

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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## GABRIELSON, COMMITTEE REPORT

### A JOINT REPORT TO

GOVERNOR ROBERT D. BLUE AND THE IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION BY THE CONSERVATION STUDY COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, AND IRA N. GABRIELSON, PRESIDENT, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, D. C. AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**T**HIS report is the result of a study of the Iowa State Conservation Commission's authority and organization and the conservation program for which it is responsible with reference to related activities that affect the success of its operation. This study was made at the request of Governor Robert D. Blue and the Conservation Commission.

In this study the basic legislative authority, the organization of the Commission and its staff and its working program were checked by a review of available records and by personal interviews with many persons both within and without the Commission.

Every possible courtesy was extended by all officials and access to records and files was freely given.

It should be made clear that it does not evaluate the entire program although all operations have been checked. This review of the accomplishments against the background of the Twenty-five Year Conservation Plan indicates that much worthwhile progress has been made and that Iowa can be proud of the results so far attained.

This report presents suggestions for legislation, the improvement of the Conservation Commission organization and recommendations that will, if carried out, stimulate those phases of the twenty-five year plan which have not moved forward as rapidly as others.

### PROGRAM

The Iowa Twenty-five Year Conservation Plan, published in 1933, was used as a basis for measuring results achieved since that time. That sound basic plan clearly recognized the difficulty of maintaining all of Iowa's renewable natural resources and providing for their maximum use in an area so intensively farmed. Iowa, with ninety-six per cent of its area in farms, has the highest proportion of



Left to right—D. C. Kern, Marshalltown, Chairman, Conservation Study Committee; Thomas Evans, Minneapolis, Regional Supervisor, Wildlife Management Institute; and Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Washington, D. C., President, Wildlife Management Institute. Register and Tribune photo.

such land of any state. This one factor makes it mandatory that any wildlife or forestry program be fitted into and exist with the predominant agricultural use of land.

Changing agricultural practices directly affect for good or evil wildlife populations. Intensive farming, due primarily to high prices and the increasing use of mechanical corn pickers, has decreased available winter cover and the increasing use of power driven mowers has increased the mortality of nesting upland birds. These and other practices have increased the difficulty of producing adequate crops of upland game and should be considered in judging the effectiveness of any wildlife management program.

Agricultural practices, past as well as present, have caused excessive soil erosion. This has resulted in reduction of the biological productivity of streams and lakes because of excessive siltation. Pollution of lakes and streams and deforestation are other major adverse factors affecting fish and wildlife population.

Recognition of the adverse effect of these and other human activities

upon natural resources resulted in studies that produced a forward looking, long time program for restoration and better management of the basic resources of soils and waters and their products.

The records indicate that excellent progress has been made in the restoration and improvement of natural lakes, in the planning and construction of artificial lakes and in the development of a state park system.

Good progress has been made in the game program, particularly in that part dealing with waterfowl and quail. A number of excellent project areas have been acquired and partially or completely developed, but the development of habitat on private lands has not moved forward as rapidly as other phases.

The fishery management program has moved forward in artificial propagation, fish recuse work, stream and lake surveys and preparation of management plans for each water area. It should be pointed out that success of fishery management is directly affected by the progress of natural

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### INDIAN MOUNDS OF NORTHEAST IOWA

**S**OME of the finest prehistoric Indian mounds in the United States may be found along the bluffs of the Mississippi River in Clayton and Allamakee counties.

Theories on the origin of the prehistoric inhabitants of this region are many and all remain theories only, for these early men left their record only in the effigy and burial mounds which are more numerous around McGregor than anywhere else in the middlewest.

The aborigenes may have been related to the Indians we know of in history, but none of the legends of the historical Indians connect them with the ancients who constructed the mounds.

Another theory of origin ties these early inhabitants of Iowa to the yellow race, which in ancient times, may have crossed from the Asiatic mainland to the American continent by way of the Aleutian Islands and gradually wandered westward to the Mississippi River.

Still another theory is that the mound builders were wanderers from the early Mayan cultures of South and Central America. This is supported by the fact that the mounds on the lower Mississippi are similar to those used in the foundations for buildings by the Mayan architects.

In the vicinity of McGregor, even in the city limits, are linear, conical, and effigy mounds, also constructions that may be fortifications and earthworks.

The linear mounds are straight earthen embankments, 60 to 300 feet long. The effigy mounds consist of birds with outstretched wings, a few bisons, several that appear like long-tailed animals, possibly panther or otter, and antlered elk, bear and other animals.

The conical mounds are merely round conical earth embankments appearing like enlarged gopher

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# Iowa Conservationist

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## DECEMBER COMMISSION ACTION

A meeting of the State Conservation Commission was held in the Des Moines office on December 1, 1947.

Members present were E. B. Gaunitz, Arthur C. Gingerich, F. W. Mattes, and Mrs. Addison Parker.

The Commission:

Approved the plan for the construction necessary to raise the water level of Rice Lake in Worth and Winnebago counties.

Approved application by the Aluminum Company of America for the lease of 2.25 acres of the bed of the Mississippi River at Bettendorf.

Rescinded the action of November 20th allowing muskrat trapping on Big Wall and Eagle Lake under the permit system.

Authorized immediate release of Dr. Gabrielson's report to the press upon its receipt from Dr. Gabrielson.

Meeting adjourned.

### "CONSERVATIONIST" INDEX

Two years have passed since an index has been compiled for the "Iowa Conservationist." We are working on one now covering 1946-47 and expect to have it completed about March 1. Many of our readers are planning to bind their "Conservationists," and an index will be valuable. If you will mail us a card requesting the new index, it will be sent to you without cost when completed.

## GIVE NATURE A CHANCE

By E. Sydney Stephens

Dean of Missouri conservationists, former Chairman of the Missouri Conservation Commission, and father of that state's non-political conservation program.

Look at these pictures! Particularly the upper one! Does it mean anything to you? Whether you live on Park Avenue or in Saskatoon, on Miami Beach or in Moose Jaw, it shows what is happening to you. It pictures the desolation caused by the erosion of the soil.

Don't say that you are not concerned with the soil; that you are not a farmer and therefore not interested in such matters. The orange juice, toast, bacon and eggs which you had for breakfast did not come from the grocery store; the clothes which you have on did not come from the clothier; the house in which you live did not come from the lumber yard; they all came from the soil, and the soil is tragically disappearing.

Don't say that it can't happen here. It is happening here! It is happening because too many people, like you, are giving it no attention. You leave it to the farmer and the farm agencies, but they cannot do the job alone unless and until all the people, young and old, rural and urban, concern themselves with the conservation and



E. SYDNEY STEPHENS  
Rex Gary Schmidt crayon drawing—courtesy Missouri Conservation Commission.

restoration of the soil. Your children and theirs, and perhaps you, will live to suffer the tragic conse-

quences of what is happening progressively to the most vital resources of human beings. Pork, beef and mutton cannot be produced on sterile soil; neither can corn, or wheat, or oats. They are the things which you live by. You should be giving them your attention.

What can you do about it? A lot. Farmers and farm agencies cannot save the soil alone. That must be done by the cooperation, the aid, and the demand of all the people.

Where can you turn to be helpful? To any farmer, to any farm agency, to any conservation agency—and they are all everywhere about you.

Give nature a chance to conserve and restore the soil. Then you will have a scene like that in the lower picture. Barren fields will turn green, trees will grow, clear streams will flow, farm animals will prosper, wildlife will reappear, and food will be more abundant for them and for you—and cheaper.

It has been proven in a few places that nature will restore the soil and its products, but it will need help—your help. Think about it—do something about it!



Allen Green photo

## THE CATFISH AND THE CHICK

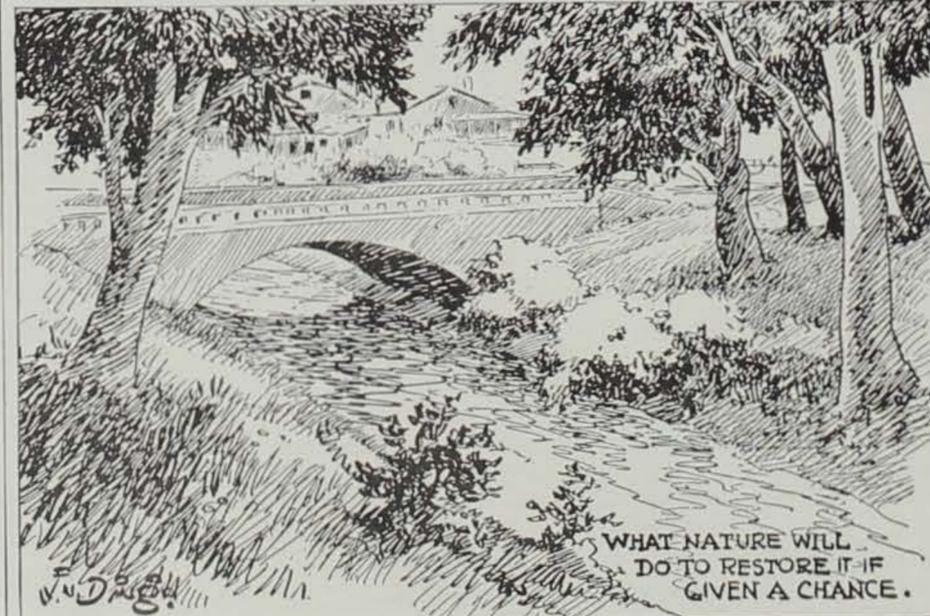
By Allen Green

"Will you walk into my parlor?"  
Said the catfish to the chick,  
"I think you'll find it spick-and-span,  
"Or is it span and spick?"

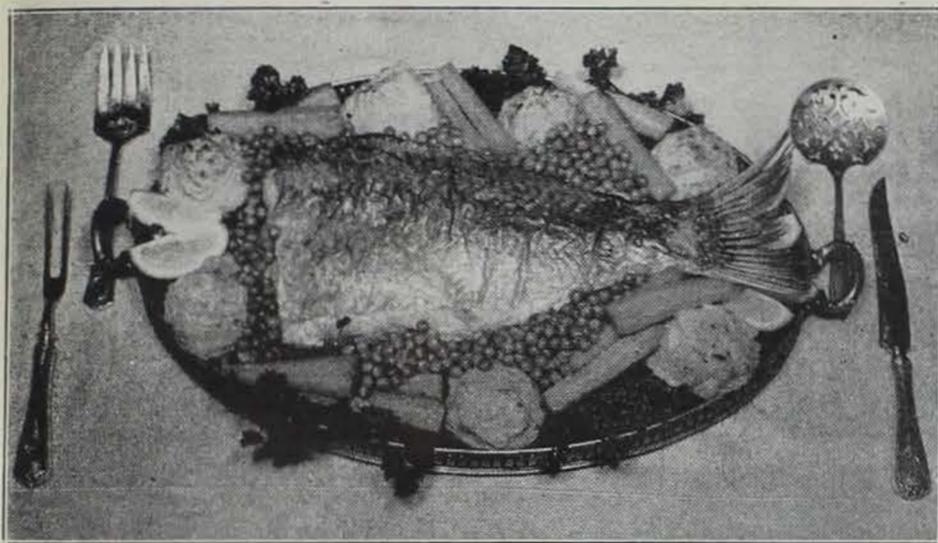
The chick replied, "I do not see  
"A chair which I can sit-on;  
"And I don't care to bite upon  
"The worm that you just bit-on."

When necessary, enough tackle and bait for a day's fishing can be carried in a shirt or trousers pocket. The line can be carried without tangling wound around a one-inch wide empty adhesive tape spool. The outer metal case keeps the dirt out. Various sizes of hooks, a few split shot and an extra sinker or two can be carried in a metal aspirin box. A cork bobber or float is carried loose in the pocket. Worms, grubs or other baits are easily carried in a tin tobacco can. Any slender sapling found along the river bank will serve as a rod.

Fast flying wild ducks and geese actually cannot fly for a period of several weeks during the summer. The non-flight period occurs during their moulting season which coincides with the period when their young are in the downy stage and are growing their flight feathers.



Reprinted from "Our Great Out-of-Doors," published by Iowa Division Izaak Walton League.



"We won't argue about the edibility of carp, but if properly prepared they are better than many of the so-called fine fish." Iowa State College photo.

## FINS, FURS AND FEATHERS

Millie and I have been going over the results of the past season's fishing efforts. All in all, it was a wonderful season—there were some trips that netted almost nothing but there were enough others to compensate for all the discomforts, all the expense, and all the time spent.

There were many high spots. Not the least of these high experiences were those times we fished for carp from the Benter Bridge. We stood above the middle pier, let out a lot of line downstream, used Curt's carp bait, and had hundreds of hard strikes. We hooked maybe one in ten and landed about half of those we hooked. The carp averaged around two pounds, and with from 75 to 100 feet of line out, they made good sport.

There are folks who speak disparagingly of fishing for carp. The truth is there are few fish in our streams that put up a better battle when hooked than do carp. We won't argue about the edibility of carp—but at that, if properly prepared, they are better than many so-called fine fish. You must be a good fisherman to land a five-pound carp in swift water. And when a big carp takes the bait, it really tries to go places. We think it is good sport to fish for carp.

We had some delightful experiences in the early trout season. Up on Elk Creek in the early days of the season we took our limit on at least three occasions, and we got nice trout, too—12-inchers and better. There's a spot up there under a cut-bank where there's a ree lying in the channel—around and under that tree Millie caught nice trout until the wording of the law said she had her limit.

Our success together on Spring Branch was not so good, but we didn't go there until in July and August—then nobody was doing very well. But on several occasions we went to Spring Branch alone—

and I had excellent success. One day with Curt Grigg, he took a brown that beat five pounds. One other day I took five beauties from that pool just below the highway bridge.

Opening morning for striped bass found us at Bailey's Ford, using garden worms for bait. We were choicy about the size of the fish we kept—but it took only about two hours to get our limit—and we went back to work at eight o'clock in the morning. Other times we went back to Bailey's Ford—one time the river was away up—Millie dropped a bait in a little pocket among some weeds right along the highway. To my surprise she got a good strike and brought out a two-pound channel.

The best smallmouth fishing we had was on Silver Creek. While we got no very big ones, we did get plenty of bass that went better than twelve inches. And the strange thing is that they took night-crawlers in preference to minnows. Over at Quasqueton Millie took several smallmouth—my luck there wasn't so good with the smallmouth.

Very early in the year we went

out for chubs and suckers. One day stands out big. We tried several spots and didn't get a strike. Finally we remembered a spot on Penn Creek, southeast of Earlville. The roads were muddy, but we wallowed through. After parking the car we went on a two-mile hike—and didn't get a keeping fish. We were pretty tired and somewhat short tempered when we got back to the car. Well, we decided we'd try it right off the bridge—right where we started. Well, it wasn't a minute until we got the first big black sucker—and when we quit we had a dozen of them.

That's fishing for you. You work and wait and hope for four hours. You give up. You try it once more. In thirty minutes you have all the fish you want.

Our first fishing for channels was after the high waters subsided—along in mid-June. That first day we went to the dam at Delhi—and hit it exactly right. Got a fine string of channels—the bass season was open too—we got some beautiful bluegills and some big crappies. Went up there several times—never a disappointment. My crowning event was the day I took the eight-pound channel from the fast water just below the wheel—and I was using the six-ounce fly rod.—Hopkinton Leader.

### ONE SHOT BAGS RABBIT, FOX

N. A. McGuire, who lives south of Lockridge, outsmarted a fox who was more intent on catching a rabbit than seeing the hunter. McGuire saw the chase, pulled up his gun, fired, and saw the rabbit hit the dust. The fox turned, disappeared in the brush. McGuire followed the fox tracks and found Reynard lying in a bush, dead. His one shot had killed both the fox and the rabbit.—Burlington Hawkeye Gazette.

"The best conservation laws are not found in the pages of our statute books, but are engraved on the conscience of the true sportsman."



Anglers on the northeast Iowa trout streams reported excellent early trout fishing. Jim Sherman photo.

## Wardens Tales

Shop Talk From the Field

Charlie Adamson, Conservation officer in charge of Scott county, asks the \$64 question: "Did you ever see or hear of a spotted skunk chasing a gray ground squirrel? I was driving with my window down, listening for shots, when I thought I heard a ground squirrel whistle. Almost at that instant a squirrel came out of the grass along the edge of the pavement twenty feet ahead, followed by a civet cat close behind. I could almost smell the beautiful perfume as I put on the brakes. However, I missed them both. That civet was sure putting the hotfoot on the squirrel and making him whistle plenty."

George Kaufman, conservation officer in charge of Allamakee and Clayton counties, writes:

"In rambling over the hills I find that there is a great increase in the ruffed grouse population. Nearly every place that has habitat for grouse contains from one to a dozen birds. I do not know why, but every time I flush one it gives me a big thrill. I think one reason for the increase this year was the wet spring which kept down the burning of the hills and brush land. Why land-owners burn off these places is more than I can understand. Burning is very bad and does no good to man, birds, mammals, soil or timber and stimulates rapid water runoff and erosion of our steep hill slopes."

Verl Holmes, conservation officer in charge of Woodbury county, writes the following:

"Just before Christmas, a doe and two three-quarters grown fawns visited in the residential district of Sioux City. The kids were all excited because they thought they were Santa Claus' reindeer that wouldn't be back up north in time for the long sleigh haul. Finally the deer worked downtown and ended up back of the police station. A couple of policemen, aided by some bystanders, herded the deer into the police garage. About this time, Walt Trussell and I were called to get rid of the deer. The police loaned us the Black Maria which was backed into the garage. The old doe and the young doe hopped up into the paddy wagon for a ride, but it took us both several minutes and four or five half-nelsons before the young buck was placed in the patrol wagon. We unloaded the deer on the Missouri River bottom, and, with the old doe in the lead, they walked out on the river ice to the open channel, jumped in, swam to the ice edge on the other shore, climbed out on the ice, and dis-

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## Indian Mounds . . .

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mounds, some as much as 35 feet in diameter.

All types of mounds found in this area have been known to contain some relics and human bone. More relics have been found in the conical mounds than in any of the other type, but even in these the artifacts have been fragmentary and of no value to the souvenir hunter. Many of the mounds have been spoiled by vandals; some have been excavated by archeologists; but many have been undisturbed by modern man.

Dr. Charles R. Keyes, Director of the State Archeological Survey, has made a thorough and long-time study of the mounds in this area. Dr. Keyes has stated that the reason for erecting the mounds is not clear.

It seems that instead of burial of a whole body in the mounds, many contain only a collection of human bones, apparently from many different bodies. It is believed possible that these mounds were built at some ceremonial time and that each family brought a part of the skeleton of the dead members of their family to be included in the mass burial.

Soil tests have shown that some of the soil has been carried from considerable distance, while other parts of the mound apparently have been scraped up nearby.

Effigies of the animals are almost always in profile on the right side, with nose pointing downstream as if watching the old Mississippi roll down toward New Orleans. Reptiles and birds seen from above also face down river.

The pottery found in the mounds, for the most part, is reddish or dull brown in color, rather soft, porous, crumbly, and unpolished, but ornamented with designs impressed on the clay with twisted cord. The few chipped stone knives, drills, and



Ellison Orr, one of the outstanding authorities on the Indian mounds of northeast Iowa, examines one of the rarely found intact pieces of burial pottery from the McGregor area. Jim Sherman photo.

scrapers found in the mounds show a high development among these people as do the few other relics that have been unearthed.

There are seven major groups of mounds in this area. The Adams group is one and one-quarter miles south of the mouth of the Turkey River on a high ridge overlooking the Mississippi. It contains three conical mounds and one the shape of a huge woman, 70 x 145 feet.

North of the Adams group one-quarter of a mile is a group containing a long-tailed animal and apparently following at its heel a smaller, stubby-tailed quadruped.

The Turkey River group of approximately 57 mounds is located at the junction of the Turkey and Mississippi rivers.

The Sny-McGill group, six miles south of McGregor, contains 94 mounds, two of them bird effigies with wingspread of almost 170 feet. The Sny-McGill group is one of the largest mound clusters in the United States.

The Jennings-Liephart group is three miles north of McGregor. This association contains two linear, three bird, and a procession of ten bear effigy mounds.

On the bluff at the mouth of the Yellow River are forty conical, linear, and effigy mounds. The largest bear mound here is 70 feet wide and 140 feet long and five feet above the surrounding surface.

The Fish Farm group is five miles north of Lansing and contains thirty mounds clustered in one acre.

The Sny-McGill mounds are owned by the Federal Government. The Turkey River, Jennings-Liephart, and the Turkey River Bluff groups are state-owned and under the control of the State Conservation Commission.



Although most fish do not bury the hook as deeply as the omnivorous bullhead, thousands of under-sized fish returned to the water die from injuries received at the hands of the angler.

## GAME BAG

The state of Missouri is following the lead of other southern states in abolishing all size limits on fish.

According to the "Missouri Conservationist," "The revolutionary action of abolishing size limits upon all species is based upon studies of fish population and the rate of harvesting, studies made not only in Missouri but in other states with comparable waters and in the Tennessee Valley. The technicians in this state, after lengthy survey, came to the conclusion that Missouri waters, particularly in the larger lakes, are not thoroughly fished because of their very natures, sizes and carrying capacity . . . Fish are a crop; a lake is an aquatic pasture, community-owned and frequently over-stocked, a condition that can cause poor fishing quite as much as understocking."

The creel limit remains the same

but the angler may keep every fish he catches whatever the length.

Will Iowa remove size limits on fish? At the present time the answer awaits the results of stream surveys the biology department has been conducting in the last few years.

In the writer's opinion, size limits should be removed. One good reason is the great loss of fish that are returned to the stream now because they are not long enough according to the present size limits. A big share of the fish die from handling and from being injured by the hook. These could just as well be kept and used for food.

Instead, under the existing laws, the angler throws these undersize fish back and continues to fish for some that are long enough to keep, sometimes killing three times the legal limit.

Removal of size limits is not only good conservation but good management. Put a thousand baby chicks in a brooder house too small for them, provide only half enough feed and the final result will be a large percentage of scrubs, a high mortality rate and poor quality poultry. True enough, there will be some normal chickens and probably some that do exceptionally well but at the expense of the majority.

The same theory applies to fish.

In nearly every case our Iowa streams are overstocked with fish to the point where they compete with each other for food. A sound and economical method of alleviating this condition is to harvest more of them to make more room and more food for those remaining.

It is impossible to fish a body of water to the point where the brood stock is endangered because the fish refuse to bite when natural food is available. When food is scarce fishing will be good, and many will be caught. When the population is reduced, making more food for those that remain, the fishing will be poor. Experiments on some of the artificial lakes in the state bear out this theory.

Where we attempt to improve hunting and fishing by stocking species already present we may be hurting instead of helping by contributing to the crowded conditions already existing in our fields and streams. Restocking fish and game, except where the species does not exist or where natural reproduction is curtailed, is a waste of time and money. A better plan of procedure and one that will bring tangible returns is to improve the habitat or the places where our game lives. Mother Nature will do the rest.—Milo F. Gerry, Waterloo Courier.

Carp were brought into the United States in 1876. Originally this fish was only native to China; however, through the efforts of man it was transported to Europe in the thirteenth century. Later in the sixteenth century it was carried to England. Now it may be found the world over. In the Great Lakes commercial fishermen take over five million pounds of carp each year. The carp belongs to the minnow family of fishes.



High on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi are found many prehistoric Indian mounds. Some are effigy mounds constructed in the shape of bears, birds, and other animals. Jim Sherman photo.



"Competent service cannot be given by persons under constant tension because of compensation inadequate to meet ordinary living costs, and employees of the Commission are among those hardest hit by rising prices and inflated economy." M. E. Stempel photo.

## Committee Report . . .

(Continued from page 1)

lake restoration, construction of artificial lakes and stream improvements. Artificial propagation and stocking can do little more than maintain present stocks of fish until improvement programs make the waters capable of sustaining greater fish populations.

The forestry and stream improvement programs, both the responsibility of the Conservation Commission, and the soil erosion control program, which is not now legally within Commission jurisdiction but which is vital to the success of many of its projects, have not kept pace with those previously mentioned.

Iowa, with the nation's most completely farmed land surface, has been slow in applying good land management practices designed to prevent deterioration of its rich soils.

While soil erosion control has not been considered a responsibility of the Conservation Commission, good land management is such an important factor in the success or failure of many of its projects that it must be stressed in evaluating the results of its work and weighing its chances of future success.

The forestry program has not had adequate appropriations and has lacked wide popular support and aggressive leadership by the Conservation Commission.

The stream improvement program has not moved ahead as rapidly as other phases of the twenty-five year plan. This work is intimately related to soil erosion control and results will be difficult to obtain until good land management is practiced within the watershed of streams on which work is done.

Stream improvement efforts are not as certain to produce results nor will results be as easily demonstrated to the public as those obtained by the construction of artificial lakes; nevertheless, such work is a vital part of the overall conservation plan. The Commission has studies underway designed to develop a stream improvement program. This is a correct approach to

this complicated problem and should be pushed vigorously.

### BASIC LEGISLATION

The basic legislation under which the Commission operates is good—in fact better than in the majority of states. The Commission has operated with much better than average success in carrying out its functions and programs, a fact which indicates the soundness of conservation laws.

Certain amendments to these laws are desirable to provide better administration and these are indicated in detail later in the report.

The most serious gaps in the general conservation laws are the confusing financial set-up under which the Commission operates, the lack of adequate laws to control pollution of publicly owned waters and the weakness of the Soil Conservation Districts Act.

Experience in other states has shown that police power vested in the soil conservation districts is necessary to prevent an occasional land owner from rendering ineffective the efforts of adjoining owners.

### CONSERVATION COMMISSION ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

The Commission is established as an independent agency with wide powers to carry on its operations within the general laws of the state. It is authorized to: Employ personnel; fix standards of employment; fix salaries (subject to the approval of the Comptroller or the Executive Council) except those of the Director and the Conservation Officers which are fixed by law; employ a Director and on his recommendation to establish other positions; dismiss employees upon the Director's recommendation; make regulations governing the taking of game and fish; purchase lands for conservation purposes; establish refuges; propagate game and fish; establish and maintain parks and state forests; practice forestry; carry out certain soil erosion control programs when necessary to protect publicly owned waters; and to carry out a wide variety of conservation projects.

The overall accomplishments of this important Commission have been

good. The Commissioners are deeply interested in the work for which they are responsible and have devoted much time and effort to it. Mistakes, inevitable in any constructive program, have undoubtedly been made, but there is no evidence to indicate that they have been anything more than errors in judgment.

The greatest single weakness in the present organization is that of totally inadequate pay scales. Compensation for all employees from the Director down is far below that of successful competitive conservation organizations in other states. The result has been that the young men employed by the Commission have often been hired by other conservation organizations as soon as their work became outstanding. Only employees who chose to remain for personal reasons and those whose work has not yet been outstanding enough to attract other offers have remained.

There are valuable employees with long experience and good young men with excellent training who will develop with experience. There are, however, too few employees with from five to ten years experience added to their technical training. Normally this class of employees would be able to shoulder the burden of the expanding conservation program. Due to the shortage of men in this group the higher administrative officers who should be doing the overall thinking, planning and coordinating, are overwhelmed with detail work.

Iowa has trained many men in the past fifteen years who are now working in widely scattered states at far higher salaries than corresponding positions under the Iowa Conservation Commission. Salaries of all positions from that of Director down must be increased by a minimum of fifty per cent if this state is to compete with other agencies who are bidding for the services of trained and experienced individuals.

This situation is caused by two conditions, the legislative fixing of certain

salaries including that of the Director, and by the fact that pay scales must be approved by the Comptroller or the Executive Council as well as the Commission. To correct this situation certain legislation is recommended. In addition to legislation a comprehensive program of salary revision by the Executive Council and the Commission will be necessary.

This investigation was requested by the Governor and the Commission because of reports alleging political interference, differences between the Governor and Commission, and friction within the staff of the Commission.

Careful inquiry has failed to produce any evidence of political interference in the affairs of the Commission by any elected officer. Neither has any evidence indicated that the Governor has attempted to dictate appointments to positions on the staff. There have been two occasions on which he has issued instructions to the Commission regarding the assignments of individuals already on the staff. These constitute the only indication of any infringement on the duties of the Commission. The Governor has made suggestions regarding the operation of the Commission with which the Commission has not always agreed but there is no evidence of political pressure to force compliance with such suggestions.

On several occasions Commission recommendations designed to correct at least partially the present inadequate salary rates have not been approved. This failure to act has handicapped efforts to add to the staff and to attract and hold better men. There have also been delays in obtaining approval of land acquisition proposals which have slowed up the work.

Reports of political pressure to accept certain projects have come to attention. The more recent of these are the Osceola and Allerton reservoirs.

(Continued on page 6)



"It is evident that a training program, both for new and present employees, to give them a better concept of their part in the rapidly growing conservation program would result in a better informed staff." Jim Sherman photo.



"The educational program is good as far as it goes, but in view of the tremendous problems involved in carrying on a conservation program in an intensively farmed state an educational program, particularly in the schools, is a vital necessity." Jim Sherman photo.

### Committee Report . . .

(Continued from page 5)

The Osceola reservoir was given to the state free of encumbrance. It has provided good fishing in the past, but the dam is in need of repairs which may make it an expensive gift. Local groups pressed the state to take over this unit, but political pressure, if any, on this project other than that from local groups is difficult to establish. Delay in approving other land acquisition projects may have been used as a means of pressure to secure action on this project.

The Allerton reservoir purchase was authorized twice by special legislation. A proposed purchase contract under the first authorization was rejected on advice of the Attorney General because of unacceptable reservations. A later bill passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor gave the Commission authority to pass on the title and the reservoir was purchased, after further conference with the Attorney General. It would appear from this record that if any mistake was made the legislature, the Governor and the Conservation Commission share the responsibility for it.

It might be stated that old reservoirs are often of questionable value. Siltation of a reservoir decreases its value for fishing and ultimately for other uses. Such projects should be included in the state water management program only after careful surveys indicate a sufficiently long life to justify cost of needed repairs and subsequent maintenance.

Reported friction within the staff undoubtedly existed and still exists.

A certain amount of office gossip, expressions of resentment by individuals whose viewpoint has not prevailed in determining policies and the voicing of disappointment when a promotion is given to some other person, is inevitable in any organization. On some occasions too much attention has been paid to such talk by both the Commission and higher administrative officials.

Expressions of varying viewpoints within the staff are healthy and should

be encouraged prior to making decisions and establishing policies. This insures the presentation of various aspects of the problem, utilizes the ability and experience of all staff members and provides a broader basis for a decision than would be possible without such free expression.

Differences of opinion become harmful whenever they are carried outside the organization after a decision has been made. This has unquestionably occurred frequently and was participated in by some of the present as well as some of the recently dismissed personnel. Such actions should be grounds for dismissal since no organization can carry out an efficient program unless established decisions and policies are loyally supported. No person, however able, is of use unless that person is a loyal member of the organization.

There is evidence that employees have on occasion developed or attempted to develop outside pressures to insure the adoption of proposed programs by the Commission. Such a practice makes it difficult for an organization to develop an intelligent program and employees who use it should be dismissed.

Staff difficulties have also undoubtedly been accentuated by the low salary scale and the uncertainty that it causes to individuals. Competent service cannot be given by persons under constant tension because of compensation inadequate to meet ordinary living costs and employees of the Commission are among those hit hardest by rising prices and an inflated economy.

Another cause of staff difficulties is the lack of any clear cut line of demarcation between the policy making functions of the Commission and the administrative duties of the staff. This condition can only result in bickering among the personnel and a confused feeling of trying to serve many masters.

The minutes of the Commission for March 1947 contain a statement of policies and functions of the Commission and the Director in which the

Commission reserves powers for itself that are a mixture of policy and administrative functions. This statement needs revision and clarification.

The Commission, consisting of seven citizens meeting at intervals, cannot well handle administrative matters. It is recommended that it define its functions to include the following types of activities:

1. Outlining major policies and programs.
2. Approving projects to carry out the program.
3. Adopting administrative orders.
4. Carrying out sufficient inspection to determine that its policies and programs are adequately executed.
5. Approving qualifications and salary rates for personnel.
6. Selecting a Director to be held responsible for administration.
7. Approving personnel recommended by the Director.

In the interests of good administration the Commissioners should not, as a group, or individually, issue instructions or orders to any subordinate. Commissioners should not permit employees to discuss with them their individual problems or assignments but should establish a system whereby appeals and information reach the Commission through regular channels. The uncertainties that develop when official business is handled on a personal rather than an impersonal basis contributes to poor morale and every effort should be made to avoid such effects.

Information has been received and evidence found that on some occasions Commissioners have issued direct or-

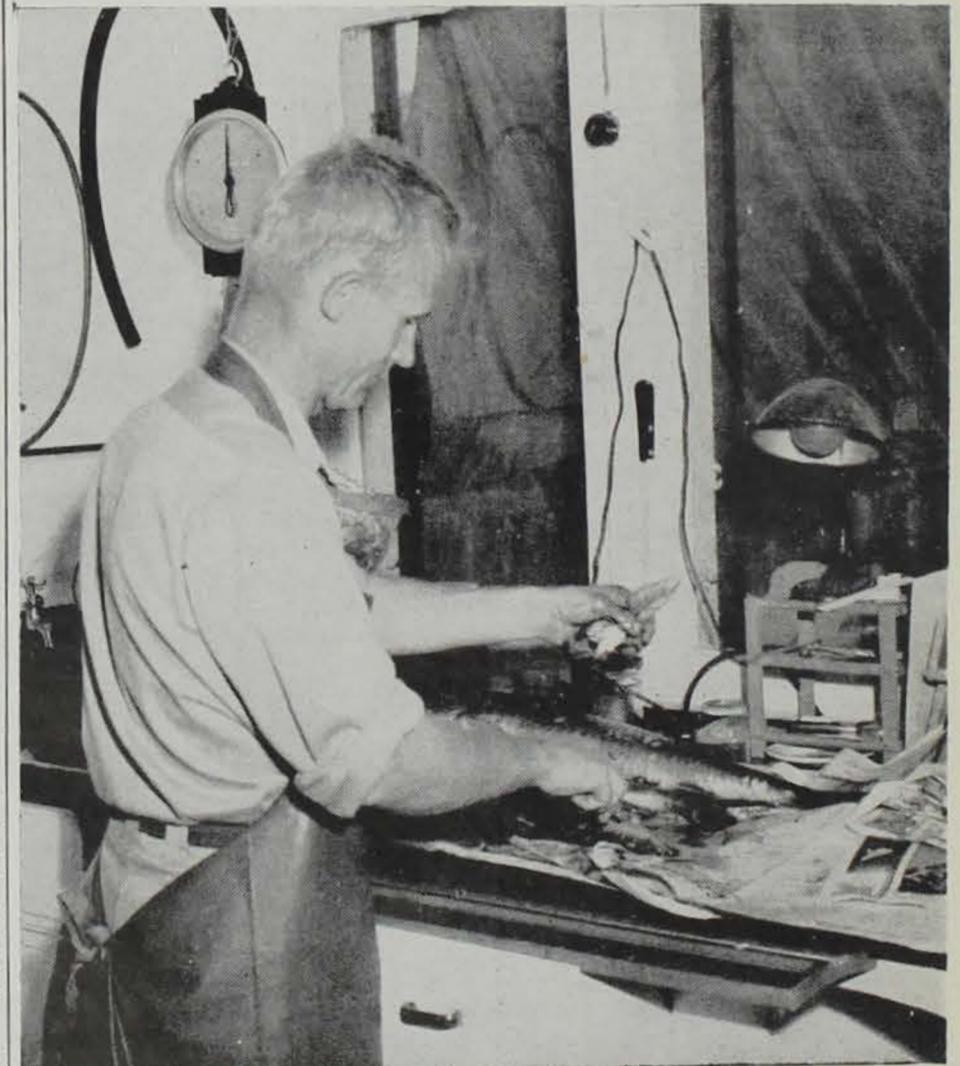
ders to employees; that inspections of proposed purchase areas have been made without the presence of staff members; that inspections have been made of work projects in the field without giving the responsible employee any opportunity to present information, and that individual Commissioners spend much time with certain employees. Such actions are indications of a fundamental difficulty, namely, the failure of the Commission to distinguish clearly between its own policy making functions and the administrative functions which should be delegated to the Director. No Director, however competent, can build and maintain an efficient organization if there is any confusion in his mind or in that of the staff members regarding his authority as administrator.

The files of the Commission contain a memorandum dated October 17, 1946, outlining the duties of the key personnel which could be expanded to include an outline of the duties and responsibility of each class of employees.

In addition to a job classification there is need for an outline of qualifications for each class of employees. These should provide educational or experience requirements, or both. At the present time there is no accepted standards for judging the qualifications of applicants for the various positions.

It is evident that a training program both for new and present employees to give them a better concept of their part in the rapidly growing conserva-

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The report recommends that "biological research be continued under the present cooperative unit plan and that the fisheries research be expanded to cover the most immediate and pressing problems."

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tion program would result in a better informed staff.

The Commission has full power, on the recommendation of the Director, to discharge any employee but has seldom used that right. The records show that it has preferred to try persons not completely satisfactory in one position in other assignments before dismissal. While such a policy has much to commend it, there is room for improvement in the handling of personnel problems.

The staff is at present undermanned to carry out the program for which funds have already been provided. This is particularly true in the units directly responsible for carrying out the capital improvement program.

At present all biological research work is carried on in the cooperative unit at Iowa State College. Largely because it has been underway longer more basic information is available in the game than in the fisheries field. The latter needs expansion to provide definite information needed for the better management of streams and lakes. Such research should for the present be directed toward solution of the most pressing management problems.

The educational program is good as far as it goes, but in view of the tremendous problems involved in carrying on a conservation program in an intensively farmed state an educational program, particularly in the schools, is a vital necessity. The records show that conservation officers and other personnel carry on work designed to inform the people on basic conservation problems. However, the present public relations staff cannot prepare basic material necessary for such important work in addition to present assignments.

### FUNDS

Iowa is mindful of the importance of these basic natural resources and is inclined to be generous with funds for such work. Money available to the Conservation Commission has increased in each of the last three fiscal years.

The total funds for each fiscal year are:

*July 1, 1944-	
June 30, 1945	\$ 851,559.95
July 1, 1945-	
June 30, 1946	1,020,933.14
July 1, 1946-	
June 30, 1947	3,943,496.82

\*A balance of \$509,936.62 was available on July 1, 1944.

Included in this are legislative appropriations and the seven months receipts under the increased hunting and fishing license fees provided by the last legislature. From April 1, 1947, to December 1, 1947, receipts in dollars were 32.07 per cent greater than the corresponding period in the preceding fiscal year and the number of licenses sold decreased only 9.78 per cent in the same period. Indications are that license sales in November and not yet entirely reported will cut the reported decrease in the number of licenses sold.



The joint report recommends that increased efforts be made by the Conservation Commission to promote closer working relationship with those living on the land. M. E. Stempel photo.

There has been little protest over this increase which indicates a growing appreciation by hunters and fishermen of the necessity of providing funds to do the job. As the present habitat improvement program in cooperation with soil conservation districts gains momentum and stream improvement programs follow, more funds will be needed. Iowa license fees are still relatively low and it is probable that another increase would be acceptable to license buyers when they see the results of work accomplished.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION

It is recommended that:

(1) The Soil Conservation Districts Law (Chap. 160, Iowa Code, 1946) be amended to give to the districts power to compel compliance with soil erosion and water control programs adopted by the districts.

*Comment:* The lack of authority to force compliance by a few land owners can render this program ineffective. This is the most serious defect in conservation legislation found in this study. While soil erosion control is not a direct responsibility of the Conservation Commission, the lack of an adequate soil conservation program can render futile many of its efforts to improve streams and provide better wildlife habitat.

(2) A greatly increased state appropriation be made available to the State Soil Conservation Committee for more intensive soil erosion control activities and a strong corps of engineers and other soil erosion control technicians be provided to assist organized soil conservation districts in accelerating work programs. Federal technicians of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service are far too few to assist in developing comprehensive plans rapidly enough to meet the basic economic and conservation needs of the state. The Conservation Commission and the State Soil Conservation Committee should work closely together in this most important effort.

(3) Legislation be enacted prohibiting the dumping of raw sewage or industrial wastes into natural or artificial lakes.

(4) The Commission be relieved of the responsibility for boat inspection and water navigation regulations.

*Comment:* This more properly belongs in some state service carrying out similar duties.

(5) Legislation be passed authorizing the use of funds for training of personnel both before and after initial employment.

(6) Section 107.21, Code 1946, creating three divisions within the Conservation Department be repealed and that responsibility for departmental organization be left with the Commission.

*Comment:* Division organization is a matter of distributing the work load. With an expanding and changing conservation program the Commission should have the power to reorganize the department to meet changing conditions.

(7) 50 G. A. Chap. 84 be amended to permit habitat improvement by planting of trees, shrubs and other vegetation on private lands.

(8) The numerous special and local laws regulating the taking of fur bearing mammals and fish be repealed and leave suitable regulations to the Commission under the authority already granted under Section 109.38 and subsequent paragraphs.

*Comment:* It may be desirable to prepare new legislation carrying certain definitions scattered through these various acts but even so the law could be greatly simplified.

(9) Section 107.12, Code 1946, which fixes the salary of the Director and 107.13, Code 1946, which, among other things, fixes a maximum compensation for conservation officers, be amended by striking out the salary fixing provisions of each paragraph.

*Comment:* It is difficult to build and maintain an efficient staff when the compensations of some are fixed by law and others are not.

(10) Present legislation be amended to place supervisory control of Commission expenditures and compensation schedules in one agency.

*Comment:* At the present time there are two agencies legally exercising such control over parts of the operations, namely, the Comptroller and the Executive Council.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

It is recommended that:

(1) There be a clear cut understanding of the relationship between the Governor and the Commission. The Governor should be informed of the operation and programs of the Commission but should not interfere in personnel and operation affairs.

The responsibility for the conservation program rests primarily with the Commission. The Executive Council has the responsibility for reviewing proposed land acquisition programs and compensation paid to employees. It is essential that this right of review be exercised carefully to insure necessary consideration of proposals without undue delay to the overall program. (The many and varied duties imposed on the Executive Council comprised of officials who already have heavy responsibilities causes wonder that time can be found to give consideration to any project.)

(2) The Conservation Commission clearly define its own functions and relationships with its staff, retaining for itself only policy making and review functions.

(3) The Director outline and clearly define the duties and responsibility of persons occupying each type of position in the staff and that as new positions are established, similar definitions be formulated.

(4) Qualifications necessary for applicants for each type of position be established and used in the selection of personnel either for promotion or initial employment.

(5) The present policy of promotion from within the staff be followed where qualified persons are available but that this policy should be flexible enough to permit the employment of better qualified individuals from other sources.

(6) Immediate efforts be made to increase the salary scale to a point where qualified personnel can be attracted and held on the staff. (Unless this can be done it will become increasingly difficult to develop and carry out efficiently the expanded program.)

(7) Enough new positions, including technicians (foresters, biologists and engineers) be established to carry on the studies necessary to provide adequate information for development of projects and to secure more comprehensive data on which the regulation of the annual harvest of fish and game can be based.

(8) Biological research be continued under the present cooperative unit plan and that the fisheries research be expanded to cover the most immediate and pressing problems.

(9) The public relations personnel be increased in order to furnish conservation material to the public schools and to inaugurate a cooperative educational program with school officials and those of other organizations.

(10) A training program for new employees and "refresher" training for present employees be started. This

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training should inform employees of, among other things:

(a) The legal authority and legal limitations under which the Conservation Commission operates.

(b) The extent of the work of the Commission and the organization of the staff to carry it out.

(c) The duties and responsibilities of the job to which employee is to be assigned.

(d) The proper cooperative relationship with other employees, with members of other conservation organizations and with the public.

(e) Standards of conduct expected from employees.

(f) Special instructions on any methods involved in the job to which he is assigned.

(11) That the Director establish a system of warning employees whose work is unsatisfactory. This might consist of a statement of the deficiencies in the work, or suggestions of possible ways of improvement along with a specific warning that failure to improve could only result in a recommendation for demotion or dismissal. A record of such warning should be made part of that employee's record with the organization.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROGRAM

It is recommended that:

(1) The program for working with sportsmen's groups and soil conservation districts be pushed and adequate technical help be provided to insure maximum conservation advantage from such cooperative efforts.

*Comment:* Various projects will need assistance from biologists, foresters and engineers and such service should be available where needed.

(2) As rapidly as possible areas owned by the Commission be treated with such soil conservation methods as are necessary to obtain maximum values from the land and at the same time provide a demonstration of good land and wildlife management.

(3) In continuing the lake improvement program which is relatively far advanced, dredging should be carried on in additional lakes only after the most careful studies in the light of past experience.

*Comment:* Data on lakes already dredged and others to be dredged indicate that in some cases other and less expensive methods might accomplish the same results.

(4) Present studies on streams be continued and that stream improvements be initiated to the extent found feasible.

*Comment:* In the future the rivers of the state must provide a greater share of the total fishing and other recreational demands. Such a program should as far as it is possible be integrated with sound soil erosion control programs on adjoining lands if maximum values are to be obtained.

(5) Studies be made of the feasibility of purchasing overflow lands along the rivers by combining the needs of stream improvement, acquisition of access areas, forestry and partial flood control programs.

*Comment:* Many states are now purchasing extensive strips of stream bottom lands for one or more of the following purposes: To provide public access to the streams; to give control of the banks for stream bank protection; to permit revegetation and reforestation of eroding areas; to help in flood control; to provide wildlife habitat.

(6) The general forestry program be pushed to bring it up with other phases of the twenty-five year plan. This work should, among other things, furnish technical assistance to private forest owners, provide proper forest management on state owned forest lands, provide for acquisition of additional lands to block in ownership of established areas, consider the establishment of additional purchase areas and provide for an expansion of the forest nursery to produce several million trees annually for reforestation, windbreaks and wildlife plantings.

(7) Increased efforts be made to promote closer working relationship with those living on the land. The cooperative program with soil conservation districts and sportsman clubs for the development of wildlife habitat and the enlarged forestry program suggested represent the greatest apparent opportunity now available to accomplish this purpose and increase wildlife production.

(8) That fishery management programs be frankly tied closely to the development of farm ponds and new artificial lakes, the restoration of natural lakes, the abatement of pollution, stream improvement and soil erosion control.

*Comment:* It should be recognized that the success of these basic programs furnishes the only possible chance to increase present fish production.

*Note:* The recommendations on programs have been confined to those elements of the Twenty-five Year Conservation Plan that have not progressed as rapidly as others. The fact that such items as parks, the artificial lake program, the restoration of natural lakes and marshes and similar well advanced programs are not given prominence does not imply that these programs are not important. They should be continued along present lines.

The Committee suggests, with the concurrence of Dr. Gabrielson, that it be continued for the purpose of following through on the recommendations in this report.

A meeting was held by the Governor's Conservation Study Committee and Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, engaged in a similar study for the Conservation Commission at Des Moines on December 18, 1947.

After due consideration it was agreed to present a joint report with a copy each to Governor Robert D. Blue and the Conservation Commission.

Signed:

- Ira N. Gabrielson
- J. T. Dykhouse
- W. J. Kilpatrick
- Theo. Klemesrud
- H. L. Zigrang
- Robert K. Beck
- Glen B. Law
- D. C. Kern

### Wardens' Tales . . .

(Continued from page 3)

appeared into the willows on the Nebraska bank."

Conservation Officer Warren Wilson, in charge of Boone and Story counties, sends along this hair-raiser:

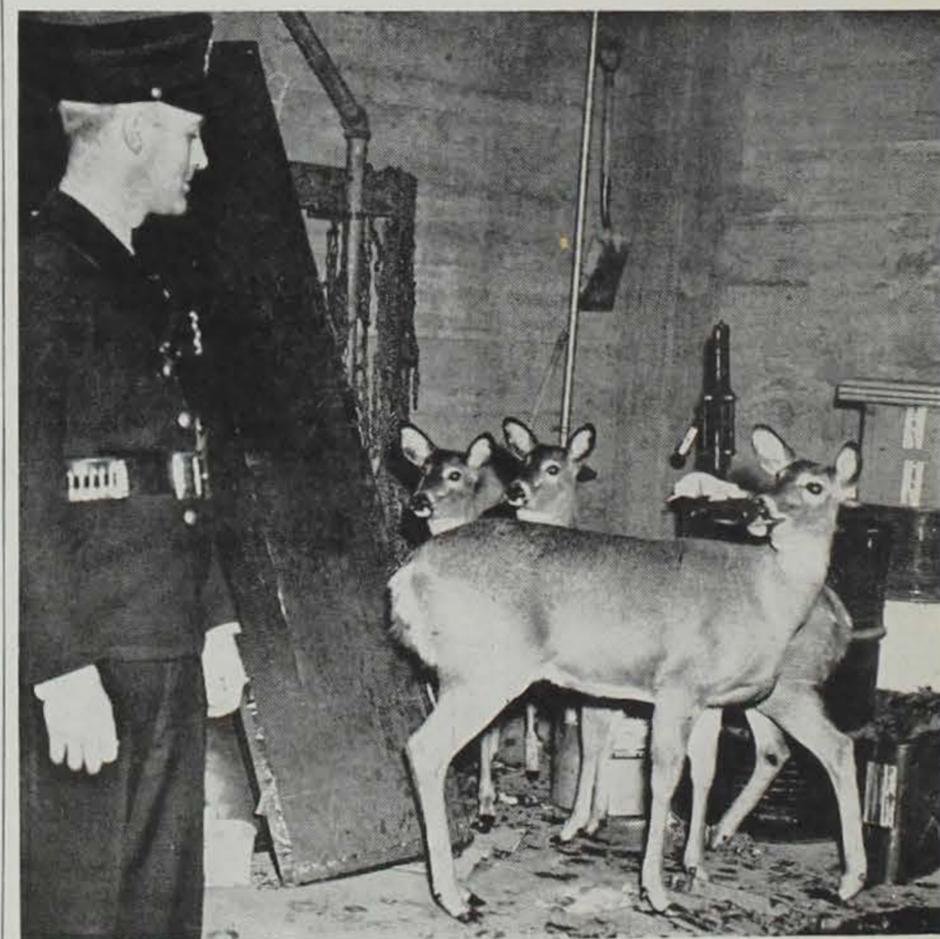
"Lee Berkley and I were making a river trip on the Des Moines River, which was bank full and really moving along. Lee was at the motor and I was watching the bank for diddy poles, trot lines, etc. As we approached Frazer Dam I told Lee I thought we could run it at a low spot and save portaging. Lee slipped the boat down a little closer to the dam so I could find the opening. We got too close and I yelled for him to take it upstream, but it was too late. The tow caught us and over the dam we went, motor first. We hit the boil and it gave us a spin, turning us into the trough, and there we sat, motor going full gun but the boat not moving an inch. Water started to come in on both sides and, believe me, Lee and I were doing some serious thinking. I still don't know what happened, but all of a sudden the motor caught some sound water and the boat pulled away from the dam. Right then and there I learned to respect the tremendous pull of moving current."

Frank Starr, conservation officer in charge of Buena Vista and Cherokee counties, writes:

"I sure feel like the proverbial eager beaver. I was working with

the Storm Lake Boy Scouts on a winter feeding program in which we were using Christmas trees with which to build feeding stations. The Storm Lake Pilot Tribune, our local paper, had asked the good people to put their Christmas trees out on the parking where the Boy Scouts would pick them up by truck. There was a lot of snow on the ground and some of the trees were placed in the drifts in an upright position. Some were frozen in the snow and it took a lot of pulling to get them loose. I saw one that still had considerable tinsel hanging from the branches. I went into the yard to get it but it stuck tight. I was jerking and pulling for all I was worth when the front door of the house opened and a man stuck his head out, asking in no uncertain terms what I was trying to do. It was then that I discovered that the tree was growing there and had been decorated during the holidays. After I explained what we were doing everything was cleared up and we had a good laugh. Boy, I'm sure glad I didn't pull that tree out by the roots."

The Mason City Globe Gazette tells the following tale on Jack Stevens, conservation officer in charge of Cerro Gordo county: "When Jack was collecting pheasant legs during the pheasant season for the state biologists' survey, he found a bunch at one of the Mason City depositories tagged this way: 'Jack—I know that meat is high and the wardens' wages are low, but I didn't think that you'd have to resort to this.'"



Under the watchful eye of a Sioux City police officer the wayward doe and her two fawns await the arrival of the paddy wagon in the police station garage. George Newman photo—courtesy Sioux City Journal.