

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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NUMBER 1



Having been driven out of the Dakotas by a local freeze, a bunch of mallards decided to take the day off and help out with the first duck flight.

## Duck Flight Fables, or Who Saw Those Mallards Go By?

By BRUCE F. STILES

Chief, Division of Fish and Game

Once upon a time away back before old Chief Waubonsie had worn the varnish off his first camp stool, young Geronimo, pulling back the buffalo hide flap on the tepee, flopped down on the radio bench and said, "Mishe mokwa poca a poco s' il vous plait", which in Comanche means, "Let's invent a myth." Not having invented a myth for quite some time, old Waubonsie was in a good mood for myth-inventing, so he called in the head medicine-man and all the witch doctors, and locking themselves in the tepee, they started in.

After going through 12 hours of heavy mental gymnastics (this was contrary to both the local union rules and the Fair Trades Practice Act), the old chief got a cramp in his cerebellum and they were taking time out when in came old Iagoo, the great boaster, with a duck hunting story that made even these old disciples of Ananias blush. The story gave

them an idea, and after checking through an old Sears and Roebuck catalogue and calling the U. S. Patent Office, they found out that the duck flight myth had not yet been invented and that upon payment of three beaver hides and a bag of wampum, they could get a copyright.

It seems that old Nokomis had had a lot of trouble getting little Pocahontas to pick the maize, and as Nokomis was busy on her own account what with making application at the trading post for her old man's basic "A" gas ration book and knitting moccasins for the local Red Cross, the maize was still in the field down by the shores of Gitche Gumee, the big marsh.

It happened that Captain John Smith, elated over his winnings in a game of Chinese Checkers, decided that he should make some appropriate gesture, and calling all the settlers together in front of the stockade he announced that the

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## You Can Catch 'Em, But Can You Identify Your Fish?

### Rare Floating Bogs Found In Iowa's Rice Lake

By L. F. TELLIER  
Conservation Officer

Everyone likes to lie in the grass on a balmy afternoon and watch the clouds drift across the sky before the refreshing breezes of early summer. This is so common that we spend little time thinking about it and merely relax and enjoy ourselves.

But suppose that you were dreaming on a knoll in Rice Lake State Park overlooking the lake and were jolted back to reality by suddenly becoming aware that the shoreline was moving in from across the lake and closing up all the open water that you had been viewing. This is the experience of many of the people who visit Rice Lake State Park, located in Worth and Winnebago counties, and see for the first time the floating bogs.

These bogs are living islands of marsh vegetation and vary in size from small islands a few feet in diameter to as large as 40 acres in area. They drift lazily back and forth before the changing summer breezes or roll and toss angrily at the stormy winds. Bogs of this type are very unusual, and these at Rice Lake are the most important and extensive found in Iowa.

Wave and wind action seem to have very little "breaking up" effect on the bogs as they travel across the lake before the prevailing winds, opening some areas of water and closing others.

In 1900 Rice Lake lay in a basin extending from Lake Mills almost

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### Superintendent of Fisheries Describes Sunfish Family

By E. B. SPEAKER  
Superintendent of Fisheries

Perhaps no other sport is enjoyed by a greater number of enthusiastic Iowans than fishing, yet many fishermen are unable to identify a large number of the finny creatures they catch. Most of us know a sunfish, crappie or bass, and for all practical purposes this is sufficient to ward off the clutches of the law. There are anglers, however, who like to know specifically what kind of fish they have, and it is for this group the article has been expressly prepared.

When the forces of old Mother Nature were shifting and gradually shaping the features of the great midwestern prairies, Iowa was geologically divided into several dominant areas. The northeastern corner is referred to as the "driftless area", a region not invaded by the glaciers. The north central portion was covered by the Wisconsin drift, and when the ice melted, many lakes and marshes were left.

The southeastern corner is called the Illinoian, and the southern portion of the state is known as the Kansan drift area. There are others, but this will suffice to show the composite make-up which is responsible, by and large, for the restriction of the ranges of certain fishes to limited areas in the state.

Studies by early and present day scientists indicate the existence of 25 fish families in Iowa. Reports and keys published by Aitken, Bailey, Hubbs, and others,

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**Fish Species**

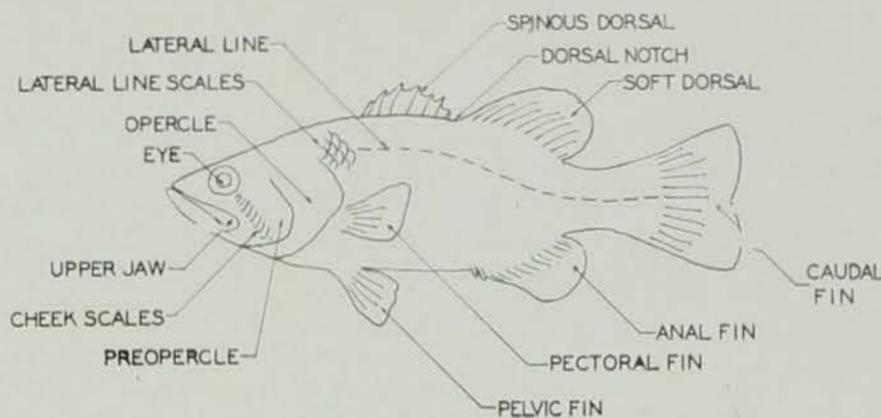
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list some 140 species and subspecies of fishes. These represent a diversity of structural types ranging from the eel-like parasitic lampreys through the peculiarly specialized shark-like paddlefish, the armored sturgeons, the colorful trout, the naked catfish, the voracious pike, the spiny bass, sunfish, and perch to the highly modified sculpin, stickleback, and burbot.

The minnow family represents the largest group of fishes in the state and comprises about one-third of the total number of species. Minnows can be identified with few exceptions, by the single soft fin near the middle of the back, which has nine or fewer rays. The introduced carp is a minnow which has a saw-like spine and many soft rays. Most of the other fishes have a double fin, called the spinous and soft dorsal. There are about 48 species of minnows known from Iowa.

The sunfish family is one of the most important, since it is general in distribution and comprises a

**Use This Chart of The Typical Fish As You Follow This Article**



good share of the fish taken. Other species which are commonly confused may be treated in subsequent articles, but for this issue let us concentrate on the **Centrarichidae** or sunfish family.

Some of the sunfishes are unimportant to the angler, while others represent a substantial part of his annual catch. The range is wide, from the orange-spotted sunfish, which rarely exceeds two and one-half to three inches, to the old largemouth bass, which has attained a weight of eight to 10 pounds in Iowa. Many anglers have not realized that the largemouth and smallmouth bass are not true bass at all, but members of the sunfish family. The only true bass in Iowa are the white or silver bass and the yellow bass. Crappies are also members of the sunfish family and represent an important role in our fishing, since they are found in virtually all waters.

Of the 12 members of the sunfish family, the green and orange-spotted sunfishes are most abundant. There are few, if any, streams or lakes where these species are not found. They are extremely prolific and have the faculty of being able to adapt themselves to virtually all conditions.

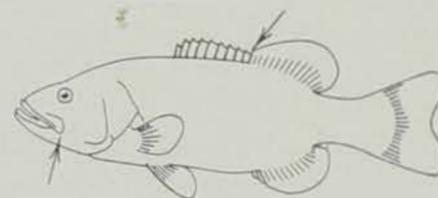
Don't be surprised if you find a sunfish you cannot clearly identify from the descriptions given here. The chances are 100 to one that it is not a new species, but a hybrid, or a cross between two different sunfishes. Hybridization is very common in sunfishes, especially the smaller members of the family. We have no record in our files, however, of a cross between the largemouth and smallmouth bass.

A large majority of anglers identify fish by their color. Perhaps this is because most fishes are highly colored, especially during the breeding season. Unfortunately color is usually a poor method of identification and should be used only as a guide. The reason for this statement is that fishes frequently change color in various environments and at different seasons of the year.

The color pattern of many fishes is remarkably similar. To the

eye, however, they appear markedly different. Actually it is not always color alone that enables you to identify the fish you are examining, but the shape and other physical characters you subconsciously recognize. Color has been mentioned in the description of some of the species for your guidance, but should only be used for the purpose of identification when other characters are not markedly outstanding.

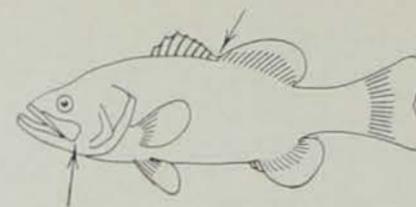
Clear-cut external characters usually exist and should be used to identify fish. These characters rarely fail and are used by the scientist and layman alike. Follow the descriptions given here carefully. Refer frequently to the sunfish diagrams prepared by Dr. Louis A. Krumholz of the Michigan Institute for Fisheries Research, and the writer. You should experience little difficulty in properly identifying all the members of the sunfish family in Iowa.



**SMALLMOUTH BASS**  
(*Micropterus dolomieu dolomieu*)

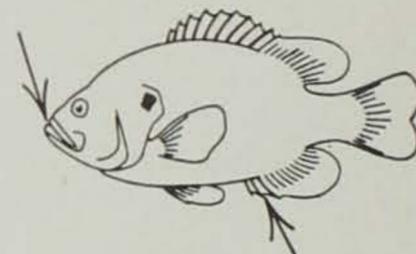
The smallmouth may easily be distinguished from the largemouth by the following characteristics: The maxillary or upper jaw bone rarely extends beyond the center of the eye; the spinous portion of the dorsal fin is gently curved, without a deep notch between the spinous and soft portions; the scales are smaller, usually 70 to 80 along the lateral line and 14 to 18 rows of scales on the cheek from the eye to the preopercle or gill cover; there is no prominent dark stripe along the body; the color pattern consists of vertical dark brownish bars. Color, usually greenish-brown or bronze.

The United States spends almost \$100,000,000 a year for specialized foods, remedies, supplies, and veterinarian services for dogs.



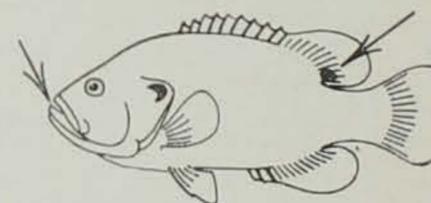
**LARGEMOUTH BASS**  
(*Huro salmoides*)

The maxillary or jaw bone extends beyond the center of the eye. The spinous part of the dorsal fin is more angulate, and there is a deep notch between the spinous and soft portions of that fin. The scales are larger than the smallmouth's; there are usually 58 to 69 scales along the lateral line and nine to 12 rows of scales on the cheek from the eye to the preopercle or gill cover. There is usually a dark stripe along the body. Color, dark green or silvery green.



**WARMOUTH BASS**  
(*Chaenobryttus coronarius*)

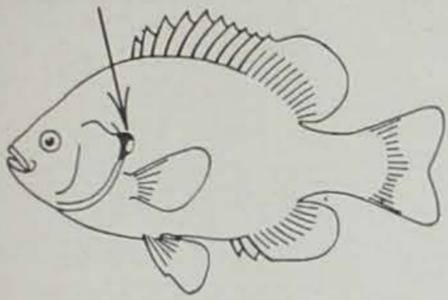
Warmouth and rock bass are usually confused by the angler. They may be easily separated, however, since the warmouth bass has three anal spines and the rock bass has six. The mouth is large and there is a patch of small teeth on the tongue of the warmouth which clearly distinguishes it from the six species of *Lepomis* listed below. In Iowa the warmouth is found only in and near the Mississippi River.



**GREEN SUNFISH**  
(*Lepomis cyanellus*)

The green sunfish occasionally reaches a length of six inches or more but is usually found breeding at four inches or less, and is consequently of minor importance to the angler. Like the rock bass and warmouth bass, it has a large mouth. The pectoral fins of the green sunfish are short and broadly rounded. It is usually dark green or brownish-green in color and can be quickly distinguished by the definite black blotch at the base of the posterior rays of the dorsal fin. The anal fin has a white or pinkish margin. It is one of the dominate fishes in the streams and ponds of the state.

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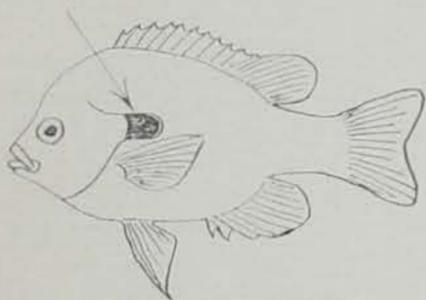
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### PUMPKINSEED OR COMMON SUNFISH (*Lepomis gibbosus*)

The pumpkinseed is easily distinguished from the other members of the family by a bright, semi-circular, orange-red spot on the gill cover flap. There are usually 39 to 44 scales on the lateral line. The pectoral fins are long and pointed. The sides are brilliantly covered with brown, orange and red spots, and there is no dark blotch on the soft dorsal fin. Adults reach a length of eight inches or more. Pumpkinseeds are common in the Dickinson County lakes, in Clear Lake, and in the Mississippi River, but elsewhere in the state they are rare or absent. Orange-spotted sunfish, which are found everywhere, are frequently, but incorrectly, called pumpkinseeds.

### SHELLCRACKER (*Lepomis microlophus*)

The shellcracker, also known as redear sunfish, is rarely found in the waters of the state and is apparently confined to the Mississippi River. It is closely related to the pumpkinseed sunfish, from which it may be distinguished by the bright scarlet margin on the gill cover and the scales in the lateral line, which number only from 34 to 38. The pectoral fins are long and sharply pointed.

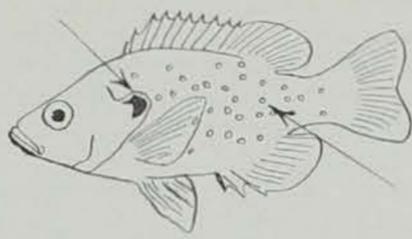


### LONGEAR SUNFISH (*Lepomis megalotis*)

The longear sunfish is also rare in Iowa and is apparently confined to the eastern tributaries of the Mississippi River. It attains a length of from five to six inches. It is one of the most brilliantly colored of the sunfish family. It can be distinguished from the other sunfish by the especially long tip or "ear" on the opercular flap or gill cover, which is sometimes narrowly bordered with white.

The color is olive, sides spotted with orange and emerald, cheeks light olive to orange with wavy streaks of emerald, soft dorsal and anal fins usually pale orange. From the orange-spotted sunfish the longear is most easily recog-

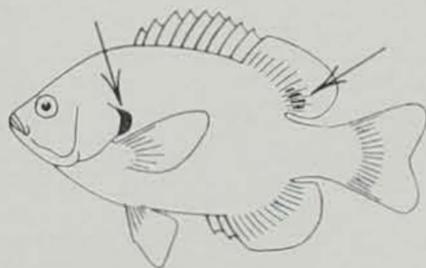
nized by the short bluntish gill-rakers (projections from the anterior face of the first gill arches).



### ORANGE-SPOTTED SUNFISH (*Lepomis humilis*)

The orange-spotted sunfish is the smallest sunfish in the state, reaching a maximum length of about four inches and a usual length of from two and one-half to three inches. Although too small for food, its brilliant colors make it an attractive aquarium fish. Because of the tremendous numbers in ponds, abandoned gravel pits and streams throughout the state, it is often found on the small boy's stringer.

It can usually be identified by its small size and brilliant coloration. The color is light olive, the sides heavily flecked with yellow and greenish-blue spots; the belly is dark yellow or orange; the sides are covered with 20 to 30 bright orange spots, usually four or five brilliant orange bars on the jaw and gill cover. The fins, particularly during the breeding season, are pink or scarlet. The females are much less colorful than the males, but the spots tend to be dark brown and in extremely sharp contrast with the ground color of the sides. Unlike the last species, the gill-rakers are relatively slender and elongate.

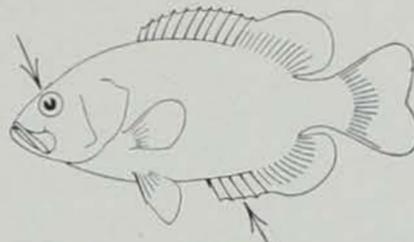


### BLUEGILL (*Lepomis macrochirus*)

The bluegill is one of the most important of the sunfish family in lakes and weedy areas. The distribution is widespread throughout the state, but the species prefers lakes, large ponds, and rivers containing appreciable amounts of aquatic vegetation. The color is light to dark olive with a greenish or purple tint. The adults have rich yellow or yellowish brown bellies.

There are six or more fairly distinct vertical bars on the side. The gill covers are often a dull emerald green or blue, hence its name. There is a black flexible tip on the opercular or ear flap and a dark blotch on the median portion of the posterior dorsal rays. This blotch is not as distinct or dark as on the green sunfish. The pectoral fins are long

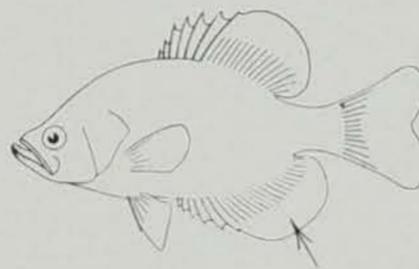
and pointed. See diagram for outstanding characteristics.



### NORTHERN ROCK BASS (*Ambloplites rupestris rupestris*)

The northern rock bass may be distinguished from all members of the *Lepomis* group by the six anal spines, 11 dorsal spines, and the large red eye. This especially fine little fish inhabits rocky streams and rocky shoal areas in the lakes and is often referred to as red-eye or goggle-eye. The mouth is large like the warmouth bass, but it can be easily distinguished from that species because the warmouth bass has only three anal spines. It attains a length of from 10 to 12 inches but is usually from five to eight inches in this state.

The color is olive with dark mottlings and brassy reflections. There are a number of dark stripes or bars running longitudinally along the sides. The pectoral fins are a transparent amber color, low and rounded. In Iowa it is confined principally to the small-mouth bass streams and some of the larger lakes in the northern and eastern parts of the state.



### BLACK CRAPPIE OR CALICO BASS (*Pomoxis nigro-maculatus*)

Crappies may be distinguished from the other sunfishes by the high dorsal and anal fins, which are of nearly equal size. Since little difficulty is experienced in distinguishing the crappie from the sunfish, we will turn our attention to differentiating between the two crappies.

In the black crappie the dorsal spines normally number seven to eight. The mouth is strongly oblique and the color is olivaceous, covered with dark green or blackish spots. There is no distinct pattern. It is the predominate crappie in most of the natural lakes, artificial lakes and clear water streams and ponds. In moderately murky waters such as the Mississippi River, both the black and white crappies are numerous. The species is abundant throughout the state, and we have records of specimens weighing over four pounds.

### WHITE CRAPPIE (*Pomoxis annularis*)

There are usually six dorsal

## Have You A Little Trapper In Your Home?

The trapping season has descended upon us with a suddenness and fury that we cannot quite meet.

One hears upon the early air of morning the triumphant shout of the young trapper. The back door bursts open and the skunk and the trapper both rush in. By the time they are ordered out, the house is full of their presence. It permeates every crevice, dominates every breath of air.

It is always the first skunk of the season that assails the sensibilities most. After that, one gets gradually used to the presence of the creatures. In fact, the smell of a skunk is essentially a noble and gentlemanly one when compared to the smell of a weasel.

A weasel has a sneaking, underhanded smell about him. It creeps upon you, like something in the dark. It does not hang heavily upon the air, as does the smell of a skunk; it seeps into your lungs and comes up from inside you.

If you have a young trapper in your home, be thankful if he brings you in a skunk.—Decorah Journal.

Birds' beaks are adapted to their feeding habits. Shore birds have beaks which have sensitive and flexible tips admirably adapted to locating and capturing small worms buried in the mud. The beaks of the herons are long and sharp like spears and are suitable for catching fish, on which they live. The hawks and owls are equipped by the nature of their beaks to tear flesh.

spines which serve to distinguish the white crappie from the black crappie, which normally has seven or eight. The mouth is moderately oblique. The color is silvery-olive, mottled with dark green, and there are several faint vertical bars on the sides which are not present in the black crappie. Although usually found in smaller numbers than the black crappie, it has taken residence in many of the waters of the state and often predominates in the more turbid waters. We have a record of a white crappie taken from Iowa weighing three pounds and nine ounces.

Below is a list of the fish families known from Iowa. The 25 families include about 140 species. If you learn 12 species each month, it would require about one year to know them all. This seems like a long time, but be truthful with yourself — how many could you accurately identify before you read this article? Whatever the number may be, it

(Continued to Page 8, Column 1)

## Duck Flight

(Continued from Page One)

next day would be a holiday.

A bunch of mallards, having been driven out of the land of the Dakotas by a local freeze, started out on a little reconnaissance flight, and being attracted by the maize and the hospitality of the big marsh and the open water, they decided to take the day off and help out with the first duck flight.

Old Iagoo received a new Winchester magnum for Christmas the year before and, taking advantage of the holiday, was at the big marsh that morning trying to set a new record on long distance high fliers. Having tired of this exercise about 10 in the morning, and in addition having got his pants wet from going in over his new moose hide leggings, he decided to go back to the lodge and down a few gourds of fire water as a precautionary measure against contracting the ague. On his way back it started to snow.

Great big wet flakes, as large as post-toasties, came tumbling down out of the clouds. With the coming of the snow a big flock of mallards out in the maize suddenly decided that with all of Europe on half rations and even Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve being limited to four gallons of gas a week, it would be unpatriotic to eat any more corn. So up they got and tumbled pell-mell into the swamp, almost knocking the eagle feather out of Iagoo's war bonnet.

The old boy was equal to the occasion, however, and sneaking to within 15 yards of them, he pointed Big Bertha out through the bulrushes and potted them on the water. What with the storm and all the ducks huddled together, and a little luck, he bumped off an even dozen, which of course was two over the limit. But since the game laws hadn't been invented yet, the conservation officer that checked his license and duck stamp gave him a clear bill of sale; and he went home whistling "The Caissons Go Rolling Along", a song very popular among the Indians at that time.

Now whatever faults old Iagoo had, over-modesty wasn't one of them, and when it came to improving on a story, he could hold his own with the Japanese ministry of information. After having canvassed the first five tepees and taking a few more precautionary measures against the ague, he couldn't remember whether it was 21 or 23 ducks he had bagged, so he went home to count them. Taking a firm grip on the center pole to steady the wigwam, he counted with his left hand; and after including three empty shells, a war drum and the papoose, he found that he had bagged 57 ducks.

To make certain he hadn't over-



So calling together the medicine-man and all the witch doctors, they locked themselves in the tepee and invented the duck flight myth.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 looked any, he added two more each time he told the story, till by the time he began to think about shedding his long underwear, the number had reached a grand total of 196, a figure which he stuck to until he walked down the sawdust trail at one of Billy Sunday's revival meetings; but by that time he had told it so many times that he believed most of it himself, and he never would reduce it below 193.

Now old Mudjekeewis was no babe in arms when it came to duck hunting, and to him the story of old Iagoo's sounded like a bunch of applesauce; and he wasn't a bit backward about saying so. But every time he raised his voice in tribal council to question the story, old Iagoo explained away his doubts by insisting that the flight was on that day, and as everybody knows, anything can happen when the flight is on.

Well, everything would have gone along okay and the story would have eventually been forgotten if it hadn't been that someone in the WPB office finally got around to the myth applications, and about three weeks later the mailman delivered a long legal-looking envelope to Waubonsie and Geronimo. They opened it up, and there it was all done up in red tape with the official seal and everything on it—a sure enough legal copyright on the duck flight myth.

Ever since that time right up to now whenever duck hunters get together, the duck flight myth is sure to pop up; and they never fail to agree that the flight hasn't arrived yet. But when it does, Oh boy! shooting ducks will be as simple as killing flies around a cider press.

Dear reader, I admire your perseverance and fortitude in having struggled through this literary monstrosity, and so in all seriousness I will get down to the point of the thing.

Every fall as far back as I can remember, hunters have asked one another, "When will the

northern flight be here?", "Did we miss the flight; has it gone; what happened to it?" There are many people who are honest and sincere in their belief that if you can only get the dope on the northern flight, your duck hunting problems for the season are simmered down to a mere matter of your ability to hit them.

Let me say here simply that the northern flight is a myth, a figment of the imagination, an unreal condition that exists only in the minds of hunters. The migration of ducks is as yet little understood. It is a gradual thing, dependent upon many circumstances, and beginning, as it ends, in many places and under varied conditions. Food or water conditions may at times cause ducks to concentrate in certain localities, or they may move in great numbers in the van of sudden storms. Many mallards will winter as far north as they can find an abundance of food and open water.

In certain years when favorable conditions exist in the prairie provinces of Canada, many ducks may remain late until they are forced out by a sudden hard freeze which cuts off their water supply or by heavy snow that cuts off their food supply. Then they may move out in great numbers in search of more favorable conditions. Four years out of five the movement is a gradual thing, scattered out over a period of time so great that the peak is barely perceptible.

It is common to hear talk about northern mallards or red-legged mallards as if they were some special breed that came from the far north. The mallard is one and the same bird from Greenland to Panama, the difference in the color of the legs being a difference in advancement toward full breeding plumage, and not a difference in geography.

In full breeding plumage, the legs of all mallards are a bright orange-red. In the summer, drake mallards are almost indistinguishable from hens. The late fall birds are usually heavier and brighter in exactly the same way that the tame goose you fattened for Christmas was a much finer bird than his brother you ate in September. He had more time to fatten and mature.

Let me say in conclusion that here in Iowa more ducks are killed before the 15th of November than after, and that he who postpones his duck hunting trip until the "northern flight" is on will be disappointed nine years out of ten.

Forest fires progress uphill faster than down because the heated air moves upward, drawing the flames with it.

The largest raccoon ever to be recorded weighed 49 pounds.

## WARDENS' TALES

SHOP TALK  
FROM THE FIELD

During the pheasant season Conservation Officer Harry Rec-tor saw a car drive off the shoulder of the road into a ditch and stopped to help the driver. It was soon apparent that more help was needed, so the officer stopped two approaching cars, and with the aid of the occupants they were able to get the car back on the road.

Noting they were all hunters, Harry introduced himself, and in the routine check hit the jack pot. In the car that was in the ditch the officer found hen pheasants. In the second car he also found hen pheasants. In the third car were eight illegally taken quail.

In court the driver of the first car vowed never to drive in the ditch again. The drivers of the other two replied in unison, "If you ever do you'll get out by yourself."

—WT—

Conservation Officer Jock Graham sent to the central office U. S. Biological Survey Band A-722-



854 from a wild goose and asked for information as to when and where the goose was banded. Jock's story as to how he came into possession of the band follows:

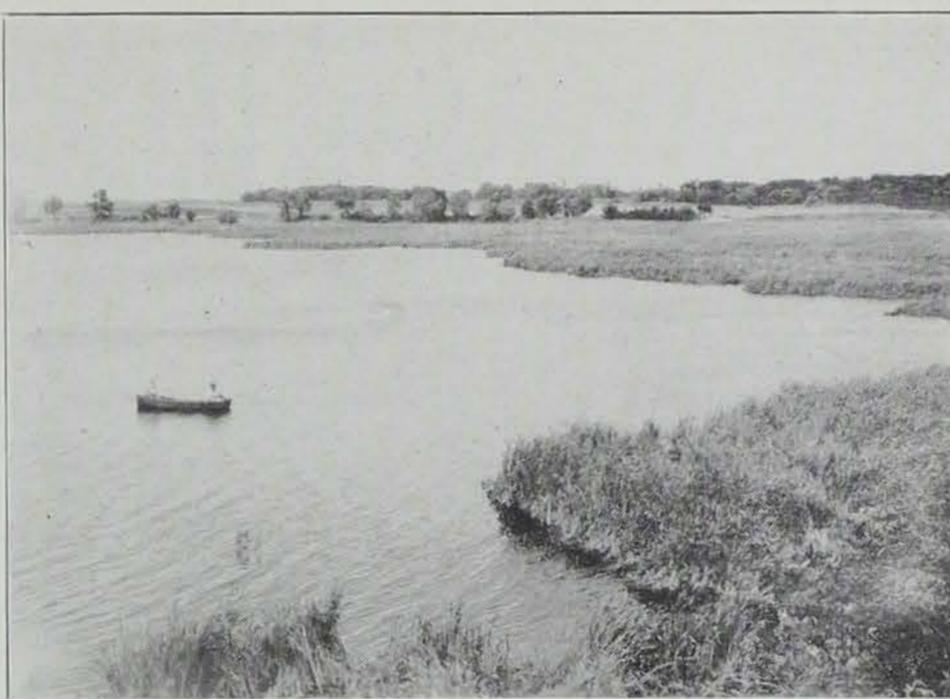
"Sometime late in the duck season about 20 geese roosted all night on the Ed Marvin farm, Sedan, Appanoose County; and in the night or early morning, somehow a fox caught this goose and was eating on it when a fellow shot the fox. As this seems to be a very rare case, I thought I would let you know about it. In fact, I did not think that a red fox was strong enough to hold and kill a full grown goose, but this fox surely was."

The red fox found in Iowa is the northern plains red fox and is found, as its name implies, in the northern plains of Alberta, east to Manitoba, south to Iowa, the Dakotas, and Montana. The home range of an individual fox varies with the season. During summer when food is relatively plentiful, it is thought that the animal does not go more than four or five miles from its home, but during winter they may range two or three times as far in search of food.

# FOREST, FIELD and STREAM

Echoes from the  
Great Outdoors

*"Allah does not deduct  
from the allotted time of  
man those hours spent in  
fishing"*



The immense islands of floating vegetation in Rice Lake are not without danger to the unwary boatman who is caught between their shifting masses.

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This department, "Conservation Columnists", is to give each month a little sketch of one of the columnists who write outdoor columns regularly for newspapers. These writers are widely known for what they write, and we know that you will enjoy these briefs of what and who they are.

By CHUCK KOSEK

Just as a little introduction to the readers of this column, my name is Charles J. Kosek, better known as Chuck. I am 44 years of age, six feet tall, and weigh 20 pounds too much. I am a one-gallus sportsman, much interested in flower gardening as well as conservation.

For a number of years I have been a one-horse or maybe a two-truck electrical contractor, at times too busy to collect money and pay bills, but never too busy to get out and rescue fish, feed birds and animals, or plant trees.

My shop has been the regular meeting place for about 20 of the same type of sportsmen. We do not have the old-fashioned pot-bellied stove to spit on, but we have a register from a pipeless furnace that serves even better.

My wife knows how to cook fish and game when I get any, and my 11-year-old son can and does pull his end of the seine when we go after bait together; and last year he landed a 9 1/4-pound carp on a flyrod unassisted.

I started fishing just about the time I was big enough to dig bait and have fished for almost everything from bullheads in the pond to lake trout around the Apostle Islands in Lake Superior. One of my favorite stories hinges around the time I went fishing in a small stream in the Ozarks of Arkansas with a sledge hammer.

I started hunting in earnest when 12 years old. Dad took down the old 12 gauge, single barrel, gave me three black powder shells and said, "Son, go out and see how much meat you can bring in." I found a covey of quail huddled under a thorn apple bush and brought home nine—I remember every word of the lecture, and it lasted a long time.

I have been writing the Forest, Field and Stream column for the



CHARLES J. (CHUCK) KOSEK  
Cedar Rapids Gazette Outdoor Columnist

Cedar Rapids Gazette for over two years. I try at all times to give the picture as I see it. While I would a thousand times rather go out and do the work than write about it, I long ago realized the value of publicity, and as past president and works committee chairman of the Linn County Fish and Game Club, was called on to handle that end of the work.

At present, besides serving as chairman of the Linn County Selective Service Board No. 2, I am Commissioner of Parks and Public Property for the City of Cedar Rapids, a job that I enjoy more than any I have ever had, and have often remarked that while I had been doing this type of work all my life, I had never expected to be paid for it. At present we are erecting bird feeders in all of our parks and eventually intend to create sanctuaries in all of the

larger ones.

In writing I do have certain things that I keep harping on, and they are, first, the cooperation between the sportsman and the landowner. No lasting program can be had without this cooperation. I have found that 95 percent of the farmers will permit you to hunt on their property if they are approached in the proper manner. My method, and I guarantee it to work, is to drive into the yard, get out of the car, properly introduce yourself, and then ask if he allows any hunting. Always invite the farmer or his sons to go with you. Remember they possibly like to hunt as well as you do. When you are through (and if lucky), share your game with him, whether he was able to hunt with you or not. If you follow these rules, you are almost sure to be invited back.

I see great possibilities in our Iowa conservation program. I think the Conservation Commission has made great strides in the right direction, although I do not always see eye to eye with it. I think that at the completion of the 25-year program, Iowa will be tops for sportsmen and sports-women.

I believe that as soon as possible the state should acquire small camping and picnic areas all along our major streams and lakes and secure public access to them. We have thousands of splendid fishing places and hundreds of miles of river that are inaccessible to the public.

I believe that the state should have at least one conservation officer to each county and that they should be better paid and have a pension system to induce them to stay on the job.

I think the greatest need at present is the organization of conservation clubs throughout the state and the appointment of a trained conservation officer to keep the clubs on their toes, and vice versa.

## Rice Lake

(Continued from Page One)

to the town of Joice, with a total length of four miles and average width of three-fourths of a mile. Sometime previous to this date a paddle-wheel steamboat plied back and forth carrying passenger's to Burdick's Island, which at the present time is Rice Lake State Park.

About 1906 plans were drawn up for a drainage system, and in 1907 ditches were dug and an attempt made to drain and reclaim some of the land comprising the lake. The drainage project was not agriculturally successful. As a result of the operations, a large amount of swamp land was created that could not be farmed and provided only a limited amount of pastureland.

An organization of sportsmen in the vicinity began a movement in the early twenties to restore the area to its former status. In 1940 the State Conservation Commission obtained title to the area and built a dam, establishing the lake at its present water level.

It was anticipated that as the water level rose the shallow water plants that had overgrown much of the land would be drowned and that a clear body of water would result. Nature plays many strange tricks, and instead of drowning, the plants with their closely entwined 35-year-old root systems broke loose from the underlying peat and floated to the surface of the lake, forming an island of luxuriant vegetation resting on a tough, flexible, floating magic carpet of its own root mass more than a foot in thickness.

Close examination of the bogs reveals a wide range of plants and animals maintaining their existence in a floating Wonderland.

Living slough grasses, cat-tails, reed or cane-grass, arrowhead, triangular bulrush, round bul-

(Continued to Page 6, Column 1)

## Rice Lake

(Continued from Page Five)

rush, smartweed, sago pond weed, and blanket moss make up the bulk of the plant life of which the islands are composed. Occasionally a dry land plant such as lesser ragweed or thistle may be found. Many of the plants obtain a height of six feet or more above water, the average height being well over five feet.

It is interesting to watch the nesting activities of some of the marsh birds, particularly the red-winged blackbird. These birds nest on the floating bogs and weave the stalks of rushes into the edges of their basketlike nests to suspend them a foot or two above ground level. The nest may be built here today and have floated down the lake half a mile or more by morning. How the parent birds are able to keep track of their nests and young, which they do with seeming ease and certainty, is a mystery. We suspect, however, that Papa Blackbird, when he is late with a worm, uses as an alibi, "I couldn't find the house."

The American bittern readily adapts itself to these floating bogs to rear its young and spends its time walking through the weeds seeking food, and feeding its young. Marsh wrens, rails, ducks, and all the other marsh birds use the floating islands for their habitat.

During the duck season the wild ducks use Rice Lake as a haven of refuge, flying over the bogs and alighting on the water in the temporary open places to rest and feed. Many crippled birds are lost by hunters when they fall among the weeds where they cannot be recovered by boat or dog.

Reptiles, too, find sanctuary in the floating jungles; gartersnakes glide silently through the stems, waxing fat on the millions of frogs that are born and raised among the weeds and in the shallow waters. Even the wily 'coon has been found curled up fast asleep drifting slowly across the lake, gently rocking on a bog cradle.

The muskrat finds its habitat among the bogs and builds its house from the rushes. It stores its food in the houses and rears its young in them while drifting back and forth before the wind.

This unusual bog is not without danger to the unwary boatman who is caught between shifting masses of vegetation. The closely matted root system defies efforts to push a boat through, and he must either wait for a change in the direction of the wind or escape by using his oars in snowshoe fashion to carry him over the crust of the floating islands.

Rabbits and opossums are believed to be the most ancient of the living known animals on the North American continent.



All the native marsh birds use the floating islands for their nesting habitat and sometimes range considerable distance to other lakes to find sufficient food for their young.



Projects No. 599, Iowa Co-operative Wildlife Research Unit, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.

By GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON  
Project Leader

Emmett B. Polderboer, Graduate Research Student, investigated the ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus umbellus*) habits and cover in the vicinity of Lansing, Allamakee County, Iowa, from August, 1938, to January 31, 1940. For approximately 45 grouse on 1,414 forested acres, the following cover types were of greatest utilization value in the order named: poplar stands, 10-20 year-old oak-hickory forest, 5-10 year-old clearings, advanced oak-hickory forest, and 20-35 year-old oak-hickory forest.

Cover type groups utilized as loafing cover in order of importance were: second growth clearings, advanced forest, and mature forest.

Most of the roosts found were on the ground. Winter roosts were chiefly under dogwoods in maple-linden communities on north and east slopes when no snow was on the ground. Following heavy snows a large majority of winter roosts were found in clearings and in second growth oak-hickory communities.

Drumming logs selected by male grouse ranged from 10 to 24 inches in diameter and from seven to 40 feet in length, without preference discerned for any age, class, location, or type of surrounding cover.

Three nests were found, each within six yards of an open road or path, in mature and advanced white oak woods with an abun-

dance of leaves on the forest floor. Both upland and valley clearings, containing an abundance of brambles, located near maple-linden communities were used as brood cover.

Molting cover, in maple-linden woods and clearings in shaded ravines, was used extensively August 15-September 15.

Pastured woodlands, combined with open grass pastures in valleys, held grouse under grazing pressure as intense as one head of stock to five acres. Woodlands with undergrowth shrubs of a density of less than 3 shrubs to the square yard and a density of more than 50 mature trees to the acre were not suitable to the grouse.

Burning in the spring, said by wood cutters to be accidental when sparks from brush bonfires blew away and started fires which they could not get under control, destroyed the desirable nesting habitat in two-thirds of the Lansing area. That accidental burning, which probably interfered with reproduction of the grouse, should be more closely guarded against. Fall burning of one-fifth of the area concentrated the grouse in a smaller amount of loafing cover but did not affect their feeding range to any extent.

To learn the foods taken by ruffed grouse, 176 samples of droppings were collected throughout the year 1939, and the remains of food items identified. Animal matter, almost entirely insects and spiders, made up about 50 percent of the food in summer, 10 percent in fall, three percent in spring, and no percent in winter.

Plant food rated almost 100 percent in winter, 97 percent in spring, 86 percent in fall, and 45 percent in summer. Seeds and fruits, particularly acorns and sumac berries, were first, buds second, and catkins third as major winter items. Buds were taken in largest quantities when swell-

## Proof of Policy Lies in Results of Conservation

The splendid pheasant season just closed, with 21 days of good shooting in Fayette County, is eloquent testimony in behalf of the conservation policy for the state of Iowa.

In spite of an open season for pheasants for the last four years, with a full week's hunting last year and the year before, the surplus pheasant crop has continued to grow and prosper.

This is due in large measure to the Commission's policy of allowing hunters to shoot only roosters, combined with pheasant feeding programs, cover planting projects, and the circulation of conservation ideas throughout the state in a great educational program.

More and more Iowa folks are coming to consider the wild game of the state as a valuable resource to be conserved and wisely used. By considering the game as a regular crop, to be harvested with its surplus and seed crops left, the wise sportsman provides for the future hunting pleasure of himself and his children.

That most sportsmen keep this in mind as they hunt becomes more and more apparent with the increase of imported game species and the return of our own natural game. Credit is due the Iowa State Conservation Commission for much of this grand job, but equal credit must go to the men and women of the state who have cooperated with its program.—Fayette County Union, West Union.

Man and his dog have been associated together through all the ages, and between them there is developed a love that in its blindness and loyalty is the most beautiful sentiment in all the world, and I can forgive much and overlook all that a man says in defense of his dog.—Dr. Wm. Brulette.

During the 1940-42 biennium conservation officers prosecuted 2,448 game violators and secured 2,405 convictions; \$50,234.25 was assessed in fines, and 7,317½ days in jail were meted out by the courts.

ing and opening in April. Leaves, especially of hog peanut, dandelion, and wild strawberry, were prominent in spring and summer diets.

Gravel varied from four and five percent in fall and summer to none and 0.5 percent of items in spring and winter. For the entire year, buds were indicated as 24 percent of the materials eaten, leaves 21 percent, seeds and fruits 30 percent, catkins seven percent, animal matter 16 percent, and gravel two percent.

## Lucas County Conservation League Has Active Program

An outstanding record of achievement in preserving and increasing the wildlife of Lucas County during 1942 is cited by the Lucas County Conservation Club.

A tree planting program sponsored by the club resulted in the planting of 2,500 tree plants and shrubs designed to prevent soil erosion and to give game birds needed cover.

In the quail propagation and stocking program one brooder was built and put into operation, and 96 adult birds were reared and released. Since no hunting is permitted where the birds were released this year, it is possible that sportsmen finding a large covey of quail next season may have the club to thank.

Seed has been distributed for planting of a type that will insure the birds winter care and feed.

A total of 250,000 game fish were reared and stocked in Red Haw Lake and the city reservoir by the State Conservation Commission, with the cooperation of the local club, whose members volunteered to do much of the work.

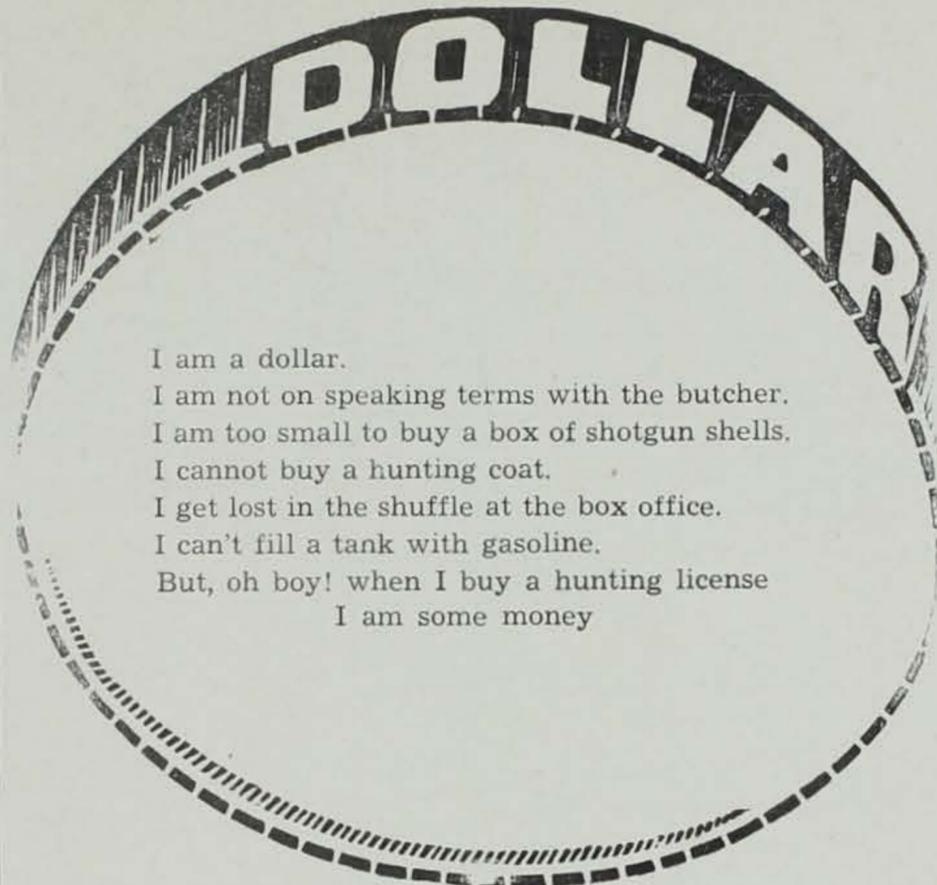
The club boasts of 141 members, the largest in its history, and through these members a great deal of work was done to promote better farmer-sportsman relations. Many lectures, wildlife motion pictures, etc., were shown to club members at the monthly meetings as part of this educational program.

Not content with past performances, club members have even more pretentious plans for the future. It is planned to continue with the tree planting program, to stock the new city reservoir with fish, and to keep in operation two additional quail brooders which have now been constructed in addition to the one used this year. This will provide capacity for rearing 450 adult quail during the summer of 1943.

Also in the program is a plan to sponsor wild game and fish dinners, organize a junior membership to educate the sportsmen of tomorrow and to increase the membership of the club.

Officers point out that everyone who enjoys wildlife or is interested in the conservation of soil or any of our natural resources is vitally concerned with the club and urged to join. The club will start its 1943 membership drive next week. Election of officers for 1943 will be held on Monday, December 28.—Chariton Herald-Patriot.

It has been estimated that more than 60,000,000 Americans are interested in wildlife activities of one form or another.



I am a dollar.  
I am not on speaking terms with the butcher.  
I am too small to buy a box of shotgun shells.  
I cannot buy a hunting coat.  
I get lost in the shuffle at the box office.  
I can't fill a tank with gasoline.  
But, oh boy! when I buy a hunting license  
I am some money

## \$2,294.72 Donated For Lake And Park Area in Decatur Co.

A check of \$272.69 was recently mailed to F. T. Schwob, Director, Iowa State Conservation Commission, representing the balance left in the Pleasanton Lake Fund.

A total of \$2,294.72 was contributed by Decatur County people and others in behalf of land purchase near Pleasanton for a state lake and park; \$2,272.69 has been turned over to the State Commission; the balance, \$22.03, represents expenses in connection with the local fund drive, including stenographic help, postage, receipt books, and letter supplies. A financial statement may be seen by contacting V. L. Deskin, treasurer of the Lake Fund.

Practically all of the land in the proposed lake and park area has been acquired by the State Conservation Commission, according to Arvid Miller, who was chairman of the fund drive. Miller states that a recent letter from Mr. Schwob, director, discloses that mechanics of the transaction for remaining land purchases have been set and that such should go through in due time.

Plans—buildings, lake, etc.—are being drawn up by the State Conservation Commission. Development of the project will await the successful conclusion of the war.—Lamoni Chronicle.

From July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, conservation officers provided emergency winter feed for approximately 250,000 birds and animals; 2,632 feeding stations were built, and approximately 250,000 pounds of feed was distributed.

## Violators Just Spoil Own Sport

The violators of the hunting laws in regard to pheasant shooting have been paying some rather stiff fines lately. At Ames recently one fellow drew a fine of \$140, and others have been getting similar jolts from the courts when they are brought in by the game wardens.

Just why those who love hunting will do the things that hurt the sport is just one of those things. When they shoot out of season, or kill the female birds or violate some other provision of the law, they are hurting the very thing that makes for good and continued hunting in Iowa.

Our present crop of birds has been reared with care by the sportsmen's clubs, joining in with the conservation officials, to get pheasant and other sports back with a stock of birds and populated streams, so that going out is worth while. And just why any hunter will not carry his gun properly while driving in a car is quite beyond the officials, who immediately figure that he is a potential violator, with a gun all assembled and ready to go if the bird appears.—Des Moines Plain Talk.

The feathers of birds are more closely related to the scales of reptiles than to the hairs of mammals.

## Iowa Convicts Befriend Family of Humming Birds

The snow storm September 25 was a record breaker in more ways than one; as a direct result, the library played host for several days to a whole family of numming birds. Cold, wet and helpless, six tiny residents of the flower beds faced possible death that day until the library crew, and Benny Keturokis, came to their rescue. And, almost at once, they amazed everyone by becoming nearly as tame as canaries.

Uncaged, they had the run of the library. Paper flowers—each partly filled with honey water—were supplied to make them feel at home. From wire perches near the ceiling they practiced playful dive bomber attacks on the many visitors who came to see them. They learned to feed, on the wing, from an eye dropper. One with a broken wing soon died; another was drowned; the four remaining birds seemed perfectly happy.

But Indian Summer brought warm sunshine—the migratory call became strong—the library crew kept the door open, and one by one their tiny guests departed in a blur of emerald wings.—The Presidio, edited and published monthly by the inmates of the state prison at Fort Madison, Iowa.

## Hunting Not As Dangerous As Driving A Car

The next time you hear some fond mother say that she doesn't want her Johnny to own a gun and go hunting, you might point out to her that out of 100,000 fatal accidents occurring in the U. S. in 1940, less than 2½ percent were caused by firearms.

The automobile caused 15 times as many fatalities; simple falls 11 times as many; fires and drownings three times as many; baseball was responsible for four times as many as hunting; winter sports, sledding, tobogganing, skiing and ice skating, caused three times as many accidents as gunning.

Of accident claims filed with insurance companies, golf and tennis caused three times the number of accidents caused by hunting, and, believe it or not, picnics and similar outings were responsible for 50 percent more claims than hunting.—Davenport Democrat.

During the 1940-42 biennium state seine crews removed 3,448,362 pounds of rough fish from the inland waters of the state.

## Is Hunting Brutal? Sportsmen Say No

Hunting season has come and gone, and again voices may be heard proclaiming that it is brutal to kill game birds and animals, that the hunters aren't sportsmen but are just meat hunters and that all hunting should be stopped.

With the national emergency on and a threatened shortage of meat products, the millions of pounds of wild fowl and game meat harvested this year takes on an increasing importance.

After all, game in this country for years has been just another crop raised on the farms and in the woods and wastelands. When there is a surplus, that surplus should be harvested, the same as any other crop. When there is not a surplus of any one species, that species should be protected until there is a surplus, and that has been pretty much the contention of fish and game and conservation men for years.

After all, it is not any more cruel to kill a game bird or animal than it is to kill a chicken or cow, and those who will eat domestic duck should feel no pangs if another person prefers wild duck. A true vegetarian, who does not eat fish, fowl or animal, may have a right to criticize the killing of game, but praise be, we are not all vegetarians.

The sportsmen, the men who

## Fish Species

(Continued from Page Three)

represents those you have learned in a lifetime.

In the February issue we'll try to stir up something about another common yet very confusing group, the catfishes of Iowa. There are only nine of them.

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Scientific Name	Common Name	Number of Species	Percentage of Total
1. Petromyzonidae	Lampreys	3	2.14%
2. Polyodontidae	Paddlefishes	1	.72
3. Acipenseridae	Sturgeons	2	1.42
4. Lepisosteidae	Gars	2	1.42
5. Amiidae	Bowfin or dogfish	1	.72
6. Hiodontidae	Mooneyes	2	1.42
7. Clupeidae	Herrings	3	2.14
8. Salmonidae	Trouts	3	2.14
9. Catostomidae	Suckers	17	12.14
10. Cyprinidae	Minnnows	48	34.27
11. Ameiuridae	Catfishes and Bullheads	9	6.43
12. Umbridae	Mud Minnows	1	.72
13. Esocidae	True Pikes	3	2.14
14. Anguillidae	Eels	1	.72
15. Cyprinodontidae	Killifishes	4	2.86
16. Percopsidae	Trout-perches	1	.72
17. Aphredoderidae	Pirate-perches	1	.72
18. Atherinidae	Silversides	1	.72
19. Serranidae	True Basses	2	1.42
20. Centrarchidae	Sunfishes	12	8.58
21. Percidae	Perches and darters	19	13.57
22. Sciaenidae	Drums	1	.72
23. Cottidae	Sculpins	1	.72
24. Gasterosteidae	Sticklebacks	1	.72
25. Gadidae	Codfishes	1	.72

140

100.00%

## Bateese's Lament

Bateese she's used to hunt de duck  
An' all de time he's have good luck;  
He hunt for market wide and loose  
An' nevair sleep in calaboose.

But time is change an' poor Bateese  
Kill 40 duck & 19 geese  
An' when he start to leave de blind  
Someone say "Wait if you don' mind."

Les' see what you got in dat sack  
What look so heavy on your back."  
An' when he look—"Voila—By gee!—"  
He say; "You better come wit' me."

"Les' tell de judge about dis t'ing  
An' hear what kind of song he sing!"  
An' now Bateese he's get his mail  
Addressed in care of Federal jail.

—Louisiana Conservation Review.

buy hunting and fishing licenses, are after all the only ones who really support conservation of fish and game. It is their license money that goes for the payment of game protectors, and not a cent of tax money other than hunting and fishing license money goes for the support of the conservation department, members of which enforce the game laws.

There is even some criticism over the killing of the beautiful ringneck pheasant, but if it were not for the hunter, these birds would not be in the state. The hunters, through the conservation department and their own sportsmen's clubs, have spent thousands and thousands of dollars raising ringnecks and releasing them in the wild. Thousands have also been spent on the Hungarian partridge and on other upland game. Now more thousands are being spent on breeding places for wild ducks.

For many years the hunters not only supported the game farms, but they also supported the state fish hatcheries because not so

long ago there were no fishing licenses required, and all the money the conservation department obtained was from the hunting licenses.

The hunter, often called cruel by persons who do not know the facts, is the person who is paying for the protection of the robin and the blue jay.

Too, it is the hunter and fisherman who practically support many sections of the country, especially the northern lands where there is good fishing in the summer and good bird or deer hunting in the fall. Canada, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and other northern sections have all felt the curtailment of gasoline and tires because hunters and fishermen have been kept closer to home. The money usually made off the hunters and fishermen was not so plentiful this year and will be even less so in 1943.—Lou Klewer, Ohio Conservation Bulletin.

During the 1940-42 biennium the Conservation Commission acquired 2,059.66 acres of land for state parks, preserves, and forests. During the same period 5,260.5 acres were acquired for fish and game production purposes.

## Sportsmen Should Be Landowner's Best Friend

Whether hunting, fishing, or picnicking with the family, courtesy to the landowner demands obtaining his permission, cleaning up all papers and refuse, carefully closing all gates.

Most landowners will welcome crowd hunters. Pest hunts, conducted by groups or individuals, help to save farm crops, small game, song birds.

Any man can nominate himself "friend" by looking out for livestock on the roads. A few minutes spent herding strayed cattle, or informing their owner of their whereabouts, can result in hours of mutual understanding.

Farmers are much too busy at present to train their bird dogs. After he has obtained permission to hunt, the real sportsman will invite the farmer to go with him, shoot over his dog, maybe use his shells.

There are records of sportsmen aiding in the actual farm work. In the present defense effort, nothing would be more timely than helping to plant or harvest or to run errands.

Sportsmen who hunt or fish over the same area each year can prove their friendship by sending a subscription of a sporting magazine to the farmer. It is a monthly reminder of you, builds his interest in conservation, assures your welcome.

The best hunting trips are planned in advance. Many outdoorsmen make periodical visits to their country friends, purchase chickens or vegetables, present cigars or candy as evidence that they appreciate their privileges.—Ohio Conservation Bulletin.

During the past two years the game bird hatchery near Boone released to the wild 95,456 quail and pheasants.

## Hiawatha Up-to-Date

He killed the noble Mudjekeewis,  
Of the skin he made him mittens,  
Made them with the fur side inside,  
Made them with the skin side outside.  
He, to get the warm side inside,  
Put the inside skin side outside.  
He, to get the cold side outside,  
Put the warm side fur side inside.  
That's why he put the fur side inside,  
Why he put the skin side outside.  
Why he turned them inside outside.

—Author Unknown.