

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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SILVER ANNIVERSARY FOR PHEASANTS

HAVE YOUR QUAIL AND EAT THEM, TOO

By Robert E. Mangold

Iowa Cooperative Wildlife
Research Unit

What is the effect of hunting on quail abundance? This has been a subject of discussion for many years by the public. Often sportsmen are blamed for depletion of quail within a given locality. Is such criticism justifiable? The effect of hunting pressure on bob-white populations has been studied in other states. Iowa, however, has been a pioneer in investigating this controversial problem. Let's look at what happened to a known fall quail population in southern Iowa.

Since 1935 personnel of the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit have checked the spring and fall populations of bob-whites on a 7,713-acre privately owned area in Decatur County. Fall and winter losses in populations on this area have varied from about 6 to 88 per cent. What are the reasons for these losses?

One important factor analyzed in 1949 was the effect of hunting. A 4,739-acre section of the research area was selected for intense investigation from October 1, 1949, to March 15, 1950. Of the 24 farmers who resided on the area, only one posted his 240-acre farm with "No Hunting" signs. During the open season, November 1 to December 15, 1949, the biologist, who lived on the area, endeavored to contact all hunters. Thirteen hunting parties, consisting of 34 hunters, were located during the season. Five of the 13 parties were within ten miles of home and were considered to be resident hunters.

By October 31, 1949, the day before the season opened, the biologist had located 21 coveys, containing 305 bob-whites. This was an average of about a bird per 15 acres. The 34 hunters harvested only 14 quail and these from just three of the 21 known coveys. Of

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In 25 years of open seasons, the ring-necked pheasant has never lost his ability to fascinate the tyro, charm the cook, or fool the marksman.

By James R. Harlan
Assistant Director

Just a quarter of a century ago some 75,000 licensed hunters thrilled to the announcement of the first legal pheasant hunting season in Iowa. For three half-days in 13 counties the ringneck was fair game. Twenty-five years later on November 11, 325,000 licensed hunters may hunt in 83 counties for as long as 25 days.

The first opening day, hunters poured into the open counties and found a fast, tough speedster, later called by many game officials the perfect game bird.

During this 25-year period the "Chink" has stood up under relentless gunning pressure, in the face of intensified agriculture, blizzards, predators, and a host of other hazards. He has never lost his ability to fascinate the tyro, charm the cook, or fool the marksman. Even more important, he has steadily extended his range.

This year many believe the total number of ringnecks in Iowa is the greatest in the state's history. Unquestionably greater densities of birds in given localities have often occurred, but never has the ringneck been so firmly established in numbers over so great an area.

A review of the ringneck pheasant is necessary to appreciate this remarkable bird. Leopold, in his *Game Survey of the North Central States*, published in 1931, credits Iowa with the first north central states plantings in 1900.

The 1900 Iowa planting occurred when a thousand birds were liberated at the William Benton game farm at Cedar Falls when the fences blew down in a windstorm. Other private stockings followed shortly after.

Stocking by the state in these early days was primarily through the distribution of pheasant eggs that were sent to interested sports groups and hatched under Bantam hens. Later and continuing to date on a limited basis, plantings of adult birds and young were made

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OUR TIMID SMALL SNAKES

By Robert B. Moorman and
Kenneth D. Carlander
Iowa State College

Included in Iowa's list of snakes are seven that are little known because of their small size and retiring nature. Most of them are found under decaying leaves, logs, boards or overturned sod. None of them is dangerous to man.

DeKay's snake, *Storeria dekayi*, is seldom more than a foot long.

The upper parts of the body are grayish brown and the belly is light pink. Down the middle of the back is a streak of lighter color bordered on each side by black spots. The wide belly scales are often marked near the edge with tiny black dots.

This little snake usually spends most of the daylight hours under flat rocks or logs. In late after-

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THOUSAND-ACRE DUCK MARSH NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

By Lester F. Faber

Supt., Federal Aid Section

Duck hunting in northeast Iowa will get an assist with the completion of a new 1,000-acre marsh being built on the Wapsipinicon river bottoms a mile east of Tripoli in Bremer County. The area, called Sweet Marsh, will be the first of its kind constructed in Iowa. Water is being impounded on the waste bottom land by a series of dikes and water control structures. Water for the marsh area comes from Plum Creek.

By arrangement of the dikes, the marsh will be in three main segments, each a little over 300 acres in size. Water levels can be controlled independently in each of the three segments.

Most of the construction, being financed by Pittman-Robertson funds, will be completed during 1950, with the marsh ready for ducks and hunters in the fall of '51. The management plan for Sweet Marsh calls for a portion of the area to be in refuge with part open to public hunting.

The Wapsipinicon valley is one of the best inland waterfowl flyways. The establishment of a permanent marsh of a thousand acres will have a favorable effect on the numbers of ducks and geese using the Wapsi flyway.

Besides providing additional area for ducks, the new marsh will provide nesting, resting and feeding grounds for many other kinds of birds and animals.

PROGRESS

In Iowa the Soil Conservation Service is cooperating with the State Conservation Commission in developing and applying the programs in the watersheds of artificial lakes. The program, of course, is designed not only to give the usual benefit to farm land but to reduce sediment deposits from the watershed and increase the length of life to artificial lakes.—*Iowa State Watersheds Bulletin.*



Jim Sherman Photo.

"It was just one damp mile after another, and I'm sitting there thinking that duck hunting must be sponsored by the penicillin trust."

UNDER THE SKY

Of the many worthwhile organizations in this highly organized land of ours, Alcoholics Anonymous ranks right up front center. They threw their own brand of headacheless New Year's Eve party last year. Bet it was a treat for them babies to roll out of the shucks come New Year's A. M.

During the eve, at their shindig, an M. C. cracked many jokes. It seemed that the following got the biggest laugh:

Dear Louie:

Well that duck hunting trip I'm telling you I'm going on in my last letter, is now history. Ducks, I'm off of. I don't even want to hear the word. Why, Louie, I wouldn't sidestep a truck any more for fear people would say I was ducking! You're probably saying, "What are the reasons you don't like duck hunting, Joe?" Well—how do you want 'em, Louie, alphabetical or at random?

In the first place, Louie, I musta had a attack of dementia syntax or something or I wouldn't even have let them daniel boones talk me into going in the first place. Elvira and me (you remember when them same jokers told me a skunk could be housebroke—well, Elvira is my new wife) had just got in amongst the springs when there broke out the most gawdawful clatter and banging on the front door. The whole house shook. You'll remember my little place, Louie, just a block past the end of Elm street. I've had it covered with some new shingles and a mortgage, and all that vibratin' made me mad. I pops out of the shucks just in time to catch the door and there stands my pals grinning and looking like them Greek gorillas you read about. Having a few choice verbal tidbits spinning around a tonsil, I open my mouth and Charlie sticks his

face right up to mine and hisses, "Sh-h-h-hsh, do you want to wake up the whole neighborhood?"

So, we're off on the hunt. I'm probably the only guy a duck ever saw in a night shirt and hip boots. I make casual mention of the fact that I am starving to death and they tell me that dawn is breaking and the only nourishment I'm apt to get will have to be intravenous which didn't sound good for breakfast so I shut up, which did sound good. We go for miles over bill and dale, and several other pedestrians had narrow squeaks, too.

We get to the duck dock and Charlie says, "There's the boat." I ask him to point it out, as the only thing I see tied up is an old tub containing much more water than the slough. He says, "Don't be funny, and pile in." I says right back, "I'm not bein' funny and 'dive in' is the words you are looking for." So we slowly bail our

way upstream just as the sun, lookin' like it wisht it hadn't came up at all, poked out through the trees. I quit bailing, Louie, as I feel I'm soaking up my share. I'm sitting quietly, making like a wick, when suddenly I feels the urge to ask all and sundry if anybody had ever considered giving a duck hunter an I. Q. test, I. Q. meaning to me, I QUIT!!! They give me the granite works and I shut up. Charlie tells me to float quietly as this is the time ducks start to come in. Now you know, Louie, that you don't have to be quiet around anybody that's comin' in at that time of the morning, but they're the nimble-rods, so I shush.

It was just one damp mile after another, Louie, and I started to sneeze, with the water coming up out of my collar like a coffee-maker. I'm sitting there thinking that duck hunting sure must be sponsored by the Penicillin Trust, when somebody whispers, "There it is!" I look where he's pointing and see an old piano box partly covered with dead grass and standing out like a sore forefinger (fooled you, didn't I, Louie?). I gives with a moist sneer and says that any duck that's fooled by that layout must be blind! You know, Louie, they must of agreed with me cause all the rest of the day they called it a duck blind. Did I get any credit? Not with that bunch, Louie. We piled out of the boat, which sunk, and layered ourselves neatly in the box. I went in with the first layer so any duck I was going to shoot would have to be swimming underwater and slow. We finally got settled about noon, and I'd swear, Louie, if any of them birds had of flew over with a worm we'd have opened our mouths and stuck our necks out. From then on, 'til we run out of shells, we blazed away at everything with feathers. Charlie was the only one that hit anything at all. Back at the car he was ad-

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Jim Sherman Photo.

"I gives with a moist sneer, 'Any duck that is fooled by that layout must be blind.' They agreed with me and all the rest of the day called it a duck blind."

STARLINGS

Before we speak too harshly about the starlings, let's look for the bird's good points. And, believe it or not, no less an authority than the Smithsonian Institute says the starling actually has some good in him. In the first place, the bird is not responsible for being in this country. He was brought over from England sixty years ago, for what reason the Smithsonian does not say. But he likes our climate, quite obviously, and has done well, multiplying amazingly, which is the chief thing we have against him—he's entirely too numerous.

But on the credit side let it be said that he's about the best insect exterminator in the business. He loves beetles and caterpillars and weevils, and if you'll do a little autopsy on one of the clan you will likely find evidences inside his alimentary canal to prove that his food habits are beneficial to man.

We have never made such an examination but the Smithsonian experts evidently have. Some of his other traits, however, are not so good. He is a notorious moocher for one thing. Rather than build a nest of his own he moves into a woodpecker's hole, chasing the rightful owner out. Come to think of it, we don't see many woodpeckers any more. Bluebirds, too, are not so numerous. But we do have starlings—millions of 'em—and they come to town every evening to roost in our big shade trees and make infernal nuisances of themselves. And do you wonder why they prefer to roost in town rather than in the nice woods adjacent? It's because the starling is much in favor with owls and hawks, and it isn't any too safe for the starling clan to perch out there in the timber. So they fly in at eventide and fly out again at dawn, leaving sidewalks plastered and housewives mad as all get-out. The starling may be agriculture's friend, but he certainly abuses the friendship.—*Washington Journal.*



A license gives only the right to hunt—not to trespass. Ask the farmer first for the privilege and, when granted, take your indoor manners outdoors.

ASK THE FARMER FIRST

More hunters than ever before are taking to the fields this year in pursuit of wild game. It is well to point out that some 97 per cent of all land in Iowa is privately owned and unless the hunter is hunting on his own land it is necessary to secure permission of the owner first.

Farmers as a group want to know who is hunting on their land. They want to know that the hunter will be careful about shooting near livestock, that gates will be closed, and that property will be protected against damage. One careless act on the part of a hunter may close a farm permanently to all.

Many "No Hunting" signs have been posted. Most of the posted properties are open to hunters in whom the landowner has confidence. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the individual sportsman to make himself welcome. Hunters cannot be urged to

strongly to contact the owner of the property on which they expect to hunt and secure his permission. The importance of farmer-sportsman relationship in Iowa cannot be overstressed.

If every hunter conducts himself as a true sportsman at all times, the "No Hunting" signs will soon go the way of the dodo.



The enthusiasm reflected in the eyes of a retriever may not be reflected in the eyes of the master of the kitchen.

WANTA CLEAN A DUCK?

When the mighty nimrod returns home with his limit of ducks and dumps them on the kitchen table, the expected enthusiasm of his welcome is often dampened to a considerable extent by what his wife generally looks upon as an extremely distasteful task . . . the cleaning of the game.

This really should not be so, according to Henry P. Davis, public relations director of Remington Arms Company, Inc., for the cleaning of a wild duck can be a fairly easy affair. "The 'kink' that does the trick," says Davis, "is a quantity of inexpensive powdered rosin.

"Use about ten cents worth of the rosin to each duck. Pull back the feathers with one hand and with the other rub in the rosin all the way to the skin. Then, holding

the duck by the legs, dip it into a pot of near-boiling water for about ten seconds. Allow the bird to cool. The feathers and down can then be easily ripped off right down to the skin. This is a surprisingly easy and effective method which will make the housewife look forward with a little more pleasure to the return of her sportsman-husband."

A Vinton, Iowa, angler, George Mastin, recently caught a 19-inch catfish that had no eyes. He said that the fish had no eye sockets and apparently was born sightless. He made the catch in the Cedar.

Approximately 70 species of mammals are native to Iowa. Of these at least seven species are now extinct. These include: black bear, timber wolf, mountain lion, Canada lynx, elk caribou and buffalo. There is some question as to whether or not the antelope ever occurred in Iowa.



The plumage of the starling changes greatly, ranging from a dull flat gray (left to right) in the young to a brilliant iridescent black in adult breeding costume.

Ding's Newest Conservation Cartoon



THE LAST OF THE "TOY" DEER OF THE FLORIDA KEYS

THE SMALLEST SPECIES OF DEER IN NORTH AMERICA, ALONE, UNGUARDED AND ON THE WAY OUT!

A SHARE FOR THE LITTLE PEOPLE

I planted some midget sweet corn in my garden. The squirrels watched me as I planted it. I cultivated the midget sweet corn in my garden. The squirrels watched me. The corn developed. One day I went into the patch and plucked a few ears for dinner. The squirrels watched me. Then the squirrels started husking corn and taking it high up into a maple tree, where they feasted. After eating they dropped the cobs down to the lawn. I went out time after time to clean up the mess the squirrels had made. And they watched me. And I might add that Marj and I watched the squirrels as they worked at corn husking, and Marj remarked that "they work harder to get something to eat than most humans do." But we do not feel angry that the squirrels got their share of the corn.

The good Lord put berries on this planet to feed the bears and birds. He put walnuts, hickory nuts, hazel nuts and butternuts here to feed the squirrels. He put angleworms in the earth to supply work for the robins and worm-eating birds so that they might feed their young. So when we go forth to fill our baskets with the vegetables, the fruits, the roots that are edible, let us not begrudge the birds and the squirrels enough for their needs.—Britt News-Tribune.

PROTECTION OF KEY DEER MOVES AHEAD

A federal refuge for the key deer, hard-pressed for survival on several small islands off the coast of Florida, would be established under terms of a bill, H. R. 7524, which has been favorably reported to the House by the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, according to the Wildlife Management Institute.

Heavily taxed by the encroachment of resort development on its range and by ruthless illegal hunting, the herds have dwindled to less than 50 animals within recent years. Some authorities believe there are no more than 25 left. These miniature whitetails, averaging less than 50 pounds in weight, are threatened with extermination unless they are immediately placed under federal protection.

Their present habitable range extends over only a few hundred acres on several relatively small islands. Poachers have found it a simple matter to drive them from cover with dogs and kill them as they attempted to swim to safety or to burn the brush in which they seek refuge. The keys are too remote from the mainland for effective state protection, and federal officers located on the nearby Great White Heron Federal Refuge are powerless to act on state-controlled lands. The cost of establishing a refuge on the islands inhabited by the deer is estimated by the bill at between \$35,000 and

\$100,000. Unless a refuge is established soon, the key deer will be lost.

SPORTSMAN CLUB SUCCESS

Why Sportsmen's Clubs Fail! That was the subject of a recent article in a well known sportsmen's magazine. It brought up the question in our minds, "Why do sportsmen's clubs succeed?" And we thought of the local Izaak Walton League chapter.

The local Izaak Walton League is a success, and it isn't hard to figure out why. First and foremost is the enthusiasm of its members. With few exceptions, local Waltonians are ready and willing to help in any activity furthering conservation. This work is not confined to a few officers and committeemen, but extends to the membership as a whole.

Second, leadership is good, with men chosen for their ability as leaders, interest in conservation and willingness to spend time for the organization.

Third, the activities of the chapter have created and maintained the interest of the membership, as well as that of outsiders.

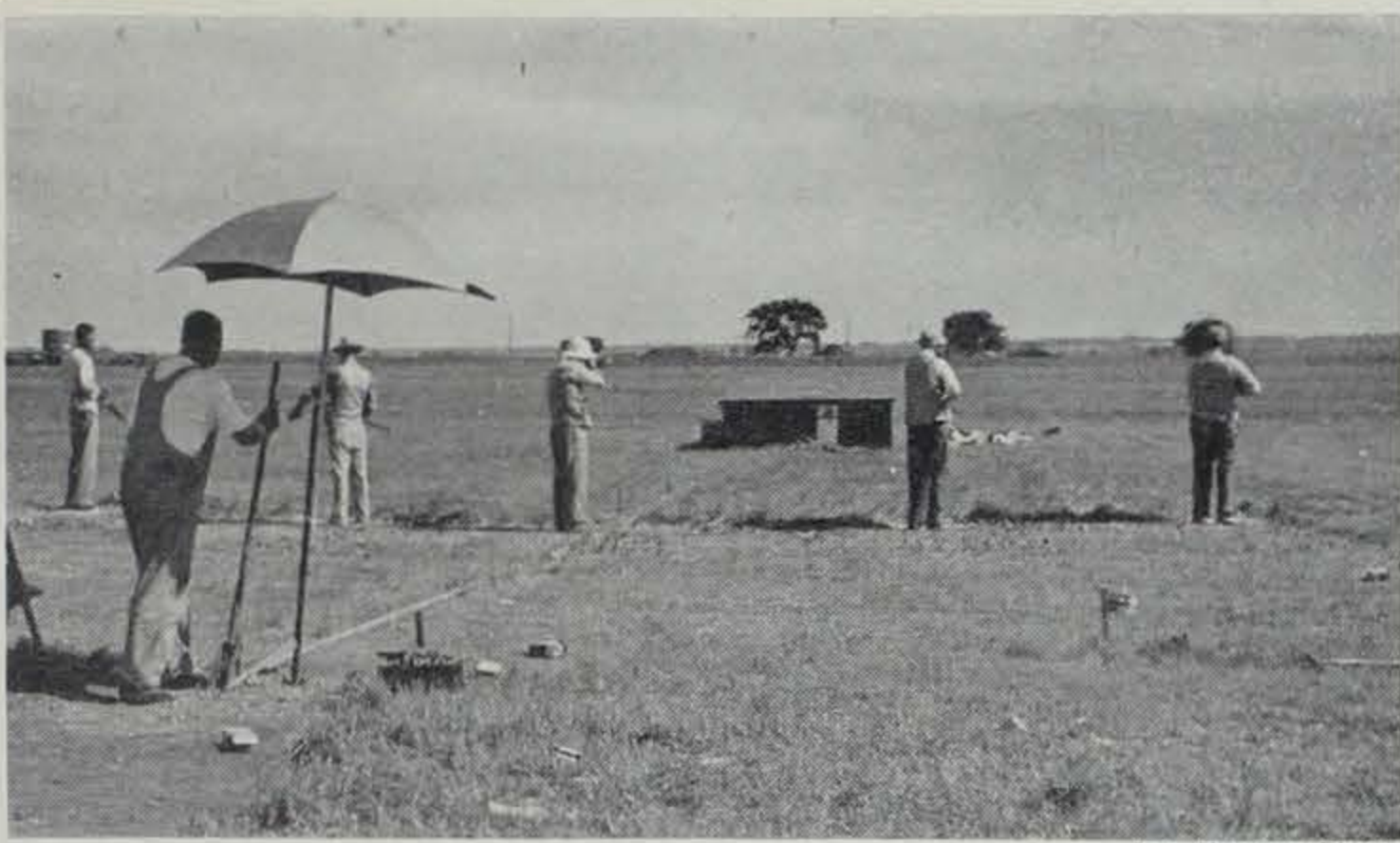
These are all in addition to the fine accomplishments of soil, water and wildlife conservation for which the chapter has been responsible. It has been and continues to be an active, successful, organization, benefiting sportsman and non-sportsman alike.—Lake Mills Graphic.

NUMBER AND VALUE OF FURS TAKEN IN IOWA 1949-1950

Kind	Number	Average Value	Total Value
Raccoon	58,527	\$ 1.95	\$114,127.65
Opossum	6,681	.35	2,238.35
Muskrat	171,820	1.38	237,111.60
Mink	17,973	12.15	218,371.95
Skunk	6,136	.60	3,681.60
Civet	4,532	.48	2,175.36
Badger	136	.75	102.00
Red Fox	4,826	.60	2,895.60
Gray Fox	983	.35	344.05
Weasel	433	.90	389.70
Wolf	57	.65	37.05
Beaver	2,449	12.20	29,877.80
TOTALS	274,553		\$611,352.71



The average value of beaver pelts during 1949-50 was \$12.20, exceeding the average value of mink by only five cents.



The Ames Ikes have installed a launching site for chrome steel flying saucers that travel 1100 miles an hour. 1949 State Trap Shoot, Camp Dodge.

PRETTY BIRDIES

By Bernie Kooser

Sunday I visited the new Izaak Walton trap and skeet shooting range on the recreational tract northeast of Ames.

Con Wendell, the publicist for the Ikes, was there. He "just happened," he said, to have a little 20-gauge single shot along and also "just happened" to have a box of shells.

Would I like to shoot at some of the pretty birdies?

Well, I was confident enough. I loaded the gun with the first shell, yelled "pull" and the bird came flying out of the trap.

"Bang!" went the 20-gauge and the bird disappeared in dust.

I looked around, cocky-like, and grinned.

I should have stopped shooting right there. From then on, every bird coming out of the trap had a 75 per cent chance of hitting the hillside untouched by pellets from my gun.

The birds come out of the trap at 1,100 miles an hour and are about the size of a doughnut. Some of them are supposed to be made of clay or something that will break when a shot or two hits them. Those I shot at were composed of chrome steel. I'd hit them and never even dent them. Yet they must have changed back to clay sometime after I took my shot at them, because most of them broke to pieces when they hit the ground.

That was on trapshooting.

I also tried some skeetshooting. Here the birds come out of the traps at 2,200 miles an hour; that's sea level speed, so it would mean about 2,500 miles an hour where I was, and the birds are about the size of marbles.

I broke one or two birds on the skeet layout.

After I was all through shooting, Con poured a little acid into my wounds by remarking:

"I saw Tom Kirby break 25 straight on the skeet layout once and we had a fellow here today who got 24 out of 25 shots."

Well, I was all out of shells, so I used the 20-gauge as a club and

chased Con over a couple of fences and finally treed him.

"If you let me come down," he said, "I'll shoot some and then you won't feel so badly."

I let him down out of the tree and he shot five times at birds out of the trap layout—and he missed all of 'em.

That made me feel pretty good. Anyway, the skeet and trapshooting layout will be open again this weekend for all those who want to try out their guns and shooting eyes for the coming fall hunting season.—*Ames Tribune.*

Under the Sky . . .

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mirin' his bird, a sorry bedraggled mess of feathers, that looked like it had been playin' alone against Notre Dame on a rainy day. I asks him what it was and he says, "A mud hen," I says, "Yeah, I know it, but what was it before you shot it?" Charlie didn't like that, Louie.

Now you know why I say, Louie, if any more ducks is lost somebody else is gonna have to hunt 'em. Elvira should be talkin' to me again by Thanksgiving and we'll be down to see you. Well, Louie, I'm running out of paper and, unless I'm planning on mailing you the table top, I'll have to clothes now. I'm gonna hit the hay as I am dead. Hoping you are the same, I remain,

As always,

JOE.

—*Burlington Herald.*

There was an increase in the use of dogs in 1949. Hunters with dogs required 1 hour 12 minutes less per bird than dogless hunters and lost only 9 per cent of birds shot down. Hunters without dogs lost 21 per cent of all birds shot down.

The tail of the jumping mouse found in Iowa is one and one-half times as long as the rest of the body. These mice are capable of making leaps of eight to ten feet; the powerful hind limbs act as the propulsive force and the long tail helps to maintain balance.

Estherville has its new sewage treatment plant completed. Congratulations, Estherville!

OUTDOOR NOTES

By Joe Austell Small

Thunderation

You sportsmen who complain over being drenched by a sudden thunderstorm, remember, it's necessary—the thunderstorm, that is. At any given moment there are 1,800 thunderstorms in progress around the earth. This number is necessary, says Dr. Robert E. Holzer, of the University of California, because they are part of a tremendous electrical system which he describes thusly:

The sun is a giant generator, thunderstorms are the king-sized batteries, and the earth is a condenser.

The greatest number of thunderstorms occur, Dr. Holzer says, when it is afternoon over such land areas as South America or Africa. The earth's electrical charge is at the maximum during this period.

Frog Bait

That's not quite what Mr. Howard Beck, who lives near Lebanon, Missouri, said when his 11-year-old son, James Robert, told him that bullfrogs in their pond had eaten three six-day-old pet ducklings. The boy said he saw a frog eat the last one.

Thinking his son the victim of a hallucination, the farmer took his .22 caliber rifle and busted a big bullfrog near the spot his son pointed out as scene of the crime. When he cut it open, he found the dead duckling was inside. The remains of another duckling was found in another frog which he killed later.

Biologists inform us that bullfrogs will eat anything they can swallow. Since their mouths are so wide, this takes in one dickens of a lot of territory!

Lead Poisoning

We are watching with great interest the experiments of a major ammunition manufacturer in their

attempt to find a shot pellet which will prevent lead poisoning in ducks. This is caused by wildfowl picking up pellets from the bottoms of shot-over marshes and lakes and is a great killer of ducks annually.

Research has proven that wild ducks do not die directly from lead poisoning thus taken, but from the action set up by feeding upon corn and wheat after they have taken lead pellets into their gizzards. Scientists of the ammunition company are trying to find an alloy which will disintegrate in the gizzard of a duck or dissolve in water.

New "Shooter's Bible" Out

An arms and ammunition editor once told me: "I'd rather be without any other book published on shooting, guns and game than to try and get along without my 'Shooter's Bible'!" The statement caused me to buy one—and I saw what he meant.

The 1951 edition is just out. It contains 544 pages, and the publishers say it has the most complete listing of gun and sports equipment ever assembled in one book. There are new articles by gun and sports experts, a new enlarged gun section, a new foreign section devoted to the world's finest guns, a revised and enlarged parts section covering all domestic and many foreign guns and pistols, an enlarged reloading section, the largest variety of air and gas pistols and air rifles, a large book section, and a line of the finest fishing tackle. And that's only the beginning. You can get this shooter's book by sending \$1.25 to Stoeger Arms Corp., Dept. WS 10-50, 45-17 Pearson St., Long Island City 1, New York.

Aquatic Quail

Whoever saw a quail swim? It's so unusual as to be a believe-it-or-not, brother. But farmer B. H. Pulliam witnessed the rare sight when his dog accidentally flushed

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Lead poisoning in ducks is caused by the reaction of corn and wheat on lead shot in the gizzard.



Jim Sherman Photo.

King of the game birds, the pheasant has, for a quarter of a century, withstood relentless gunning pressure, intensified agriculture, blizzards, and predators and during this time has increased its range into every county in Iowa.

Anniversary . . .

(Continued from page 73)
in cooperation with sportsmen's groups.

During the 25 years since the first open season, pheasant numbers have fluctuated greatly. The cause of these fluctuations is not understood, except that they occur in practically all species of wildlife and in certain types of animals are so marked as to become cyclic. In spite of fluctuations, pheasants have spread from original focal points until they occur in the wild in every county of the state.

In recent years pheasants have increased phenomenally in some of the southern Iowa counties where for many years repeated attempts to establish shootable populations had failed. One reasonable explanation for present day success of the pheasant in these areas is that

large acreages of badly eroded crop land have been allowed to go back to grass, one of the ringneck's absolute necessities.

With a better understanding of the needs of the ringneck, it is probable that in the future, pheasant hunting will be legal in every county.

Having lived with the ringneck for half a century, we have by trial and error and through research come to know many things as facts and have discarded many "facts" as fallacies. The most startling fact is that on typical pheasant range, even with modern gunning pressure, this bird cannot be overhunted as long as only cocks are killed.

It has been found that fertile eggs will be produced with a ratio of one rooster to ten hens. In 1949, with the heaviest hunting pressure

of all time, cocks were shot down only to a ratio of one to two and three-quarters hens. Simply, this means that three and one-half times as many roosters could have been killed in 1949 as were actually bagged. Even when pheasant populations are low, cocks can be killed without damage to next year's crop of birds as long as the ratio does not go below one rooster to ten hens.

There has been a gradual change in pheasant hunting methods in Iowa. During the early days of pheasant hunting, long lines of hunters drove the fields, flushing the birds at the ends of rows. Gang hunting has become less popular and less effective in recent years. Surveys show more and more parties of three or four hunters working over dogs, and limits are found more commonly in possession of hunters using dogs than in the bags of dogless hunters.

The "kill no hens" law is now almost universally understood and observed by our hunters. As a result the "golden eggs" continue to hatch chicks for fall shooting, and the future looks especially bright for the pheasant shooter.

The one ominous cloud on the pheasant hunting horizon is the farmer-sportsman relationship. Although it has become an exception to the rule to trespass without permission, widespread and increasing "roadside hunting" is a red flag waving in the delicate balance of farmer-sportsman relationship.

Shooting from cars is dangerous and each year several serious accidents occur. The practice is unlawful and each year several hundred fines up to \$100 each are assessed by the courts. It is unsporting and brands the "road shooter" as a pot hunter of low degree.

When roadside hunting is outlawed by the hunting fraternity itself, as hen shooting has been, we may look forward to a long succession of 25-year pheasant hunting anniversaries.

And to you, John Ringneck, a 300,000 gun salute. May your harem multiply and your tribe increase.

PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE GOOSE

The *Tennessee Conservationist* reports that a Memphis schoolboy wrote the following essay on wild geese:

"Geese is a low, heavy-set bird which is mostly feet and feathers. His head sits on one side and he sits on the other. Geese can't sing much on account of dampness of the moisture; he ain't got no between-the-toes and he's got a little balloon in his stummic to keep from sinking. Some geese when they get big has curls in their tails and is called ganders. Ganders don't have to sit and hatch but just loaf and go swimming. If I was a goose I'd rather be a gander."



Jim Sherman Photo.

"Sportsmen can do a good turn for conservation by controlling foxes where they are overabundant or where evidence based on facts proves they are doing important damage."

GET FOX FACTS STRAIGHT

The following paragraph is from the *Woodville Leader*:

"Some of our conservation leaders and sportsmen honestly believe in the theory that a red fox will not kill a pheasant. We have, personally, heard those of authority make such a statement at gun club rallies."

Conservation authorities find it mildly astonishing to hear of a theory that "a red fox will not kill a pheasant."

The fact is that a fox, like most predators, is not unduly fussy as to what animals it eats. It can be mice, grasshoppers, game, or other species—whatever the fox can catch or pick up most easily.

These are among the significant facts on the fox question:

1. A high proportion of chickens claimed to be killed by foxes actually die from disease in the poultry house. Many farmers toss dead chickens into the manure spreader and haul them out to the back forty, where a fox is very likely to find them and drag them happily to its den. If, thereafter, some fast-talking but slow-thinking individual digs out the den and finds chicken bones, he promptly broadcasts the news that the fox is a great poultry-killer—and that furthermore he can prove it!

2. Similarly, there is reason to believe that many of the pheasants and rabbits found in fox dens were sick, injured, or dead when the fox picked them up. Most predators simply will not knock themselves out chasing healthy, fast-moving game if they can eat with less exertion.

3. Some healthy game is killed by foxes—a fraction as much as some fox-haters believe. This happens mostly when foxes have trouble finding enough to eat, when game does not have good cover to hide in, or when game is very plentiful. In spring and early summer the kill includes some young game which is not able to take

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DOGS AND HUNTING SUCCESS

	1948		1949	
	With Dogs	Without Dogs	With Dogs	Without Dogs
Hours per bird bagged.....	2.8	3.4	2.7	3.9
Per cent of birds shot not found..	11.0	20.0	9.0	21.0
Birds in bag for each bird lost....	8.4	4.1	11.4	4.1

BIRDS SHOT NOT FOUND

Type of Dog	1948	1949	Average
Labrador	8.6%	5.4%	7.0%
Chesapeake	6.9	7.9	7.4
Pointer	7.1	9.4	8.2
Springer	10.9	7.3	9.1
Setter	13.8	6.1	10.0
Cocker	11.0	14.2	12.6
Mongrel	23.0	10.2	16.6
All Dogs	11.0	9.0	16.6



Jim Sherman Photo.

Three quail bagged by hunters during the fall season does not mean three quail fewer in the coverts when the spring nesting season rolls around.

Quail . . .

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the 14 bob-whites, 12 were bagged and two were crippled and not recovered.

On January 19, 1950, a census revealed only 200 bob-whites in 19 coveys, indicating an additional loss of 91 bob-whites that were not harvested by hunters. Of these, 30 birds in two coveys had moved off the research area, and 61 quail were probably lost by predation, accidents, disease, etc. *But of the total reduction in the fall population, 105 bob-whites, only 14 were accounted for by hunting.*

In 1916 Iowa's quail season was closed in an effort to increase the number of these birds. After 17 years the closed season experiment had not resulted in noticeable increase in the quail population. Therefore, in 1933 a study was conducted by the State Conservation Commission in cooperation with Iowa State College. Controlled shooting was allowed on 14 selected areas, and no hunting was permitted on six check areas. Results indicated that on hunted areas, populations reduced by shooting to or below the carrying capacity of the land suffered but little winter loss. On the other hand, the birds in excess of the carrying capacity on farms where no shooting was allowed were apparently taken by predators. The hunters, therefore, merely harvested the birds that otherwise would probably be lost through natural causes prior to the spring nesting season.

In Virginia biologists found that the conservative shooting of quail

NORTH AMERICA FUR PRODUCER

The United States and Canada together are the greatest fur-producing countries in all the world. The United States by itself has always been one of the largest. Here are some facts:

Muskrat—the U. S. A. is first in quality and supply.

Raccoon—the U. S. A. is first in supply and quality.

Mink—the U. S. A. leads in the number of ranch-bred mink, and together with Canada is first in all grades of wild mink.

Beaver—the U. S. and Canada are first in supply and quality.

In ranch-bred foxes the U. S. and Canada lead the world in quality and supply, with 2,650 farms in America alone.

Skunk—America is first in grade and supply.

Badger—America and Canada lead the world.

Weasels, both white and brown—America and Canada are world leaders.

Ringtail—Texas and California offer the world supply.

American civet is strictly an American fur.

—*Fur Shopper's Guide*

The Chinese ring-necked pheasant was first introduced into the United States in 1880.

during the fall months had no noticeable effect on winter survival. The studies conducted in both Iowa and Virginia suggest that hunting during the fall months does not control the subsequent spring population. In other words, you can have your quail and eat them, too.

Quail Populations on the 7,713-acre Decatur County Research Area

Year	Fall Population	Spring Population	Percentage of Loss
1935-36	508	228	55.7
1936-37	736	90	87.8
1937-38	501	471*	6.0*
1938-39	1334	1254*	6.0*
1939-40	2316	389	83.2
1940-41	1549	679	56.2
1941-42	1690	780	53.8
1942-43	2461	1136	53.8
1943-44	2974	1102	62.9
1949-50	493	331	32.9

*Estimated 90-day winter loss only

Snakes . . .

(Continued from page 73)

noon it ventures forth in search of such foods as earthworms, soft-bodied insects, slugs and snails. Since it is not apt to encounter enemies in its short travels, this snake has been able to survive within the limits of our towns and cities.

Young of the DeKay's snake are born, not hatched, and there may be 12 or more in a single litter.

The red-bellied snake, *Storeria occipito-maculata*, is very similar to DeKay's snake in general appearance. There may, however, be three whitish spots just back of the head. The best means of identification is, as the name suggests, a red belly that may be either a brilliant red or a brick red.

The red-bellied snake is probably Iowa's smallest snake. It seldom exceeds a length of 10 inches. It loves moisture and is almost entirely restricted to woodlands, where it feeds on the soft grubs of beetles and on slugs and earthworms. Although normal mating takes place in the spring, this snake has been known to mate in the fall just before hibernation.

Both the red-bellied snake and DeKay's snake are widely distributed in Iowa.

A small snake with a yellow ring about the neck in contrast to a uniform dark gray body is sure to be the prairie ring-necked snake, *Diadophis punctatus arnyi*. The DeKay's snake also may have this light ring on the neck when the snake is very young but it disappears as growth begins. The belly of the ring-necked snake is yellow, marked with black spots in pairs.

Ring-necked snakes are quite partial to moist woodland situations, where they may be found beneath stones, boards, or the loose bark of decaying logs. They do not burrow in the earth, but feed on earthworms and on small lizards and other snakes.

Unlike the two preceding species, the ring-necked snake lays eggs. Each female deposits about three eggs in a hollow in some damp rotten log. Often more than one female will use the same nest, so that many eggs may sometimes be found together. Development of the embryo within the egg is well along at the time the eggs are laid.

This snake is found in all parts of Iowa, although records for many counties are lacking.

Two of Iowa's snakes are uniformly green in color. The smooth green snake, *Opheodrys vernalis blanchardi*, has body scales with smooth satiny surfaces. Scales of the keeled green snake, *Opheodrys aestivalis*, are keeled or ridged.

The smooth green snake is considerably stouter in appearance than is the other species. The color above is a leaf green, the color on the belly is greenish white. Foods eaten include many kinds of insects, all of which it finds above ground. Green snakes are the

most gentle of all snakes, never showing the least sign of anger. The smooth green snake lives in areas of tangled grass and low bushes.

The keeled green snake is very slender in form, with a very long, tapering tail. A bright green above, it is bright yellow on the belly. It does considerable climbing in bushes and low trees, apparently in search of insects for food. This snake is quite rare, having been collected only in Wapello County in southeastern Iowa.

Possibly tied with the red-bellied snake for first place as Iowa's smallest snake is the worm snake, *Carphophis amoena vermis*. This snake averages about nine inches in length. It has no noticeable neck and has very small eyes, so that it actually is quite worm-like in appearance. The color above is gray or black, the belly is salmon pink. The worm snake prefers damp woodland areas, where it does considerable burrowing in search of earthworms. It is found only in the southern part of the state.

The Western ground or Virginia's snake, *Haldea valeriae elegans*, is one of Iowa's rare snakes. To date it has been collected in only three counties in central and southern Iowa. The color is uniform brown with two rows of tiny black dots on the back. The belly is yellowish white. This snake might be confused with DeKay's snake except for its smooth and satiny appearance, which DeKay's does not have. Like the other secretive snakes, this one is small, rarely reaching a foot in length.

These seven perfectly harmless and rather inactive snakes are fine subjects for introducing children to the reptile world. They are clean-bodied snakes and can be handled without fear. Several of them are also brightly colored and make attractive pets. Such pets will live several years if given a little care. A cage should be almost as long as the snake, be well ventilated, and kept well supplied with water in a shallow cup or pan. Many of these snakes will take food directly from an offering hand.

Fox Facts . . .

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care of itself. Again the principle is the same, although stated differently: Foxes will take game if it's easier to catch than other food.

4. Sportsmen and farmers can do a good turn for conservation by controlling foxes where they are over-abundant, or where evidence based on facts rather than moonshine proves they are doing important damage.

5. For a permanent solution to the predator problem, the best bet is habitat restoration to provide better game cover. This makes it possible to maintain a good game population in spite of a moderate toll by predators.—*Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin*.



Allen Green Photo.

A flame with burning color of fall, Iowa's hardwood timbers are matchless in their beauty.

FOR A WEEKEND VACATION

Have you taken a vacation this summer? To Yellowstone Park, perhaps, or to Canada or California?

If you did, you're probably still dead tired from driving so hard and long; if you didn't, you're probably just itching for a chance to get away from home for a change of scenery.

At any rate, a short weekend trip or even just a Sunday afternoon picnic is probably just what you're needing—and there are dozens of places nearby, right here in Iowa, to enjoy.

Most persons are amazed when they learn that Iowa has nearly a hundred state parks or state-owned recreation areas.

Several are close by in our own north central Iowa area. There are Eagle Lake Park northeast of Britt; Pilot Knob State Park, west of Fertile; Rice Lake State Park, south of Clear Lake; McIntosh Woods State Park, near Ventura; Pioneer State Park, southwest of Riceville; and Beeds Lake State Park, northwest of Hampton.

All of these parks are suitable for picnicking; most of them have a good shelter house, fireplaces, etc.; good fishing is available at some, golfing at one; several have resident custodians and fine lodges.

You know about most of them, of course—but have you visited them recently? If you haven't, you've been missing a treat.

Perhaps you want to go a little farther from home and see something new. There are clusters of beautiful parks, many with camping facilities and some with cabins which may be rented, and all within easy riding distance. Here are a few:

Northeast Iowa—Fort Atkinson, in Winneshiek County; Echo Valley, southeast of West Union; Yellow River Forest, near Waukon; Fish Farm Mounds, near Lansing; Pike's Peak, southeast of McGregor.

Northwest Iowa—Gitchie Man-

itou, northwest of Larchwood; Trappers Bay, adjoining Lake Park; Gull Point, west side of Lake Okoboji; Pike's Point, east side of Okoboji; Mini-Wakan, Spirit Lake; Gardner Sharp Cabin, Arnolds Park; Kearney, Emmetsburg; Fort Defiance, southwest of Estherville; Tuttle Lake and Okamanpedan, northeast of Dolliver.

Those names don't tell much—but at these parks, also, are available golf, fishing, boating, hiking, camping, and touring spots of historic interest—and, of course, picnicking.

It would be fun to lay out a program for several weekends between now and the time snow flies to visit these and some of the dozens of other beautiful state parks in other sections of the state.

In case you're interested, there's a new pamphlet—guide book to the state parks of Iowa, just published this year, which lists them all. It's entitled, "Where to Go and What to Do in Iowa's State Owned Recreation Areas." It tells how to get to each and what recreational facilities are available, tells all about cabin rental, camping sites, and so on. If you'd like a copy, one can be obtained free of charge from the State Conservation Commission, 914 Grand Avenue, Des Moines.—*Northwood Anchor*.

PHEASANT HUNTING SUCCESS, 1949

Officers made 1,793 interviews in the field during the 1949 season. Hunters worked an average of 3 hours 30 minutes for each bird bagged, compared to 3 hours 18 minutes in 1948. It took 6 per cent more time per bird bagged, but birds per hunter increased 10 per cent.

There are approximately 14 species of mice, 28 species of snakes and at least a dozen species of turtles native to Iowa.

DINGELL BILL NOW LAW

Fishing enthusiasts in Iowa will benefit next year under a new law passed by the house and the senate and signed by the president. The measure was sponsored by Representative John Dingell of Michigan, a democrat. It earmarks existing excise taxes on fishing rods, creels, reels and artificial lures to provide the necessary revenue to carry out federal aid to state programs.

For several years a similar law has been in effect on revenue from the sale of firearms and ammunition, the money being used to further game programs in the 48 states. Actually the Dingell law does for fishermen what the Pittman-Robertson act does for hunters—improves the conditions in the field and on the stream.

Since World War II the sale of fishing and hunting licenses has increased rapidly, a fact which means heavier pressure on the fish and wildlife population of America. So heavy has this pressure been in some states that few hunters and fishermen have been able to bag their limits, either of wildfowl or fish.

Under the Dingell law provisions, 75 per cent of the cost of a project is paid from the earmarked federal funds. The balance of 25 per cent is paid from the state fishing license fund. This will increase the state's ability to improve fish restoration and management programs.

It will mean more fish for the anglers. And money for this improvement comes from the fishermen themselves—through state fishing license fees and the taxes they paid the federal government for their fishing tackle.

Iowa anglers cannot expect immediate results from the new law inasmuch as the funds will not be available prior to July 1, 1951. It also will require some planning on the part of the State Conservation

Notes . . .

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a brood of young quail near where the farmer was mowing hay.

In what was probably their first prolonged flight, the young bobwhites arched toward a pond which bordered the field. Either through exhaustion or confusion, they all plunked into the five-foot stretch of water and lay between their landing point and a growth of cat-tails.

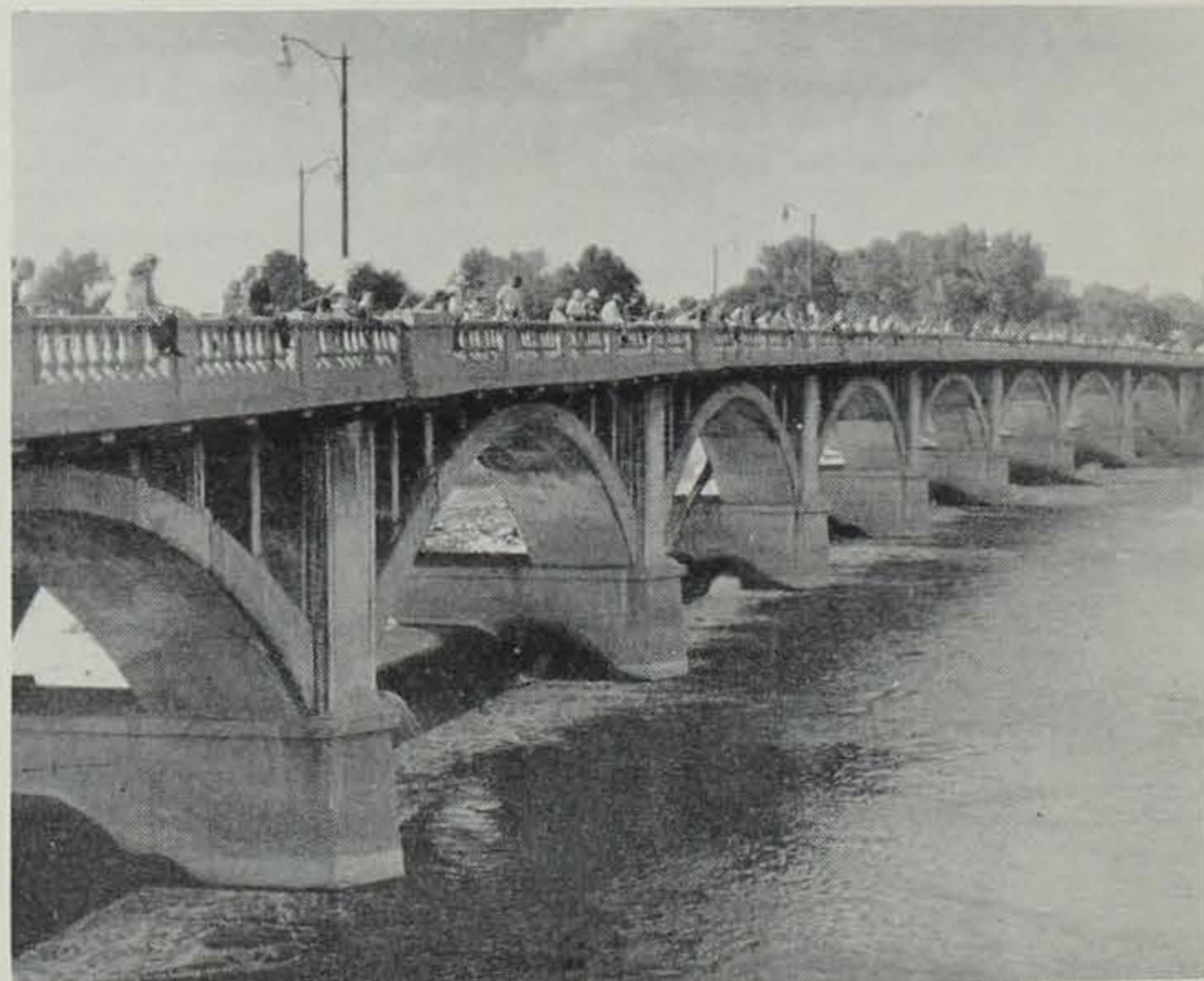
Pulliam jumped off his tractor and ran to the rescue. However, he watched, completely amazed, as the young birds, floating on the water with outthrust wings, began paddling to the bank. All clambered out of their surprise bath except one tiny ball of feathers which Pulliam boosted ashore. "Pluckiest little devils I ever saw!" the farmer said.

MAMA SAYS "NO, MAYBE"

One of the better fish stories of the week involves not only fish but crows. It seems that on a certain family fishing trip, one of the younger boys, not yet a true fisherman, wandered into the woods and came up with a couple of baby crows, which he decided would make good pets. But mama says "no" to his repeated requests to take them home. However, late in the day mama herself hooked a big one, and after the struggle of landing the catch was over, junior notices how happy his mother is over the turn of events and, patting the fish on the head, says, "Gee, I'm glad you made mama happy."

That did it. He got to keep the two crows.—*Boone News-Republican*.

Commission, which takes time. But in the long run these additional funds should pave the way for better fishing in the streams and lakes of the Hawkeye State.—*Sioux City Journal*.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Financing for the Dingell Act comes from the fishermen themselves through state fishing license fees and taxes paid the federal government for fishing tackle.