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State Conservation Commission  
10th and Mulberry Sts.  
Des Moines 8, Iowa

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 4

DECEMBER 15, 1945

NUMBER 12

## HERE COMES THE FOX HUNTER!

### Plenty of Smart Foxes Yours for the Taking

By Clayton B. Seagars

(Reprinted from "The Fox in New York" by special permission of the New York Conservation Dept.)

ANY stimulant which takes mankind outdoors and sets him to walking on the good earth with a lift to his step and a lift to his thoughts is very fine medicine. Br'er Fox has been big medicine for a long, long time. This vulpine bottle of beef, iron and wine has what it takes to oust a man from his chair not only when the weather is fair but when it is extremely foul. That's probably why writers use the adjective *seasoned* when describing fox hunters.

A fox is equipped with a very warm pair of pants to which Nature has attached a highly efficient muff. The fox needs these items because, when pursued, he is apt to seek out the highest, toughest, windiest and nastiest crag on the horizon. Thus most fox hunters should wear feathers in their caps and learn to yodel. They must go where the fox goes and they usually do. As a result some of the world's greatest appetites are possessed by fox hunters. The medicine is that good.

The mere telling of the various methods of fox hunting and the accumulated pleasures to be derived therefrom is like reducing the savor and relish of a chestnut-stuffed Thanksgiving turkey to a couple of vitamin tablets. Before scanning any of these printed pills, therefore, it should be remembered that very little, if any, of the real taste can be detected without putting on a napkin (a hunting coat would be better) and letting experienced fox hunting cooks actually serve up, in the hills, the whole menu of

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Any stimulant which takes mankind outdoors and sets him to walking on the good earth is fine medicine. Br'er Fox has been big medicine for a long, long time. —Des Moines Register & Tribune Photo.

### Raccoon Rates High With State College Gourmets

By Anna Margrethe Olsen

THE Iowa State Conservation Commission has placed the seasonal catch of fur-bearing animals for 1944-45 at 655,042, with a pelt value of \$1,991,413.94. This number does not include squirrels, cottontails and jack rabbits, which are not classed as fur-bearers. The number of raccoons, opossums and musquash (muskrats)—516,126— included in this figure represents an appreciable food resource which has barely been tapped in some sections.

Game as food varies in popu-

larity and use within the state: the musquash, beavers and woodchucks are seldom eaten, about one-fourth of the raccoons are eaten, more of the opossums, most of the squirrels and cottontails, but few of the jack rabbits, according to Dr. G. O. Hendrickson of the zoology and entomology department.

A long-time project on the utilization of the fish and wildlife resources of Iowa was initiated at Iowa State College in the spring of 1943 under the direction of Dr. G. O. Hendrickson. One of the chief

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### BRIEF ANALYSIS OF IOWA FISH AND GAME POLICY

GAME HARVEST, HABITAT IMPROVEMENT AND ARTIFICIAL STOCKING

By Bruce F. Stiles  
Chief, Division of Fish and Game

(Editor's Note: This is the third of four articles analyzing the various phases of the Iowa fish and game policy.)

Dr. Eschmyre in his work in Tennessee found that it was impossible to destroy the fishing quality of a large body of water through pole and line fishing. When the population of fish reached a point where food was at a premium, fishing success was high. As this harvesting by pole and line fishing decreased the population, more food was available for those individuals that remained, and the fishing success dropped off until it was almost nil. At this point the fishermen became discouraged at their lack of success and stopped fishing long before the brood stock had become endangered. On the basis of this he was able to secure a continuous open season in Tennessee and an abolition of size limits on most species.

This has many parallels with hunting. On a controlled pheasant hunting area in Ohio, it was found that 82 per cent of all birds taken were birds of the year. Fourteen per cent were one-year-old birds, three per cent two-year-old birds, and only one per cent three years or older. It is apparent from this that hunting success is dependent upon each year's production. The

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# Iowa Conservationist

Published Monthly by

THE IOWA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

10th and Mulberry—Des Moines, Iowa

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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE.....24,000  
Subscription Rate.....40c per year  
3 years for \$1.00

Subscriptions received at Conservation Commission, 10th and Mulberry, Des Moines, Iowa. Send coin, check or money order.

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### VALUABLE NEW BOOK

"The Ring-necked Pheasant and Its Management in North America" (\$3.50), published by the American Wildlife Institute, Washington, D. C., is an outstanding book. This 325-page, illustrated work is authored by more than a dozen of America's outstanding game technicians, including our own Dr. Paul Errington ("The Pheasant in the Northern Prairie States"). It contains all of importance that is known to date of this popular game bird. The book is invaluable to the game manager and interesting to the hunter. The latter, in particular, will be astonished at the amount of research that has been undertaken in order to guarantee pheasant hunting in the various ringneck ranges in the United States.



Typical Iowa fox territory in Boone County. With normal populations fox are ordinarily found in this rolling, brushy country. However, when fox are abundant, as they are at the present time, the flat prairie parts of the state often have heavy fox population. Thos. G. Scott Photo.

### Fox Hunter . . .

(Continued from page 185)

a full day's hunt. Once tasted, this fox fare is virtually guaranteed to develop a year-round appetite which gnaws most persistently when frost flakes and foxes frolic together, and when the hymn of the hounds hangs sweetest on the crisp air.

There are at least six different methods of hunting foxes in New York.

1. With hounds. Hail to the "Voice of Bugle Ann."
2. Still hunting. Usually means tracking on a new snow.
3. Driving. Has many variations.
4. With horse and hounds. Formal hunt clubs. Tallyho!
5. Belling. Silly but fascinating fun.
6. Decoying. Involves patience and moonlight.

### Fox Hunting With Hounds

The red fox is responsible for the development of what has been termed the most sensitive nose and the most enduring, self-pro-



By fall this midsummer fox will have lost his docile look and will have developed enough sagacity to test the ability of the smartest hound or hunter. —Des Moines Register & Tribune Photo.

pelled stamina to be found on the face of the earth. Possessor of these two remarkable assets is the American foxhound, the New World's outstanding contribution to the more than 50 breeds of sporting dogs. This great hound is as American as the Rhode Island Red, Dan Patch and golden bantam corn.

He harks back at least to 1738 when Lord Fairfax imported the first English foxhounds. This Virginia sportsman soon found out that the American red fox was so much faster and smarter than his heavier, shorter-furred Old World brother that the stocky imported dogs couldn't get much beyond first base. Forthwith began the need for the careful breeding which later was to produce the rangy, long-winded, genius-footed, vari-voiced, wonder-nosed hound of today. If the superlatives seem too broad—ask the man who owns a real one.

Today many famous pedigreed strains of American foxhounds have been developed, several of them to suit various climates, fox temperaments and terrain. These are the Triggs, Trumbos, Julys, Birdsongs, Bywaters, and the Walkers. There are also the plain, long-eared hounds which can make music just as sweet and have noses capable of miracles, too. They are the so-called native hounds—the New England hounds, if you like—with wrinkled mein, dangling ears and, sometimes, dewy haws (drooping lower eyelids) proclaiming close kinship to the bloodhound, one of the most ancient of all canine breeds. They're the blue-ticks, the redbones, the black-and-tans.

These hounds sing for their supporters. To a very large group of hunters, the trail-intelligence, nose, style and staying powers are secondary to the somewhat rare

hound with an opera voice—the bell-toned or bugle-voiced dog—the silver tonguer. The voices of the hounds are individual voices. There are the squealers, the choppers, those with clear or with foggy driving notes and those whose persistent, deep, bullish tonguing seems to flood whole valleys as cathedrals swell with an organ's full-stop processional. Each pack is a mixed-voice choir and each participant sings the dog-song of how fares the chase. Every subtle change of pitch or cadence is significant—and the wind drifts the story back.

Go into the hills one day with the lucky man who has a pack of foxhounds—or just one bold-voiced dog. Then let him translate the miracles of that sensitive nose from the ringing code, now faint and distant, now hesitant and high up in the hazy ledges, now full and booming and breathless. As Edward Briggs says so picturesquely: "He is the only dog in the world whose voice matters a tinker's dam when you are buying him, or selling him, or going out with him or remembering him!"

Today it's estimated that there are 150,000 pedigreed American foxhounds and an additional million or so plain long-eared hounds geared up and ready to hunt game. In New York State there are several hundred pedigreed foxhounds and many more with untraced lineage able to run a real race and let the countryside know of it.

One of the nation's best-known houndsmen who for years has been a breeder of royal snow-going Walkers is Fred S. Streever of Bolton (on Lake George) and Ballston Spa. His stories of hounds and hunting have been read by millions. Three hours afield with him and fox hunting has become an adventure, a philosophy, a fine art, poetry, a lesson in human and animal understanding, a chapter in genuine conservation and bang-up, all-out exercise. There's something about it that has a Sunday punch.

Reynard, the Red, has been responsible for a lot of good things in this life. He deserves to be better understood.

How can the uninitiated taste of this fox-and-hounds drama? One way would be to write the Bureau of Conservation Education in the N. Y. Conservation Department at Albany for the address of the current secretary of the N. Y. Fox Hunter's Association. Then let that enthusiastic group provide the ways and means. Also, local game protectors would be glad to furnish the names of houndsmen who might have suggestions of their own.

Sometimes it might be possible for sportsmen's clubs to arrange with local hound owners for a series of hunts, each participant chipping in a quarter or a half-dollar toward a general pot to be given those houndsmen for the

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In Iowa, especially in the open country, the red fox quite often goes underground during bad weather. Here a fox has broken through the fresh mantle of snow that covered the den opening and left his bedroom in search of his breakfast.  
—Thos. G. Scott Photo.

## Fox Hunter . . .

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maintenance of more and better hounds than otherwise they might afford.

Briefly, the method of hunting foxes with hounds, as most commonly practiced in New York, starts with the hound or hounds led, leashed, until a reasonably fresh track is found in the snow. On snowless ground the hounds usually are simply cast loose, in the area chosen for the race, to do their own looking. Once the dogs hit the line, the hunters scatter to take up stands in areas of good visibility where the fox is likely to pass sooner or later. The better the habits of the individual fox are known the more likely the hunter is able to pick a productive spot for sooner shooting rather than later. Meantime, there's music to hear.

If a red fox is started, the dogs may run him far into the night—unless the hunter is smart enough to change his stand (often via car) across a ridge or two and thus short-cut the proceedings. Or, lacking time or victuals, he may elect to call in the hounds. At this point the old American custom of tootling on the fox horn comes in. This is part of the fun. The hunter may have a real goat-horn fox horn, or he may simply blow down his gun barrel. When so doing, it is always necessary to "break open" the gun—otherwise, the hunter may simply blow his head off. Incidentally, when several hunters participate in a chase with hounds owned by one in the party, it is common etiquette to present the houndsman with the spoils. This is mentioned merely to help establish equities too often unintentionally overlooked—and to help the novice maintain his welcome.

There's comparatively high mortality among foxhounds, mainly because good ones are apt to land in the next county behind a better fox. But the fox returns. Sometimes the hound does not. He's dog-

### FOX UP

Read more about the fox in forthcoming issues of the "Iowa Conservationist" under these titles: "The Bounty and Fox Control," and "More Facts About Foxes."

tired. He trots up some lane, tail a-wag and friendly. All he wants is a spot to curl up and rest a bit, or maybe a snack to eat. Very often, in mistaken kindness, he is tied up. Sometimes the owner never is notified. All good foxhounds should have identification. Some owners tattoo the hounds' ears. In any event there should be a name plate and an address, usually a telephone number, on the collar. There may be added significant inscription: "I am a foxhound. If found please notify my owner at once." If more people would do just that, there'd be more foxhounds. And more foxhounds are needed for the multiple good of Man.

### Still Hunting

Pick out a new snow and find a fox track. If there's a noisy crust, go home. If not, proceed down the track and watch well ahead. Don't expect to see the fox—but you might. Look particularly for a high boulder, a stump, ledge or some kind of elevation well to one side of the route the track seems to be following. The fox beds down by day—the red most always in the open; the gray usually in a hole, under



To the experienced fox hunter snow tracks are as easily read as the big print in the first grade reader. These tracks are of a walking fox having tough going in the heavy snow.  
—Thos. G. Scott Photo.

a windfall or similar protected spot. When he beds down, he nearly always looks back on his track to watch for just such dangers as you. Very often he starts to make a twisting trail before hooking back into his bed. If the fox jumps before you get in a shot, wait a half-hour. Then try again. Otherwise the fox will line off and stay well ahead. If the fox is jumped within three hours or so of dark the chances are that he'll not bed down again that day. Many hunters feel that a white outfit helps when hunting on snow. If a fox is trailed to a hole, there's often a chance for a shot if you're on the spot at twilight. Make allowance for wind direction.

Foxes sometimes are taken by hunters who merely sit tight against an old stone wall on the

edge of a pasture lot or along a woods road or a sand spit known to be frequented by foxes. Plenty of study and patience are necessary. The first hour or so after dawn and during the same interval before dark are best. Then again the fox may cross up the works and appear at high noon. Much seems to depend on the weather and the temperament of the individual fox. In February, when the reds begin to pair up, they are apt to be active any time during the day. A man may tramp a thousand miles in good country year in and year out and never knowingly lay eyes on a fox.

### Driving

Fox drives are not unlike deer drives, except they're usually more fun. Participants may include any number—as for example the Erie County group which during one wintry day in 1944 put more than 400 men in the field at one time. Out of it they got plenty of recreation, two foxes and a woodchuck.

Fox driving (not the variety which recently attained such adverse publicity) provides an increasingly important means of hunter recreation during the winter when game, other than the fox, is protected by law. Many clubs have launched systematic programs of weekly fox drives in which anywhere from 10 to 50 members participate.

Methods all follow the same general pattern. The idea is to place the gunners in a position where they are most likely to draw a bead on the fox as it flees the drivers. Usually the fox is tracked into a patch of woods or swamp which can be entirely or partly surrounded.

Grover Pfeiffer of Jamesville has had considerable success with a method which seems to work best with seven or eight participants. They are numbered, for purposes of this description, from one to eight. If there's a tracking snow, a swamp or other foxy area is circled to see whether foxes are at home therein. If so, the men are assembled at the down-wind end of the area. Men numbers one, two, three and four then proceed quietly on the down-wind side (and well out of sight and hearing of the fox) to the stations or watches at the far side of the area. After reaching their stations, they should make no noise, conceal themselves well and remain motionless, since the slightest movement can be detected by a fox from a surprising distance. Many experienced fox hunters seem to agree, incidentally, that the wearing of yellow clothing is bad news.

Next, men numbers five and six move up to their stations on each side of the area away from the hidden watchers. They talk back and forth to each other but only in ordinary tones and never should get the fox unduly excited by whacking trees or by whistling. Unusual sounds or actions often

send a gray fox into a hole or a red away under full steam. The object is to make them sneak off slowly.

Next, men numbers seven and eight enter the swamp between five and six. They should stay in the swamp at all times as they approach the watchers, following whatever fresh tracks they may find. Numbers five and six walk naturally toward the watchers on either side of the swamp and three or four rods ahead of seven and eight. Thus they are in a position to cut off the escape of the fox if he tries to sneak out the sides.

Watchers are cautioned to keep an eye on the fencerows and ditches down which the fox, especially the gray, is likely to sneak.

This method seems to work with high efficiency in swamps, brushlots, or wooded areas, provided they are not too extensive. The bagging of one fox out of four started is considered a good batting average.

Incidentally, the method is far more productive and much more fun if a couple of days are used to locate good cover and get the crew accustomed to the lay of the land.

### Belling The Fox

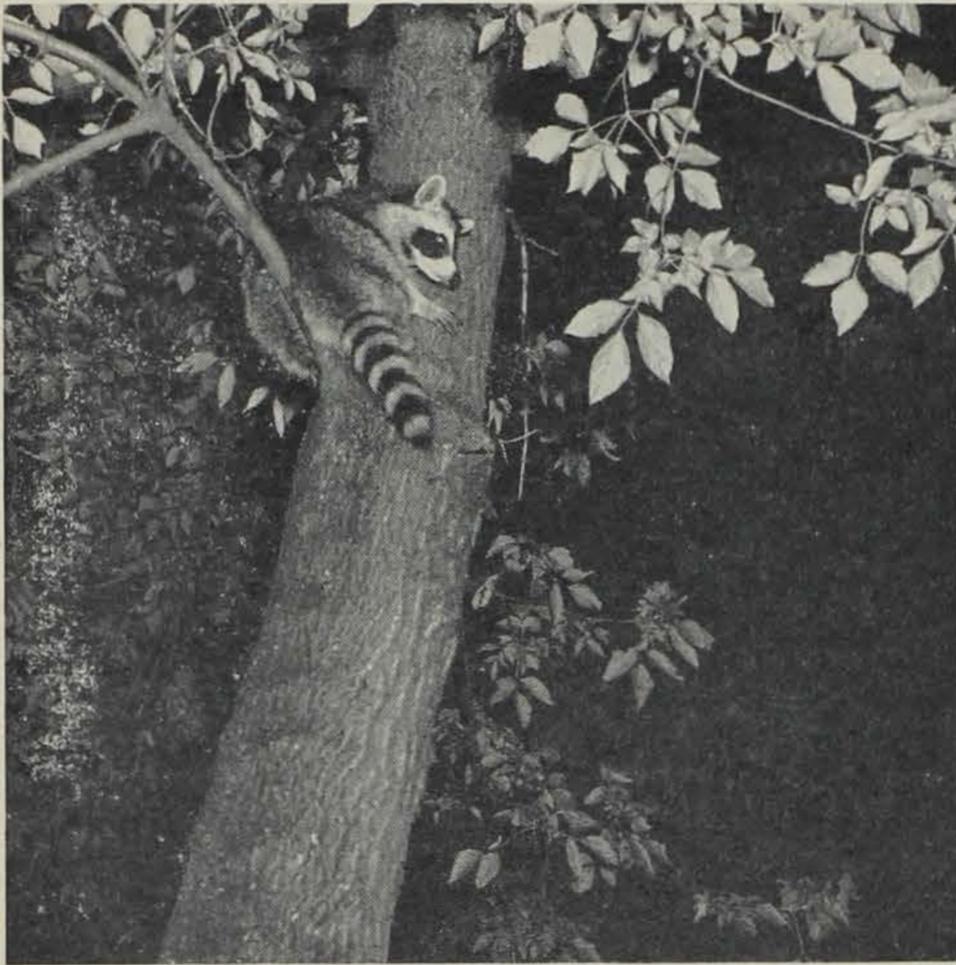
A red fox is nothing but a lean bunch of nerves propelled by steel springs buried in fur and guided by a curiosity so overpowering that sometimes its brain plays second fiddle. The hunter with a sense of humor can cash in on the fiddling. This leads us to a type of fox hunting which depends for its success upon the temperament of the fox and the ability of the hunter to refrain from hysterics. It is called "belling," sometimes "tolling." For novelty and for excitement on the end of a slow-burning fuse, there's no other brand of hunting quite like it. Also, it often works.

Needed are a melodious dinner bell, a good tracking snow (preferably a new snow) and a pal with a gun and a good eye. Also requisite is a fresh fox track down which you proceed until the fox is jumped or until you're reasonably

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Knowledge of the habits of the quarry spells the difference between success and failure for most hunting. This is particularly true of fox stalking. The fox beds down in cover on the lee side of a knoll, where its keen nose detects strange scents borne by the wind from over the hill, and where its sharp eyes can see much of the valley below.  
—Thos. G. Scott Photo.



The coon is sly, elusive, and depends upon intelligence rather than speed to escape its pursuers. This ringtail, treed by hounds, seems to say, "What goes on down there?"

## Raccoon . . .

(Continued from page 185)

objectives of this study has been the promotion of fish and wildlife as food, with emphasis on those less commonly used but available in numbers.

During the winter quarter of 1945 the American coot, cottontail, musquash, opossum and raccoon vied with each other for popularity with a picked panel or tasting squad of nine to eleven staff members and research workers who passed on the palatability and desirability of each as a food. Each product was judged on appearance, aroma, flavor, texture and/or tenderness and juiciness with a possible score of 10 for each factor. The findings were recorded on a score card. At the close of the quarter the more popular game were served to the panel as pictured in figure 1. The menu of the game dinner is given in the caption. The raccoon proved to be one of the most popular with the game gourmets.

### The Raccoon Is A Many-sided Game Animal

The raccoon occupied third place in numbers among the most important of the fur-bearing animals within the state in 1944-45 and was exceeded only by the beaver, mink, wolf and red fox in individual pelt value. To the supply of meat for the home each animal can supply from five to 15 pounds, according to size. The 1944-45 catch of 36,558 raccoons could furnish anywhere from 182,790 to 548,370 pounds of dressed meat. When properly dressed and prepared, this meat is not only good to eat but nutritious as well.

The 'coon is a game animal, sly, elusive and intelligent rather than speedy. He matches his wit against those of the sportsman and his 'coon dog as he cuts capers to bewilder his pursuers and throw them off his scent.

The raccoon has his definite place, too, as a family pet. To quote from the behavior study of penned raccoons reported by Homer E. Fairchild and Dr. G. O. Hendrickson in the February, 1945, issue of the Iowa Conservationist, "Raccoons are one of the best behaved and best show animals of all our native species and rival monkeys in their ability to cut capers."

The common raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is frequently referred to as the washer or washerwoman of the forests because of his habit of washing all of his food before eating it. Many fascinating as well as informative stories for children and adults, too, I dare say, are based on raccoon lore exploiting the physical traits, habitats, food habits and artfulness of these interesting animals.

### The Raccoon Trail in The Experimental Laboratory

Only 14 raccoons were studied in the food laboratory; seven of these were pen-fed and seven were from the wild. Their fate is given pictorially with explanatory captions, brief discussions contrasting the penned and the trapped and with recipes for preparing the dishes which met with the approval of the panel.

Raccoons are at their best during pelting time after the cold weather really begins. The raccoons studied were killed in December and Jan-

uary, skinned and dressed for cooking with heads and feet removed, tagged, wrapped tightly in heavy paper, labeled, quick frozen and stored in the College locker plant. When about to be prepared in the laboratory they were removed to the refrigerator two days ahead for thawing. If very gamy and diffused with blood, they were left at room temperature for six to eight hours or longer for more rapid thawing, washed thoroughly and then soaked in a brine solution to cover (1 to 2 tablespoons salt to 4 cups of water) overnight or longer in the refrigerator or a cold place.

### Penned Raccoon Versus Wild

Data on the pen-fed carcasses included information on sex, length of animal, possible age and food, live and dressed weight, location of scent glands and their removal, aging of game, freezing and storage dates. On the trapped animals the data were less complete, with no information on sex, length, age, food or live weight. Four of the pen-fed raccoons were females and three males; the sexes of the trapped were not given.

The carcasses of the penned raccoons ranged in weight from 4 pounds 13 ounces to 9 pounds 12 ounces, with an average weight of 7 pounds 9 ounces. The weight of the fat removed from these carcasses ranged from 1 pound 2 ounces on the smallest to 5 pounds 14 1/2 ounces on the fattest carcass. The heaviest one had 3 pounds 3 ounces of fat. The fat was firm and creamy white with no strong odor.

The carcasses of the trapped raccoons varied in weight from 5 pounds 12 ounces to 11 pounds 13 ounces, with an average weight of 8 pounds 14 ounces. These raccoon carcasses were muscular and an-

gular rather than fat and compact. Six ounces of fat were removed from the smallest and two pounds from the fattest but not the heaviest carcass. The fat had a strong, gamy odor; it was dark in color, tenacious or rubbery in character and unattractive in appearance. It was removed from each one of the trapped carcasses before cooking.

The kernels or glands, more or less embedded in fat, had been removed from under the forelegs and the thick part of the thighs in dressing the animals. These glands are common to all fur-bearing animals; just how much they affect the flavor of game is a debatable question. Until proven to the contrary it is wise to remove all glands.

There was a striking contrast in odor between the pen-fed and the trapped carcasses, as well as between the different trapped carcasses. These differences were no doubt due to many factors such as: age, character of food, amount of activity, complete or incomplete bleeding at the time of killing, and the conditions under which the dressing, cooling and aging of the animals were done.

The pen-fed carcasses had little or no gamy odor. The oldest of the seven was about one and one-half years old. While in captivity, corn on the cob had been their principal food, supplemented with various fruits and vegetables. They had been given no animal food; however, during the last six weeks a concentrated protein food in pellet form was given to them daily. Living in confinement for practically three months they had had little exercise. They had been properly bled when killed and drawn, skinned, cleaned, cooled and aged.

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Figure 1. Game-tasting panel of Iowa State College about to pass judgment on: left, center and back, three roasted raccoons; foreground and on platter to left, two roasted opossums; in the corner, right, breaded rabbits; center to the right, two roasted rabbits. Accessories to the game are candied sweets, parsnips saute, buttered broccoli, tossed green salad, fried apple rings crowned with spiced prunes, garlic-buttered toasted Vienna loaves and cornbread sticks. Lime sherbet, almond finger biscuits and more coffee rewarded the judges after their scores were turned in.

—Iowa State College Photo.

## Raccoon . . .

(Continued from page 188)

promptly and under sanitary and ideal conditions.

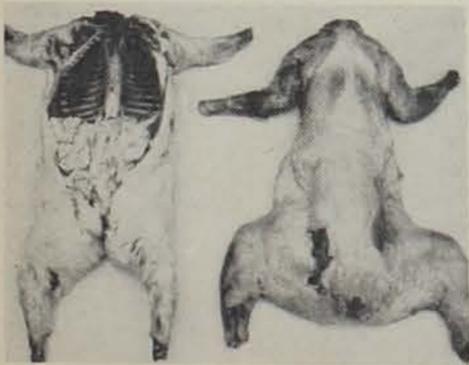
The trapped carcasses, on the other hand, were strong and gamy. Four of the seven weighed nine pounds and more, and were, no doubt, from older raccoons. The raccoons came from two different parts of the state.

Raccoons are considered one of our cleanest of game both as to habitat and food. To quote Ellsworth Jaeger from St. Nicholas, 58:509, May '31, "Of all the cleanly folk of the woodland, the raccoon is the most astonishing, for he has the remarkable faculty of washing all his food, each and every piece, be it wet or dry, clean or muddy, frog or fish, flesh or fowl, eggs, insects, fruits, nuts, grain or vegetables." From a study made of raccoons at Iowa State College, LeRoy Giles found that the raccoons near Ames in the fall lived on 70 percent corn supplemented largely with crayfish and wild fruits. Just as soon as the technique of handling the raccoon from the trap or the hunt to the refrigerator or locker plant improves and approaches that used for the penned ones, there is no reason why these should not be equally desirable as a food.

The strong and gamy carcasses were either rubbed with soda, soaked in a brine for eight or more hours, or parboiled before cooking. Follow them into the roaster, frying pan or casserole to learn of the results.

### Follow Pattern Used for Domestic Meats

Age, size, shape, percent of bone and condition of a carcass or cut of meat determine largely the method of cooking best suited for it. The flesh of young or young adult animals can be broiled, fried, roasted or braised; these methods develop the natural and distinctive flavor of the flesh. The flesh of old animals is best when stewed or braised. To either young or old fat should be added when the flesh is very lean. To judge the age of a carcass presents a problem for one who is cooking game for the first time. The following characteristics are indicative of a young animal: light weight carcasses, smaller and less rigid bones, pliable cartilages, lighter colored and less firm muscle tissues.



Pen-raised, corn-fed raccoon, carcass at left. Wild trapped raccoon carcass at right. —Iowa State College Photo.

Cooking methods were limited to: a combination of frying and braising, roasting, grinding and making the meat into patties and loaves, long time cooking in bean jugs or casseroles and the use of tomatoes and seasonings to modify the flavor of the meat. Just a beginning has been made on these methods and additional work will no doubt substantiate or modify the recipes which have been developed.

Flavor plays a most important part in judging all game dishes; it is also one of the most difficult factors to understand in all meat research. Likes and dislikes, also prejudices, have to be considered. A few attempts were made to try to localize game flavor in the raccoon by giving three paired samples (hindquarter, forequarter and saddle) from the right and left sides of the same carcass differently treated. Conclusions cannot be drawn at this time from the limited data obtained. The flavor of each kind of game is not always recognized even with game enthusiasts. Raccoon was identified as raccoon 58 different times, as opossum 16 times, as musquash seven times, as rabbit and squirrel twice each, and as pheasant and American coot once each.

### The Raccoon in The Roaster

Of all the different ways of preparing raccoon roasting was the most popular with our judges. Different kinds of stuffings were used, such as the customary savory stuffing, onion and apple, apple, cranberry, all made with bread cubes as the basis; also a rice and apricot stuffing.

Five pen-fed raccoons were roasted; the three served at the game dinner scored highest with a rating of 9.0 out of a possible 10; the one rubbed all over with soda before washing it scored 8.2; and the one that was soaked for eight hours scored 8.4.

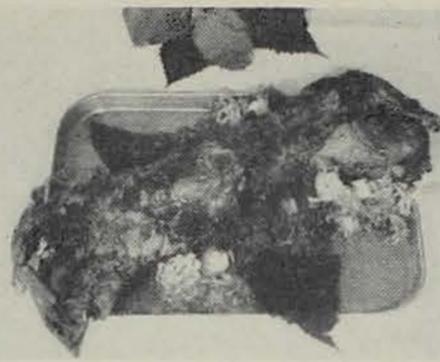
Two of the trapped raccoons were roasted; they scored definitely lower. The one soaked in a brine of salt, soda and water for 18 hours rated a 6.6; the other one, which was strong and therefore rubbed with soda before washing it, then parboiled for two hours before roasting, scored 6.1.

For the recipe which was developed see "Roasted Raccoon." Why not plan for a raccoon dinner during the holidays? Your guests will think they are eating roasted young pork.

### The Raccoon in The Frying Pan or Dutch Oven

A combination of frying and braising met with the approval of our panel. By dividing each carcass in half lengthwise and preparing each half differently, it was possible to compare the merits of methods.

Two pen-fed raccoons were fried and braised. To check the flavor of raccoon fat one-half of the carcass was fried in an unflavored fat and the other half in fried out



Roast raccoon—and as good as it looks. —Iowa State College Photo.

raccoon fat. There was little difference between the two, the first one scoring 8.5 and the second 8.2. The second carcass was soaked for 18 hours in a weak brine; one-half of the carcass was floured and the other half breaded. Here again the scores were similar, averaging 8.4 and 8.2 respectively.

Only one of the trapped raccoons was fried and braised. The second one was discarded. The raccoon which was cooked weighed 11 pounds 13 ounces and was apparently old and gamy. After soaking in a strong brine with soda added for 16 to 18 hours, the carcass was cut in half lengthwise. The half which was fried in fat and braised scored 7.2; the other half, which was parboiled, then fried and braised, dropped to a score of 6.6.

(Next month, recipes for cooking raccoon.)

### HUNTING AND FISHING BY RADIO

An indication of awakening consciousness on the part of radio advertisers to public interest in hunting and fishing, the Sportsmen's Service Bureau reports, is the sponsorship by a tobacco concern of the program "Fishing and Hunting Club of the Air." This half-hour broadcast is heard each Wednesday at 8:30 P. M., E. S. T., over more than one hundred ABC stations from coast to coast.

Prize-winning questions on topics of interest to sportsmen are answered by the program experts—Dave Newell, editor-in-chief of Field and Stream, and Jim Hurley, outdoor columnist of the New York Mirror—and others who appear as guests. Additional features include prize-winning tall stories and tips of practical value, interspersed with anecdotes and hunting and fishing experiences. Roland Winters is master of ceremonies.

Interest is said to be keen, especially in rural areas. A recent survey revealed a 50 percent coverage of all radio listeners in one midwestern state at program time. Mail is reported to average 10,000 letters a broadcast.

The wild goose is more cosmopolitan than we; he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Susquehanna, and plumes himself for the night in a Louisiana bayou. —H. D. Thoreau.

End of autumn.  
The hop of a wild rabbit  
Scuttling through dead leaves.  
—Florence B. Spilger.

## Fox Hunter . . .

(Continued from page 187)

sure he isn't too far ahead. At this point you unmuffle the bell, swinging it in stride as you walk deliberately and without pause on the fox track. The fox very probably will lead off half a mile or so at the outset. The bell goes bong—a—bong, bong—a—bong without interruption. The fox has never heard such a thing before and he begins to itch with curiosity inside his furry pants. Bong—a—bong, bong—a—bong—and he gets more and more curious. He just has to take a peek. Soon the tracks will show where he has turned around for better peeks. He's all a fidget by now. You get closer and closer. Don't hesitate or the fox will put distance between you.

### CERTIFICATE OF LIABILITY

To the Sanity Commission:  
Honorable Sirs:  
The fact that . . . . .  
(name) was observed tramping over hill and dale in an aimless manner while ringing a dinner bell is NOT evidence that said party has become touched in the head and therefore should appear before your honorable body for examination. Proof of this assertion can be demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of your aforementioned honorable body—preferably on a new snow. Bring lunch.

Your pal with the gun, meantime, has gone off, out of the fox's view, to a good stand, according to the wind. He keeps his eye on the territory ahead of you, and doesn't move unless he's sure he can do so unseen by the fox. By now the fox isn't quite sure whether he's going or arriving; he's busier than a two-headed cat in a fish store trying to figure out whether the 5:15 has jumped the tracks at Valley Junction and is cutting cross-lots to Back Pond or whether the mice he ate are ganging up on his digestion. A couple more bongs—then bang!

There is one other bit of equipment which should be carried by the fox beller. It appears above.

### Decoying

This method is little practiced, but under the right conditions is surprisingly productive. Sometimes the hunter may get skunked. Yes, skunked. First of all, it's necessary that the fox's hunting grounds be thoroughly known. The deceitful sportsman then awaits a bright moonlight night and takes up his position against an old haycock, stone wall, stump or ant hill (depending on the state of occupancy of the latter). It is assumed that the fox eventually appears. The hunter then merely chirps ever so faintly—like a field mouse beating his wife. Sucking on the back of the hand seems to be an excellent imitation, it can be assumed. Keep the hand still and ready for another chirp if the fox fails to maintain sufficient interest to come within gunshot. The hunter also may annoy some object near his resting spot with a good fox scent. This helps, especially if the odor can be tolerated by the hunter.



A given acre of water is able to support only so many pounds of fish. We have long recognized that these may be either game fish, rough fish, or a combination of both. For that reason we carry on our rough fish removal program.—Jim Sherman Photo.

## Iowa's Policy . . .

(Continued from page 185)

crop is not static as natural mortality is too high.

In order that good pheasant hunting may be continued from year to year, it is essential that the hen bird be protected. Pheasants are polygamous, and research has shown that high productivity can be secured in the wild at a sex ratio of one cock to ten hens. It is likely that the sex ratio might be much higher. At our game farm, where we ordinarily carry one cock to seven hens, in experimental work we secured high fertility of eggs at a ratio of one cock to 50 hens. Where the sex ratio approaches one to one in the wild, we find excess cocks competing with hens for food and cover. As long as only cocks are shot, our pheasant populations will withstand hunting pressures greatly in excess of anything they have ever been subjected to. The more the birds are hunted, the more wary they become, the harder to bring to bag. As hunting success diminishes, hunters become discouraged and the hunting pressure drops to near zero long before the population of cocks in relation to hens is brought to a point where it will materially affect fertility of eggs or reproduction.

The danger of too long a season is not in killing too many cock birds, but as hunting success decreases the poaching of hens shoots up alarmingly. As soon as the hunter realizes that the taking of one hen affects the future of pheasant hunting more than all the cocks he bags during the season, then the justification of the hen law becomes apparent and the law becomes popular and is supported by the hunters.

In experimental work carried on by our research unit, two years ago when we allowed one hen in the bag with five cocks, it would be expected that the take would be in ratio of one to five. This was far from true, however. An an-

alysis of some 1,700 feet collected by conservation officers and interested sportsmen revealed that the take was actually one hen to one and seven-tenths cocks. The only justification for shooting hens is to reduce the population. This need arises when the population becomes too high to be compatible with agricultural practices.

It may be seen from this that we must know more about our fish and game populations in order to intelligently formulate the regulations under which they may be taken. **Popular approval or disapproval will not alter the course of nature, and civil laws cannot abolish natural ones.** So much for legal regulations that may be included under the wildlife management heading, legal restrictions or law enforcement.

### Habitat Improvement

Habitat improvement is the most basic and fundamental of all management practices and is exceedingly difficult to carry out effectively on a sufficiently large scale to materially affect populations of either fish or game. Let's compare the pheasant populations of Iowa



Hunting pressure drops to near zero long before enough cocks are killed to materially affect the fertility of eggs. The danger of too long a season is not in killing too many cock birds, but as hunting success decreases, the poaching of hens shoots up alarmingly.

and South Dakota. Our lands are more fertile and their food potentially is higher. Why then do we have fewer birds? Simply because South Dakota's facilities for production are greater. For pheasant production in Iowa we have more food, more winter cover, more water, at least an equal supply of minerals essential to their diet, such as magnesium, lime, phosphorus, etc. The bottleneck in our proven pheasant range is primarily nesting cover, but in some instances winter cover may be the principal limiting factor.

The rich, black soil of Iowa has proven too valuable as a means of producing corn to leave much of its surface in grass lands. The part that is left in grass lands is pastured too closely for our purpose and the forage crops such as alfalfa are harvested at the most critical period of the nesting season. Some slight change in agricultural practices now beyond the control of the Commission could easily affect our pheasant population enormously, either detrimentally or beneficially. To influence farmers to so manage their lands in a way that will be beneficial to wildlife without interfering with crop production is a part of public relations; but to ascertain the facts upon which to base our recommendations is definitely a function of wildlife management.

Probably one of the most important functions in habitat improvement for fish life is our rough fish removal program.

On state-owned fish and game lands, we can and are now in the act of manipulating the land and waters in such a manner as to provide the greatest number of favorable environmental factors. This is only a drop in the bucket, and except as we and other agencies may offer advice, **wise land use, the greatest potential in the production of game and fish, lies entirely in the hands of private individuals.** Here we must consider the work of the Soil Conservation Service, the State Department of Agriculture and the State College.

Without exception farming practices that benefit the land benefit wildlife. Contour farming, strip cropping, living fences, erosion control, cover crops and farm ponds all serve to improve conditions for wildlife. These practices provide nesting cover, escape cover, travel lanes, winter security and food for upland forms. They check flash floods, slow down run-off of surface water, prevent siltation, serve to stabilize our stream flow and contribute immeasurably to the improvement of our streams and lakes which in turn provide better fishing.

Stream pollution from industrial waste and sewage must be checked and that will come only as soon as an aroused public makes its demands known. It is a part of our job as conservationists to bring these needs to the attention of the public.

Construction of artificial lakes and dredging are of major importance in providing habitat for fish and game. This work, however, is a function of the Division of Lands and Waters and therefore can progress only as rapidly as money is appropriated by the legislature for that purpose.

### Artificial Stocking

Artificial stocking of any species of fish or game is a sound practice only insofar as it is used to furnish seedstocks in areas where the environmental habitat is suited to the species and where seedstocks do not already exist. This may be qualified to the extent that where it is economically possible, game birds or fish may be stocked with the deliberate intention that the sportsmen take the individuals that are stocked as is now our practice in the stocking of trout and in some instances bullheads. The practice is also justified under certain conditions from a public relations standpoint in providing an activity for conservation groups to stimulate their interest in wildlife management and lead them on to the fundamentals of this work, which consists primarily of the improving of conditions under which birds and fish may live and produce normally in the wild.



Artificial stocking of fish and game for the most part is a sound practice only insofar as it is used to furnish seedstocks where habitat is suited to the species and where seedstocks do not already exist.

Almost without exception, the lands and waters of the State of Iowa already contain adequate seedstocks of fish and game, and in many instances the introduction of additional artificially reared individuals may be detrimental rather than beneficial. Bobwhite quail reared in the wild have been known to move out into insecure environment when pen-raised birds were introduced into the particular secure covey range they had previously frequented. Stocking additional fish in lakes or streams may under certain conditions serve only to throw an additional burden upon the available food supply, creating endless complications resulting in subsequent poor fishing.

The value of artificial propagation and stocking of exotic species cannot be denied. Without it, we would have no pheasant hunting. True, our native species should have first consideration, and where the environment is suitable nothing should be done to interfere with

(Continued on page 191)

## WE SAW IT

By Charley Gillham

THIRTY-THREE thousand people jammed the A.T.A. grounds at Vandalia, Ohio, August 26 to witness the Miami Valley Outdoors Show. State and county officers clocked 11,000 autos parked on this property and how many more were left by the roadside is only a guess.

The estimate of three people per car was conservative during these times when jalopies and tires are well worn, and the crowd was not just curious—seeking free entertainment. Contestants were on the grounds by the hundreds. Bait and fly casters, dog owners for the coon houn' race. Beagle men with their entries to pursue live wild rabbits. Muzzle loaders boomed, trap guns cracked, and archers sent their silent missiles flying toward innumerable targets.

Blue shirts and gingham were in evidence everywhere, mixed in with the latest fabrics of Fifth Avenue, for these were folks interested in the outdoors. The disciples of Ike Walton and Nimrod recognize no financial rank. A mother changed her baby's diapers atop the trap house where champions of the world had shot for the highest honors. Picnics baskets generously dotted the green; grizzled old coon hounds of dubious parentage sniffed in wonder the perfumed silky aristocracy of the dog world.

What was it all about? Just a gathering of outdoorsmen sponsored by the Miami Valley Outdoors and the Dayton Journal-Herald. The latter, through their buzz-saw sports editor Al Clark, were demonstrating to the world that 50 percent of newspaper sport pages should be devoted to the outdoors. The assembled crowd bore out this contention.

## DUCK CAMP THOUGHT

Well, we moved into duck camp this week and it is too soon for us to unwind any tales about duck shooting. However, we confess having one round on a flock of mallards jumped from a patch of flooded scrub brush and scoring what will go down in history as three shots and three misses. At any rate, we didn't pick up any ducks, which is considerable proof of missing.

We found camp in its usual messy condition—lots of cobwebs, dead flies and mouse tracks. In fact, one of our first discoveries was a mother mouse and a brood of young snug in a nest of cotton filched from a bed comfort. It was in a leather saddlebag hanging on the wall and we promptly carried "the works" outside and dumped the cargo. Mamma Mouse had her family hanging onto her with their toothless mouths clamped to the loose hide and fur of her neck and body. They were all aboard ready to make a hasty exit.

Must confess the sin of obliteration

ating all of them, and ease the conscience with the thought that it was the only way to gain redress for the holes chewed to get the cotton for their nest. Sure, mice are pesky creatures and they make people mad at them for the damage and annoyance they create, but sometimes we wonder if the All Wise Creator holds us to account for destroying the helpless little rascals without compunction. Darn their troublesome hides. He gives them the right to live.

—Blaine Hawkins,  
Mediapolis New Era News.

Gib Knudson's note of a sign on a roadhouse near Mankato, "Lunches and Live Bait," and his "Okay, Brother, but we hope you don't get them mixed," brings to mind the story of the absent-minded professor who caught a splendid big bullfrog on which he was to lecture to his biology class. Immediately after dinner, upon opening the package, the starry-eyed professor brought out two peanut butter sandwiches.

## Iowa's Policy . . .

(Continued from page 190)

their perpetuation and increase. Bear in mind, however, that the Iowa of 1945 is different from the Iowa of 1880. The face of the land has undergone a vast change. The wide prairies of waving grasses that resounded to the boom of the prairie chicken have been transformed into tasseled fields of stately corn. The prairie chicken is gone forever, except for a few remnants that still eke out a precarious existence in isolated sections of rapidly diminishing grasslands. As the transition of the habitat takes place making the survival of native species impossible, we can then and only then supplement our wildlife with introduced species adapted to the new environment.

Iowa is favored by nature beyond most any other state in having over large areas the necessary environmental requirements for two such grand game birds as the native bobwhite quail and the hybridized Asiatic pheasant. At the present there is no need for new species, neither should we with present ease of transportation be too concerned about the production of pheasants in southern Iowa or the production of quail in northern Iowa. Both are gallinaceous birds highly competitive for nesting cover, food and winter cover; and under certain conditions in the same range the dominance of one of these species must at least to some extent be at the expense of the other. It seems the course of wisdom in this instance to develop each species to its maximum in its own proven range and remember Aesop's fable of the dog losing the bone in an attempt to grab its image reflected in the water below.

(Concluded next month)

## THE STOWAWAY

By Carl Stempel

A mousie has come to live in my boat;  
What's that, did I kill him? Why, no.  
He's only a poor little stowaway  
And he's welcome wherever I go.

He has built him a nest beneath the bow seat  
With the straw from my old fishing hat;  
It was dirty and bent and had seen its best days;  
Would you kill the poor mousie for that?

He will nibble at anything softer than flint;  
I believe he would eat my cravat;  
He has eaten some holes in my minnow seine,  
But I wouldn't kill mousie for that.

He likes to hide in my high rubber boots,  
Where he plays he is safe from the cat;  
He scares me to death when I pull the boots on;  
Would you have me kill mousie for that?

He got into my lunch and he nibbled and ate  
Till the beggar looked sassy and fat;  
But he left me a couple of hard-boiled eggs,  
So I couldn't kill mousie for that.

My anchor went down in the lake today;  
The rope severed right where I sat;  
I'm quite sure that I know how it happened to break;  
Would you want me to kill him for that?

He sat on the gunwale and nibbled my cheese,  
Right where I could lay him out flat,  
And he searched out my soul with his beady black eyes;  
Nobody could kill him for that.

## L'Envoi

So I stoke up my pipe as I sit in my boat,  
Sans minnow seine, anchor or hat,  
But if mousie should mess my tobacco all up,  
He wouldn't live long after that.



Those were glorious days, and I only wish that all boys could live them.

## ALL BOYS CAN

I feel sorry for any boy who has to live his boyhood without the thrill of running a trap line in the fall. Do you remember how you used to get out those steel traps that hung in the woodshed and about this time of year oil them and clean off the summer's accumulation of rust so they would

be ready to do their job? Can you forget those cold, frosty mornings when you got up before the Devil had his shirt on and hiked out to the little old creek to see how you had done through the night?

Recall how, as you tramped along, you let your imagination carry you away and you pictured yourself up in the cold North country, a gnarled and seasoned old trapper musing along on snowshoes? Only you were musing along in overshoes and leggings. Remember how each muskrat was, in your imagination, a prime beaver and each civet cat was a silver fox? Remember how you imagined yourself poling down some rapidly flowing stream in a canoe loaded down with the season's catch of fur?

And of course you will never forget how the teacher and the girls in school turned up their noses when you came into the classroom the morning you made a miscue when you meant to deal the coup de grace to that big short-striped skunk. And later the principal asked you to go home and change your clothes or "do something."

Those were glorious days and I only wish that all boys could live them as I have known them.

—Frank Powers, Cedar Rapids Gazette



## COTTONWOOD GROWS UP

By F. R. Longwood, Farm Forester

FROM the days of the early settlers in Iowa until a few years ago, two of the most perplexing problems to the farmer were the almost yearly inundation of bottomland areas he was trying to farm, and the perpetual war he waged against the cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) seedlings that sprang up so often after the flood waters had receded. Year after year this struggle went on; bottomlands were flooded by high water, necessitating delayed plowing and planting until the water had subsided and the soil dried out.

Often when the farmer returned after a wait of several weeks, he found that not only was his land dried out sufficient for plowing and seeding, but that nature had already seeded the area and that he was heir to a stand of thousands of cottonwood seedlings from six inches to two feet high.

In most cases he was a man of determination and ambition and accordingly set about to relieve himself of the so-called "weed trees" growing on his land. This was corn land, and despite flood and the short crop season left it was going to grow corn. So grow corn it did—but often at a slim margin of profit or at an actual loss, and always at a terrific cost of labor and time.

Some years the overflow land was in such shape that the farmer was unable to return to the area until the following spring, or even the spring after that. When he did return, he was greeted by a sight even he could not believe. Before his eyes were thousands upon thousands of cottonwood trees 10 to 15 feet high and an inch to two inches in diameter. He now had but two courses of action—either cut out the seedlings at a great expense of time and labor, or give up and let nature take its course. In many cases he let nature take over. Unknown to him, he was reaping as great a net annual profit from each acre of land as corn would have brought, and in many cases more.

Let us follow this typical chain of events to the end. Twenty-five to 40 years have passed since the farmer bowed to nature and spent his time farming higher land on his farm. A great war had come again and the foresters of the county were scouring the land for mature

timber. A forester, hearing of the "weed trees," stopped to check over the 40 acres the farmer had been paying taxes on and wishing he was rid of for some 35 years.

The forester had an amazing story to tell. On the bottomland there was an average volume of 30,000 board feet per acre or 1,200,000 board feet on the 40 acres. A local sawmill bought this crop at \$8.00 per thousand board feet, a total of \$9,600, or \$6.86 as the gross annual income per acre per year on the 40 acres of "weed trees." To get this income the farmer paid his taxes of perhaps a dollar an acre per year.

Hundreds of Iowa landowners have enjoyed this experience in the last few years. More will follow.

With the increased cutting of cottonwood, many uses have developed for it where other more expensive woods were formerly used. As a wood for boxes, crates, egg cases, baskets, and containers it is tops. For general farm construction it is invaluable due to its characteristic wide, clear boards, ease in working with edge tools, straight grain, and favorable nail and point holding qualities. Thousands of feet are being shipped to northern Michigan for conversion into veneer, much is being cut and shipped for pulpwood for manufacture of paper, and still more is being used in the manufacture of toys, wagon boxes, car blocking, and a myriad of other uses, including excelsior.

These uses are in many instances tied up with the unusual growth rate and form of the tree. On the average site cottonwood will grow from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches per year in diameter and approximately five feet in height for the first 35 or 40 years of its life. The better sites will grow a thousand board feet per acre per year on a 35 to 40-year rotation or life cycle.

It is commonplace to find trees 30 inches in diameter and 120 feet high at 35 years of age with three or more clear 16-foot logs in the bole and two or more logs with a few branches above these. These lower clear logs produce a high percentage of clear, straight-grained, light-colored lumber.

As the years pass, there will undoubtedly be an ever-increasing appreciation of the former "weed tree," which is now the "forester's delight" in Iowa. Many landowners will grow it where crop failures are frequent, taxes are low, and tree growth is excellent. Many more new uses will be found for cottonwood, and it will ultimately be considered by everyone as one of Iowa's valuable trees.

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn  
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening  
To silence, for no lonely bird would  
sing  
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn.

—Thomas Hood.

The tints of autumn—a mighty  
flower garden blossoming under the  
spell of the enchanter, Frost.—Whittier.



Generally speaking, the hunter is a sportsman, is respectful of the farmer's right and mindful that only through the farmer's consent may he hunt.

### THIS COUNTY BECOMES HUNTING MECCA

Appanoose county is gaining wide reputation among midwest sportsmen as one of the best quail hunting spots in existence. Hunters drive hundreds of miles for a few days of sport, and they usually go away determined to come back again the next year.

Sports publications and magazines are carrying the news about Appanoose quail. Some very good movies have been taken and shown to sizeable audiences. Each year the publicity seems to increase and Appanoose county's reputation as a splendid quail mecca continues to grow.

This publicity is a good thing for our county. Not that we want to be overrun with sportsmen who tear around our fields, but generally speaking, a sportsman isn't that

type of fellow. He is respectful of the farmer's right and mindful that only through the farmer's consent should he hunt on his property.

Some very fine people journey to Appanoose county each year to hunt. Whenever the Iowegian people attend a state publishers convention, or any kind of Iowa convention, there are two things often mentioned. One is our famed girls' basketball teams, and the other is our quail. Appanoose has gained a wide reputation for these two things.

Quail seasons have their ups and downs. This season is described as moderately successful. Last season was unusually good. But, even in the poorest seasons, sportsmen can always find some quail shooting in Appanoose county.

—Centerville Iowegian

### WELCOME, NEW READERS

Probably the most significant among our new readers are 260 Boy Scouts of the Fort Madison District. Every troop member has received a year's gift subscription, beginning this issue, from the Green Bay Chapter of the Izaak Walton League at Fort Madison. This group agrees with Jay N. "Ding" Darling that the future of true conservation is dependent upon the conservation education our youths receive.

George Helm, president of the Green Bay Chapter, Joe Ochsner, state vice-president, Conservation Officer E. D. Benson, and the entire Green Bay Chapter membership are to be complimented on their vision. Other Izaak Walton League chapters and service clubs throughout the state might well copy this idea with Boy and Girl Scouts, Future Farmers, 4-H Clubs and other junior groups the members of which will soon be using and managing our natural resources.

Another fine group added this month are the officers of the Izaak Walton League chapters in Iowa who are not now subscribers. One-year gift subscriptions were paid

by the All-State Chapter through its secretary, Cliff Hallowell. Yet another group subscription, with 74 new readers, is from the up and coming Waltonians, Inc., Cedar Rapids, through their secretary, A. C. Norton. Subscriptions to the "Iowa Conservationist" are included in membership dues of this organization, and new subscribers are in addition to a large block previously received.

All we of the Conservation Commission can say is, "Send 'em in, boys, and we'll do our best to make the 'Conservationist' informative and entertaining."

### 'CONSERVATIONIST' INDEX

With this issue two years will have passed since we have prepared an index to the "Iowa Conservationist." We are working on one now covering 1944-45. It will be completed about March 1. Many of our readers are planning to bind their "Conservationists," and an index will be valuable. If you will mail us a card requesting the new index, it will be sent to you without cost when completed.