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IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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NUMBER 1

FEDERAL AID FOR STATE FISHERIES

EVER since the enactment of the Pittman-Robertson Act providing federal aid for State game projects it has been the dream that a similar law would be passed for State fishery restoration projects. The late Frank Buck, a California Congressman, introduced such a bill about six years ago and later Senator Clark had a companion measure in the Senate.

Neither one of these bills received the approval of Congress—the first because of opposition from the fishing tackle manufacturers and the second because of the intervention of the war.

Recently Congressman A. Willis Robertson, diligent chairman of the House Select Committee on Wildlife Resources, introduced in the House H. R. 7104, which again brings this important subject before the Congress.

This new Robertson bill is similar in philosophy to the Pittman-Robertson Act. The new bill provides federal aid for State fishery projects while the old act gives the aid to game projects.

Section 2 of the bill provides that "fish restoration and management projects" to which federal aid may be applied are those "which have material value in connection with sport or recreation in the marine and/or fresh water of the United States," and includes (a) research into fish management and culture, (b) the acquisition of facts needed to guide and direct the regulation of fishing, (c) restocking waters with food and game fishes and (d) the rehabilitation of and improvement of fishing waters.

In order to provide the necessary federal funds to pay its 75 per cent share of the cost of any project approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service the bill earmarks the present excise tax of 10 per cent on "fishing rods, creels, reels, and artificial lures, baits and flies,"

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Since the enactment of the Pittman-Robertson Act providing federal aid for game projects it has been the dream of the conservationist that a similar law would be passed for state fishery restoration projects. Such an act has been in the mill for seven years, sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation and supported by many conservation groups.—Jim Sherman Photo.

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

By Lester F. Faber
Game Biologist

In concluding this History of Stocking and Management of the Ring-necked Pheasant in Iowa, discussion is centered around

habitat improvement. Although much of the information applies to all species of game the pheasant has a primary place in the program.

The biennial report for 1933-34
(Continued on page 103)

WHY PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS?

AN opportunity for every man to go hunting and fishing is one of the things we like to think of as part of the American way. These rugged sports are in our blood, part of our pioneer heritage. Even persons who never ply rod or gun probably nurture a secret ambition to do so. Give them a chance, a timely invitation, and they join the outdoors trek.

It is perhaps to the credit of our progress in things democratic that these sports recently have become available to a vastly larger proportion of the American public. It is, however, no sudden development. Actually the trend was well under way before the war. Missouri, and most other states, had recorded a steady increase in permit sales since 1935—in fact, with occasional reverses, since the first world war. The last war, of course, accelerated the trend; increases of 30 to 50 per cent have been noted since 1941.

Three factors probably have been responsible: More people now have leisure time to go hunting or fishing, more of them can find transportation to the streams and woods, and more of them can afford it.

Their increasing numbers, however, brought outdoorsmen face to face with a new situation that is threatening to limit their sport. The new problem is finding a place to go. For anglers the problem is not so serious; there are major streams and new, made lakes open to the public. But if fishing waters can be expanded by impoundments, the land area cannot be stretched. And in a state where 90 per cent of the land is privately owned, as in Missouri, the problem becomes acute for the hunter. Farmers have been generous, but their fields can accommodate only so many friends from town.

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Iowa Conservationist

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THE IOWA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

10th and Mulberry—Des Moines, Iowa

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GUNS AND AMMUNITION IN 1947

"American shooters can forget their 1946 shortage gripes as guns and ammunition will be more plentiful in '47." That's the answer Major General Julian S. Hatcher, head of the National Rifle Association's Technical Service, comes up with in his article, "1947 Production Prospects", in the January issue of the NRA's authoritative gun magazine, "The American Rifleman."

To get the material for his story, the General traveled to all the major arms companies in the country. He visited the headquarters of Remington, Colt, Winchester, Marlin, Smith & Wesson, Harrington and Richardson, Federal Cart-ridge, High Standard, Mossberg, Savage-Stevens, Ithaca, and Peters. He got the answers to the questions the shooters have been asking themselves for the last year.

To quote Hatcher, "The general picture for 1947 is that nearly every element of the arms and ammunition industry is producing in volume. They will be trying to catch up with large backlogs of orders, which represent not only immediate consumer demand but the large quantities necessary to fill the pipelines between maker and user."

General Hatcher has the specific answers from the individual companies in his story. The picture is good—if not perfect—and the General tells the shooters why in the January Rifleman.

The bloodhound is the only animal whose testimony is accepted in a court of law.

The quickest way to destroy game is to remove the places where it can live. The quickest way to bring it back is to reverse the process.

The wild goose has about 12,000 muscles, 10,000 of which control the action of its feathers.

A mammal is an animal but not all animals are mammals. Mammals are warm-blooded, vertebrate creatures, which bear their young alive and feed them at their breasts.

COMMISSION ACTION DECEMBER, 1946

A MEETING of the State Conservation Commission was held at its Des Moines offices, 10th and Mulberry on December 2, 1946.

Members present were F. W. Mattes, F. J. Poyneer, James C. Jenson, R. E. Stewart, E. G. Trost, and Mrs. Addison Parker.

The Commission: Expressed appreciation of the offer of Henry Frankel and Alex Fitzhugh, representing the Greater Des Moines Committee, of the gift of the 88-acre Saylor Woods tract in Polk County and the offer of Clarence Yarn for an adjacent 10-acre tract.

Accepted, contingent upon its tender to the state free of obligation and providing the City of Osceola will maintain the park area, the 70 acres of land and 10 acres of water known as the East Osceola Reservoir property as a gift by the City of Osceola.

Authorized an agreement with commercial fishermen to remove rough fish in the water adjacent to the Mississippi River, known as the LeClaire Canal, Credit Island and Lake Odessa in Muscatine Slough.

Authorized the director to negotiate with affected parties to achieve settlement of the disputed boundaries of the state owned Green Bay Bottom lands in Lee County.

Authorized preparation of a resolution of appreciation to various persons for gifts used in furnishing the Lucas House and also for articles that had been loaned for use during dedication ceremonies.

Authorized printing, in pamphlet form, information in regard to hunting, fishing and park areas printed on the reverse side of the 1946 Highway and Outdoor map for distribution in 1947 in place of maps.

Authorized a timber cruise of the Yellow River Forest unit and on 500 acres each in the Lee-Van Buren and Lucas-Monroe forest areas by the Central States Forestry Experiment Station, and requested that plans for operation be submitted for further consideration of the Commission.

Commended plans presented by W. B. Anderson, Vice President of the Association for the Preservation of the Herbert Hoover Birth-place, for restoration and preservation of the Herbert Hoover birth-place at West Branch.

Authorized trucks transportation to Red Wing, Minnesota, of a marine motor for repair, subject to Executive Council approval.

Reviewed and revised list of 53 suggested legislative changes presented by Assistant Director Stiles and Assistant Attorney General Larson and set date for discussion of same with representatives of sportsmen's groups.

Adjourned.

A baby crow is called a stimp.

NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONFERENCE THEME—LAND AND WILDLIFE

"Americans, Wildlife and Their Land" will be the theme of the Twelfth North American Wildlife Conference to be held at San Antonio, Texas, February 3, 4 and 5, 1947. The Conference is under the sponsorship of the Wildlife Management Institute, which has taken over the activities of the American Wildlife Institute.

What is expected to be one of the most interesting sessions ever held in the annual North American Wildlife Conferences will be that of Monday evening, February 3, when the subject for discussion will be "Is Wildfowling on the Way Out?" Waterfowl conditions of recent years have made this subject of intense interest to all sportsmen and conservationists and the open forum discussion is expected to bring out some widely divergent ideas. Harold Titus, noted writer and member of the Michigan Conservation Commission, will preside at this session. A number of well known authorities on wildfowl conditions will participate.

Subjects of other general sessions will be "Wildlife and the Land", "Is Wildlife Education Getting Results?" and "Wildlife and Business".

The technical sessions will attract leading wildlife technicians from every section of the country. Six papers will be selected for each of the technical sessions and general discussion will follow. Subjects will include the following: "Wildlife of Grasslands and Forests", "Wildlife of Farms and Ranches", "Inland Fisheries and Fresh Water Areas", "Marine Fisheries and Ocean Areas", "Wildlife and Land-use Concepts", and "New Techniques in Wildlife Management".

Approximately 2,000 delegates from all states, Canada and Mexico are expected to attend. Six representatives of the State Conservation Commission will be in attendance.

GAME VIOLATIONS CONTINUE HEAVY

Another "worst" month from the game violation standpoint is revealed by a recapitulation of conservation officers' field reports for November. During the month 218 violators were convicted and assessed fines totaling \$6,764 plus 123 days in jail. The total for the two months, October and November, were 582 convictions with assessments of \$16,475 in fines and 283 days in jail, the heaviest for a 60-day period for many years.

How the earth was first formed is a matter of debate and how it will end is one of conjecture; but with erosion on a down-hill pull and atomic fission a reality it won't be long now.

Storms that clear the air of insects frequently bring starvation to chimney swifts as the bird feeds only on the wing.

The study of nature is intercourse with the Highest Mind.—Agassiz.

The Sportsman Speaks

"Remarks" from the Sportsmen's Questionnaire

Farnhamville: "To protect our wildlife we should put teeth into the laws for killing game out of season. I think in Iowa that more pheasants are killed out of season than are killed legally."

Minburn: "I favor an increase in license fees so that we may have more conservation officers in the field and also more educational programs on the preservation of our wildlife."

Sioux City: "The State Conservation Commission does not give the Iowa sportsman privileges he is entitled to now. Raising the license fees would not help the cause and there is no need for an increase now."

Sioux City: "I want to thank you for sending me this bit of news. As I work all week long I am just what you call a Sunday hunter. I can't get all I would like to get and I can't get shells as the big shots get them first and that puts the little fellow like me behind the eight-ball."

Des Moines: "Hunters and fishermen should not object to double the present license fees for 365 days of sport privilege."

Lewis: "I am advocating a big raise with the feeling that it is going to take a lot more and larger artificial lakes to take care of fishing from here on out, for there are ten people fishing now where one fished a few years back, and it will get worse. Every county in the state should have and is entitled to at least one big artificial lake."

Lake Park: "If you care to do something to get more money why not make the boy pay. They charge just as much as a man when they work."

Mason City: "Sell more licenses at present prices to get more money, if more is needed."

Sibley: "It's getting so there is no hunting and there are 'No Hunting' signs all over the country. Quite a few get run over on the highways and I don't have any luck fishing."

Fort Dodge: "Let's stop being niggardly about the wage of the people who protect and propagate the fish and wildlife of the state. Let's raise their pay to the place where they are at least on an economic par with bartenders and barbers."

Fontanelle: "I favor a different guide on legal fish caught. I prefer to make a limit of the catch and make fishermen take all that are caught regardless of length. Too many fish die when put back and some fishermen catch their limit and keep changing fish on the stringer for larger ones."

Des Moines: "Just one criticism present situations. Where is any thing being done for the hunter? Fishing is okay and I don't do much hunting."

Rhodes: "They let old age assistance people hunt and fish without a license. They have money to drink beer and whiskey, play pool, drive their own cars. If they raise licenses I won't buy any."

Webb: "I feel that it may be necessary in the near future to have a small uncultivated game preserve in the center of each section of land where game may not be molested at any time. As it stands now we farmers who have creeks, rivers, etc., are carrying rough game on our farms so it does considerable damage, and we suffer from careless trespassers because of the concentration of wildlife into these areas. I don't believe an acre from each quarter-section would be too much. We have several beavers and recently saw three deer on our farm and the coons stole nearly all our sweet corn."

Randolph: "How about a season mourning doves? We fatten them for Missouri hunters. How about us getting in on a little of that fast flying stuff?"

Humboldt: "I think there should be more reserves for ducks. More education for your officers to get cooperation with sportsmen. Raising license is okay if you benefit more than the favored few."

Pleasant Plain: "When this inaction period is over I think this increase in hunting and fishing licenses should be continued and be used for more artificial lakes and better fishing."

Red Oak: "Three times this summer we drove 185 miles north for river fishing and always from 10 to 20 others from Red Oak were there. A dam in our river would give us equality with some of the other streams, and much better than an artificial lake we hear so much 'talk' about."

Rockford: "I feel that increased prices of licenses are all right. It is my opinion that the agencies which issue the licenses receive or ask too much for issuing them. Our local bank receives twenty-five cents which I feel is too much for the few seconds which it takes."

Waterloo: "This is about the only entertainment the poor man can enjoy. Why put the price up so he will even be denied this amusement?"

Arlington: "Upper Brush Creek in Fayette County is badly polluted from local industry. Many fine bass have been taken from this stream in the past, but no marine life exists there at this time."

Glidden: "I don't think fifty cents would hurt anybody that really enjoys good fishing and hunting."

Washington: "I also would favor legislation allowing disabled veterans and physically handicapped people to shoot from the car."



The hunter should secure permission before entering farm land for day or night hunting. Ignoring this safeguard and courtesy creates more friction between hunters and the landowner than any other cause.—Jim Sherman Photo.

WILDLIFE IS COMMON PROPERTY

ONE of the most definite principles of law in this country is that wildlife belongs to you and me—a long step ahead of old English law from which so many of our laws are patterned. In older days, and pretty much still, hunting in England was the exclusive right of royalty, and all others were poachers.

But after we traded sovereignty for democracy the situation changed — the sovereigns still owned the game, but the people are the sovereigns, each in his own right, in the United States. There is a limiting factor, in that as long as game is at large it belongs to the State, but instantly you bag a pheasant or creel a fish, by legal

means, it's strictly your private property. Another important factor is that while a land-owner does not own wildlife, he controls it against trespass. A hunter does not have an iota of right to enter the lands privately owned without permission.

To be a good sportsman, and really to enjoy a hunt, one should be sure to secure permission before entering farm land for day or night hunting. Ignoring this safeguard and courtesy creates more friction between hunters and land owners than any other cause. It is well to make arrangements in advance of opening day in preference to simply sallying forth and trusting to luck and the good nature of the man who holds the ace-card. Such procedure will pay dividends. Try it.

—Ohio Conservation Bulletin

TREES AVAILABLE FOR EROSION CONTROL

THE State Conservation Commission is again offering nursery tree stock for erosion control and water conservation planting purposes. Order blanks for the 1947 spring planting season are now available from county agricultural agents, state conservation officers, soil conservation representatives and the State Conservation Commission office in Des Moines.

Trees are grown at the State Forest Nursery at Ames, which is operated under provisions of the Norris-Doxey and Clark-McNary acts of Congress. Production was somewhat curtailed during the war years; orders should be placed as early as possible to insure delivery.

Species	Age & Class	Price for 250 trees	Price for 1000 trees
Black Locust	1 yr. seedling	\$2.00	\$6.50
Green Ash	2 yr. seedling	2.75	7.00
Black Walnut	1 yr. seedling	3.00	8.50
American Elm	1 yr. seedling	2.75	7.00
Red Oak	2 yr. seedling	3.00	8.50
Osage Orange	1 yr. seedling	2.75	7.00
Soft Maple	1 yr. seedling	2.75	7.00
Virginia Pine	8-10" transplant	3.00	9.00
White Pine	12-15" transplant	3.00	9.00
White Pine	12-15" seedlings	2.75	8.50
Douglas Fir	10-15" seedlings	2.75	8.50
Douglas Fir	10-15" transplants	3.00	9.00

Wardens' Tales

Shop Talk From the Field

Conservation Officer Vern Shaffer of Murray sends along this story of lights and shadows.

At the tag end of the last quail season Vern noticed a car driving slowly along a hedge. Suddenly it stopped and two fellows got out, put their guns together, and blazed three times into the base of the thicket. When the officer pulled along side the "sportsmen" had just finished picking up fourteen quail, the entire covey. Needless to say, Vern was hot under the collar at the ethics displayed by the pot hunting pair. "What will you do for hunting next year if you completely clean out a covey like that?" queried the warden. The reply was, "Buddy, it's your job to stock them back with the money we guys pay you and if they're not here next year we'll go where they are."

Still hot under the collar the conservation officer moved on down the road.

"Coming over a rise by an abandoned house I saw a couple of colored boys coming out to the road. I stopped to give them a routine check. There were two cars there and before I had checked the licenses of the first two hunters it looked like a colored work battalion around there and they were having themselves a time. Net results, ten perfectly valid hunting and combination licenses, seventy-three rough-dressed rabbits, and one very dead fox.

"In checking the licenses one had the usual jumble of cards and whatnots in his billfold, and a big strapping fellow with an overseas patch on his battle jacket said to the nervous hunter, 'I sure hope you don't find that license. These boys down here just line you up and shoot if you don't produce.' The license was found, however.

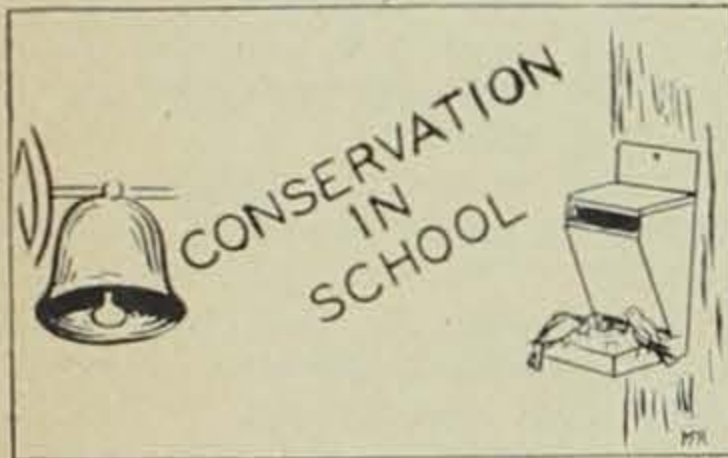
"These boys carried every kind of a shotgun from an old ten gauge lever action Winchester to a brand new Remington automatic. I asked them if they had got any quail. One old fellow said, 'Boy, you is silly. Them quail at five cents a shot? No, sir.' I have never checked a finer bunch of sportsmen, and I mean sportsmen."

Conservation officers Don Kriebble and Garfield Harker had arrested a game violator and had taken him to the office of a near-sighted small town mayor for trial. The mayor was out but was finally located. The messenger had evidently told the mayor the purpose of the meeting for upon entering his office he pointed an accusing finger at Harker and said, "Young man, you're in trouble. I'm going to fine you ten dollars." It took the wardens several minutes to convince the mayor that he had the wrong man.

(Continued on page 100)



The lean-to feeding station is the most common type feeder for game birds and animals. It is not designed for warmth but merely as a windbreak and to keep snow from covering the feed placed on the ground inside.



Winter Bird Feeding

In every part of the state there are birds and animals scattered through the woods and fields that can be easily attracted to a winter feeding station. Once they have become accustomed to the feeding platform these ordinarily timid wild creatures become quite tame and can be closely studied and enjoyed.

In addition to the pleasure of watching the table manners of wildlife, those engaged in a winter feeding program may also enjoy the fact that they are helping many birds and animals live that might otherwise die; for it is the winter period that is the critical time for wildlife.

Late winter is particularly dangerous to our bird and animal friends for by this time strong north winds have shaken most of the seeds and fruits from plants that stand above the snow and snow and ice have now covered up much of the available feed that is on the ground.

As the winter advances the insect eaters that stay with us the year round are able to find fewer and fewer of the worms, grubs and other "bugs" upon which they feed.

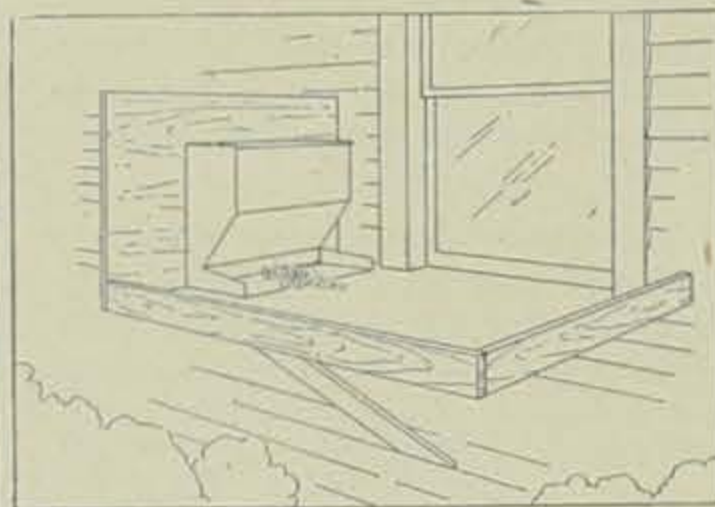
Proper location of the feeding station is of great importance. If you had to eat your lunch outside when the thermometer was at zero and the northwest wind was blowing snow you would not sit down in the middle of a wind-swept corn-field or pasture, but would eat your lunch in some sheltered spot. And so it is with wildlife.

One of the best places for a songbird feeder and a place where

the birds are easily observed is outside a window, generally on the south or east side of the house. A simple platform about twenty inches square with a two inch rail around to keep food from falling off will do. With this feeder care must be taken that food is available and not covered with snow.

Many times an automatic feeder like the one in the drawing is used. With this device the birds can pick out the grain and seeds as they are to be used and there is little danger of snow making the food impossible to find.

The platform may be fastened to the window-sill and the food supply replenished from inside by opening the window. Many experienced bird feeders believe that the platform should be placed on a tree a little distance from the window. Here the birds may be well observed, are generally more quickly attracted to the station, and less easily frightened than if the platform is too near the building.



Common window type of bird feeder.

For the game birds, quail and pheasants, and the game animals, squirrels and rabbits, as well as for many of the various sparrows and "other seed eaters" the lean-to feeding station is most common. This is often called a feeding shelter, but it is not designed to keep the birds and animals warm but rather to provide a windbreak and keep the snow from covering the feed that is usually placed on the

ground or on a flat board or platform.

The game bird feeder should be placed some distance from buildings and should be placed in some brushy cover. Brushy fence rows near a woody or weedy waste patch of ground are generally best, for here wildlife can loaf with less fear of predators.

For the window songbird feeder the best "baits" include seeds of sunflower, pumpkin, millet, hemp, rye, barley, wheat, table scraps, cracked nuts, and suet.

The game bird feeder may be supplied with all or any of these along with elevator and seed mill screenings. The rabbits and squirrels are very fond of whole corn and the mess that they make when dining on a whole corn banquet is not wasted, for many of the game and song birds will gobble up what the animals leave.

To secure the most enjoyment from winter feeding a knowledge of names and habits of the birds attracted is needed. There are many inexpensive books to aid the beginning bird student and they may be either purchased or borrowed from the library.

The Iowa State College at Ames has printed a booklet, "Winter Birds Around My Home," that is designed especially for the beginner in bird study. This pamphlet is available to teachers, cost free, in single copies and may be secured by writing to the Extension Service, Iowa State College, and requesting Extension Booklet 241, "Winter Birds Around My Home."

Wardens' Tales

(Continued from page 99)

A few days before the past pheasant season Conservation Officer Claude Alexander observed a hunter walking in a half crouch through hazel brush. Shortly after the officer was not too surprised when a squawking rooster sprang from the thicket and was promptly shot down. Unobserved the officer reached the downed bird simultaneously with the gunner and when the elderly violator finally did notice Claude they were almost face to face. Efforts of the violator to speak failed for some seconds, but finally he managed, "I have never seen a game warden before but I'm looking at one now and I was never more sure of anything in my 76 years."

CAPTURE ALLIGATOR IN BLACK HAWK CREEK

A 38-inch alligator was captured in Black Hawk Creek recently by Cecil Deeds of Waterloo. According to the Waterloo Courier, Dr. C. W. Lantz, Professor of Biology at Iowa State Teachers College, identified the animal. Dr. Lantz believes that the alligator was brought to Waterloo from Florida or from some other state along the Gulf where they are quite common and either escaped or was released in the Waterloo vicinity

HUNT THREE HOURS AND SIX MINUTES FOR EACH PHEASANT IN 1946

If you "got the limit" of three pheasants in less than nine hours during the last pheasant season you can consider yourself a good hunter, according to State Conservation Commission game biologists. A preliminary tabulation of "hunter contact cards" show it took the average hunter three hours and six minutes in the field for each cock bird killed. The 1,488 contact card questionnaires filled out by conservation officers in the field while checking licenses represented 5,921 hours of hunting and revealed that the hunters contacted killed a total of 1,923 birds.

Pheasant populations are definitely down in all parts of the United States. Michigan reports the poorest season in 16 years. Game technicians "believe it possible that populations may continue low next year". Although in the popular mind predators, unfavorable nesting seasons, and dozens of other factors are blamed for the decrease in birds, game technicians are not in complete agreement as to the cause and the term "cycles" is being commonly used in pheasant population discussions.

As the result of an appeal to sportsmen to collect and send in pheasant legs for biologists to determine the ratio of young birds to old birds bagged, the Commission has received more than 2,300. Analysis of the legs show that 2.9 young to each adult cock were taken during the season. With a 1946 spring ratio of approximately two hens to each cock a successful nesting season should have brought the ratio of young birds to adult up to four or five young for each adult taken during the hunting season.

From this it is apparent that although 74 per cent of the birds taken were young of the year, yet production represented only one-half of what can normally be expected. Biologists re-emphasize the fact that good hunting depends upon a successful hatch and the survival of young birds until the hunting season opens and is not the result of accumulative populations.

In most parts of the pheasant territory seed stocks at the first of the year are considered adequate and if nesting success improves in 1947 good pheasant hunting may return next fall.

TABLE SCRAPS FOR BIRDS

Maybe you don't care anything about fishing. Maybe you haven't any yen for hunting. Maybe you don't care a whoop for trapping. But there is one great service you can render our feathered friends this winter . . . make plans to do some feeding of the birds when ice and snow and sleet covers their normal food supply. Your table scraps will go far to keep our winter birds alive and happy. You will rate as a nice person if you arrange to feed the birds this coming winter. —Hopkinton Leader



The pelt of the mink is composed of soft dark underfur, more or less concealed by long glistening guard hair. When the fur is light the mink is known as "cotton", and is less valuable. Here a fur buyer tests a mink for cotton.—Jim Sherman Photo.

MINK

Mustela Vison

THE mink is a weasel-like mammal nearly as large as a small house cat but much more slender. The body is elongate and supple and the head when viewed from above has a triangular shape. Ears are small; the neck is long. The legs are conspicuously short relative to the body proportions. The tail is about half as long as head and body and is moderately bushy. Each foot has five toes. The fur is composed of soft underfur more or less concealed by long glistening guard hairs. The musk-gland is well developed.

Sexes are colored alike with no seasonal variation. The upper parts are a uniform dark amber-brown, rich and glossy in appearance, slightly darker along back and tail. Underparts are similar to the upper parts but have a white area on the chin and irregular white spots which may be scattered anywhere. Fur of the young is not quite so dark as that of the adults and lacks most of the long, hard outer hairs.

The females are noticeably smaller than the males, weighing an average one pound and 10 ounces; whereas the males average two pounds in weight and 24 inches in length.

This animal belongs to the family *Mustelidae* which includes also the weasel, marten, fisher, otter, skunk, badger, and wolverine. All of these animals are characterized by having the scent-gland more or less

developed, splendidly exemplified by the skunk.

Range of the mink includes the greater portion of North America. The extreme northern part of Canada and Alaska, the arid southwest of the United States and Mexico are excluded as range territory. The home range or locality of each individual is probably very large for so small an animal. Its habit seems to be that of all weasels. It hunts a given area until the game grows scarce by destruction or flight, then it moves on a mile or two, along stream or overland, in search of new hunting grounds. It has been judged from evidence that the home range of an individual does not exceed five miles in diameter and this may be overlapped by the ranges of other individuals.

The mink is merely a large weasel of somewhat specialized habits and shows this relationship rather clearly in its general structure. It differs from the other weasels in slightly more robust build, uniformly darker coloration and semiaquatic habits. It prefers the vicinity of streams or of standing water. It is found in the forests or out on the plains where it follows the watercourses. The den may be a burrow in a bank, under logs, in rocks, or other similar places offering sufficient concealment.

Much of the food is caught in water, but this animal is not specialized for an aquatic existence as is the otter and does much hunting along the banks of streams. It is fully capable of catching ac-

tive fish such as trout and thus its range of diet runs all the way from mammals such as rabbits and muskrats through frogs and less active land dwellers, to any of the highly specialized forms of stream life. There are records to tell of the bloodthirsty temperament of the mink, and apparently it sometimes kills for the sheer love of the act, although it is said to be less given to this than the smaller weasels. A trapped mink is the triple distilled essence of fury and red-eyed rage.

From 1931 to 1946 524,576 mink were trapped in Iowa for fur. Their total value for the 16-year period was \$4,892,757.84.

The odor of the musk carried by the mink, as by all the weasels, and set free at moments of great excitement, is very powerful and disagreeable, more offensive to the nostrils of some people than the musk of the skunk.

Although the mink can and does climb, it seldom does so.

The fur is of high quality, being durable, of close texture and a good natural color.

The average number of young per litter is five to six, although the number varies from three to ten. They are born from April to May, and there is but one brood per season.

WHAT MAKES A GUN "KICK?"

"That which goes up is bound to come down" is an old statement of a recognized fact. But this doesn't mean that "all that goes out has to come back."

However, when a firearm is fired, a certain amount of "come back" is bound to happen. This, in shooting parlance, is known as recoil, more commonly called "kick". To understand it, all that is necessary is a little knowledge of elementary physics.

"To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is one of the so-called laws of motion and is the basic cause of recoil," says Dr. C. S. Cummings, Supervisor, Ballistics Standardization, Remington Arms Co.

"The gases generated by the burning of the powder in a shot-shell exert a force which pushes the shot charge and wads out of the barrel. In so doing an equal force is exerted in the opposite direction against the breechblock. If the gun is free to move then the above law of motion tells us that the weight of 'charge' (shot, wads, and $\frac{1}{2}$ the powder) times its velocity equals the weight of the gun times its velocity. Thus the speed with which the gun recoils is inversely proportional to the ratio of the gun and charge weights, i.e., the heavier the gun, the slower it recoils, the heavier the charge, the faster the gun recoils.

"There is a slight further increase in the gun recoil due to the 'rocket effect' of the gases during their escape from the barrel after the shot and wads have been driven out," continues Dr. Cummings. "It

is this effect which is utilized in the recoil reducing devices such as the 'compensator'. Neglecting the mass of the powder and wads in comparison with the ounce and a quarter of shot in a 12 Ga. load with a muzzle velocity of about 1,400 feet per second, we see that a gun with a weight of $7\frac{1}{2}$ pounds will have a recoil velocity on the basis of the above of about $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet per second, plus a small increment (2 to 3 feet per second) due to the 'rocket effect'.

"Since the gun is held in the two hands against the shoulder, the recoil momentum is absorbed by the hands and shoulder. This amounts to approximately 35 foot pounds of energy.

"The three factors most affecting recoil are the weight of the gun, weight of the shot, and the velocity of the shot. Thus a heavy gun has a lower recoil velocity and, hence, less recoil than a light gun if used with the same load. Similarly, the recoil is less with a light load than with a heavy load.

"Relatively little can be done to reduce the recoil velocity of the shotgun for a given load except by the use of a device such as the compensator," says the Remington authority. "The action of this device is to 'reflect' the powder gases backwards and, hence, to deliver a forward push to the gun thus reducing the rearward velocity. The physical effects, that is to say the effect on the shooter, of recoil may be controlled to some extent in the construction of the gun. Stock length, drop, and pitch should be correct so that recoil is absorbed at the proper points. The distinction between reduction in recoil and reduction in punishment due to recoil must not be forgotten, however.

"Proper gun holding will do much to minimize the effect of recoil on the individual shooter. Many experienced trapshooters shoot through large tournaments without getting bruised shoulders but the inexperienced gunner who does not make his gun become a part of himself gets punched around some every time he pulls the trigger.

"Good advice to the beginner," concluded Dr. Cummings, "is to stop trying to make yourself become a part of the gun. Rather try to make the gun become a part of you. Then the recoil will become much less objectionable."

\$24,000,000 FOR CONSERVATION

New York State, instead of reducing taxes, wisely saved money during the high income period of the war years. Now the state has set aside for conservation an appropriation of \$24,500,000. This is the largest single investment New York State ever has made in its conservation field and it probably is just about the first time in history that money from a state's general fund has been used for conservation, although in many states the conservation fund has been robbed to benefit the general fund.



The proposed ten per cent tax on fishing equipment would not tax the barefoot boy heavily. Most of the revenue would come from the pocket book of the angler whose fancy equipment often runs into the hundred dollar figure.

Federal Aid . . .

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imposed by section 3406 of the Internal Revenue Code, effective October 1, 1941. The law now does not tax "lines," and to include this item would necessitate amending the Revenue Act. What amount of revenue this will produce is speculative. Some estimates place it at \$500,000, others at a million dollars or more.

Each State which gives its consent to the law will participate in the fund in an amount arrived at by the formula set up in the Bill as follows: 40 per cent in the ratio that the area of the State bears to the total area of all the States and 60 per cent in the ratio that the number of fishing licenses issued by the State annually bears to the total of such licenses in all the States.

No State, however, shall receive more than 5 per cent of the total fund nor less than \$4,500 if it puts up \$1,500.

Eight per cent of the fund is set aside for federal administration of the Act.

Any project proposed by the State fish and game departments must be approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service before federal aid will be given.

In case any allocation is not taken up or fully used it reverts to the Fish and Wildlife Service for carrying out its fish-research program.

Engineering items and expense cannot exceed 10 per cent of the cost of the project.

The Federal government pays 75 per cent of the cost of the project, the State 25 per cent.

After July 1, 1950, maintenance of projects heretofore completed may be considered as projects and not more than 25 per cent of the State's annual allotment from the funds shall be available for this maintenance.

The Secretary of the Interior is given authority to make the necessary rules and regulations for carrying out the provisions of the Act and must make an annual report to the Congress giving detailed information regarding projects.

The above are briefly the essential details of the Robertson Bill. The Pittman-Robertson Act has worked well for game within the States and there is no reason to believe that this bill aimed at fishery restoration should not work equally well.

The only fly in the ointment is the attitude of the fishing tackle manufacturers' association. When Frank Buck introduced the first bill on this subject there was no excise tax on fishing tackle. The bill, itself, imposed such a tax. It was bitterly fought by the tackle manufacturers. By resolution of their organization and by appearance of their officers at the hearings conducted by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee of the House the bill was condemned and the specious plea for the barefoot boy was used as an argument. It was shown by one of their own members that the average purchase of the average fisherman for "rod, line, reel and lure" was 89 cents. A tax of 10 per cent on this would be just under 9 cents—not a heavy burden on any sportsman. Of course it was pointed out that many—a great many—spend far greater sums annually. This would, perforce, reduce the amount purchased by the "barefoot" boy to a still smaller sum. In spite of much support in favor of it the Buck Bill was allowed to die in Committee.

In 1941 a ten per cent tax was placed upon the several types of fishing tackle mentioned above by the Ways and Means Committee of the House in the Internal Revenue Act of that year. This the manufacturers of tackle paid directly into the United States Treasury

for credit to the general fund. This tax later carried a proviso that it should be effective for the duration of the war and six months thereafter. Officially the war is still on.

Sometime after the tax became effective the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers at a meeting in Chicago passed by an overwhelming vote a resolution to earmark this tax for federal aid to State fishery restoration projects in a manner similar to the earmarking of the excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition for game restoration projects. This was in 1944.

In December 1945, the tackle manufacturers met again in New York, at which time this proposal was brought up on a motion to rescind the resolution passed in 1944 at Chicago. However, in spite of considerable discussion in its favor it was finally agreed that the whole matter of earmarking the excise tax for fishery restoration or wiping out the tax entirely be left to the annual meeting to be held in June 1946.

At the June meeting the tackle manufacturers, realizing that the official end of the war must come within a matter of months and that the 10 per cent on tackle would automatically go off six months thereafter, again brought up the 1944 Resolution. A motion

was made to rescind the Resolution of 1944 favoring the earmarking of the tax and by a bare majority the motion to rescind was carried. The Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers "now go on record as not favoring the passage of a bill (earmarking a tax) on fishing tackle similar to the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1938" for game restoration.

That is the situation as it stands today. The people who would receive the greatest amount of good from such an Act, after twice resolving to support it, now give it the cold shoulder and offer nothing in return. The sportsmen are interested in more and better fishing waters. They contribute many millions of dollars in license fees for the present administration of the fisheries. They have not objected to this tax.

Let us hope that when Congressman Robertson reintroduces this bill next session the fishing tackle manufacturers (only a bare majority are opposed to it) will see the light and get behind this measure which will do much for them—and for the sport.

This program has been sponsored since its inception seven years ago by the National Wildlife Federation and has drawn to its support many conservation groups.

—Conservation News

State Park Attendance Million Short of All Time High

ing some 36,000 acres, located in 55 of the 99 counties.

MORE than two and one-quarter million Iowans visited the state parks and recreational reserves during the first eleven months of 1946. The attendance was almost a million more than the previous year but it failed to reach the three and one-half million all time high of 1942. The Conservation Commission manages 86 state parks and reserves, contain-

Basing their prediction on early season figures, park officials believed that the '46 attendance would exceed any previously recorded. In September V. W. Flickinger, Director of the Lands and Waters Division of the State Conservation Commission, observed that "The polio scare has cut park attendance for this month to a low unknown in recent years". In spite of the unusually fine steak fry and picnic weather of October and November, park usage continued to be far below average during these months.



This picnic at Lake McBride State Park was duplicated thousands of times during the past year in the recreation areas. More than two and one-quarter million Iowans visited the state parks during 1946.—Jim Sherman Photo.



The game management area idea has encouraged the farmer to improve the environment for game on his farm. Note the abundance of cover on this farm.

History of Ringnecks . . .

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goes into some detail in describing the Iowa Game Plan. The first two fundamentals of this plan are: (1) to build environment so that where adequate seed stock exists or is placed it will have a reasonable chance of producing an annual surplus which may be harvested by the hunter, (2) to gain some measure of control over the take so that adequate breeding stocks remain on the land.

Because a high percentage of Iowa land is privately owned any program to restore natural environment for game is dependent largely on the farmer. Iowa set up a program treating game as a crop and carried out an educational program to interest farmers in having game on their farms by carrying out improvement measures.

To further this program the game management area plan was inaugurated. Each area was made up of one or more farms, usually organized in cooperation with sportsmen's groups. The State Fish and Game Department assisted with the work and enforced the control measures instituted. Certain requirements as to environment had to be met before an area was accepted.

At the end of 1934 there were 180 areas under game management totaling 583,140 acres with 3,529 farmers cooperating. By May, 1935 the total number of areas had been increased to 270 involving 854,498 acres of farm land.

During the period 1937-38 the Commission entered into a cooperative agreement whereby the Soil Conservation Service, the Commission and the farmers all cooperated to build up and manage the game crops. After gullies were fenced and planted and new vegetation provided cover for game the Commission supplied seed stock where necessary and the three parties worked toward the common objective of proper land and water use and management which included game crops.

By the end of 1942 the number of game management areas had decreased. The following statement from the biennial report explains the situation. "These pooled areas include some landholders who had little interest in game management and had gone into the plan solely to get their land posted or to accommodate their neighbors and sportsmen in filling out a block of farms. Such landholders weakened the entire plan in that particular area. Careful analysis of the operation of poorly functioning game management areas has led to more stringent requirements in the selection of farms for that purpose."

In June 1942, 410 areas of 245,191 acres were under operation as game management areas.

Because of the importance of proper land and water use in game management to increase game production, emphasis has been placed in establishing game management areas on farms signed up in the Soil Conservation District Program.

When farms in a Soil Conservation District are established as game management areas the following clause is included in the contract:

"Wildlife will be protected and its propagation encouraged by leaving grass nesting areas in fence corners and along fence rows. Feed and gravel will be provided when necessary during the winter months. The farms will be posted and hunting controlled in cooperation with the Iowa State Conservation Commission to the extent that seed stocks of game on the farms will be protected until a shootable surplus of game has been produced. Then hunting will be permitted to the extent of harvesting surplus game crop."

It is recognized that the cooperation with the farmer through the Soil Conservation Districts is one of the best methods of building up farms to produce and maintain populations of wildlife.

The game management area idea has served well in providing a media through which the farmer

has become aware of the problems of maintaining wildlife in shootable numbers. It has encouraged the farmer, who owns the land on which game must be produced, to improve the environment for game and at the same time realize that shootable surpluses should be harvested.

A program similar to that of the game management area on private land has been put into operation on state-owned lands which can be managed solely for wildlife production; and all the state-owned areas under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission have been put to this use. These state-owned areas are being

developed to provide ideal conditions for wildlife. In addition to land already owned the Commission is continuing to buy submarginal areas suitable for wildlife development.

The state-owned areas have all been classed as either refuges or public shooting grounds or a combination of both.

At the present time the Commission is maintaining 94 wildlife refuges. Six of these are leased for this purpose. The 88 state-owned refuges have a combined area of 49,894 acres. There are 86 public shooting grounds totaling 65,700 acres on which any Iowa license holder can hunt in season.

Hunting Areas . . .

(Continued from page 97)

If something isn't done about it, increasing numbers of nimrods are bound to find themselves hunters only for a place to hunt, with worn-out tires and unsoiled shotguns. Particularly is this true of certain kinds of hunting in which the game and opportunities to hunt it are concentrated in relatively small areas.

The obvious and necessary solution, if we are to maintain our democratic tradition of hunting as a sport for everyone who wishes to take part, seems to be public shooting areas. Recognizing this growing problem in Missouri, the

Conservation Commission this year started purchase of its first major public-use area for waterfowl. (Iowa now has 86 public shooting grounds containing 65,700 acres.) Several tracts of state forest land were posted for the first time for public deer hunting.

Public shooting areas will present new problems of regulation and management, to be sure. They seem to be the answer, however, for the thousands of sportsmen who, because of sheer overflow of numbers, cannot find a place to hunt on private lands.

—Missouri Conservationist

The Missouri River, 2,945 miles long, is the longest river in the United States.



Public shooting areas present new problems in regulation and management but they seem to be the answer for the thousands of sportsmen who because of sheer overflow of numbers cannot find a place to hunt on private lands.—Jim Sherman Photo.



State Lake Patrolmen holding refresher course at Clear Lake, left to right, State Boat Inspector, Verne Petersen, patrolmen, Ray Purham, Ray Mitchell, Wm. McGiboney, Verl Holmes, I. E. Carrier.—Jack Kennedy Photo.

STATE LAKE PATROL PAYS DIVIDENDS

THE state lake patrol, operated on six state owned lakes, including Black Hawk, Manawa, Okoboji, Storm, Clear, and Twin lakes, rescued 36 persons from drowning during the 1946 swimming and boating season. In a comprehensive report to the Commission, state boat inspector Verne Petersen broke down the activities of the lakes patrol. In addition to 36 operations identified as "rescue from drowning," the patrol gave assistance to 173 persons in "dire distress" on the water, gave safety demonstrations to more than 7,500 people, in addition to issuing life-saving certificates to 63 beginners, 11 intermediates, two juniors, and nine seniors. The patrol, while not claiming to be responsible for the reduced number of drownings in the state, "points with satisfaction to the fact that the Iowa drowning rate has been reduced from 140 in 1940 at the inception of the patrol to less than 80 in 1946."

PRAIRIE DWELLERS

The prairie chickens lived on the seeds of weeds and grasses and on rose haws. The predacious animals lived on the prairie chickens. There were few quail out on the prairie until the settlers had opened farms and begun to grow grains and to make shelters for them. In my opinion the limiting factor in the increase of the prairie chicken before the coming of white man

was the scarcity of food in winter. After the settlement of the country began I am certain that for a while they increased rapidly in numbers. They still had ample areas of nesting ground and the fields of the new farmers gave them an increased supply of food.

I doubt whether this bird could have been protected from extinction in Iowa any more than could the buffalo have been saved. The land all went into cultivated fields or pastures. In neither could the prairie hen find the nesting safety she required. The only salvation for the bird would have been great estates left in part unpastured and unsown with strict local protection and a system of gamekeepers; and this would not have been possible in Iowa.

—Herbert Quick

MY LEGACY

To those who follow after me I'd like to leave a legacy of all the things I loved so well—each lake and stream and shady dell.

Primeval forests now so rare I would preserve with jealous care. My furry friends I would protect, and not one bird would I neglect. I want posterity to know I was a friend and not a foe.

The richest treasures in our land are those we get from nature's hand. They're ours to love, to have, and hold and should not be exchanged for gold.

We have no right these gifts to waste, for they can never be replaced. I'd like my plea throughout the land to make them safe from vandals' hands.

—Enos Haywood
Pennsylvania Angler

REFUGE RABBITS TAKE A WALK

By Allen Green

DID you ever see a rabbit walking? I did.

We seemed to have discovered a new breed of wild rabbits at the refuge. We recently rubbed our eyes when we sighted as many as five rabbits that walked about in the yard. Of course they did not walk all of the time, but resumed their natural hopping posture after about a six foot walk. Visitors seeing this and telling their friends were automatically made members of the Liar's club. Skeptics drove to the refuge and were dumbfounded at the sight. So many have already seen these walking rabbits that all doubt as to my sincerity has been dispelled. They declare it must be an Alice in Wonderland breed come to life.

There are many stories of wildcats, tigers, etc., being seen recently in this section of Iowa, as well as across the river near Oquawka. No one has yet been able to produce a photograph as proof. However, here's the picture of one of the walking rabbits. Should they temporarily increase and continue to walk, I'm sorely afraid they will soon become extinct, for the hunters will surely "Mow 'em Down". I have seen many strange sights on the refuge but this tops them all—the rabbit that "walks like a man".

PAY \$18,000 FOR FISH POISONING

Conservation authorities won signal anti-pollution victory in Ohio recently, according to the Sportmen's Service Bureau, when the Electric Autolite Company of Toledo agreed to pay the State \$18,000 for fish killed in the Little Miami River by acids and cyanide which the company had dumped into the water. In addition, the company agreed to provide 200,000 minnows for restocking the stream and to cease the practice of dumping lethal wastes into public waters.

The out-of-court settlement was reached in agreement of the company's lawyers with assistant district attorney A. Lee Shield after the latter had completed preparations to file suit to collect damages for fish killed by the pollution. Action was started at the instigation of conservation authorities on the basis of a recent ruling by Attorney General Hugh S. Jenkins that the commission was obligated to protect wildlife from pollution menaces, and after pollution engineer Thomas H. Gallagher had reported on damage resulting from the Autolite Company's waste disposal practices.

NEVER A HOOT HOOTS HE

The owl is a gentleman
Of downright fascination;
He opens his eye and shuts his
mouth
And gains his reputation.



—Allen Green Photo.