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IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Iowa Furs Make High Quality Garments

By Ree M. Berry

OUTDOOR IOWA AMONG THE BEST

By Ron Tallman
Iowa City Press-Citizen

I SAW a half-hour motion picture the other evening — a picture that Iowa Citians are going to see in very short order—that pointed up better than ever before, one of my favorite theories. And after seeing it, I couldn't resist the urge to use this space to expand a bit upon the idea that Outdoor Iowa offers more good things for its outdoor-minded men, women and children than do most of the states of this nation.

Six prints of "Iowa's Big Five" have been made. The motion picture can be secured through the local conservation officer in the territory in which it is to be shown or prints can be secured by writing to the Visual Instruction Service, Iowa State College, Ames, or the Extension Division, the State University of Iowa, Iowa City. The new picture is in great demand and, consequently, groups that wish to show it should contact these sources well in advance of the expected movie showing.

The movie is that new production of the State Conservation Commission, "Iowa's Big Five," which takes the viewer on five delightful hunting expeditions — in quest of quirels, quail, pheasants, ducks, and rabbits — and does so with that authenticity that will please even the most particular of hunters. It is a beautiful job of full-color photography, done by Jim Herman, with some shots that literally take the breath away, and others that please the know-how hunter with the un-staged naturalness of their presentation. It is all tied together in an excellent job of editing and is supplied with a spoken commentary, written by Jim Harlan, that provides a full and proper emphasis to the under-

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Red fox fur is used for neck pieces, jackets, and coats, and although fox furs are very dressy the pelt is frail and of rather poor wearing quality.—Dick Trump Photo.

The History of Stocking and Management of Ringneck Pheasants in the State of Iowa

By Lester F. Faber
Game Biologist
(Part 2)

THE ringnecked pheasant had become firmly established in Iowa by 1928, and this fact was emphasized by Game Warden Albert in his report for that year. The numbers had increased considerably since the first open season in 1925, and good pheasant hunting was enjoyed by the sportsmen of Iowa.

Southern Iowa was still receiving a greater portion of all the birds stocked or transplanted. From 1927 through 1930, 10,211 pheasants and 31,372 eggs were distributed in southern Iowa counties. During 1929 and 1930, the average southern county received over 500 birds.

According to the biennial report covering 1929 and 1930, it was

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THE harvest is on and all over America men and boys are matching wits with the sly fox, cautious mink, and some dozen other native furbearers. The trapping, skinning, drying, and selling of animal pelts is big business, and during the past three seasons in Iowa alone seven and one-half million dollars went into the pockets of trappers for the sale of two and one-quarter million furbearers.

The life stories of Johnnie Muskrat, Br'er Fox, and the others are pretty generally known. Countless thousands of books and articles on how to trap, skin, and market raw furs have been written, but little is known by the average reader of the why and wherefore of the change from pelt to garment.

Iowa raccoon fall into two fur classifications, a heavily furred type and a less heavily furred or flat furred animal.

The heavy pelts are used mainly for fur trimming. The flat furred pelts are used in making coats. The quality of Iowa raccoon fur is equal to any found in the world. Formerly raccoon were made up in the natural fur but during the past year there has been a new process developed for dying and shearing to resemble nutria or beaver. This dyed and sheared fur is sold under the trade name of sheared raccoon.

Coats made of natural pelts range in price from \$195 to \$250. Made of the new sheared raccoon the price goes up to about \$450. The processing and labor involved in making the nutria type garment is expensive and accounts for the much higher cost.

At the present time very little raccoon fur is being used for coats in its natural state but is being blended and dyed in several different shades and sold under the trade names of silver fox, silver frost, and platinum fox shades of raccoon. Under the newest blending

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ENFORCEMENT NECESSARY

We might as well be realistic. There are still many people in Virginia, high and low, who have little hesitancy in violating the laws and regulations made for the protection of game. They are too selfish to be in sympathy with determined efforts to make Virginia the great game state which it once was. Their attitude is that they will do as they choose so long as the local game warden and forest ranger are at a safe distance.

—Virginia Wildlife

KOREAN LAWS STRICT

The following is printed on the reverse side of a Korean hunting license:

"Hunting in public streets, shrines and temples is not permitted. Firing at buildings, people, cattle and street cars is not permitted."

Wardens' Tales

Shop Talk From the Field

(Editor's Note: "Wardens' Tales" has been a feature in the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST off and on for several years. It will be continued until we run out of stories about and on the conservation officers. Conservation officers and subscribers both are urged to send in original stories in which Iowa's wardens figure. Contributions should be addressed to the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST, 10th and Mulberry, Des Moines.)

Pop-gun Charlie

C. R. ADAMSON, the popular conservation officer in charge of Scott County, has had to take considerable ribbing because of a slip up on an enforcement patrol. In company with another warden, Charlie was on an assignment in a northern county working on early pheasant shooters. Seeing a car traveling slowly along a gravel road the two officers focused their binoculars and saw that a man and a woman were occupants, but they also saw a shotgun barrel that was plainly visible through a rear side window. Carrying an assembled gun in an automobile on a public highway is unlawful, so after a quick chase and a toot on the siren the car stopped. Upon investigation the offending firearm proved to be a child's double-barreled pop-gun, much to Charlie's embarrassment and the hilarious amusement of the car's occupants and the assisting officer.

Fox Hunting, Southern Style

K. M. Madden of Clinton, like every other conservation officer, believes that his territory has the best hunting and fishing in the state. Ken writes to support his theory: "You may be interested in our squirrel hunting in and around Clinton. Mr. Blank of Clinton shot one squirrel and placed it on a nearby stump while he waited out another one that had gone in a hole. A red fox slipped in and took it from the stump only twenty yards from where he sat. This made Mr. Blank unhappy so he killed the fox with a load of 7½ shot. Two squirrels and ten thousand mosquito bites later Blank was leaving the timber and met face to face another fox with a meadow lark in his mouth. This fox, too, was killed at about twenty yards. Mr. Blank is from the south and over the phone he called to inquire about our fox season. Shoot first and ask later, you know. His southern drawl, along with his excitement made this yarn sound newsworthy. And besides that, it couldn't happen anywhere in the world except Clinton County.—Ken."

Coon Tale

Even the conservation officers go coon hunting occasionally as this unexpurgated edition of a letter from Conservation Officer H. E. Colby of Wright County, who was sent to pick up two illegally held raccoon shows.

"The two coon Mr. Gatewood had were given to him by a farmer near Sheffield who had shot the old coon while it was killing his chickens. He picked up the young coon and has taken wonderful care of them. They are now about two years old and they sure are big.

"I took a box along with me to put the 'baby' coons in but the box would not even hold one of them, so I had to put them in my car loose. I had another call to see about a beaver complaint and when I came back to the car those darn coon had taken a box of shotgun shells and torn them all open. There was shot all over the car. The old buggy certainly looked like a cyclone from the outside and when I went to get in the cyclone struck, and that big old buck coon would not let me in.

"Every time I would open the door he would rush at me. I guess he thought the car was his by then. In about a half hour this crazy coon cooled off and I got in and started for Clarion.

"Soon both coon were up on the seat sitting by my shoulders. The road was awful rough so I had to watch where I was going. Things went okay for a while and then that old buck stuck his finger in my right ear and hung on to the other. Then he grabbed off my hat and pulled my hair.

"For a while I thought coon, car, and all were going into the ditch, but we finally made it.

"These coon were expressed to the game farm. I thought that I would investigate the next day and see how the express man took to these insane animals and then my discretion over-balanced my curiosity and I let well enough alone.—Hub."

Speaking of Spikes

Conservation Officer B. I. Severson of Ruthven writes: "Barringer's Slough has almost five thousand blue-wings on it now, with a few hundred mallards and spikes moving in.

"Speaking of spikes reminds me of an odd true story about them. A neighbor of mine, Arnold Roland, who lives two hundred yards further out in the country than I do, has a spike hen. She was two years old last spring and he raised her from five eggs that were not mashed when his brother destroyed the nest while mowing. Well, this spike hen needed a mate. A year ago she wanted to mate with any one of his tame ducks but none of them would have anything to do with her. So this spring, when the urge came on, she flew off and returned the next day with a spike drake. The drake stayed around for a week and was getting tame enough to come and eat with the tame ducks. One morning an airplane buzzed the place. The drake took off and never returned. That's an impossible ending to a story, but that's it.

"The spike hen still needs a
(Continued on page 85)

The Sportsman Speaks

(Editor's Note: Recently a poll was conducted to determine the attitude of Iowa's hunters and fishermen relative to an increase in license fees. The poll was conducted by sending double postcards to ten per cent of the combination license holders, picked at random from every county in the state. Primary question asked was: "Do you favor an increase in hunting and fishing license fees?" Sixty-eight per cent of all sportsmen were in favor. In addition to the primary question, several other queries were written down and a blank space was left headed "Remarks". The remarks from sportsmen were very interesting and in succeeding issues of the **Conservationist** we will carry some of the more interesting comments under the head, "The Sportsman Speaks".)

Traer: "I never could understand why women that enjoyed the sport of hunting or fishing should be exempt from buying a license. It's just like going to a ball game or any other sport — everybody pays. If we need more money for a good cause let's get it."

Dubuque: "At the price of meat anybody should be willing to pay more. Six squirrels will pay for a year's license. Commercial fishermen's licenses should be tripled. Look at their prices and profits. Women should buy a license. They have more time to go; also, they are lucky."

Seventy-six per cent of the questionnaires returned favored equal license requirements for women, and the Conservation Commission, at their October meeting, authorized preparation of a bill to be presented to the legislature requiring all women over sixteen years of age to purchase fishing licenses in all waters in which licenses are required of men.

Marion: "I think the cost is high enough on fishing and hunting licenses and the price on equipment is already so high you can hardly buy it now."

Davenport: "I think the State Conservation Commission is doing a good job and I figure with double the revenue they could do twice the job. My motto is: 'Make Iowa the sportsman's paradise of the middle west.' Let's get a license to be worn in plain sight in the form of a badge or a button."

A "visible license bill" has been proposed to the legislature several times in the past but has failed to meet with a favorable action. It is probable that the bill will be presented again to the legislature during the next general assembly.

Ames: "I would say an increase would be justified if it meant an improvement in our fish and game reserve, but I do not favor an increase solely for the sake of following inflationary trends. That in itself is inflation."

Council Bluffs: "I am afraid the fishing and hunting offered in our section of the state is not compa-

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tween one hundred and thirty-five and one hundred and fifty sides and bellies.

Coats made of the backs are more expensive because the quality of the fur is better. Coats made of the sides and bellies require much more labor in make-up and consequently the costs of the two are more nearly equal than the quality of the fur would indicate.

Muskrat fur can be blended and dyed any color, ranging from black to light butter shades and grays. One of the most popular brands on the present market is known as woodlawn or forest mink, medium brown in color and closely resembling natural mink. Other shades are popular. Sable is dark brown; champagne is a light brown; and Manchurian ermine is a very light tan.

In making up coats of blended muskrat fur the "dropped process" is employed. In this process the fur is cut in long, narrow strips and sewn together similar to the method used in making mink coats.

Muskrat coats are first made up in coat form in natural furs and are then blended and dyed. The average cost of a muskrat coat in natural fur is from \$275 to \$325 and the price of one of the popular blended dyed coats, such as woodlawn or sable, is \$650 and up.

Peroxiding of furs to produce a lighter color somewhat reduces the wearing quality. One of the most popular and best of the muskrat coats is sold under the trade name of Hudson seal, which is muskrat plucked, sheared, and dyed black. This is a durable fur but the finished coat is more expensive than natural muskrat, because the process of plucking and shearing is expensive. The finished coat averages from \$350 to \$425.

Mink fur is used for neck pieces, coats, and trimming. It is soft, lustrous, and durable, consequently is considered one of the finest furs obtainable. Iowa mink rank high in quality of fur.

Neck pieces are usually made of from two to seven skins, the consumer cost being determined by the number of skins used.

Sixty-five to eighty skins are required for a mink coat, and coats of natural skins range in price from \$4,000 up.

Wild mink, for the most part, are made up in natural colors, although they are sometimes blended to darken them. During recent years many strains of ranch raised mink have been developed with fur of different colors, ranging from white to black.

Mink coats made up of the most sought after of these new strains are very high in price range, from \$15,000 up to where a small battleship can be used for a small down payment.

Skunk furs are used for fur coats and for trimming on cloth coats. There are three popular types of skunk coats; those made of dark fur with the distinctive white

stripe cut out, ranging in price from \$250 to \$350; those made of furs dyed black including the white stripe, less expensive, ranging in price from \$200 to \$275; and coats made of the cut out white stripes dyed black. This coat is less expensive, the white fur being coarse, the finished coat costing from \$125 to \$175.

Several new processes of peroxidizing and dying have recently been developed which makes possible dying and blending skunk fur to resemble sable, mink, and natural stone mink. Skunk fur is durable, and requires from twenty-five to thirty-five pelts for each coat.

Civet fur is used in coats and for trimming in both natural and dyed shades. The Iowa black-tailed civet is the standard of the world in quality, and graders the world over use the standard Iowa civet for comparison when purchasing these pelts.

Civet fur is durable although the leather is relatively thin and coats made of civet wear very well if properly reinforced when made up.

Civet furs are dyed to resemble mink shades and are sold under the name of Beau Martin. For the most part, the coats are made up in the "drop process" similar to mink and some type muskrat coats.

From seventy to eighty civet skins are required for a finished coat. The price range is from \$250 to \$350.

Red fox fur is used for neck pieces, jackets, and coats. The average price for neck pieces is from \$15 to \$20; for jackets, \$100 to \$150; and for coats \$125 to \$195. From five to seven skins are required for a jacket and about twelve skins for a coat. Red fox furs are used in natural color and are sometimes dyed black, brown, or gray or New Foundland blue, to resemble silver fox. Coats made of red fox are very dressy in style, but rather fragile in wearing quality.

Gray fox fur is used in its natural colors in making jackets and coats. The number of skins required in making a finished product averages about ten per cent more than that required in a red fox coat, and the price range is about ten per cent less. The wearing quality of gray fox is better than red fox. Gray fox fur is dyed to imitate silver fox and is sold as silvered gray fox or dyed gray fox.

Weasel fur is usually made into coats or special evening wraps. Any of the native American species of weasels are sold in the fur trade under the true name of weasel, and only the Russian weasel is sold under the name of Ermine. The short-tailed weasel has longer fur than the long-tailed weasel and occasionally is sold under the name of Ermine, but this is not true in the majority of the fur trade.

Approximately one hundred and eighty to two hundred and fifty weasel skins are required for a coat and the price range is \$650 to \$750 per coat. Coats made of brown weasel pelts are sold under the name of Summer Weasel or Summer Ermine. White weasel pelts are usually dyed brown, gray, or tan and the price range on coats made of these dyed pelts is about ten per cent higher than for the coats made of brown weasel pelts. About sixty skins are required for a small evening wrap, and the price range would be on the basis of \$7.50 per skin, or \$450.

Wolf-coyote hides are used chiefly in making rugs or in sport coats. They are not satisfactory for use in long style coats. They are ordinarily used in natural shades, although they are occasionally dyed lighter colors.

The cost of a short jacket made of wolf hides is from \$100 to \$150, and the price of longer sport jackets is \$150 to \$200. Approximately six skins are required for a short style jacket or ten for longer styles. Wolf pelts are inferior in



This high-posted raccoon might well be saying, "Tan my hide and dye it platinum," for that is exactly what the furriers are doing to his durable pelt.

Iowa Furs . . .

(Continued from page 81)

and dying processes raccoon fur can be dyed and blended to almost any shade to suit individual tastes.

The average number of skins required in making a raccoon coat is twenty to twenty-five flat furred skins, or fifteen to twenty heavily furred pelts.

Raccoon, whether natural or processed, is one of the most durable furs.

Opossum fur is used both for trimming and for coats, being rather popular at the present time when made up into a comparatively inexpensive fur coat. Opossum lends itself well to dying and coats are made up in any of the popular colors as well as used as natural furs. Opossum also is quite commonly dyed solid colors, for the most part dark brown or black.

Opossum fur coats sell for between \$95 and \$150 per coat and approximately thirty-five skins are required for each garment.

Opossum fur rates low in durability.

Muskrat fur is used both for trimming or making coats and is one of the most popular as well as most abundant furs. There are two general types of coats. The first is made entirely of fur from the back of the animal; the other is made from sides and bellies. Between seventy and ninety backs are required to make a coat and be-



Beaver coats have become extremely popular in the high class bracket. The pelt when sheared and plucked is extremely soft and durable. The coat price range is from \$600 to \$1,000.—Jim Sherman Photo.

quality, but wear better than some other pelts.

Beaver pelts are used extensively in trimming for cloth coats, and for fur coats and jackets. The chief value of beaver fur is its darkness of color and the silkiness of the fur. Beaver is used only in sheared and plucked form, because the fur is too curly to use in its natural form. The furs of Iowa beaver are very good quality, and compare favorably with beaver pelts found anywhere in the United States and Canada.

All beaver coats are made up in the process known as "dropping" and the labor in making coats of this kind is rather expensive. Approximately nine to fifteen skins are required for an ordinary coat, and the price range is from \$600 to \$1,000. There is about a ten per cent loss in the tanning process in the preparation of pelts.

Badger fur is of relatively poor quality, and is used only for trimming purposes. Un-prime badger pelts, known as hair-badger, are of no value whatsoever in the fur trade, and the hair of this type pelt is of use only as bristles in making brushes. There are only a few badger pelts taken in the State each year and their value to the fur trade is very small.

There is no open season on otter in Iowa and the otter is very rare in the State at the present time. A few of these animals have been sighted on the Mississippi River in the area north of Clinton, but so far as is known there are only one or two small colonies in that region and none anywhere else in the state. Otter pelts are classed as one hundred per cent in durability in the fur trade, and are the top fur wearing quality of all other furs. Beaver, which is next in line for durability, is rated at eighty to eighty-five per cent compared to the otter. Finished otter coats range about ten to fifteen per cent lower in price than beaver.

Rabbit pelts are used extensively in the fur trade, but pelts used are those of pen-raised rabbits, rather than wild rabbits. The pelt of the cottontail has very little value in the fur trade. Pelts of tame rabbits adapt themselves readily to dying and blending to imitate any other fur, and while they are relatively poor in wearing qualities, the fur does have a very good appearance and finds a ready market in cheaper coats.

The wearing quality of rabbit is rated at about twenty to thirty per cent of other furs.

"The earth is the mother of all of us—plants, animals, and man. The phosphorus and calcium of the earth build our skeletons and nervous systems. Everything else our bodies need except air and sunshine comes from the earth.

"Nature treats the earth kindly. Man treats her harshly. He overplows the cropland, overgrazes the pasture, and overcuts the timberland. He destroys millions of acres completely. He pours fertility year after year into the cities, which in turn pour what they do not use down the sewers into the rivers and oceans.—Foreword, 1938 Yearbook of Agriculture.



The year 1930 marks the beginning of a more scientific approach to pheasant management. The problem of favorable ranges for species of wildlife was now being considered and the need for scientific research in game fields recognized.

History of Ringnecks . . .

(Continued from page 81)

thought at that time that pheasants were definitely becoming established in southern Iowa, and that in a few years the open season could be statewide. Since then we have learned that, except in a few cases, the pheasants almost disappeared after two or three generations, in most of these counties.

The year 1930 marks the beginning of a more scientific approach to pheasant management. The problem of favorable ranges for species of wildlife was now considered as well as the need for research. Aldo Leopold of the Institute of Sporting Arms and Ammunitions Manufacturers made a survey of game conditions in Iowa. His preliminary report indicated that pheasants had established themselves, and could be maintained in shootable quantities in the north central and northwesterly parts of the state.

We now know that the pheasant has increased its range to most of the north half of Iowa, including parts of northeastern counties, and in some places forced fingers southeast and southwest, beyond the center of the State.

Also, during the 1930-32 period, the Commission assisted in the establishment of a research department at Iowa State College to study wildlife and conditions under which game could establish and maintain itself under our agricultural methods. The phrase, "under our agricultural methods," is an extremely important point to consider. Nowhere else are the problems of game management so closely tied to agricultural practices as in Iowa. This point must

be constantly kept in mind when considering the problems of wildlife production and management.

The game farm at Clive was closed and the operations at Lansing curtailed. About the same time this statement was made in the biennial report, "—more definite knowledge regarding the nature of the problems of game distribution should be available before the expense of maintaining game farms would be justified. To maintain game farms for the production of a shootable surplus of game would be expensive and impractical. Plantings of birds should be for the purpose of establishing seedstocks." Even at the present time we still need a great deal more information on artificial stocking.

When the Iowa Fish and Game Commission was created in 1931, eggs were still being distributed. In 1932, 16,000 eggs were distributed to 4-H Clubs and other groups with most of the eggs being sent to southern Iowa. Only 11 per cent of the eggs produced birds that reached a size that could be released to the wild. This was the last attempt to distribute eggs in quantity.

Iowa's pheasant population reached a high point in 1929, and then diminished yearly up to the 1935-36 season. The year 1934 was exceedingly dry and proved to be an unsatisfactory season for hatching, and rearing pheasants.

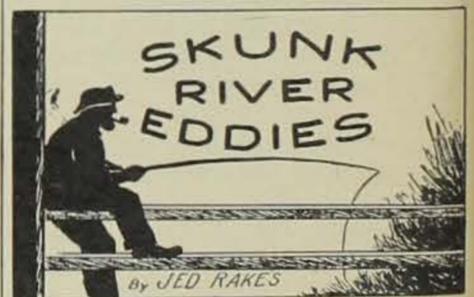
An increase in populations was noted for both years of the 1937-38 biennium, but no open season was held during 1937. The nesting and rearing seasons of both these years were favorable. The increase continued into 1939 and 1940, and

in 1939 four new counties were open to shooting. By 1940 a total of forty-six counties had an open season of seven one-half-days with three cock birds as the daily bag limit. Many birds were distributed during these two years.

Pheasant populations continued to increase during 1941 and 1942. Each year a longer season was held and in 1942 fifty-nine counties were open 21 half-days. Stocking was curtailed and hunting pressure became heavier. An estimated 684,000 cock birds were harvested from an estimated population of 2,000,000 birds that year. The winter of 1942-43 was mild with practically no winter loss. In 1943 an eight day spring hunting season was provided in 11 north-central counties to reduce excess populations in areas where crop damage was feared.

The bag limit was set at five, two of which could be hens. The spring and summer of 1943 was the first of three successive "bad" years for nesting and rearing of young birds. Heavy rains pulled down the per cent of reproduction in 1943, 1944, and 1945. Hunting pressure was lighter the fall of '44 and '45 due to war conditions. However, the general populations continued to fall. A series of poor reproducing years result in an increase in the ratio of old birds to young in the breeding stock. This usually means a reduction in young birds produced. The 1946 rearing season was favorable and with a carry-over of a good number of young birds into the breeding season of 1947, the reproduction should become much higher, providing weather conditions are favorable.

(To be continued next month)



Turtles is a good example o' mass hysteria: you kin mos' always git purty close to one turtle on a log, but when there's fifty you can't git within a block o' 'em.

Professor Peabody, the noted Mill Bend photographer of wildlife, hez traded his camera fer a shot gun. He says he will take up photographin' wildlife again as soon as the meat shortage improves.

The Chamber of Commerce voted to have a new post card made of Skunk River at Mill Bend. The one they got now aint got Andy Gillam in it.

There's all kinds o' people goes fishin', but when a feller combines fishin' with sun-bathin' he jes clutters up the scenery.



North and South Dakota have almost unbelievably good pheasant shooting; but how many states can you name that year in and year out have a pheasant population that compares with our own.—Jim Sherman Photo

Outdoor Iowa . . .

(Continued from page 81)

lying theme of all Iowa conservation practices, that the same sound soil and water programs that aid man in his pursuits are in turn the foundation of good fish and game management.

It is one of those things that makes a fellow feel it is almost too good to be true, but here at last is a real beginning of an effort to help make Iowans understand just what a wonderful spot this state is and, thus realizing, to now and forever pledge themselves to the cause of conservation that these blessings may continue and become greater in the years to come.

By Way of Comparison

Iowa is unique among states in its outdoor sports and recreation opportunities.

The south has its quail — but Iowa has quail shooting in its southern counties that compares with the best that most of the deep south can offer and in many instances even exceeds that which has made Dixie famous.

North and South Dakota have almost unbelievably good pheasant shooting—but can you name

any other state that has a pheasant population that year in and year out compares with that of Iowa?

Every part of the nation has squirrel hunting—but certainly nowhere is there an area that very far exceeds Iowa in this outdoor activity, because in the rolling hills of this state are great oak groves and hickory and walnut woods that literally abound with the big fox squirrels that make the hunting man's days so exciting and pleasant in the sun-spattered woods of early autumn.

Migratory waterfowl, in their annual south-bound flights, bring one of the gun man's greatest thrills and by the nature of their mobility these birds bring sport to a great section of the American public—and Iowa shares in this annual excitement to a degree certainly better than the average, situated as it is between the great Mississippi and Missouri river flyways and possessing widely scattered ponds and lakes and streams, and unmatched feed to entice the migrating birds to stop over in their flight.

And then, there is the rabbit,

speedy little "hotfoot" who provides more sport for more hunters than any other game in the nation—and here, too, Iowa can lay claim to sport that matches the best that any other state has to offer.

The Grass is NOT Greener

We may not have big game hunting in this state of ours and we may not have the grouse and "timberdoodles" of the east; we raise doves by the thousand, but other hunters in other states shoot them for us; we no longer have such exciting game as the wild turkey, and the prairie chicken long since has been forced back to a last stand in the Dakotas and other rugged northern areas.

But we have the big five!

Which, coupled with catfish-filled streams and lakes that this summer provided some of the best walleye and panfish fishing in the northern regions of this country, should make Iowans right proud and exceedingly happy about their state, and the job that their Conservation Commission has done and is doing.

Too often, I believe, we are inclined to slip into the attitude that "the grass is greener" in some other locality, when right here at home, in our own backyards, are to be found fish and game of a variety that few can boast of. Let's start realizing just how fortunate we are. And then let's put our best efforts to the task of making certain that we don't lose any of that we now have. Let's back the farm-

ers in their soil conservation practices, which, if properly carried out, will give us the very best flood control there is to be had and which will forever assure the game of this state the cover and the food of nature necessary for it to survive and thrive—and give us and our children and their children and succeeding generations on through the years the opportunity to partake of the best recreation of all.

FOOTNOTES OF AN OUTDOORSMAN

Blisters have spoiled many a hunting trip. Here is a sure preventative. The minute you feel a blister starting, stop and remove your shoe and sock. Rub the sore place with a bar of soap. Any kind will do but don't wet it. The coating of soap will stop the pain at once and prevents further friction between the foot, sock and boot which caused the trouble.

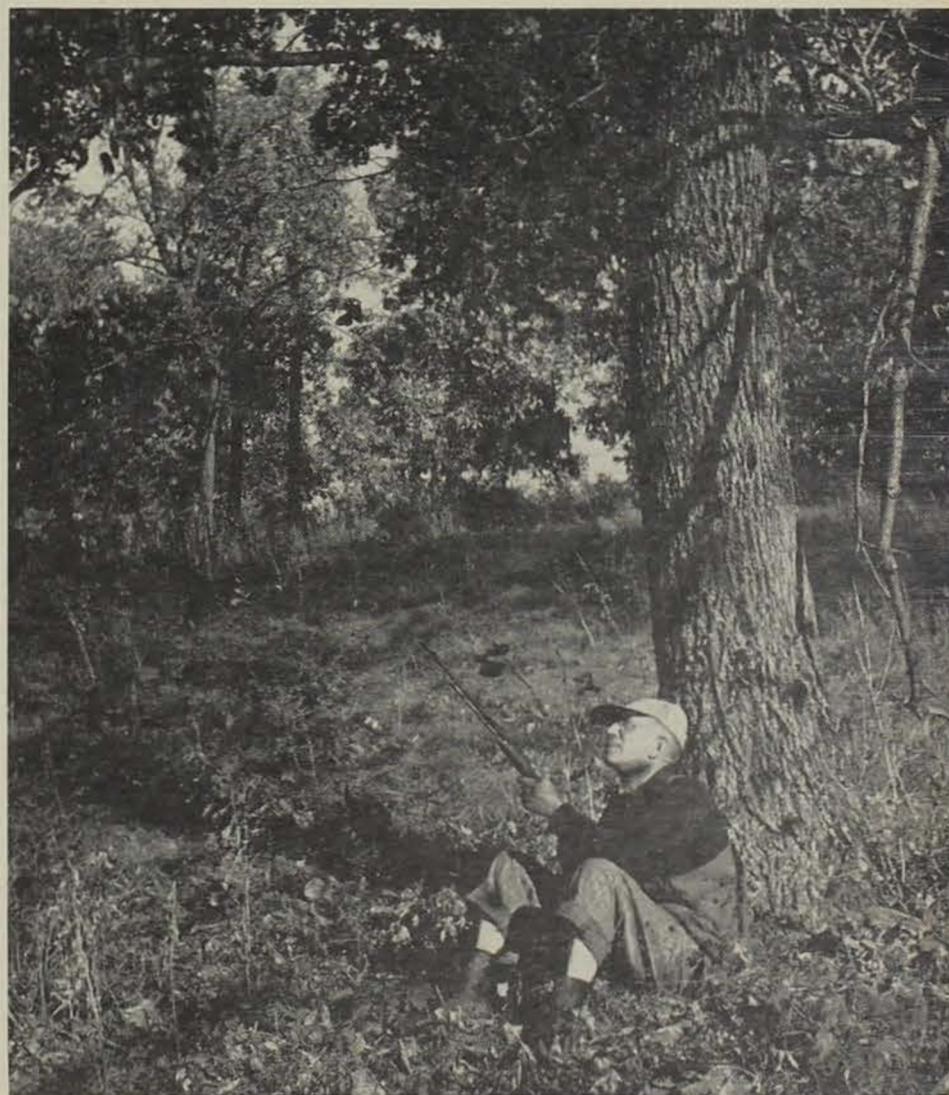
Wardens' Tales

(Continued from page 82)

mate. Mr. Roland has tried several times to catch this duck for me, first for the sports show and later for the fair. She will not be caught and she will not leave the place, even for a mate.—Stub."

During cold weather don't forget that two pairs of light wool socks are warmer than one pair of extra heavy ones.

—Outdoor Nebraska



Our great oak groves and hickory and walnut woods that literally abound with the big fox squirrels make the hunting man's days exciting and pleasant in the sun-spattered woods of early autumn.—Jim Sherman Photo.



It is necessary to know the number of pheasants so that seasons can be set that will limit the harvest to surplus birds and this can be accomplished only if we are able to make accurate estimates.—Jim Sherman Photo.

WHY COUNT PHEASANTS?

By Cecil P. Haight

Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit

WHY count pheasants? Because we want to know how many pheasants there are. That seems to be the obvious answer, but a good answer goes farther than that.

Game management is out of "knee pants"; it is a big business. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent propagating, stocking and feeding game every year. Millions are spent in harvesting game. Like big business a current need of assets and liabilities is essential. It is necessary to know the number of pheasants so that limits can be set to provide for the taking of only the surplus birds. This can be accomplished only if we are able to make accurate estimates of pheasants.

It is true that there are methods of counting pheasants which, if repeated often enough on one area, will give a reasonably accurate figure. Descriptions of several of these methods follow.

The flushing count: In this method several men cruise the selected area on foot trying to flush and count all the pheasants. Use of this method requires thorough knowledge of pheasant behavior. If vegetation is low, the visibility is good, and a pheasant may see the observers over one-eighth of a mile

away, and sneak out of the field. In the spring this habit is very noticeable. Later, when the cover is high, the birds are apt to lie close and only flush when the observer is within a few yards, or they may sneak off to one side unnoticed. Large scale application of this method appears impractical. It is most useful when applied to small areas under the supervision of a skilled technician. Whatever its limitations and merits, the flushing count is probably the only way of checking the accuracy of other methods of counting birds.

The crowing count: This method must be used in the spring, when the male birds are crowing. It is based on a count of the number of crowing males heard in a given period of time. The weather, wind, time of day, and time of season affect this count in ways that have not yet been analyzed. In Nebraska, it was noticed that the report from the explosion of small "aerial bomb" firecrackers stimulated crowing. This was used as a refinement of the crowing males count method.

The winter concentration counts. Pheasants tend to gather in flocks during the winter and congregate in swampy areas or brushy areas near food. It is often possible to obtain accurate counts on all the pheasants present in these concentrations and thus have a fair index for the number of birds in large areas.

The Lincoln Index: This counting method requires complete cooperation of the sportsmen. During the summer and early fall perhaps a thousand cock pheasants in one county would be caught, banded and released where caught. During the hunting season every cock and every band would be reported to the proper authorities. The ratio of banded to unbanded cocks brought to bag would closely approximate the ratio of cock pheasants banded in the fall to those on the area. Complications arise in trying to determine the sex ratio in the area in order to arrive at the total number of birds on the area, and in loss of bands and banded cocks, or the failure to report banded birds brought to bag.

Other indices of abundance might be developed from the number of dust baths, droppings, pheasant tracks, and other evidence of pheasant activity seen within a prescribed area.

Ten years ago the roadside census was developed in Iowa. An inexpensive, rapid means of determining the number of pheasants in each county was urgently needed to help in setting the season and bag limits on pheasants. In the spring, summer and fall pheasants come out from their roosting places to feed and sun themselves in the early morning. At this time they may be seen in the open field, along the fence rows, and along the roadside, where they pick up grit and food. It was found that when driving along a gravel road just after sunrise at 20-25 miles an hour the number of pheasants seen within 40 rods of the road bore a direct relation to the number of pheasants per section of land along the census route. This relationship was worked out mathematically and it is now used to determine the pheasant population every year. The success and accuracy of the roadside census are reflected in its long use. But even this, Iowa's best counting method, needs refinement.

In order to raise the efficiency of methods of counting pheasants, more information must be collected on pheasant behavior in relation to weather conditions, farming activities, and changes in cover during the year. Good interpretation of pheasant counts must be made in the light of these influences, wherever they can be shown to have consistent effects on pheasant behavior. These sources of error in censusing must be analyzed so that allowances can be made in the interpretation of data sent in from the field. It will be necessary to know a great deal about the activities of pheasants in order to know where and how to count them. It will be necessary to know their periods of feeding and resting, where they may be found at different times of the day, where they normally roost, the range of individual pheasants at different seasons, how weather affects them, and many other peculiarities of

their behavior. Knowledge of these activities will help to determine when and how to count pheasants, and how to interpret the counts after they are made. The conclusion of this study, it is hoped, will bring forth a method of finding and counting pheasants much more accurately than has been possible in the past. Such an improved method of inventory would provide the Iowa State Conservation Commission with a means of determining the number of pheasants that wintered successfully, the success of the nesting season, the pre-season population and a post-season check of the hunting success. These four season counts will give the Commission a knowledge of how the pheasant stock is replenishing itself after the hunting season, and will bring to light the trouble spots. Thus the Commission will be able to locate areas experiencing heavy losses from severe winter weather, wet nesting season and other emergencies early enough to protect the remaining stock and, if necessary, restock in order to bring about the return of a hunting population as soon as possible. In short, by knowing the number of birds on hand at all times better management is possible, thus the Commission can better arrange for the hunters to remove all the surplus crop of pheasants and leave only the necessary breeding stock. Any sportsman will support such a sound pheasant management procedure as this, because he is assured more good shooting seasons in the future.

A TREE FOR A TREE

A conservationist friend of ours points out another reason why Iowa should establish a natural resources council — and the sooner the better.

He said we all live in "a sort of blind confidence in nature's bounty and a presumption that what Iowa once had in abundance she will always have." Then he takes the case of lumber to prove that we should open our eyes.

Iowa used to grow 80 per cent of the lumber it used. But nothing was done down through the years to replace the trees that were being taken to make that lumber. So, today Iowa imports a little over a billion board feet of lumber every year — which is \$90,000,000 worth at present prices. That amount, as our friend says, "puts quite a nick in our annual take from corn and hogs."

And the pity of it is, he continues, "that we could still grow 80 per cent of our lumber on the side hills and cutover land now practically idle and unfit for any other profitable use."

To which we say only: "Amen, brother."

—Cedar Rapids Gazette

DDT is not a good insect powder to use on a dog or other pet. Even small amounts of it taken internally may be harmful. It might get on the animal's food or be licked off its fur. Be careful.

COMMISSION ACTION OCTOBER, 1946

THE October meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Commission offices, Tenth and Mulberry, Des Moines, on October 7 and 8.

Members present were E. B. Gaunitz, James C. Jenson, F. W. Mattes, F. J. Poyneer, R. E. Stewart, and E. G. Trost.

The Commission:

Authorized designation of home stations for all employees who receive traveling expenses and prohibited payment of expenses at home station.

Established positions of Editorial Assistant and Supervisor of Files, subject to approval of the Comptroller.

Appointed M. D. Lewis, Supervisors of Lands and Leases, to the position of Superintendent of Game.

Authorized purchase of the one acre Parker tract, between Highway No. 18 and the shore of Clear Lake.

Adopted Administrative Orders No. 87, 88, 89, and 90 establishing pheasant, quail, trapping, and Hungarian partridge seasons for 1946.

Reaffirmed policy relative to nuisance beaver removal and authorizing removal by state trappers where farmer or his immediate family are unable to trap.

Authorized revision of the Lands and Waters Division budget for the July, 1947-June, 1949 biennium.

Meeting adjourned.

Reconvened October, 8.

Authorized investigation of proposed artificial lake site near Alton, Sioux County.

Authorized investigation of proposed extension of Josh Higgins Parkway in Black Hawk County.

Approved the proposed conservation development budget asking to be made to the next session of the Legislature.

Authorized the Director to sign the State-wide Wildlife Area Acquisition and Development Programs submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Requested Director and Chairman to determine whether arrangements could be made with the Attorney General's office to re-draft the laws and assist in the drafting of new bills to be presented to the Legislature.

Authorized employment of an attorney to represent the Commission in the appeal from the condemnation award filed by the Austmans, on their 33-acre tract at Muskrat Slough, Jones County.

Authorized revival of legislative forum to acquaint sportsmen's groups with proposed new legislation, forum to be held at a date and place to be determined later.

Authorized attendance of Director, Assistant Director, and three commission members at meeting of the Midwest Fish and Game Commissioners at Rapid City, S.

D., October 20, 21, and 23, subject to Executive Council approval.

Authorized Superintendent of Public Relations to make an inspection of the Forest Park Zoological Garden at St. Louis, in connection with plans for remodeling of the fish and game exhibit at the State Fair Grounds, subject to Executive Council approval.

Authorized attendance of six staff members and three Commissioners at Midwest Wildlife Conference at Columbia, Missouri, October, 5-7, subject to Executive Council approval.

Granted scientific collector's permit to Dr. Max D. Wheatley of the State University of Iowa.

Authorized architectural consultation with designers of Fair Grounds Fish and Game Building, relative to permanent animal display pens.

Approved Director's bid of \$1.00 for approximately 300 acres of fishing access along the Des Moines River in the Des Moines Ordnance grounds.

Rejected offer of Mrs. W. G. Porter to sell to the state an 18-acre tract in Woodbury County.

Authorized presentation of a bill at the next session of the Legislature increasing license fees to \$1.50 for hunting, \$1.50 for fishing, and \$3.00 for combination hunting and fishing licenses, and to make license requirements apply to women over 16 years of age in all water in which licenses are required.

Accepted offer of the Interstate Power Company of \$10 per acre for 68-acre island on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River at Lansing, subject to Executive Council approval.

Appointed Assistant Director to serve on the over-all committee of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Survey Committee.

Approved insulation of the Spirit Lake Hatchery building at an approximate cost of \$300 from fish and game funds.

Granted 3-year concession privilege at Lake Wapello State Park to O. C. Clark.

Authorized sale of building known as the Spencer house, on the Nine Eagles State Park area, to highest bidder.

Approved the opening of Muskrat Slough area in Jones County for public shooting in 1946.

Approved the opening of the Hooper area, adjacent to Lake Ah-quabi, for public shooting in 1946.

Adopted hunting regulations on the Forney Lake Tract, in Fremont County, and Lake Manawa.

Established certain areas in South Twin Lake as public shooting grounds, and other areas as a State Game Refuge.

Meeting adjourned.

To his dog, every man is Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs.—Aldous Huxley.

Very young mussels, called glochidia, attach themselves to gills of fish and thus get a free ride to other waters.



Selection of a full choke gun is the worst error an inexperienced shooter can make. He had better start with a sawed-off "sprinkle-pot" and kill himself some game, for he will find that most of his shots will be from twenty yards up to perhaps thirty-five yards. The open bore with its wider pattern will give its user a chance to hit where otherwise he will almost surely miss.—Jim Sherman Photo.

POPULAR SPORTING MYTHS EXPLODED

By Captain Stan B. Wade

THE mistaken idea that full-choke guns are best for hunting, has been the greatest boon to conservation this country has ever seen. Wiser sportsmen have profited by the mistakes of these brethren by using opener bored guns. The latter get the game while the former support the ammunition companies. The average gunner with his long barreled, full choke pump or automatic is hopelessly over-gunned. He has a weapon suited only for expert use on long range game. Only post-graduates in the art of wing-shooting are qualified to use such a gun.

What game does our average gunner expect to kill? More often than not his forays afield will be in pursuit of rabbits, with side dishes in the north of grouse, woodcock, pheasants and squirrels. In the south, his principal game is likely to be quail, with occasional chances of other game. A couple of tries a season on ducks will probably fit our average Rebel as well as the Yankee. Is our man well armed for this kind of hunting? Definitely not! He has saddled himself with a hopeless handicap to start with — one which even the most expert shot could not hope to overcome. He has a slow handling gun, too long and too heavy for the kind of hunting he will do. The only exception may be the chap in a prairie or desert locale, where all his shots are likely to be at 40 yards and up, but even there a modified choke will kill more game than a full choke.

His shots will be at relatively short ranges — 20 yards up to perhaps 35 yards. Any good improved-cylinder gun with an ounce of shot will kill any kind of game up to that distance. Its wider pattern at short ranges will give its

user a chance to hit where he will otherwise almost surely miss. None of us shoot so well that we can disdain the demonstrated advantage of the widest patterns we can use without undue crippling. Yet most of those who need wider patterns are using full choked guns!

The fetish for "long-range" guns is the worst error the inexperienced shooter can make. He had better start with a sawed-off "sprinkling-pot" and kill himself some game, get a bit of confidence in his ability to HIT and go on from there to closer bores and longer ranges.

—Colorado Conservation Comments

TRUMPETER SWAN COUNT UP 60 IN 1946

The trumpeter swan, classed as America's rarest waterfowl, increased its United States population during the past year by 60 birds, to reach a new total of 361 for the flock, Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, has announced.

This population figure is based on the census made in August on the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana, the Yellowstone National Park, and adjacent nesting areas by personnel of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service.

Of the 361 birds, 170 were found on the Red Rock Lakes Refuge, and 57 in Yellowstone National Park. The others were scattered over adjacent territory and on the National Elk Refuge in Wyoming and the Malheur National Refuge in Oregon. Forty-six cygnets were found on the Red Rock Lakes Refuge and 10 on Yellowstone Park.

Since 1924 the trumpeter swans have been given complete protection in the United States so that none of the species could be taken for any purpose. Canada affords the same protection.

Kingfishers generally nest in tunnels in earth banks.



At the dizzy rate that hunting and fishing pressure is increasing the outdoor writer must broaden the scope of his work, for unless he places more accent on wildlife management and less on tips of how to take it, he is in real danger of selling a product he can not deliver.—Jim Sherman Photo.

ARE WE OVERSELLING OUR WILDLIFE?

(Editor's Note: The following observations by Frank Dufresne, Public Relations man for the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, were made recently to the Outdoor Writers of America.)

THE tremendous upsurge of interest in field and stream recreation during the past few years is proof enough that the outdoor columnist wields a mighty pen. Without question his written messages have made many new hunters and fishermen; they have added to the average man's ability to shoot a buck, bring down a duck, creel a trout. Hints from the columnist have made John Doe wiser in woodcraft, more skilled in angling.

But what has the outdoor writer done for the wildlife itself?

Have his writings put more game in the cover? Have they placed more fish in the streams? Has the material in his columns helped produce game and fish in proportion to his tips on how to destroy it?

The outdoor writer should ask himself still more questions.

Has he been content merely with telling people the best places to go hunting and fishing? Has he believed his duty was done when he helped his readers kill more birds, catch more fish? Have his efforts mainly been toward cropping more and yet more of the wildlife resource?

If that is the extent of his column he should, in all fairness to the game, find himself another job. Because he is a long ways from performing the real functions of an outdoor writer.

Sure, he is against poaching and lawlessness. He is for feeding wildlife in the winter. He is all for giving the game a break generally. We all are.

But at the dizzy rate that hunting and fishing pressure is increas-

ing the outdoor writer must broaden the scope of his work. His job has become bigger. It has become, in fact, a mission.

Does the outdoor writer carp and grouse about the regulations in his column? Does he not know that this dissatisfaction, spreading down through his readers, encourages violations?

On the other hand, does he preach the gospel of habitat improvement, of fence rows thick with cover, of weed patches and grassy swales, of clean waters? Does he praise the farmer who makes his acres a better place for game? Does he rally his readers to fight against drainage and pollution? Does he teach a little natural history, a little more appreciation of the great outdoors? Does the creed of good conservation, of decency, and compliance with the game laws weave itself through his writings day after day until it becomes the accepted procedure?

Today, we are nearly everywhere fighting a losing fight with out wildlife populations. We have to face it. For the most part hunters and anglers are increasing while game stocks are slipping. The situation, reviewed as a whole, calls for radical revamping. It calls for the outdoor writer to bend more effort in behalf of the game—less to instructing people how to kill it.

Unless the outdoor writer places more accent on wildlife management, he is in real danger of selling a product he can't deliver.

"Precocial" birds are those which are able to run about shortly after being hatched from the shell and are not cared for in the nest by their parents. Examples are the bobwhite quail, ringnecked pheasant, Hungarian partridge, ruffed grouse, prairie chicken, woodcock, jacksnipe, and killdeer.

It is generally believed that polar bears never hibernate. This is true only of the male. The female goes into hibernation the same as other species of bears to give birth of her cubs.

FISH BENEFACTORS

IT WAS with considerable certainty of purpose that several years ago the Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association successfully defeated the so-called Buck Bill. Had that bill obtained passage, fish research today would have been on a par with wildlife. Satisfied, however, that the 10 per cent excise tax on fishing tackle would constitute a serious threat to the future of the fishing tackle industry, rod and reel makers saw the bill was properly hors de combat.

Then came the war. In an effort to underwrite history's most expensive maneuver, Congress arbitrarily slipped a 10 per cent tax on fishing tackle. Manufacturers stemmed by patriotism could do naught but acquiesce. To their surprise, customers did not turn to golf, baseball or horse-shoe pitching as a result. In fact, more fishing licenses were sold, even during war years, than in any previous period of comparable length known to historians.

With hostilities over — it says here — tackle manufacturers are

feeling more kindly toward the postwar counterpart of the prewar Buck Bill. In it, they see opportunity to allow research to work diligently on the national problem of shortening time between bites.

It was, therefore, without opposition that Congressman Willis Robertson, who has fathered more measures of benefit to sportsmen than any other patriot since Theodore Roosevelt, last month introduced H. R. 7104. Maybe it was political finesse that prompted the late introduction — we just fish for a living and write when the waters are muddy. Congressman Robertson advises, however, that the bill will early be introduced in the 80th session.

H. R. 7104 was introduced to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Although this is a commercially minded outfit from head gasket to cod-liver oil, sportsmen will undoubtedly benefit by early passage of Robertson's re-entered bill.

P. S. — Your representative is probably home campaigning right now if you wish to contact him.

—Maryland Rally Sheet



To the surprise of tackle manufacturers the ten percent federal tax on fishing equipment did not cause their customers to turn to golf, baseball, or horseshoe pitching, for more fishing licenses were sold, even during war years, than in any previous period.—Jim Sherman Photo.

The Sportsman Speaks

(Continued from page 82)

rable to the fee now charged. However, if I want to catch a two-inch bullhead I am willing to pay for the fun of going out."

Council Bluffs is near Forney Slough, a state-owned public shooting ground of 856 acres, that provides the finest duck shooting in the state year in and year out. In addition, other public shooting grounds are near Council Bluffs, including the Riverton area of 700 acres and Lake Manawa area of 945 acres, both of which provide good hunting and the latter excellent bass and panfish fishing.

Rolfe: "I want this extra money spent protecting wildlife. Many hunters are hogs, not sports. I would favor enough deputy wardens during open season to stop every car, day and night, returning from the hunting areas."

Carroll: "How you expect to sell any licenses at all is more than I can figure out, when you open the duck season after the lakes freeze up."

The duck season is set by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service. The State Conservation Commission makes recommendations to this federal agency, but does not have the power to set seasons. This year the duck season opened October 26 and hunters widely over the state, north and south, during a year of duck scarcity enjoyed the finest mallard shooting opening day for several seasons.

Panora: "Most of the boys would kick a little, but they would all pay more. I think we should do everything we can to improve the conditions."

The first successful magazine repeating rifle was the invention of C. Spencer, an American, in 1860.