; Virginia's snake; brown-snake; striped swamp-snake; Western ribbon-snake; plains garter-snake; common garter-snake; and the red-barred garter-snake.

About half the snakes native to Iowa lay eggs. The eggs are tough and leathery, ranging in size from that of the bull-snake, which is over two inches long, down to, according to Guthrie, the egg of the smooth green-snake, which is less than half an inch in length. The eggs are concealed in a moist situation, such as in decayed leaves, vegetation, decaying wood, under logs, or occasionally in moist sand. The incubation period may last as long as eight weeks, and as soon as the mother lays the eggs, she abandons them. The young, upon hatching, immediately begin to fend for themselves.

In species that do not lay eggs, the young are born alive, and within a few hours or even minutes, they leave their mothers and enter upon the serious business of finding their own food. The young of species that are born alive are more numerous than those of the egg-layers. Garter-snakes have been known to give birth to as many as 75 at a single birth.

Snakes hibernate during the winter months. With the first frosty nights of autumn, they begin to hunt for a suitable place to spend the winter. With the first really cold nights, the reptiles crawl into a fissure in the rocks or down below frost-line in a rubbish heap, or even into an abandoned ground hog or ground squirrel den, and hibernate. They

(Continued to Page 6, Column 1)

Snakes

(Continued from Page Five)

often den up together in rather large numbers. If a colony of hibernating snakes is brought into a warm room in the winter time, they will soon revive and become active.

Garter-snakes are the last to go into winter quarters and the first to appear in the spring. Sometimes they emerge too early and are overtaken by a cold snap. They may then be found far from their "bedroom", numbed with cold and almost unable to move. Around rocky ledges in the early spring snakes are sometimes very numerous, the reptiles having emerged from the deep, warm fissures in the rock, and having not yet spread out to their summer feeding grounds. The bull-snakes, fox-snakes, and some other large snakes commonly seen along the pavement in the spring have recently come out of their winter quarters and are enjoying the warmth of the sun reflected on the pavement.

Hibernation over, snakes soon begin to search for food. They get fat and lazy. Then they shed their skins. The skin becomes dull and lusterless. Even the skin covering the eyeballs becomes opaque, and the reptiles can scarcely see. The shedding starts around the lips and nose. The snake catches the broken skin on some rough projection and crawls right out, turning the skin inside out. The abundance of snakes in a given area is often revealed by the number of shed skins in evidence.

Food of snakes is varied, but consists principally of minnows, frogs, insects, worms, other snakes, small mammals, birds, and eggs. The food is taken whole. Snakes are peculiar in having the jaws hinged in such a way that they can swallow objects enormous in comparison to the reptile's size. The prey is first grasped firmly by both jaws. Next both upper and lower jaws at one side of the head hold

tightly while the jaws on the other side are thrust ahead to grasp a new hold. The jaws then in a walking motion alternate and force the food down the snake's throat.

The number of "false facts" and legends about snakes reflects the tremendous amount of interest in them that people have. Some of these false legends are exploded as follows:

Milk-snakes do not milk cows. No cow would stand still and let a sharp-toothed snake go through the processes that would be necessary to secure milk.

There is no such snake as a "hoop-snake". This snake, according to popular legend, is supposed to put its venomous tail in its mouth, making a wheel of itself, and roll along. No serpent in Iowa or any place else acts in such a manner.

The ends of a snake's tongue are not poison fangs. The tongue is merely a sense organ.

A rattlesnake's age does not correspond to the number of rattles it has. Two or three or even four rattles may be added in a single season, one each time the skin is shed. After the rattle gets long, hard usage breaks off some of the rattles, and often snakes entitled to eight or 10 have only two or three.

Iowa water-snakes are not poisonous. The poisonous water-snake is the cotton-mouth moccasin. There has never been one of these found in Iowa. Our two water-snakes are the common water-snake and the Graham's water-snake, both harmless.

Possibly the most widely circulated of the false stories is the story of young snakes running down their mother's throat for protection.

In the first place, the mother leaves the young ones immediately after birth, paying no further attention to them. In the second place, the gastric juices in a snake's stomach would immediately destroy the young. In the third place, it would take a family of 25 or 30 young consid-

Bull-Snake Out For A Sunning



A Bull-snake, recently out of hibernation, enjoys the sun on a gravel road.

erable time to crawl single file down the mother's throat. This time elapse would allow both the young and the parent to be destroyed by their enemy. Mother Nature does not operate this way. She is wiser. She has taught her children to run away from danger or to hide from it.

These are only a few of the mistaken beliefs about snakes. To list them all would take a sizable volume.

Even though many of the snakes are insect eaters and many feed on rodents, their economic value has sometimes been over-exaggerated by their friends. If they were numerous enough, they would control the ground squirrel, field mouse, or mole populations, but they are not. If there were thousands where there now is one, perhaps they would have an important part in the control of grasshoppers and other insects.

In the normal agricultural processes, many are destroyed. The disk, the harrow, the plow, and the mower are all enemies of snakes. The hero worship tendency of the human race, that applauds when a six-foot man sadistically breaks the back of a 14-inch garter-snake, helps keep the population in check. They also have many natural enemies.

In some few localities under favorable circumstances, reptiles do have some effect on rodent control. Many Iowa farmers purchase from small boys bull-snakes, milk-snakes, black-snakes, fox-snakes, and others to release in their fields or in their granaries for this purpose. Some farmers wisely will not allow a single one killed on their property.

For the same reason that they are not of great economic value, (lack of numbers), the harm they do is not great. Their enemies say they eat ground-nesting birds, their eggs, and their young. That

is true. Some of the tree-climbing snakes even climb trees to rob birds' nests. Instances of bull-snakes' working a bank swallow colony for food have been reported many times by competent and honest observers. Many owners of outdoor fish ponds have had fish cleaned out by garter-snakes or water-snakes. Plains garter-snakes sometimes get so numerous in the lakes and marshes of northwestern Iowa that the annual crop of frogs is materially reduced. Possibly the most important single phase of snake damage is the destruction of fishworms, which agronomists tell us are of great value in preparing soil for agriculture.

The wisest viewpoint for us to take is that snakes are part of Mother Nature's panorama. They are interesting, to say the least. Leave them alone. Start if you must when one surprises you, but let it go on its way as a part of Mother Nature's plan.

This is exactly the view that is taken in Iowa's state parks. Except for poisonous species, which are and should be destroyed whenever found, the conservation officers in charge of the state parks are instructed to take a compassionate view.

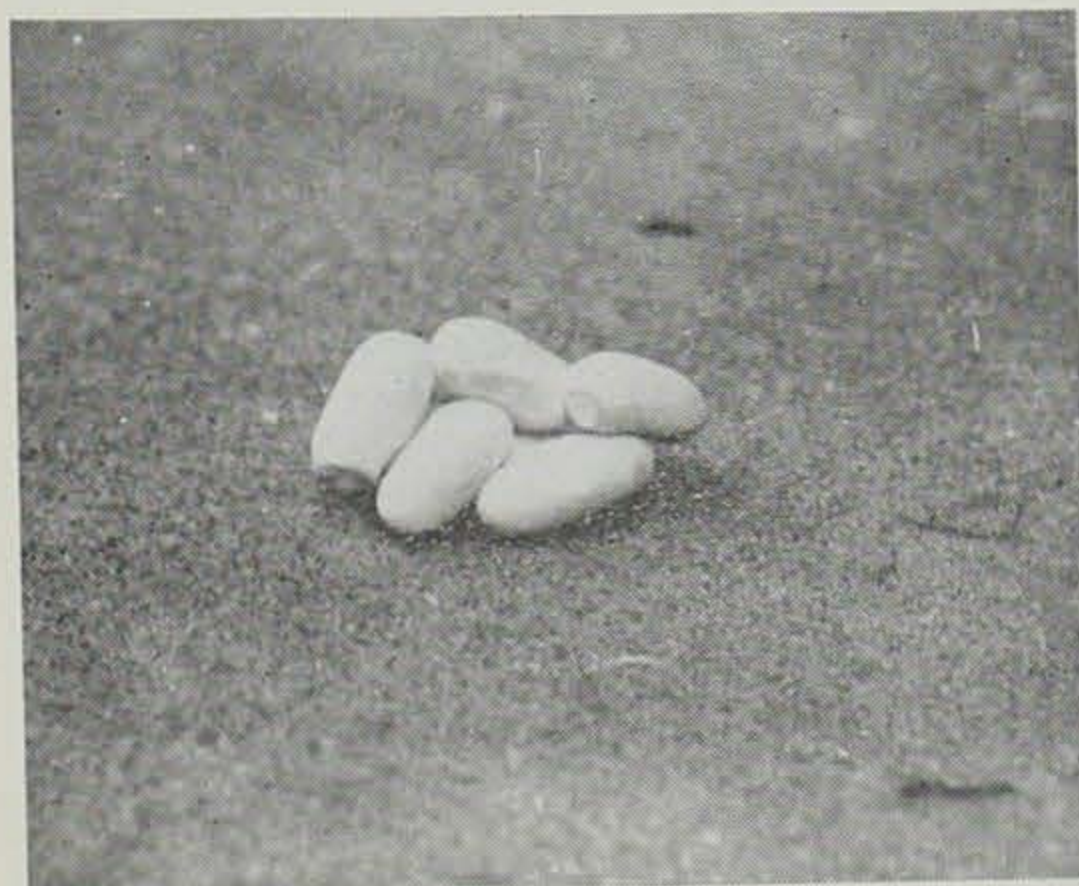
Ancient cave pictographs prove that dogs have been kept in domestication by men since prehistoric times.

Smelt get their name from an old Anglo Saxon word, "smoelt", which meant smooth or shining.

Ground hogs are herbivorous rodents and seldom eat meat in the wild.

An estimated 123,000 rats cause an annual loss of \$189,000,000 in the United States.

Fox-Snake Eggs Adhere in Clusters



About half the Iowa snakes lay eggs. These Fox-snake eggs, about an inch and a quarter long, were found in a decaying stump.

WARDENS' ❖ TALES ❖

SHOP TALK FROM THE FIELD

Late in the afternoon of the day before a triple holiday, a conservation officer apprehended a fisherman with seven very short catfish. The fish, as they were caught, were placed in a lard pail carefully concealed in the tall grass. Fisherman, conservation officer, lard pail, and short fish all proceeded to a nearby justice court for an accounting. Court was held in a frame, tarpaper-roofed building, the windows of which were being closed as the visitors arrived, the J. P. explaining briskly, "Let's get down to business. I'm just leaving on a three-day vacation."

In spite of the heat and the justice's hurry to leave, the hearing proceeded smoothly. The defendant plead guilty, paid his fine, and the three principals stepped out onto the street. The door was carefully locked, and the three went on their respective ways. But the fish in the lard pail forgot to follow.

The J. P.'s three-day holiday was spent in 100 degree temperature. Where is not recorded, but it is agreed by the local citizenry that it was among bad company, for upon his return, words and noises issued from his office never before heard on Main Street, and to this day he is known as J. P. Rabbits because of the distinct twitching of his olfactory organ.

—WT—

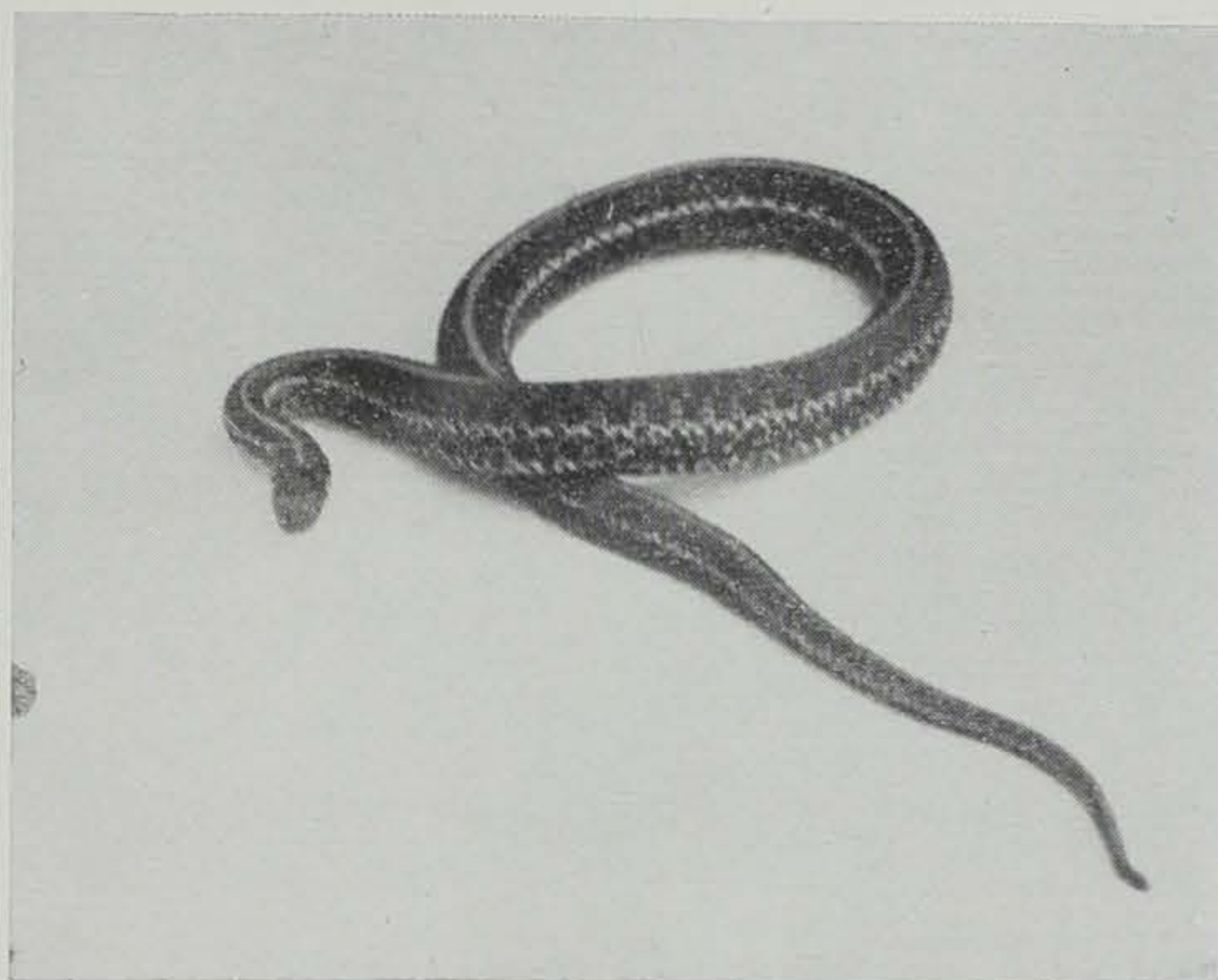
Conservation Officer Dan Nichols chronicles the following busy 24 hours:

"Drove 40 miles after 9 p. m. to investigate a report of illegal seining. Three men were loading seine into a boat. After a freezing wait on the lake shore, the fishermen returned at 3 a. m. Seized 150 pounds of illegal fish, directed violators to appear in court the next afternoon. Drove home. In bed at 5 a. m.

Up at 8. Drove 20 miles to supply licenses. Returned for a court hearing at 10 on an illegal clamming case. Drove 30 miles for trial of illegal seiners apprehended the night before. Drove 30 miles home, took confiscated fish to orphans' home, and was unlacing my shoes as the phone rang. More illegal fishing.

Put patrol boat in the Mississippi, went 10 miles down the river, arrested illegal hoop net fishermen at nine o'clock. Returned home. In bed at 10:30. The last echo of a busy night and day was, "Dan, you promised to put up the screens for me today."

Garter-Snake Most Common In Iowa



Plains Garter-snakes are abundant in the Northwest Iowa lakes region.

Conservation Officer Wogen tells this story:

Mac and Bill went catfishing and hooked a catfish that smashed Mac's leader and got away. In town both fishermen declared the fish weighed all of eight pounds. The same day Ward hooked and landed a catfish, still carrying Mac's hook and leader. Later, when asked how much it weighed, he said, "It was too small to keep. I threw it back."

—WT—

A bunch of hunters were gathered around the stove at Thurman yarning of their exploits of field and stream. A bewhiskered Missouri River bottoms patriarch pulled the zipper with, "Well, boys, I never shot but one bird in my life, and that was a rabbit, and I killed it with a club."

Wise To Remember Your .22 Rifle Is More Than A Toy

The .22 rifle has furnished real sport to more people than any other kind of gun. But the .22 rifle is not a toy—it is a real gun and must be treated with respect. There are several simple things you must remember in playing safe!

First, last and always, treat your rifle as if it were loaded, even when you feel sure it is empty. Keep it empty and wherever possible with the action open except when you are ready to shoot. Do this whether the rifle is in your hands or in a car. And at home, be sure to keep it empty and out of reach of small children.

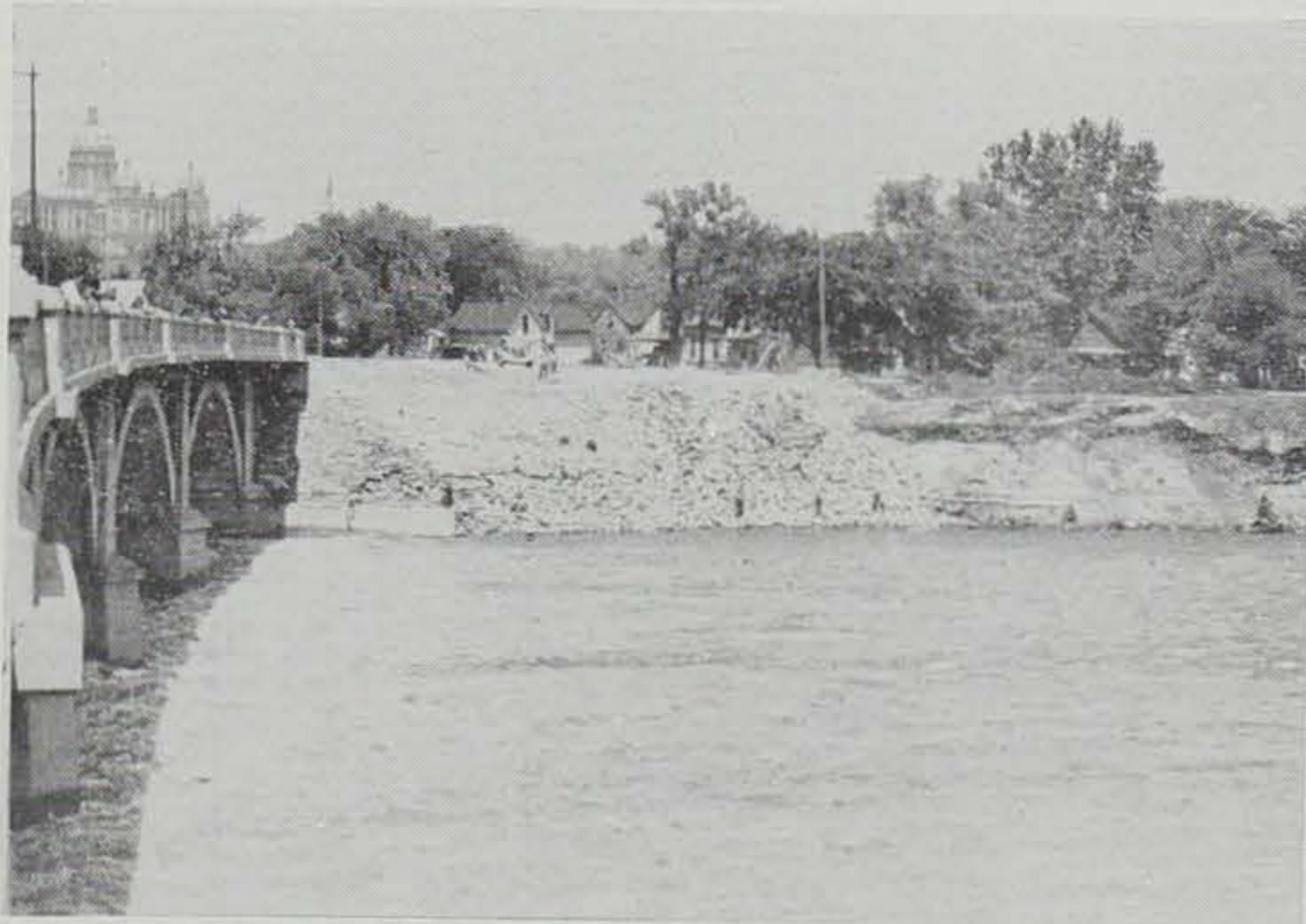
Before you pull the trigger, know what you are shooting at.

Shoot against a solid background—never into the sky or through brush where your bullet might hit someone or something you do not see.

Remember that a .22 will carry up to a mile, and that a bullet may glance off at an angle from flat hard surfaces, twigs or water. For the same reason it is best never to shoot at bottles or other hard objects.

And to you younger riflemen: Why not call Dad's attention to the Ten Commandments of Safety, and talk over this safety matter with him. Nothing would offer him more convincing proof of your fitness to be trusted with a gun.—Sporting Arms and Ammunition Mfg. Institute.

City Bridges Provide Good Catfishing Spots



Municipal sewage disposal plants have in the last few years made available near cities and towns some fine stretches of clean odorless rivers, free from oil and pollution.

Green County Sportsmen End Active Year

By SAM HYDE
State Conservation Officer

The officers of the Greene County Conservation League for the year 1941 were: President, Earl Peterson; Secretary-Treasurer, Wm. Lyons; Vice-President, Richard Seaman; Board of Directors, Roy Henderson, Forest McDonald, Tom Ferrell, and L. J. McCaffrey. The Club carried out the following program in 1941:

Game Management: 15,000 trees and shrubs were planted on 11 different farms in the county where the farmer cooperated with the club in a program of game cover planting. This planting was done by the farmers with help furnished by the club; also six Game Cover Packets were planted in the county. One thousand two weeks old pheasant chicks were received from the State Game Farm and were held in rearing pens for a period of eight weeks. At the end of this period there were 815 pheasants released on 25 farms in the county where the farmer cooperated in the game bird program. The total cost of rearing the birds was \$48.44. The pens were located on the Greene County Farm and were taken care of by the superintendent. Five raccoon were bought and released to the wild on the Raccoon River in the county.

Fish Management: Two acres of land on Hardin Creek, on which was located an artesian well, were leased for the building of a fish rearing pond. A dam was built which created a pond of about one acre. The pond was stocked with 8,000 small-mouth bass fry from the Lake View Hatchery, and at the end of 110

(Continued to Page 8, Column 4)



By FLOYD H. DAVIS
U. S. Game Mgt. Agent

In a publication titled "Local Names of Migratory Game Birds", published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Mr. W. L.



McAtee, assistant in charge of food habits research, Fish and Wildlife Service, has this to say in regard to vernacular names of migratory birds:

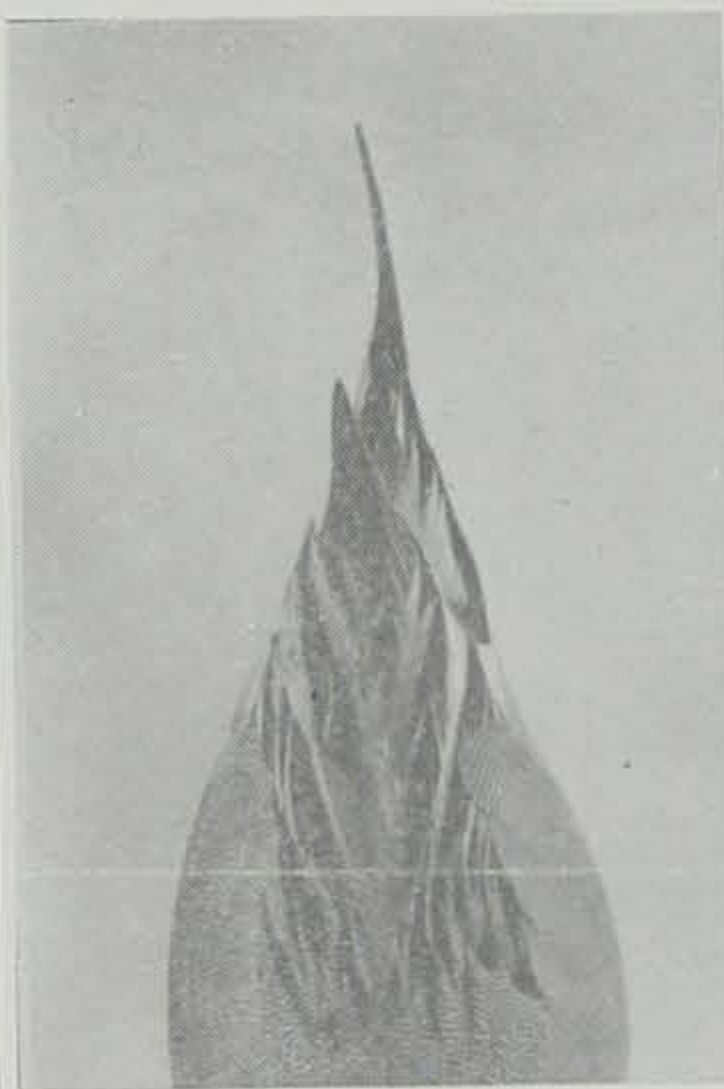
"The United States probably is as fertile a field for local vernacular names as is to be found in the world; not only has there been for a long time a sufficient supply of game to attract a veritable army of gunners, but these hunters have been drawn from nearly all of the numerous racial elements of our population. Names either derived or bodily transferred from all of the principal European languages have become part of the vernacular of American hunters, and a number of the names used by various tribes of Indians and Eskimos have been adopted. A tendency for immigrants to this country to colonize has led to the prevailing use in various localities of languages other than English or of dialects derived in part from such languages. This condition necessarily influenced the bird names, and evidences are found of this process of naming, particularly in the Pennsylvania Dutch communities, in those parts of Missouri settled by Germans, and in the extensive Acadian, or French, parishes of Louisiana.

"Not only are there geographic and racial reasons for heterogeneity in our local bird nomenclature, but our gunners seem to delight in inventing new names for the object of their sport. Fourteen names for the golden plover in one state, namely Massachusetts, 16 for the surf scoter in Maine, and 92 distinct names for a single species, the ruddy duck, in the United States and Canada, illustrate American prolificness in nomenclature."

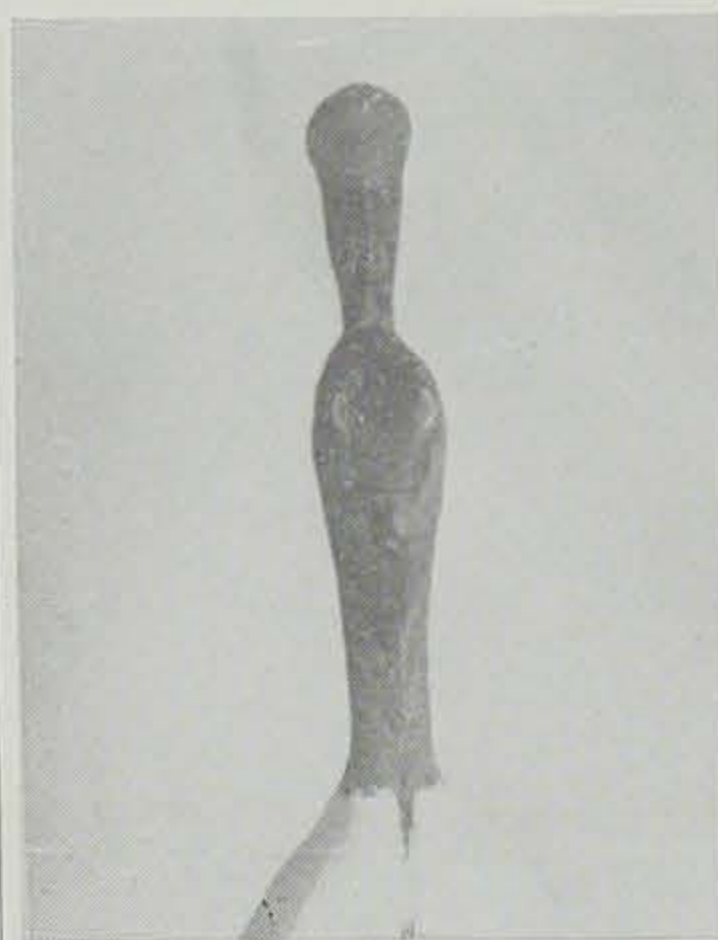
The following list gives the proper common name of some of the ducks and geese found throughout Iowa, followed by the name or names in general use:

American Merganser: Fish Duck, Saw Bill, Sheldrake (This term has no reference to shells

Physical Traits Responsible For Many Bird Names



The common names of many birds, such as Whip-poor-will, Bob-White and others, come from the call-note. However, most common names, as in the case of the Pintail or Spike, come from some physical characteristic of the bird.



The obvious reason why *Spatula clypeata* is popularly called Spoonbill, Shoveler, Spoonie and Broadbill.

or mollusks, but means drakes dappled or spotted with white.)

Red Breasted Merganser: Fish Duck, Saw Bill, Sheldrake.

Hooded Merganser: Little Fish Duck, Little Saw Bill, Little Sheldrake.

Mallard: Greenhead, Greenhead Mallard, Mallard Duck, Wild Mallard.

Black Duck: Black Mallard, Blackie or Blacks, Niggerduck.

Gadwall: Gray Duck, Gaddy, Widgeon.

Baldpate; Widgeon, Baldy, Pearlbill (The only place I ever heard the latter name used to

identify the Baldpate was in northern Iowa, Spirit Lake area.)

Green-winged Teal: Greenwing, Teal or common Teal, Teal Duck.

Blue-winged Teal: Bluewing, Teal, Teal Duck.

Shoveler: Spoonbill, Spoonie, Broadbill, Trash Duck.

Pintail: Sprig, Sprig Tail, Spike.

Wood Duck: Woody, Summer Duck, Squealer.

Redhead: Redhead.

Canvasback: Canvasback, Can, Canny.

Greater Scaup Duck: Big Bluebill, Lake Bluebill.

Lesser Scaup Duck: Little Bluebill, River Bluebill.

Ring-necked Duck: Blackjack, Jack, Ringbill.

Goldeneye: Whistler, Whistling, Iceduck.

Bufflehead: Butterball, Butterduck.

Ruddy Duck: Butterball, Ruddy, Bristle Tail, Bullneck.

Lesser Snow Goose: White Brant, Brant, Wavey.

Blue Goose: Brant, Blue Brant, White Headed Goose.

White-Fronted Goose: Specklebelly, Speck, Brant.

Canada Goose: Honker, Canada Honker, White Cheek.

Hutchins Goose: Canadian Goose, Little Honker.

Pittman-Robertson state aid funds are limited to game restoration work.

Sportsmen

(Continued from Page Seven)

days, 2,422 bass fingerling that averaged five inches in length were taken out of the pond and stocked in the Raccoon River in Greene County by club members.

A stream improvement program for and on the Raccoon River in Greene County was worked out and was to be carried out in 1942, but because of the war, it has been postponed for the duration.

Education: Meetings on the needs of conservation in the county were held with the schools, Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, Farm Bureau, and civic organizations.

Finance: Trap shooting grounds were leased by the club, and trap shooting was an activity for the purpose of raising money. The treasurer's report showed receipts of \$980.73 and expenditures of \$897.72, leaving a balance of \$83.01 on January 1, 1942. All of this money was spent for the carrying on of the club's conservation activities. The club had a membership of 515 members in 1941.

The officers elected for the year 1942 are: Earl Peterson, President; Wm. Lyons, Secretary, both of Jefferson; Treasurer, Gene Try, Farlin. The board members are Tom Ferrel, Farlin; Forest McDonald, Jefferson; Nic. Curtis, Scranton, and Chet Callaway, Jefferson.

Iowa Lakes Provide Good Fishing

It takes many strings like this to make up the 300,000,000 pounds of game fish taken in the United States each year by sports fishermen.

