IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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KIDS' FISH DAYS—1951

FISHING: A SPORT

By R. W. Eschmeyer
Executive Vice-President
Sport Fishing Institute

Does your route to work pass along a lake or a stream? If it does, the chances are that you often see able-bodied men out in the water or on the bank, busy casting their lures. They are so intent on their activity that they don't even see your car go by. You rush to work to do your part in the present emergency—they simply cast their lures!

There was a time when these activities might have reminded us of Nero's fiddling while Rome was aflame. But now we see no resemblance, because we know that the fellow who spends his "off" day on his favorite lake or stream will probably be doing his regular job a little better because of his angling.

Fishing has played an important part in our lives ever since the settlers first came to America. There have been many changes in our way of living since those early days, but angling continues to make its contribution to human well-being. In the early days fishing meant fresh meat for the table; today it's a tonic for frayed nerves.

To our ancestors, each work day brought with it a new physical challenge. There was new ground to be cleared, or corn to be planted, and many other arduous chores to perform, all with the aid of but moderately primitive equipment. Plowing then was not so simple as sitting at the wheel of an iron horse while the diesel-powered vehicle prepares the soil in a hurry.

Then there was also the problem of harvesting crops, mostly by hand, and of guarding the fields against depredations of wild animals. Truly, each day meant long hours of physical labor, but the routine was simple.

No great amount of nervous energy or mental exercise was needed to clear land for cultivation, nor to plant corn.

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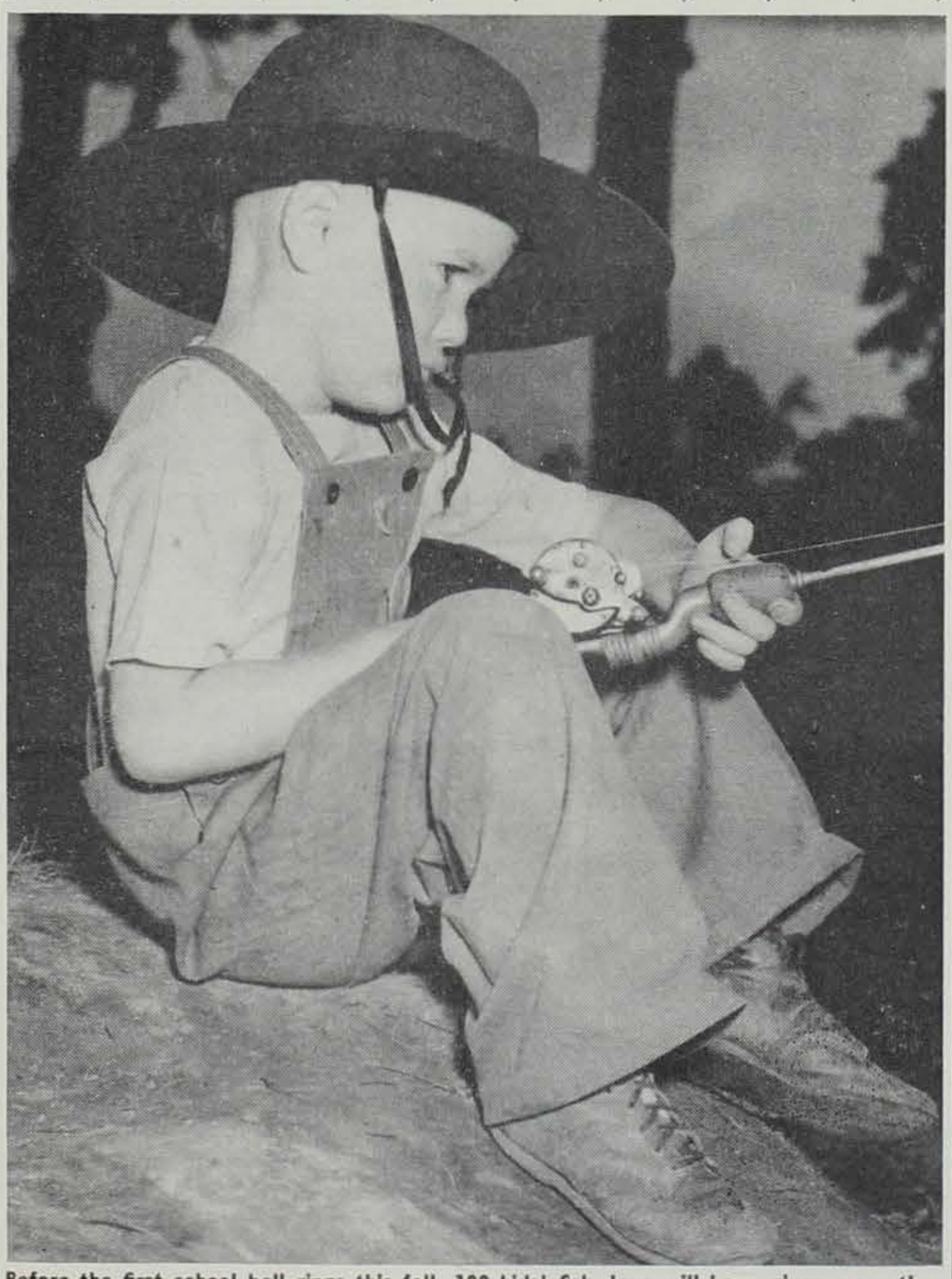

Before the first school bell rings this fall, 100 kids' fish days will have given more than 30,000 Iowa youngsters a taste of good fishing, and more important they will have learned a lesson of sportsmanship that will not be easily forgotten.

The Big Bend Park—Lacey-Keosauqua

By Charles S. Gwynne
Associate Professor
Department of Geology
Iowa State College

Lacey-Keosauqua, in central Van Buren County, is one of the largest state parks in Iowa, totaling almost four square miles. It is located in a hilly wooded area on the south side of the Des Moines River about forty miles above the confluence with the Mississippi. From the top of the bluff in the park one can get an excellent view of the river and the country far to the north. The trails through the park are winding and cross many ravines and ridges.

One of the numerous interesting things about this park is its location on the south side of what has

(Continued on page 160)

By K. M. Madden
Superintendent of Fisheries

When the first kids' fish day in 1951 was held on May 15, most school bells had not yet rung their proclamation of summer freedom. By late May and through July every weekend was blessed with at least a half dozen fish days scattered over the state.

Fish day derbys for the youngsters in Iowa have grown like "Topsy." No mastermind conceived the idea, but rather it has resulted from the wishes of anglers who wanted to teach more youngsters the love and art of fishing. Many dads couldn't take the time or didn't have the know-how necessary to teach their offspring the fundamentals of angling. Hence, local organizations stepped into the breach and they have provided group safety, plus coaching that have made hundreds of children happy.

Kids' fish days are sponsored jointly by the Conservation Commission and local Izaak Walton Leagues, sportsmen's clubs, Elk's clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and other civic-minded organizations. Prizes are given to the boy and girl who catch the most fish, the biggest and smallest fish, as well as to the smallest fisherman, the best sport, the youngster with the most freckles, the one with the worst sunburn, the child with the curliest hair and the novice with the biggest bird nest in his line. Fifty-seven varieties would scarcely cover the awards made on that day dedicated to teaching the youngsters of Iowa the value of a day spent fishing.

Instructions on how to bait a hook, land a fish, remove hooks and what to do about those bullhead spines that are always jabbing into little fingers are on the program. These and many other fundamentals of angling are taught by the adults on fish day.

Kids' fish day is one of the few instances when the Conservation Commission believes in "put and take" stocking. Adult bullheads are removed from lakes which are

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TRIPLET DEER BORN IN STATE PARK

In early June conservation employees at Pilot Knob State Park were surprised to see triplet newborn deer hidden in the grass and they concluded that multiple births are responsible for the mushroom growth of the Iowa deer herd.

These conclusions are partly right. When deer range is overcrowded and food is inadequate, single fawns are the rule and twins are the exception; however, when range conditions are good, for the older does at least twin deer are the rule, and triplets are not uncommon.

Fawns weigh from four to seven pounds at birth and are able to stand in a few hours. They do not follow the mother for the first few weeks but remain where they are placed in hiding among the leaves or grass until the doe returns at feeding time.

It is during this time that well-meaning but uninformed people find the so-called "abandoned" baby deer. It is a crime under state law and against nature for deer fawns to be molested in any way during this period.

Within a month or even less after birth, fawns begin to nibble on green material and follow the mother for short distances. By early fall they are weaned. They stay with the parent throughout the winter unless separated by ac-

(Continued on page 155)

Forest City Summitt Photo.
Helpless and frightened, these baby deer are hidden in the grass at Pilot Knob State Park waiting the return of their mother at feeding time. It is a crime against nature, as well as law to kidnap these baby animals.

Jim Sherman Photo.
About six inches in length, the mole is a powerful miniature bulldozer and nothing seems to delight him more than to pick out a well kept lawn and ply his subterranean trade.

NATURE'S MINIATURE BULLDOZER

Although only six to eight inches in length and tipping the scales at just a few ounces, this miniature bulldozer or uprooter of front lawns, back yards or any other uprootable place is one of the most unusual mammals common to this neck of the woods.

The mole, as he has been known since Noah put on his first wildlife exhibit, is a much cussed and discussed little feller.

Nothing seems to delight this tiny, mouse-like creature more than to pick out a beautiful lawn or golf course and then begin to ply his trade. The results, familiar to nearly everyone, look as though some eccentric had taken a section of garden hose, laid it out on the lawn and then painstakingly covered it over with loose sod.

Opinions as to the value of the mole from an agricultural standpoint differ. Some say that moles at times feed on flowers and farm crops. It also is accused of spreading plant pests and diseases and of providing easy access, by means of its runways, for mice to reach and destroy garden and orchard plants.

On the other hand, in many areas it is accepted with enthusiasm and held as one of the important soil-forming organisms working over and aerating the soil and destroying important crop enemies such as cutworms and Japanese beetles.

Few persons have ever seen a mole. And a mole, since it is almost blind, probably never has seen a human being. That sort of evens the score. However, the creature's hearing is fairly acute and nerves ending in its nose and sensory hairs on its tiny hands keeps it from bumping into the sides of its tunnels.

Some moles, the shrew mole, the hairy-tailed mole and the star-nosed mole, can see slightly and sometimes venture to the surface of the ground, where they take advantage of the darkness afforded by thick grass or fallen logs. These three dislike bright light.

A mole caught above ground does not run. He does a fade out comparable to an emergency dive made by a sub when an enemy craft is sighted.

Energetic as nobody's business, a mole may have its living quarters from six inches to two feet underground. Its surface tunnel, the roof of which annoys housewives and golfers, is chiefly a means of reaching food.

Practically all species look superficially alike. Built for speedy excavating, the tiny mites have heavy shoulders and a long snouted head on a short, powerful neck. Their short front legs are stout and muscular, with large shovel feet capable of pushing aside dirt loosened by snout and feet. The toes have heavy claws.

Unlike humans, moles have no external ears to get in the way, and their velvety fur offers no resistance to their passage in a tunnel.

Nature without doubt has equipped the creature with a reverse gear system which would greatly improve the present-day car should one of equal perfection be added. Proceeding along its underground tunnel system, the mole can go into reverse without stripping a single gear and run backward just as rapidly as forward.

Moles common to this country are not known to store food for the rainy day. European moles are said to paralyze earthworms by biting them in the head and keeping them in cold storage for the winter.

Eight-hour days or forty-hour weeks are not taken into consideration by moles, the busy animals working day and night with probably the hardest licks being put in during the daylight hours when earthworms and insects are stirring.

For this there may be a reason. They have an insatiable appetite and often eat the equivalent of one-third to two-thirds of their weight in a day. Even upon the approach of death their appetites continue. Wounded unto death by sharp-pronged traps they sometimes will eat earthworms placed within reach of their claws. As a food they prefer worms and insects including ants, insect larvae, millepedes and centipedes, snails, slugs and sowbugs.

Apparently, believe it or not, they do not care for tulip bulbs although it is admitted by the experts that an occasional nibble may be attributed to them. But beware the ill-fated tulip bulb which happens to be in the way of the little bulldozer when he takes off. He will not detour. Just cuts right on through and the mice which oftentimes follow up in the tunnel finish them off.

Earthworms, their particular specialty, they grasp in their mouths and chew them down after the fashion of a professional spaghetti relisher. They make no attempt to wipe off the dirt, partially cleaning the morsel as it slides between their two front paws.

The mole is a sourpuss and does not pair off with a compatible companion. Apparently males will get a room and live together much more amicably than do the females. It is a known fact that two females actually occupied a tunnel together for some time. But the inevitable scrap took place, plugging up a passageway with a wall,

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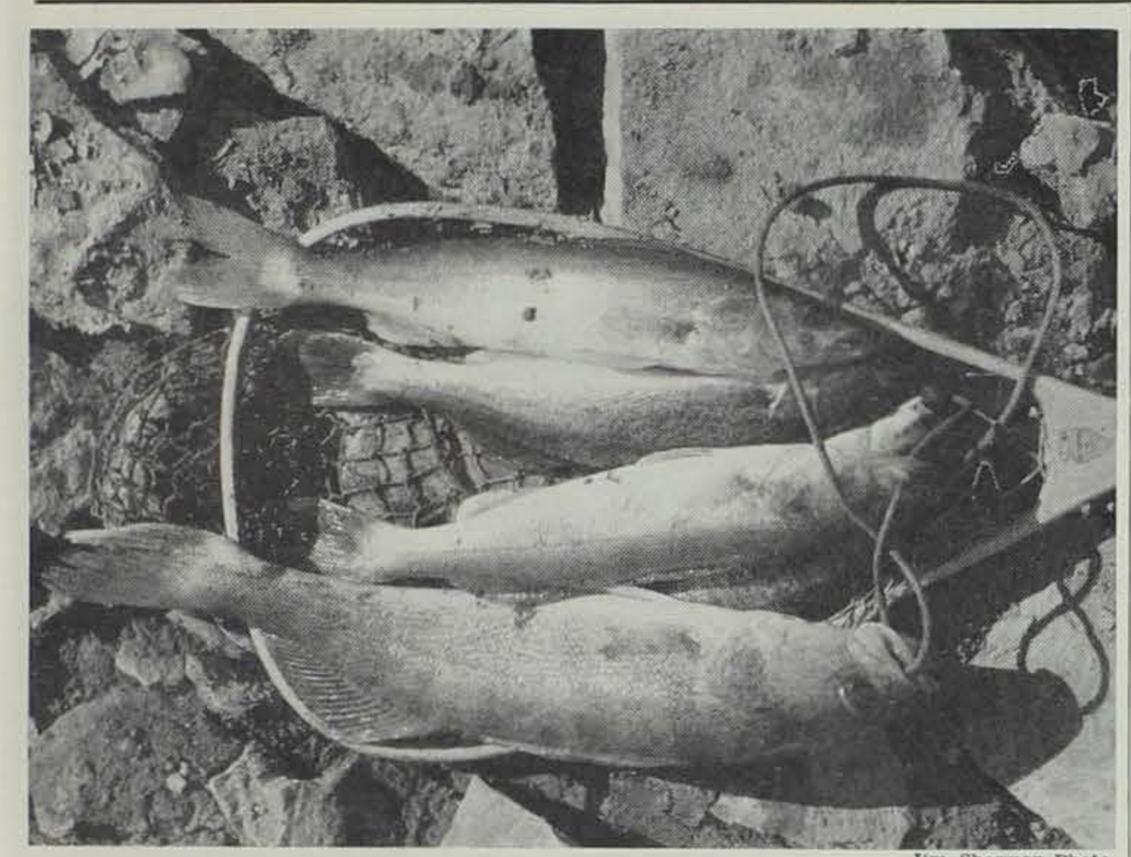

Jim Sherman Photo.

During the first half of the 1951 walleye season most anglers were successful in catching walleye pike at Clear Lake.

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CLEAR LAKE RESEARCH NOTES

By Kenneth D. Carlander
Iowa State College

According to most reports anglers were particularly successful in catching walleye pike and bullheads at Clear Lake early this summer. Although studies carried on by the Iowa Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit in 1949 and 1950 showed that the lake had an abundance of good sized walleyes, fishing for them was not particularly good. The average angler was not too successful despite the fact that experimental netting indicated that there were more walleyes than in most other lakes, including some in Minnesota and Wisconsin where similar studies have been made. Then, early this fishing season the walleyes began to bite! Why?

This is one of the questions that we hope to answer by the continued research on Clear Lake. Each year graduate students from Iowa State College collect information on the sizes, numbers, growth and habits of the Clear Lake fishes to note the changes that take place. A few of the observations made by John L. Forney and William C. Pearcy, this year's investigators, are of particular interest.

Comparatively few northern pike have been caught in Clear Lake in recent years. Early in July some young northern pike were found off the McIntosh Woods point. This is the first time that the research workers on this project have found young northerns in the lake proper. This discovery is of particular significance since some people feel that the carp trap at Ventura interferes with the reproduction of northern pike.

Although it is still a little early to be certain, aquatic vegetation, which has been on the decline since 1947, seems to be coming back in the lake. The water appears to be clearer, despite the heavy rains and winds.

Yellow perch have reproduced successfully this year and the young are growing quite rapidly. During the 1950 studies by Thomas S. English and James B. Erickson, no young yellow perch were observed—a rather remarkable situation since young perch are easily collected. Conditions were apparently not suitable for perch spawning in 1950, perhaps due to the lack of aquatic plants. It is possible that the lack, this spring, of small year-old perch which often serve as walleye food may have had something to do with the good walleye fishing.

Practically all of the bullheads caught at Clear Lake this year are of the same size. Opercular bones, vertebra, and spines are being collected from many specimens so that the rings on these structures can be studied to learn whether the bullheads are all of the same age. If the bullheads are all the same age, the present good bullhead fishing may be a more or less temporary situation—with no immediate replacement of the fish as they are caught or die. Each spring and early summer many of the bullheads die, presumably from natural causes, in Clear Lake and many other Iowa lakes. This annual mortality, which often leaves many dead bullheads along shore, is another of the problems on which further research is needed before we can explain its cause or determine its effect on the abundance of bullheads.

Triplet Deer . . .

(Continued from page 154)

cident. The spotted coat of young deer gives excellent protective coloration and is retained by the fawns until early October, when it is replaced by the gray coat of winter.

All deer shed twice a year, putting on a red summer coat in April and changing back to a gray winter color in September.

GUTHRIE CO. BIRDS COMPLAIN—NO PRIVACY

By George Worley
Superintendent of Public Relations

If they could speak, the birds, mammals, fish, soils, rocks, insects, trees, water and other resources in and near Springbrook State Park in Guthrie County would probably comment on the invasion of their privacy this summer.

The "invaders" were 90 Iowa teachers who attended the 1951 sessions of the Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp. They peeked into nearly every bird nest in the area. They watched wild raccoons searching for food. They learned to fish and to identify their catch. They dug deep holes to secure soil samples. They broke rocks to get chips for teaching collections. They waited under outdoor lights to trap night-flying insects. They collected leaves, twigs and bark. Even poison ivy was mounted under glass for its trip back to schoolrooms in the fall.

The teachers learned to use their cameras, to develop films and print pictures. They built teaching aids such as chart holders, electric posters and specimen mounts. They waded in lakes, streams and marshes to learn what lives there and how it lives. They rose early and retired late. They ate like famished cannibals and slept like logs. They square danced and played horseshoe and softball. They earned college credit for their work and relaxation for their play.

These activities are a few of those shared by the teachers attending this new kind of college course in conservation. The main reasons for taking the course were completely serious—to earn college credit and learn to do a better job of teaching conservation. It is the method and place of doing these things, however, which sets this course apart from others and makes it such a pleasure. Field trips take the place of classroom lectures. Students see, feel and actually work with resources instead of only hearing about them. The whole out-of-doors becomes a classroom. Teachers learn to use materials at hand to construct teaching aids. They live together, eat together, and work together in an area rich in variety of resources. Better learning and better teaching result.

The Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp had its beginning in 1950. Twenty-five teachers attended each of the three-week sessions. This year the course attracted 52 to the first session and 38 to the second. An additional feature enjoyed in 1951 was the presence of the Mobile Industrial Arts Shop from Iowa State Teachers College. Teachers used the facilities provided by the shop to construct teaching aids and in spare time recreation.

The camp is sponsored jointly by the Iowa State Teachers College, the Iowa Conservation Commission, and the State Department of Public Instruction.

Plans for the 1952 session provide for new courses so that former campers may return for additional work, a course for high school teachers, and the improvement of facilities for study and recreation. The new course for elementary teachers will stress the study of soil nutrients, Iowa wildlife and balances in nature. High school teachers will receive training in field work, work out individual problems, and develop conservation teaching techniques for use in high schools. As in the past, five quarter hours of college credit will be given for the three-week course.

Apparently the birds and other resources near Springbrook State Park are slated for more inquisitive company next summer. Surely they wouldn't mind if they knew the important part they have in the training of Iowa teachers and the education of Iowa boys and girls.

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George Worley Photo.

Fifty-two teachers attended the first three-week session of the second annual Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp at the Springbrook State Park

Bottle-fed wildlife become "idiot" orphans. According to Webster, "Incapable of avoiding the common dangers of life." More than 100 kidnapped baby raccoon will be shown in one cage at the annual state fair fish and game exhibit.

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ORPHAN RACCOON HEADLINE FAIR EXHIBIT

More than 100 six-months old raccoon orphans displayed in one giant cage will headline the Iowa Conservation Commission's wildlife exhibit at the Fish and Game building, August 25-Septemer 3, at the state fair grounds in Des Moines. Most of the raccoons are animals that were illegally held as pets by "wildlife kidnappers" this spring and were seized by conservation officers. A few of the raccoons are truly orphans whose parents were killed in accidents.

The exhibit pen will contain swings, teeter-totters, slide boards and other playground equipment, plus a self-serve shower bath.

The purpose of the display is to bring forcefully to the attention of well-meaning but misinformed persons that to pick up wildlife babies is not only unlawful, but certainly signs the death warrant for the animals involved. The sign describing the exhibit will point out that wild animals that reach maturity in captivity, not only do not learn to protect themselves and find food in the wild—an education painstakingly taught by the parents—but also that they lose their fear of man and become nuisances and even dangerous. It is hoped that the display will cut down on "animal-'nappings" estimated to have reached a high of over 2,000 raccoon alone in 1950.

In addition to the coon show, the exhibit will contain thousands of fish, birds, reptiles, mammals and other animal forms. Old Oscar, the 115-pound fifty-one year old black sturgeon, will again occupy the No. 1 fish tank for the 31st year. Big Hattie, Iowa's largest snapping turtle, will again be shown. The biggest, most complete collection of snakes ever exhibited at the fair will be on display. A coyote-dog hybrid will occupy a cage between an 85-pound timber wolf, not native, and a 35-pound coyote common in the state. Geronimo, a full-grown mountain lion, a species once native in Iowa that was captured alive in Arizona by Ted Girard, will be exhibited in a special cage.

Many other special animal exhibits will entertain the visitors.

Displays explaining the activities of the Conservation Commission in biology, forestry, engineering, parks, education, and fish and game development will be contained in the exhibit. For the first time the corrected second edition of the popular new book, *Iowa Fish and Fishing*, will be on sale for $2.00.

Experts in all fields of conservation activities will be on duty from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. each day to answer your questions. Plan to see the fish and game show, the most popular on the fairground, at the Conservation building, August 25-September 3.

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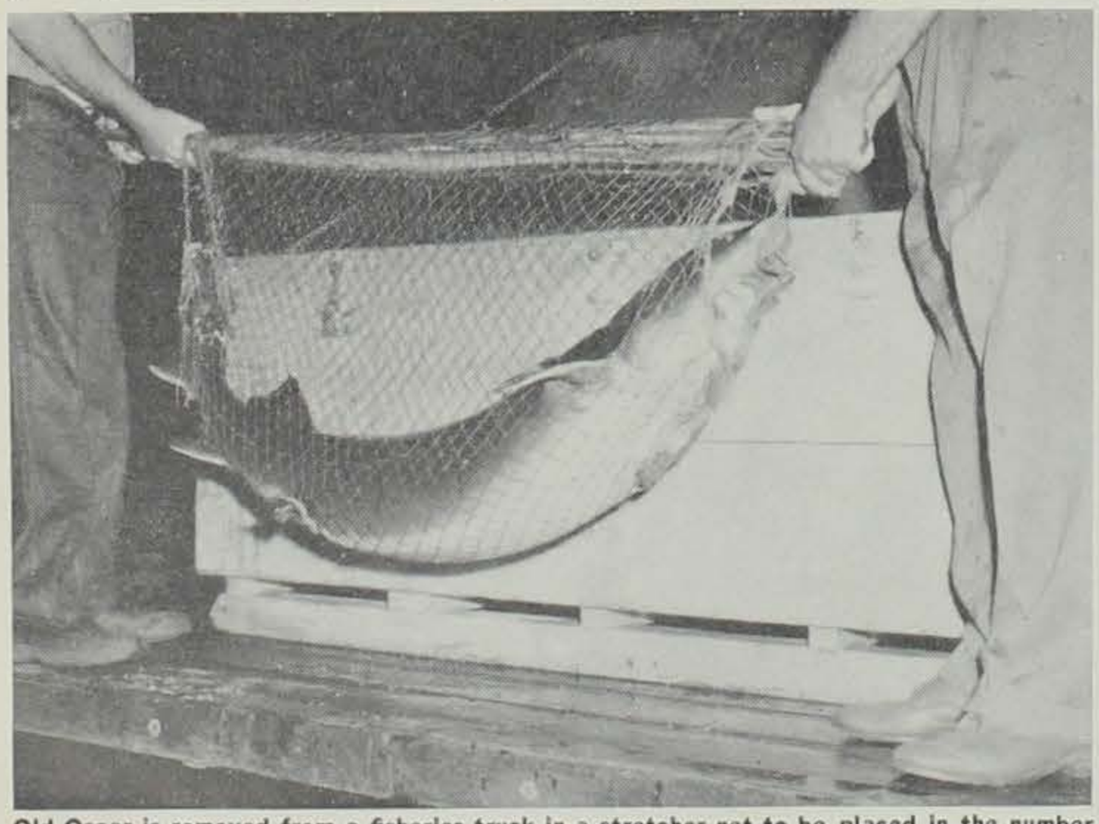

Old Oscar is removed from a fisheries truck in a stretcher net to be placed in the number one fish tank at the fish and game exhibit. The giant black sturgeon, weighing more than 110 pounds has been a star performer at the state fair for 31 years.

In 24 completed clutches of bobwhite eggs, the number varied from 10 to 22.

Bulldozer . . .

(Continued from page 154)

the two gals isolated themselves in separate cubicles.

The fuzzy rascals propagate once a year. Mating in March, the litter of from one to five is born six weeks later. The kiddies grow rapidly and at two months are as big as pop and mom.

Soon they are seeking new golf courses to conquer, at three years have reached their dotage, give up the ghost and a different tribe takes over.—*Outdoor Indiana.*

A jack rabbit is not a rabbit. It is a hare and can run as fast as 45 miles an hour.

Wild banded ducks have been reported as old as 18 years, and geese and swans at least 20 years old.

The bald eagle is primarily a fish eater, and because of this fact he is seldom found very far from water.

The submerged vegetation in Clear Lake has decreased considerably in abundance since 1946.

Jim Sherman Photo.

A beautiful stock-tight multiflora rose hedge in Wapello County.

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FREE MULTIFLORA ROSE SEED

Again this year the Iowa Conservation Commission will provide free multiflora rose seed to Iowans wishing to grow their own rose plants. Seed will be mailed upon request about September 15 in packets of 1,000 seeds, each with complete planting instructions for late fall planting.

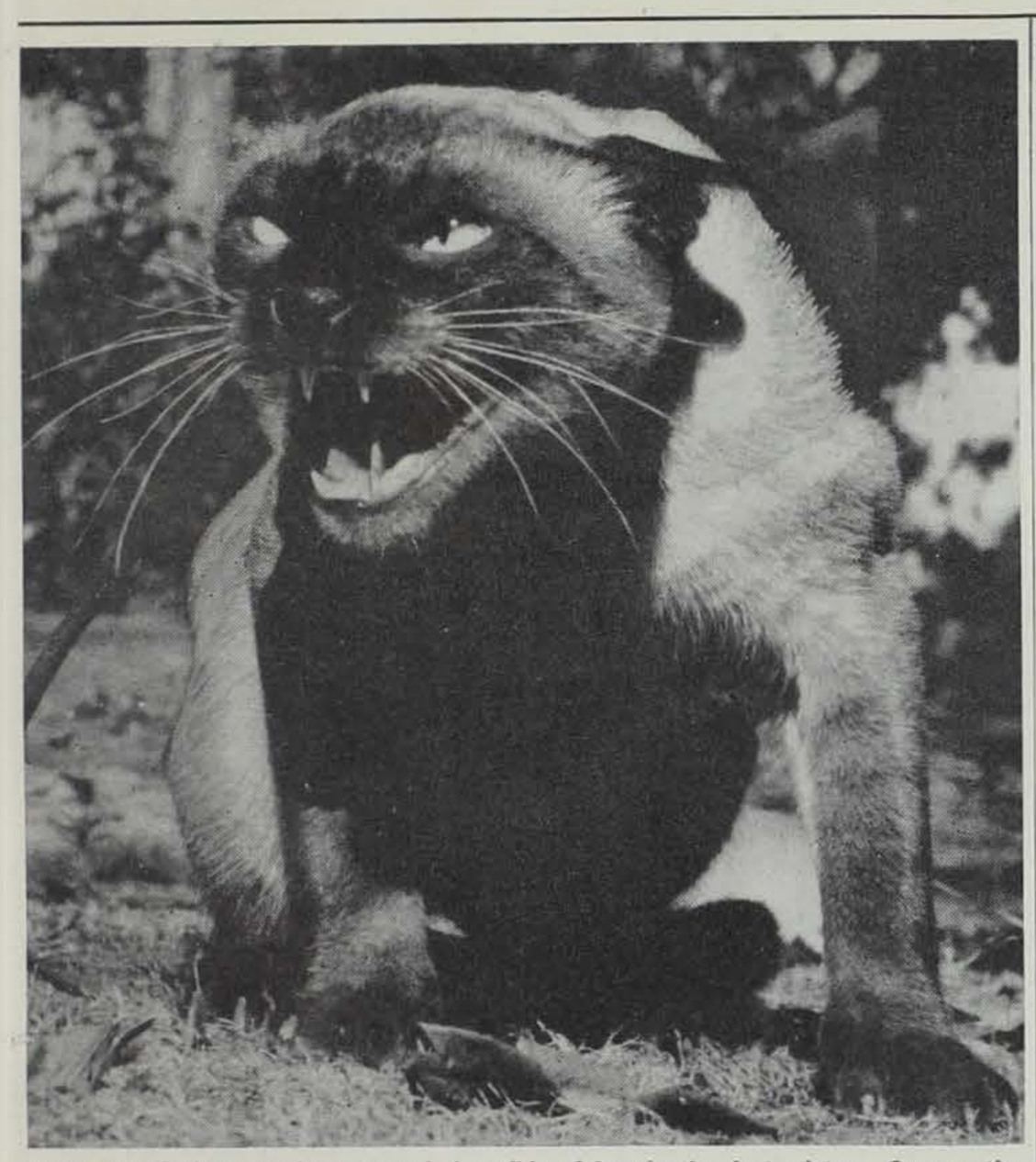
The seeds should be planted this fall shortly before the ground freezes. They may be planted in a vegetable garden plot and next year will demand about the same care during the seedling stage as carrots or onions. When the plants are a year old they may be transplanted to their permanent location. Normally, the seeds have about a 60 per cent germination, one packet being enough for 600 plants or 600 feet of living fence. Because of heavy demand, the Commission has limited the requests to not more than 5 seed packets.

Multiflora rose has proved successful as a stock-proof living fence in the south half of the state, and large numbers of experimental plantings in the north half have proved successful to date.

The rose, in addition to making an inexpensive fence, is heralded as a great boon to Iowa's wildlife. The thorny shrub, which grows to a maximum height and width of 8 feet and is non-spreading, provides excellent refuge in nesting places for game and song birds, as well as small animals.

In addition to its use as a living fence and for wildlife cover, multiflora rose hedge is excellent for wind erosion control.

Requests for free multiflora rose seed should be addressed to the Iowa Conservation Commission, East Seventh and Court Avenue, Des Moines, and should be in Commission hands by September 15.



Thousands of black panthers roamed the wilds of imagination last winter. Conservation Officer Herb Eells in Wardens' Tales tells how one such story started.

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Wardens Tales

Shop Talk from the Field

Herb Eells, conservation officer in Howard and Chickasaw Counties, tells how one of last winter's black panther tales originated.

Herb writes: "I received a telephone call from a farmwife who was all excited. She had just seen a black panther run across their feed lot and wanted to know if I could come at once. I could hardly tell her she was seeing things, and being curious myself, said that I would come out and at least examine the tracks in the deep snow. When I finally arrived at the farmhouse the lady had gone to a neighbor's but her husband was home. I introduced myself and asked him where he had seen the strange animal. He grinned a bit and said 'see those tracks in the snow going up over the roof of the barn?' I said yes, and that they were undoubtedly made by a pheasant which was beating its wings as it ran up the incline. The farmer said his wife had seen the odd-looking tracks and asked him what kind of an animal had made them. For a joke he told her that it must be the black panther. Unbeknown to him she called me. So that's how at least one black panther story started."

Christie Hein, conservation officer in charge of Lucas and Wayne Counties, writes: "Last fall just before the rabbit season I heard the report of a .22 rifle over near some railroad tracks. I walked over and saw a man and a small boy coming my way. When the hunter reached me I introduced myself, checked the man's license, and began visiting about hunting seasons. He advised me he was not hunting, just walking around looking for ground squirrels to sharpen his eye prior to the opening of the rabbit season. Just then a fast freight came by and after the noise had subsided the boy spoke up with a sad look on his face. 'Say Grandpa, we might as well go back home, that darned train has scared all the rabbits away.' "

Glen Sanderson, game biologist for the Conservation Commission stationed at Marion, writes: "Perhaps this should be titled 'Signs of Our Times' as one of the radio newscasters says.

"Our neighbors here in Marion, Mr. and Mrs. Omer Eschman, have a problem that I have never encountered before. It seems that a flicker has chosen the Eschman's television antenna for one of his favorite drumming locations. No doubt the metal antenna is an excellent sounding board for the flicker's rolling love call; however, the Eschman's are not favorably impressed with this love calling morning after morning at 5:00 a.m.!"

The editor expresses his sympathy for the Eschmans, once having put a white oak keg high in a burr oak snag for a nesting place for screech owls. The owl nest, designed to last 100 years, came down in two weeks. The flickers went to work on top of the keg drum-head and certainly created a crisis in the neighborhood.

TIPS, TRICKS AND HANDYKINKS

By Curly Sharp

An inexpensive method of preserving minnows is to pack them in salt in a large mouth jar. A layer of salt and a layer of minnows. In a few days they become tough and stay on the hook well.

To have a plentiful supply of minnows for winter pike fishing the above method may be used; prepare late in fall when minnows are easily secured.

When seining for minnows use a large piece of stale white bread to bait minnow net with. Minnows will congregate there to feed and you can catch plenty of bait.

Live baits are easy to secure and keep alive if right methods are used.

To catch grasshoppers: Wait until after dark, then go out with your flashlight and you can pick them off the grass by dozens. They can also be caught easily in the daytime with a large dip net with small mesh so they can't get through.

Cricket lore—best of all for smallmouth bass bait. You'll usually find them under boards, old tar paper, timbers, stones, etc., that rest on the ground near fields. They can also be caught with small mesh dip nets in stubble fields.

To keep crickets from eating each other put a leaf of lettuce in their container, as well as a small bunch of grass or leaves for them to range in; bone meal sprinkled in now and then is good for them. Just a little bit.

Half a building brick with hole moulded in it is a good trotline weight.

Floating trotlines for catfish: Space large corks on main line about 12 feet apart. Cut short pieces of line 18 inches long, tie on hooks and fasten to main line, using three hooks between corks. Bait with a good catfish bait or use minnows, soft shell crayfish or frogs.

Stay-on hooks for dough-baits: Fasten one end of a small wire to the eye of your hook (fine copper wire is excellent). Roll wire spirally downward to just above point of hook, turn end back under and pinch to hold, then apply bait.

To sour clam meats leave in own juice for a few days or soak in sour milk. Cover to keep flies out.

To keep the winding thread taut while winding a fishing rod, draw it off the spool through pages of a large book.

Warm, comfortable insoles for rubber waders and outdoor leather footwear can be cut from an old felt hat.

There is nothing better than plain castor oil for weather-proofing leather footwear. Apply it warm to dry leather.

No need to run short of sinkers. Cut an empty shaving cream or toothpaste tube into small squares and keep a few in your box for emergencies. Use as wrap-around sinkers.

To remove fish odor, rinse hands in vinegar; to deodorize a skillet after frying fish, boil a little vinegar in it.

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Soft-shelled crawfish are sure fire baits for catfish, smallmouth bass and carp. When sorting crawfish let the minnow seine lie open. "Hard-shells" will crawl away. Most of the crawfish remaining will be "soft-shells."

Jim Sherman Photo.

Kids' fish day prizes are given to the boy or girl who catch the biggest and smallest fish, as well as to the smallest fisherman, the best sportsman, and the youngster with the most freckles. Even goldfish, when caught are candidates for prizes.

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Fish Days . . .

(Continued from page 153)

over-populated (which helps the fish remaining in the lake to grow to larger size), and are collected and transferred to three holding areas in different sections of the state. Hatchery ponds at Lake Wapello in Davis County serve as a wholesale distribution point for south and southeastern Iowa. Rearing ponds at Eldora serve as holding ponds for fish days held in northeast and eastern Iowa. The balance of the state is served from the hatchery ponds at Spirit Lake.

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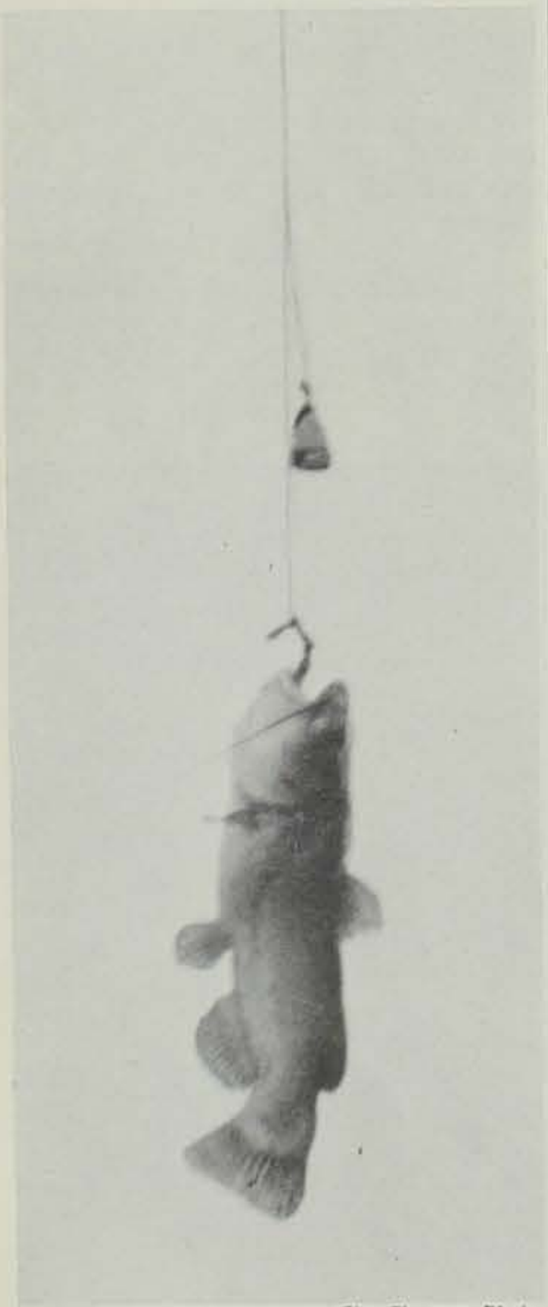

Jim Sherman Photo.

The star of kids' fish day, the ever-popular black bullhead.

Adult bullheads from seven to eleven inches long are transported to sites selected by the local organizations. They are brought in at least one day in advance so they will be good and hungry when the big day arrives.

This year in almost 100 fish days more than 200,000 adult bullheads were stocked. The increase in popularity of the fish derby idea has taxed the available surplus of adult bullheads as well as the fish transportation facilities of the Conservation Commission to the point that in the immediate future regional limits will have to be placed on the number of events which can be held.

Some of the ponds used for the kids' fish days are of sufficient quality to provide fishing all summer long from the natural reproduction of the area and the bullheads added for the special event. Other lakes or streams are blocked off in the given areas so that the fish cannot escape. In these special areas as soon as the derby is over the obstructions are removed and the bullheads that are left are free to join their buddies in the less restricted waters.

Before the first school bell rings this fall, the kids' fish day program will have given more than 30,000 Iowa youngsters of all ages a taste of the freedom and equality that can be found only on a public lake or a stream. These children have learned a lesson of sportsmanship that will not be easily or soon forgotten.

CREDIT WHERE DUE

In the June 15 IOWA CONSERVATIONIST we carried a short article entitled "Warning—Fishing Fever." It was not credited to the proper source and having heard from its author we are glad to give credit where credit is due.

The author of the widely quoted item is Howard E. Kopf, Davenport, Iowa, and the warning is well worth reprinting. Here it is:

WARNING—FISHING FEVER

Caution: This malady is spread by the slightest exposure, and by sight, sound, telegraph, telephone, television, radio, mail, or by pertinent conversation. It need not be reported to the authorities.

Symptoms: Apathetic attitude toward any regular occupation. Aversion to going to church on Sunday. Evasive answers to family and friends and business associates. Frequent checking of tackle, catalogues, resorts, maps and barometers. Inexcusable loafing in tackle shops.

Frequent desire to look for minnows. Uncontrollable desire to crawl on hands and knees late at night on lawns and in parks with a flashlight and tin can. Frequent contacts with fishing pals by phone, wire, mail or otherwise.

Insatiable desire for liquids, especially lakes, streams and rivers. Inclination to prevaricate. Offensive and boastful attitude. Continual complaint as to need for fresh air and sunshine.

Treatment: There is no cure and medication is useless. Disease is not considered fatal. If stricken, one should go fishing as often as possible. Usually the life span of victim is greatly increased.

Best Advice: Enjoy yourself—it's later than you think. The earlier it is, the better they bite—**sometimes.**

FOOD FOR CATS

Channel cats will eat almost anything, we have learned in past years. It's a matter of record that one attacked a fox hound not too long ago, and Conservation Agent Denver Camden tells the story of two anglers that confirms the old tales.

George Plummer and Walter Buckholz took two dandy big channel catfish from the Bourbeuse River last week, one weighing 11 and the other 7 pounds.

Upon cleaning the fish they noticed the 11-pounder had a greatly swollen stomach, so they opened it up. The fish had a young mink and a large bullfrog safely tucked away. Channel cats will eat anything. — *Missouri Conservation Commission.*

HAVE YOUR YOUNGSTERS ASKED FOR A 22?

If your boy has asked you "When may I have a gun?" have you puzzled for the proper answer? The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manuacturers' Institute of New York has issued a helpful booklet for parents confronted with this problem.

Entitled *What Every Parent Should Know When a Boy or Girl Wants a Gun,* this pamphlet was prepared to assist parents in arriving at their own conclusions as to when Junior can be regarded as qualified for the safe handling and use of a 22.

This fine publication can be obtained without charge by writing to Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, 343 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, New York.

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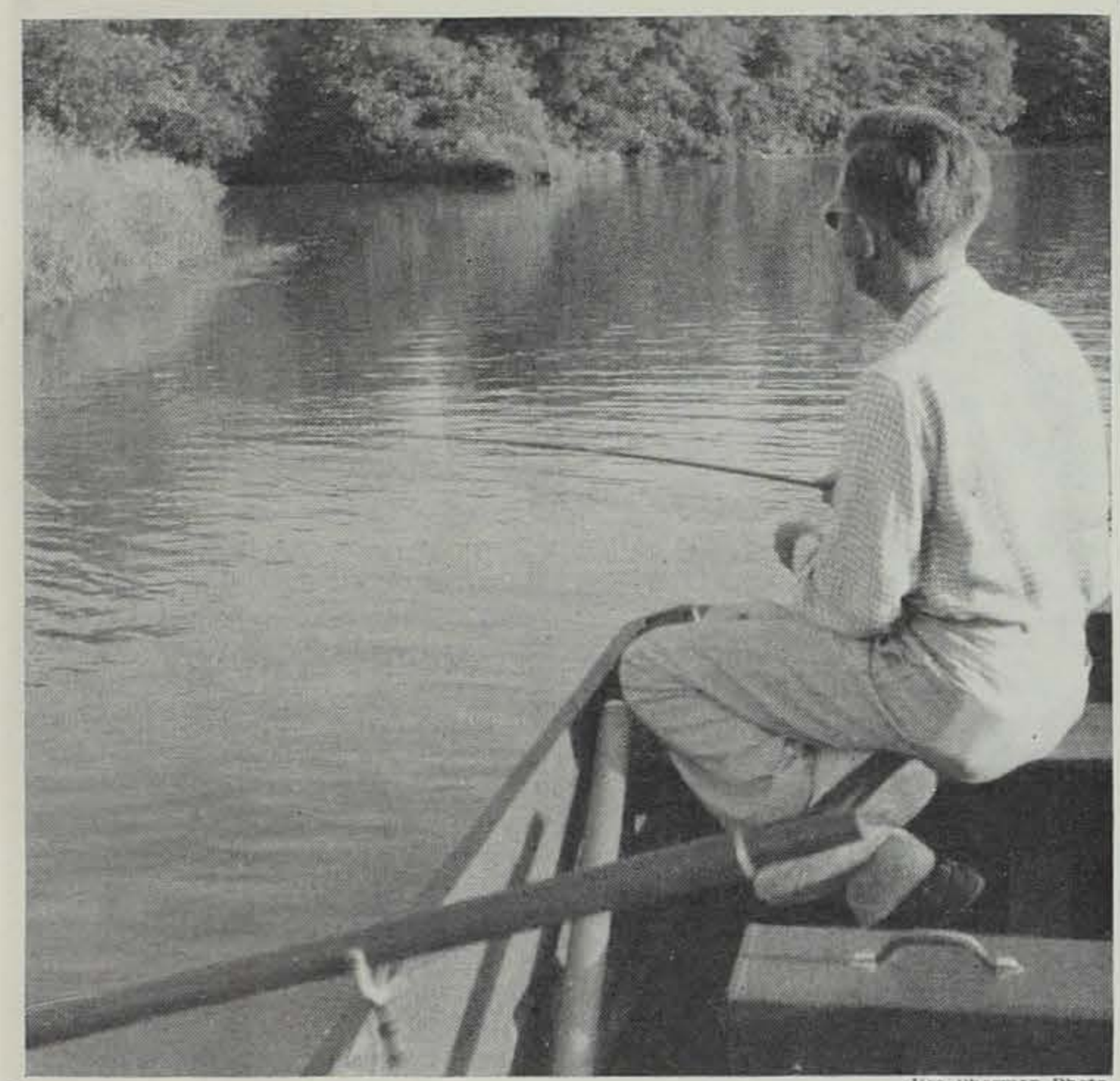
J. C. Reasoner Photo.

Too young for a gun, of course, but how old is old enough?



Jim Sherman Photo.
"We know the fellow who spends his off-day on his favorite lake or stream will be doing his regular job a little better because of his angling."

Fishing: A Sport . . .

(Continued from page 153)

Now, however, a few generations later, a day's routine for the average person is decidedly different. At an early hour the shrill clamor of an alarm clock jerks us to our feet. Clock-makers have done much to give the alarm a soft, soothing tone, but anything that reminds us of another busy day will never be considered pleasant.

Once we are up, there is the race against time; we must dress hurriedly, eat our breakfast even more hurriedly, and then fight the traffic to our office, shop, or factory. Here, as likely as not, our work will be mental. Our efforts will be directed toward selling others certain goods or ideas, and toward offering the necessary sales resistance toward those who happen to have similar designs on us. The noon meal will usually be eaten "in conference."

At quitting time we have another try at outwitting our fellow drivers who are likewise in a hurry to get home. Then, after a day of contacts, comes the social "hour" which involves more contacts, and which has a way of extending through several hundred minutes instead of the sixty which normally constitute an hour. After a little sleep the mechanical contrivance on the dresser lets go with another blast . . .

The shift in our mode of living since pioneer days has been an extreme one. In the early days there was a tendency toward too much physical exertion, but today the problem is one of trying to avoid nervous exhaustion.

Our manner of life has changed decidedly but our bodies differ little, if any from those of our ancestors. Several generations ago folks were often plagued by disease; developments in medicine have since done much to lengthen the average life-span. But our present pace is taking its toll. Mental ailments, heart disease, and gastric troubles are on the increase. Apparently, our bodies weren't built for the present tempo of living. We are living too fast.

In the old days the hard working pioneers went fishing rather often, but they were interested solely in getting meat for the table. They used any method of capture which would help them reach their objective. Fish supplies were abundant because there were few people to harvest them. Refrigeration was unknown. Fish, as a supply of fresh meat, contributed much toward solving their food problem.

(Continued on page 160)

Jim Sherman Photo.
The number of fish in the creel or on the stringer is no longer a measure of angling success. The objective is relaxation, not meat.

Jim Sherman Photo.

ONE MORE BEND

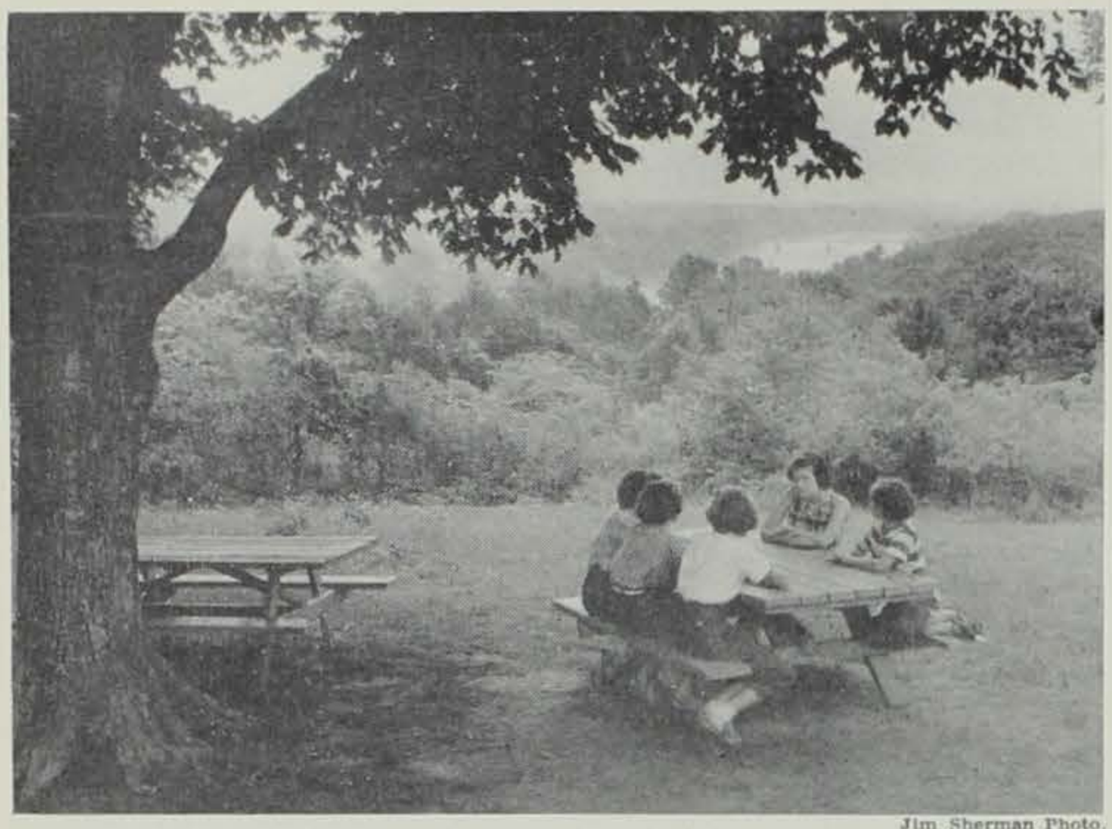
The rude disporting nighthawk takes to air,
Attains the heights and makes his power dive.
With backward look the woodchuck seeks his lair;
Reluctant bees go straightway to the hive.

It's time to go, and yet, I love to feel
The singing river's grip about my knees,
To hear the clamor of the hard stripped reel,
To loop a cast beneath the leaning trees.

I'll fish just one more bend; there ought to be
A good one there; perhaps a Grizzly King
Would suit this failing light, cast daintily.
Let dinner wait on this important thing.

So it may be when, making my last stand,
I face the Gaunt Dark Angler, and the end,
I'll take a five-ounce Granger in my hand
And simply say: "Let's try just one more bend."

—Edward S. Parker, M.D.



Jim Sherman Photo.

From the top of the bluff in Lacey-Keosauqua State Park one can get an excellent view of the big bend of the river and the country far to the north.

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Big Bend Park . . .

(Continued from page 153)

long been known to people in this part of the state as the "big bend." Coming from the northwest, the river makes a bend toward the southwest. Then it flows eastward past the park, and northeastward past Keosauqua. All this can be seen from the "lookout." Finally, after a few graceful curves it resumes its southeast course through the country a few miles below (northeast of) Keosauqua. The contrast between the course of the river through this loop and its relatively direct course through the rest of the country is indeed striking. What is the explanation of this?

First we must realize that all streams, large and small, have made the valleys in which they flow. This is obviously the case with small gulleys, carved out in a single torrential rain. It is also true of the valleys of large rivers such as that of the Des Moines. Where the valleys are wide and deep they have been long in the making.

The course of each river is in part dependent upon the character of the material in which it flows and upon the slope of the bottom. Some geologists have believed that the Des Moines River in the vicinity of the "big bend" once had a rather direct southeast course. Presently, as it kept cutting deeper, it encountered a more resistant rock on the left bank. Gradually its course was deflected to the south. The beds of rock slope gently in this direction, and in time the stream came against softer rocks. Thus, its course continued to shift slowly southward, cutting into these softer rocks. It is still doing this. The bluffs along the river in the park are on the outside of the bend in the river's course. Here the current is swifter than on the opposite side, and the river is slowly but actively cutting against the bank. Across the stream on the inside of the bend the bank is just as slowly being extended southward. Sediment is deposited by the river as it rounds the bend. This is because the current is less on the inside of the bend.

Many streams have bends and loops similar to this one of the Des Moines River. They are numerous on streams flowing in wide flood-plains, where the current is very sluggish and is easily deflected by an obstruction. The banks are readily worn away, as they are composed of silt and sand. Thus, the meanders, as they are called, are formed as the current strikes first one bank and then the other.

The park owes it hilly character to the work of the tributaries of the river. They have a high gradient and are able to cut down rapidly. The ravines and larger valleys are narrow and have steep sides. This part of Iowa was covered only by the earlier glaciers, and when it receded the country which appeared from beneath the ice was pretty much of a plain. The valleys in the park have been formed since that time.

The subsoil of the park is of three kinds. Some of it is the familiar loess, a wind-blown silt, brown in color. There is also drift, the deposit left by the glacier. This contains many pieces of rock foreign to this part of the world. They were carried by the ice from regions farther north. Finally there is subsoil that was produced by the decay of the bedrock.

The subsoil here as elsewhere in Iowa rests upon sedimentary rock, formed mostly as a deposit in the sea. The kinds are shale, sandstone, and limestone. The lowest beds are mostly limestone, very unevenly stratified. The river flows in this limestone, and it is exposed along the road in the park and in a nearby quarry. The park buildings are constructed of limestone, brought from this quarry.

The broken rock on the river bottom at the foot of the bluff is also limestone. These fragments have been detached from the bedrock by weathering and the force of the current. They have been swept to their present position by the river in flood. They will gradually be broken up and carried downstream.

The steep cliffs which line the valley side at the park are composed of sandstone. This sandstone is a part of the formation which contains the coal of Iowa and surrounding states. Coal was mined nearby in early days, but the deposits were found to be limited in thickness and area. The coal was formed from decaying vegetable matter which accumulated in swamps in the low-lying coastal plains of the ancient seas.

Today the wonderful forests of oak and hickory are completing the picture of this park, with their roots deep in the materials left by wind, glacier and seas.

Fish Days . . .

(Continued from page 159)

Today there is plenty of meat. We need only to go to the nearest market to get any of a dozen or more kinds. Fish are available, too, and they can be bought already cleaned. We no longer need to fish for meat as our ancestors did. But angling is even more important today than it was in the early days because it furnishes healthful and badly needed relaxation.

Angling does provide mental relaxation. While trying to entice the fish to take his hook, a man's mind is at ease. He forgets all about his daily struggle to "keep up with the Jones'," or to get ahead of them if possible. While angling, he can think of his business competitors as normal human beings, if he bothers to think of them at all. While playing a fish he can even forget whether he is a Democrat or a Republican. He is at peace with the world—a peace which he seldoms finds in his normal daily routine.

Angling can do more than rest our nerves; it may give us better perspective. The fellow who can "get away from it all" every now and then will probably be thinking on a more even keel, he will be a little easier to live with, and he might even lengthen his lifespan a bit. The number of fish in the creel or on the stringer is no longer a measure of our success at angling. If the trip brought temporary relaxation and contentment, it was definitely a success.

Fishing is important in normal times; in abnormal times like these it is even more significant. It's a nerve tonic which we can recommend without reservation. Twenty million Americans are taking it, and the number of "addicts" is increasing. Before taking your next dose, remember that the wife has nerves too. The next generation may face an even more complicated future, and the kid who learns to enjoy fishing will be a little better equipped to face it.

So, take the whole family. There's a possibility that these amateurs will catch more fish than you do, but that's no excuse for leaving them at home. Simply console yourself by remembering that the number of fish in the creel or on the stringer is no longer a measure of your angling success.

Your objective is relaxation—not meat! — *Tennessee Conservationist.*

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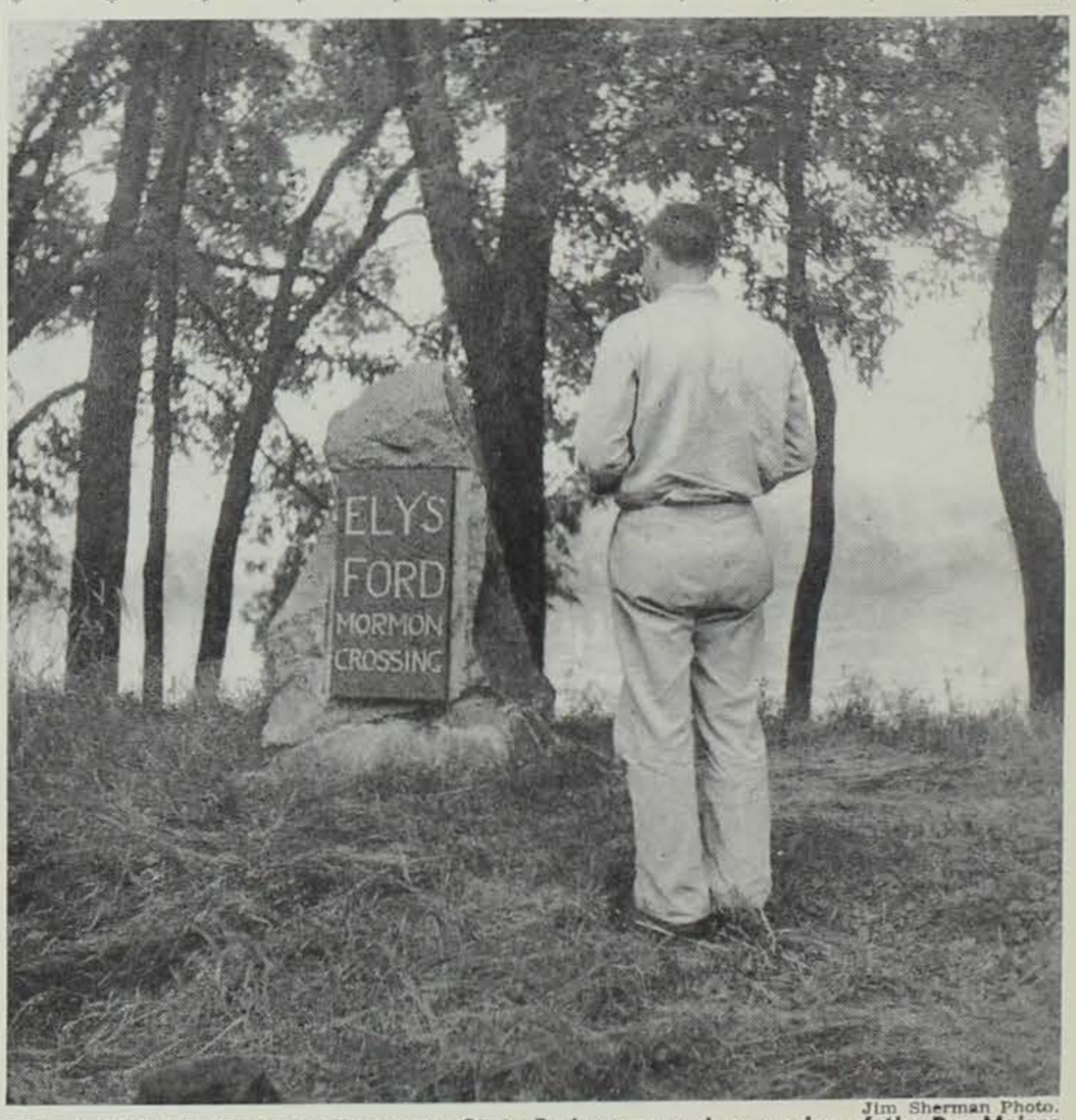

Jim Sherman Photo.

Historic Ely's Ford in Lacey-Keosauqua State Park was a major crossing of the Des Moines River for travelers long before bridges or ferry boats.