

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Number 11

THE OSAGE ORANGE HEDGEROW

FARM PONDS FOR BACK YARD FISHING

By John Madson
Education Assistant

Like gunpowder, paper, and pheasant, farm ponds are a Chinese invention. About 2,500 years ago a shrewd Oriental named Tao Chu King solved his *fish fu yung* problem by building several ponds which he stocked with carp. At about the same time a court politician named Fan Li wrote the first paper on fish breeding. Five hundred years later the Romans were digging ponds connected to the sea by trenches. When the ponds were filled with fish they were blocked, drained, and the fish were marketed.

All of which doesn't have much to do with Iowa except to show that farm ponds aren't a new idea. Yet, when the average farmer has his first stocked pond he feels somewhat as old Tao must have . . . that it's a good idea.

A lot of Iowans must feel this way, because in 1945 it was estimated that there were 10,000 ponds in southern Iowa. Since then the Soil Conservation Service has added 4,101 more, many of which have been stocked with fish by the Conservation Commission and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. These private and semi-private fishing ponds are welcomed by the Conservation Commission for several reasons. For one thing, a great deal of fishing area is added to the natural waters of the state by such farm ponds. These additions are usually in areas in which there is little natural fishing, and also take fishing pressure off the natural waters.

Most of the farms in southern Iowa have all that is needed for a good pond, and if it is built according to Hoyle, it will last. But construction is another story. This story is about farm ponds and fishing.

Last summer we talked with a
(Continued on page 87)



The Osage orange hedgerow has been bobwhite's best friend, sheltering him from predatory enemies, on the ground and in the air.
Jim Sherman Photo.

MUCH HAS HAPPENED HERE

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

Oak Grove State Park, about four miles north of Hawarden in Sioux County, is perhaps most interesting to the visitor because of the fine view it affords of the country to the west. From the lookout near the entrance to the park one is able to see for miles over into South Dakota. Broad flat fields are spread before one, stretching into the distance. One might indeed wonder what has made this beautiful land what it is today.

For a beginning of the story, as nearly as it can be made out, one may go back to the time of the Cretaceous sea. This was the last great sea to invade the continent. At one time it extended clear from what is now the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean. It was many hundred miles wide,

and came as far east as Iowa. The sea was a shallow one. It received sediments from the surrounding land areas, and these built up to thousands of feet in thickness farther west in South Dakota. The sea bottom slowly subsided as the sediments accumulated. They are not very thick in the vicinity of Oak Grove Park, nor anywhere in northwestern Iowa for that matter.

The lower part of the Cretaceous system in Iowa is the Dakota formation. This is a sandstone, famous as a source of water, and many wells of western Iowa draw from it. Above the Dakota formation are beds of shale and chalk. Shale is a hardened clay and chalk a soft form of limestone. In places in the shale there are thin beds of lignite. This is a form of coal, not as high in heating value and other qualities as bituminous coal. It has
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By Jim Keefe

Near Carmichael, Maryland, far from its native home, stands the largest Osage orange tree known, towering 66 feet above the ground. It measures 18 feet, ten inches in circumference—a giant of its kind. Out on the Missouri prairies its lesser brethren, untrimmed now and neglected for the most part, wave their 30 feet of bright green foliage in the prairie sunlight, last remnants of an empire of stately hedgerows that fenced the Midwest in its infancy.

The first fences in forested regions were of logs, staked to hold their form. They represented an era when timber was easy to obtain and, at the time, of little value. As time went on, the forested areas began to shrink and the split rail took the place of the log. Timber was getting scarcer and the fences had to change.

Out on the open prairies, last lands to be opened by the homesteaders, there was a scarcity of fence-building materials. The New England stone wall was impossible because the glacier-scoured prairies were stoneless. Lumber was scarce, although those who settled along streams had access to willow and cottonwood poles. But there was a friendly fence near at hand, and as the sodbusters multiplied, they turned increasingly toward the old Osage orange hedge to give them privacy, security and some shelter from the unceasing winds of the prairies. Prairie Missourians took it over, too, though chiefly for economic reasons.

Osage orange takes its name from the fact that it grew in the country of the Osage Indians. Actually, its true range only partly falls within the Osage's, but the French always associated it with the fierce warriors of southern Missouri. The French also gave it one of its other names—Bois d'Arc, or bow wood. That has since been corrupted by Midwest tongues into the familiar
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NOON-OPENING DAY

By **Gib Knudson**

We had put out a dozen decoys and parked our boat in a clump of cattails at the Outlet by 11:15 Wednesday, the 8th, so there was 45 minutes to go before the duck season opened.

But it wasn't quite that long. At seven minutes to 12 by our watch, somebody cut loose over on the west side with a shotgun blast and right afterward there were a few tentative shots here and there.

That was enough to lift a cloud of ducks up over the marsh and the fusillade began and was off to a good start when Ruthven's siren announced noon over on the eastern rim of the world.

The boys weren't as impatient as they've been some years. Either they're getting educated or they haven't forgotten the wholesale arrests for early shooting at the Outlet back in the 30's.

For awhile, befuddled ducks criss-crossed the place, some within easy shotgun range, but the fast shooting was soon done. We had four ducks down by that time as did some others but that doesn't mean they're in the boat. Unless you shoot them over open water this year, the heavy growth of reeds and other water vegetation will give you a bad time.

Many are never found and it's too bad this waste can't be avoided. It's the only bad angle to duck hunting and there can't be a duck hunter living who hasn't had his regrets for birds never found.



As always, opening duck day brought out a host of shooters at the state-owned public shooting grounds. *Jim Sherman Photo.*

We made up our mind we absolutely wouldn't shoot at a duck, no matter what the temptation, unless we were certain it would fall, in case we hit it, where we or our dog could find it. But even with these fine resolutions we knocked down two we never located, one of them a magnificent mallard drake with a glossy green head, white collar, mahogany breast and, we're sure, three curls in his tail.

We spent as much time looking for this bird as we did waiting in the boat to poke the gun in the air and finally give up, drenched with perspiration, from tramping in the cattails in the oven heat near the water.

We knew Twisty Lee, Ruthven's skillful caller, was up north of us a stretch when we heard his familiar feed call and saw it turn a bunch of mallards and they began circling in. We watched with interest. The reeds were too

high to see Twisty but we knew he would be surrounded by other hunters, like everybody else.

Before Lee ever got a shot at those ducks, somebody else cut in and drove them away. You can expect a mob on any opening day and that's how it was at the Outlet. It draws hunters from the south part of the state, as well as locally, as the automobile roofs, gleaming in the sun, all around the spot could testify. We were too far toward the south to count the cars, trucks and trailers at the popular landing on the northwest shore but they were there in droves.

We managed, by taking an inferior location, to keep pretty well in the clear of hunters on two sides but on the other two they were too close at hand for comfort and we're sure they felt the same way about us. About 60 yards, maybe, and that's too cozy if anyone takes a crack now



"For awhile, befuddled ducks criss-crossed the place in easy shotgun range, but the fast shooting was soon done." *Jim Sherman Photo.*

and then at teal barely skimming over the reeds.

It seemed to us there was a substantial increase in ducks at the Outlet opening day this year over last. Some of this maybe could be attributed to the earlier opening day, accounting for more bluewings not yet driven out by cold weather, but there was more of everything else too, mallards, pintails, greenwing teal, and gadwalls.

This is encouraging, confirming pre-season reports of a considerable gain in the duck hatch. It was a hard day to cash in on the bigger duck population. When you can hunt in comfort in shirt-sleeves with hardly a breeze to ruffle the water, you won't have many big ducks swinging in low.

Minutes after the first shot, the sky high overhead was flecked with mallards and other ducks and most of them never came back. But these ducks should remain in the country and with a good stiff wind they will be looking for cover again and the shooting should improve.

Our score: two greenwing teal, a pintail hen and a young mallard drake; plus a couple of unrecovered birds and our share of misses, of course. — *Emmetsburg Democrat.*

EAT YOUR CAKE AND HAVE IT TOO

Muskrat trapping is a funny business. Our experience at Horicon marsh shows that trapping too little is just as bad as trapping too much.

A marsh can support just so many muskrats, but the muskrats don't know it. If they're given half a chance they keep right on producing more muskrats until they're eating themselves out of house and home.

When things get crowded, disease is apt to kill them off.

Or the excess muskrats move out to look for a new home and get killed by predators or starvation. This usually happens in late winter when food supplies are lowest and the ice is thickest.

All in all, it's better to trap a muskrat marsh quite heavily than to lose a lot of valuable fur from natural causes. Muskrats can't be stock-piled with closed seasons or refuges. — *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin.*

Boat accidents are often caused by slippery boat floors. A removable non-slip floor covering can be cut from a length of heavy graveled roofing. Cut the roofing in sections to fit between the boat seats for easier handling. Place in the bottom of the boat graveled side up. In spite of slick soles the gravel surfaces will give secure footing.

Without eyes and living underground, the earthworm senses the fall of night and wriggles to the surface of the earth.

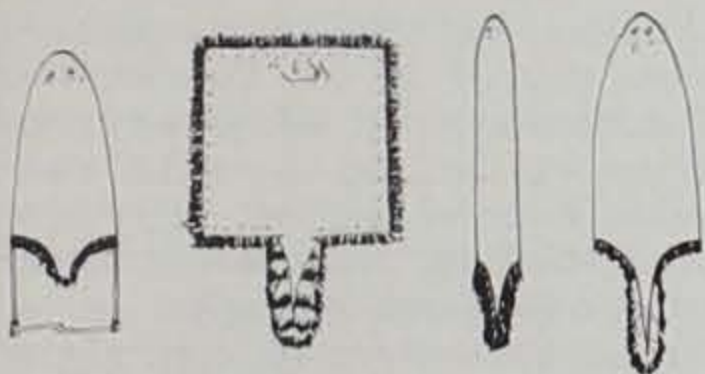
HOW TO FATTEN UP YOUR FUR CHECK

Iowa trapping is big business. As in most northern states, our furs are good ones. In fact, Iowa "plew" is well-known in the great fur centers of the world, and one of the Parisian gradings is "Iowa Skunk."

Considering all this, it's too bad that many Iowa trappers do not get top market prices for their furs. When they don't, the reason is simple: incorrect handling of the furs.

It's hard to fool the big fur houses; they know what they want and they often check furs individually. If pelts have too much fat or flesh, are stretched too tightly or loosely, or were nicked during skinning, your fur check takes a beating. On the other hand, well-handled furs are a source of personal pride and, happily enough, more money.

Pelts are handled in two general ways: "open" and "cased". Those pelts handled open are raccoon, badger, and beaver. All other pelts are cased.



It's best to begin by thoroughly cleaning the animal in lukewarm water, carefully washing all mud, blood, and burrs out of the fur. It's also a good idea to brush or comb the fur after it is dry.

If muskrat, skunk, mink, fox, weasel, or opossum, the pelt will be case-handled, and so the first step is to hang the animal by the hind legs, making an incision across the back legs to the under base of the tail. With muskrat, opossum and beaver, the tail is cut off. Cut off the feet where the fur line begins.



This is the only cut that has to be made on the body of the case-handled pelt. Slowly peel the skin down over the body, freeing it from any adhering muscle with a sharp, small blade. Being very careful not

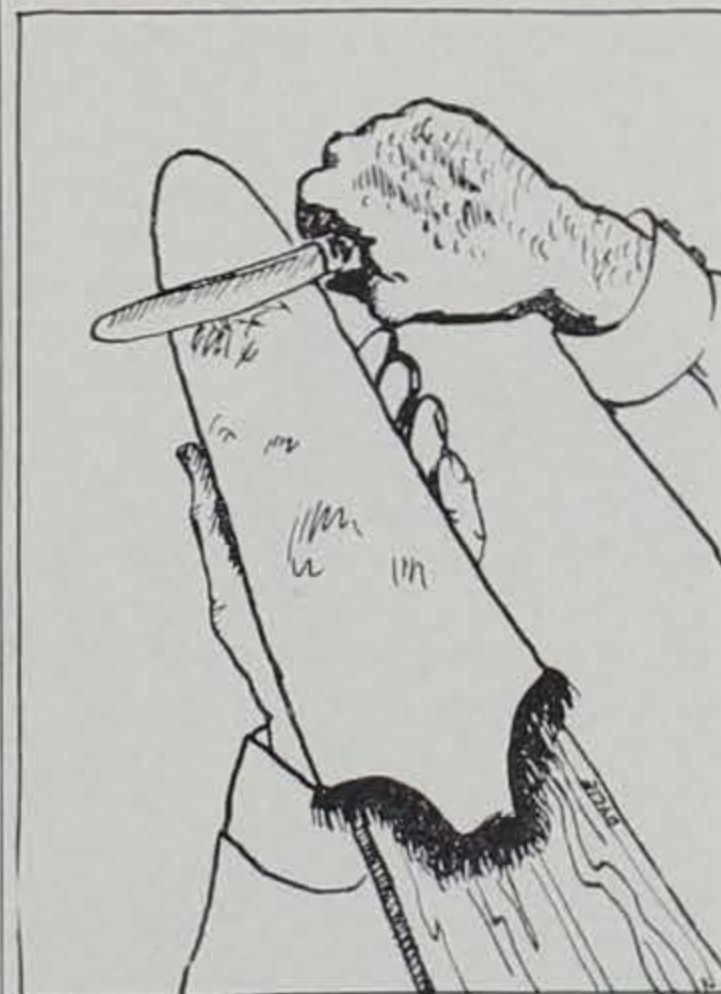
to cut through the skin, dress the skin from the entire body and head. Be especially careful around the eyes and ears, since the skin there is very thin. Cut the front feet off where the fur begins.



The pelt, now fur side in, will be placed on a stretcher for cleaning and drying. A commercial or homemade wire stretcher can be used, as well as a wooden form.

Stretch the pelt only to its natural limits. It should fit snugly on the stretcher, but without strain. It will shrink slightly as it dries. But don't understretch it, either. If you do, you are shortchanging yourself.

The pelt can be scraped clean of adhering fat and flesh with a table knife or the sharp edge of a wooden lath. Fat on pelts should always be removed, since spoiling and "burning" will result if it remains.



Open handling is started in the same way as cased handling, with the cut across the backs of the hind legs. However, another cut is made down the belly of the animal from the base of the tail to the mouth. A cut is then made on the insides of the front legs to join the belly incision. The skin is teased away from the body with a sharp knife. Never cut off the head, but dress it out as carefully as in the cased method.

These open-handled pelts must be shaped; square for raccoon, round for beaver. This can be done by



tacking the pelt in the desired shape on a board or wall, stretching it slightly. It is then ready for scraping.



Tails of animals should also be skinned out, with the exceptions of muskrats, opossums, and beaver. One of the easiest ways to skin out a tail is with an umbrella rib which is grooved down the center. Insert it beneath the skin on the underside of the tail. Place a sharp knife point in the groove of the rib and run the knife the length of the tail, making a long, straight cut. With open-handled pelts, the tail should be flattened out with a square of hardware cloth as shown in the above drawing.

Pelts must be completely dry before they are finally removed from the stretchers. If not, they will complete their shrinkage without the control of the stretcher, and their value will shrink also. They should not be hurried in this drying, however, and should be kept out of the sun and way from artificial heat. Never use salt or alum or any preservative.

Fox and coyote skins should be removed from the stretchers before they are completely dry, and turned fur side out, after which they can be put back on the stretcher to finish drying.

But although your pelts are now stretched and dried, you're still not out of the woods. Correct packaging and shipping of furs is extremely important. Check again

to be sure that all fat and flesh is cleaned from the pelts, or they may spoil in transit. Another thing to avoid is slipping cased pelts inside each other. It's always a good idea to provide some sort of ventilation for your fur package, such as having small holes in the shipping box. Another good angle is to wrap your furs in heavy burlap, sewing the package tightly shut. Never wrap green pelts in airtight paper, for that's another chance for spoilage to set in.

Handling furs correctly may take a little more time, but the fur buyer will appreciate it. So will you, when they send your check. —J. M.

WARDEN'S TALES

Here's another one about last pheasant season. Wesley Ashby, in charge of Johnson and Iowa counties, was on patrol in the Amana vicinity when he spotted five hunters with his binoculars. Wes knew four of the hunters, but the fifth was a stranger.

As he approached the party, one of the hunters said "Wes, I want you to meet Roy Rogers of Hollywood." Sure enough, it was Roy Rogers, carrying a conventional shotgun instead of six-shooters.

"Everyone had a license," Wes said, "which made me very happy. Every kid in the country would be against me if I had to arrest the King of the Cowboys."

According to Dave Fisher, a conservation officer is a marked man. When he had the territory of Des Moines and Henry counties, he found that the local conservation officer is one of the most talked about men in the area.



One morning Dave found some illegal set lines in the Skunk River and came back the next day to find the man who set them. The culprit finally showed up, took one look at Dave, and said, "Oh! I know who you are!" which surprised Dave,

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Jim Sherman Photo.
 "The duck bottoms look like a tenement district. Shacks, brush houses and other domiciles of questionable worth have sprung up like a crop of mushrooms."

GREAT DREAMS IN THE MARSHES

The duck bottoms look like a tenement district. Shacks, brush houses, and other domiciles of questionable worth have sprung up like a crop of mushrooms. Each house (duck blind) has a lot of promise attached to it. Great dreams have gone into the building of the structures. Mouths have watered as the builders have thought of limits of teal and mallards. Yes, and these same would-be construction engineers have sweated and slaved to make something out of nothing! If in civilized life we expected that much of them, they would say that Siberia were better. But when man goes hunting he can take punishment like a beast . . . and like it. He can be wet to his shoulders, frozen fore and aft . . . fingers numb and feet desensitized . . . belly empty and eyes bloodshot from brush and weeds . . . torn coat and broken watch; yes, and a dozen other handicaps, but hunting is a great sport!

I'd like to be my wife on the opening morning of duck season! I mean she comes into the kitchen at about 6 a.m., will she be sick! With a kitchen reeking from burned toast and dirty hunting clothes, she'll turn up her nose as she jerks the door open to the outside. Oh for some fresh air! Her sink is littered with broken egg shells and bacon rind. The kitchen table is a perfect mess . . . jelly and toast crumbs have been ground into the butter dish . . . coffee spilled . . . and dirty dishes everywhere. How could four fellows leave such a mess?

But, listen, sister, suppose you were the hunter who did all this! Here's part of that story. For more than five months you have been looking forward to the opening day. The night before you didn't sleep a wink—waiting for the alarm to go off . . . and it never did! Every half hour shooting a flashlight at

the old alarm clock, and ma yelling from the corner, "What's wrong with you. Go to sleep." But it isn't that easy. You can sleep any night, but tonight is the eve of the duck season. A thousand thoughts run through your mind: Will Jack be on time? Will Art get here? How about Gaylord, did we tell him to be here by 4 a.m.? Ah, what a haunting a good imagination can give a man. I hope some slicker doesn't beat me to my blind. Worry, worry, worry. I can't sleep. Why don't they have a television program that lasts all night. I can't stand this. So up I get, and it is only 2:45 a.m. But at least I'm up.

I sneak into the bathroom to dress but stumble over junior's shoes! I hit a medicine cabinet reaching for the light switch . . . knocked over a bottle of cough syrup . . . boy, is that stuff sticky! Another yell from the bedroom and I realize that I better use extreme caution. I'm not away from the house yet. She might throw a foot down, and the other boys would go alone.

About this time I hear a commotion on the porch, crazy pals of mine trying to sneak in as quietly as they can and of all the misfortune they have to crash into four empty milk bottles . . . two broken and one rolled onto the lawn.

Useless to attempt silence any more, the entire household is awake. Mother comes down and feigns a smile as she greets my pals, they in turn feign great joy at seeing her. Queer people, these human beings!

I mention all these handicaps to hunting, friend, because you may be one who has not started to hunt, and you have an idea that you should. I have now fairly warned you, and with the warning will give a bit of advice. Take to hunting anyway, it's worth every effort!—*Bellevue Leader*.

The mink has scent glands similar to those of skunks. However, he depends on his fighting ability for protection more than his scent.

WHO IS A SPORTSMAN?

By Ed Johnson

The term, "sportsman," often is stretched to cover some peculiar characters. This forthright analysis rules out a lot of counterfeits.

The editors of this magazine asked me to write my definitions of a sportsman.

Not all educated persons are intelligent nor are all hunters and fishermen sportsmen. However, I believe the comparative percentages are higher for educated persons being intelligent than hunters and fishermen being sportsmen.

While not a dictionary definition, I believe a sportsman is a man who faithfully obeys, without compromising, the laws of nature, the game and fish laws, and decencies of human behavior. I often read where an outdoorsman is described as a "real," "true," or "good" sportsman. Frankly, I believe a man is either a sportsman or he is not, and there are no comparative degrees of a sportsman.

Certainly, various sportsmen distinguished themselves for notable accomplishments or by setting examples but sincerity is the common bond. Too many people these days have an elastic definition of a sportsman that is largely tailored for the person or situation.

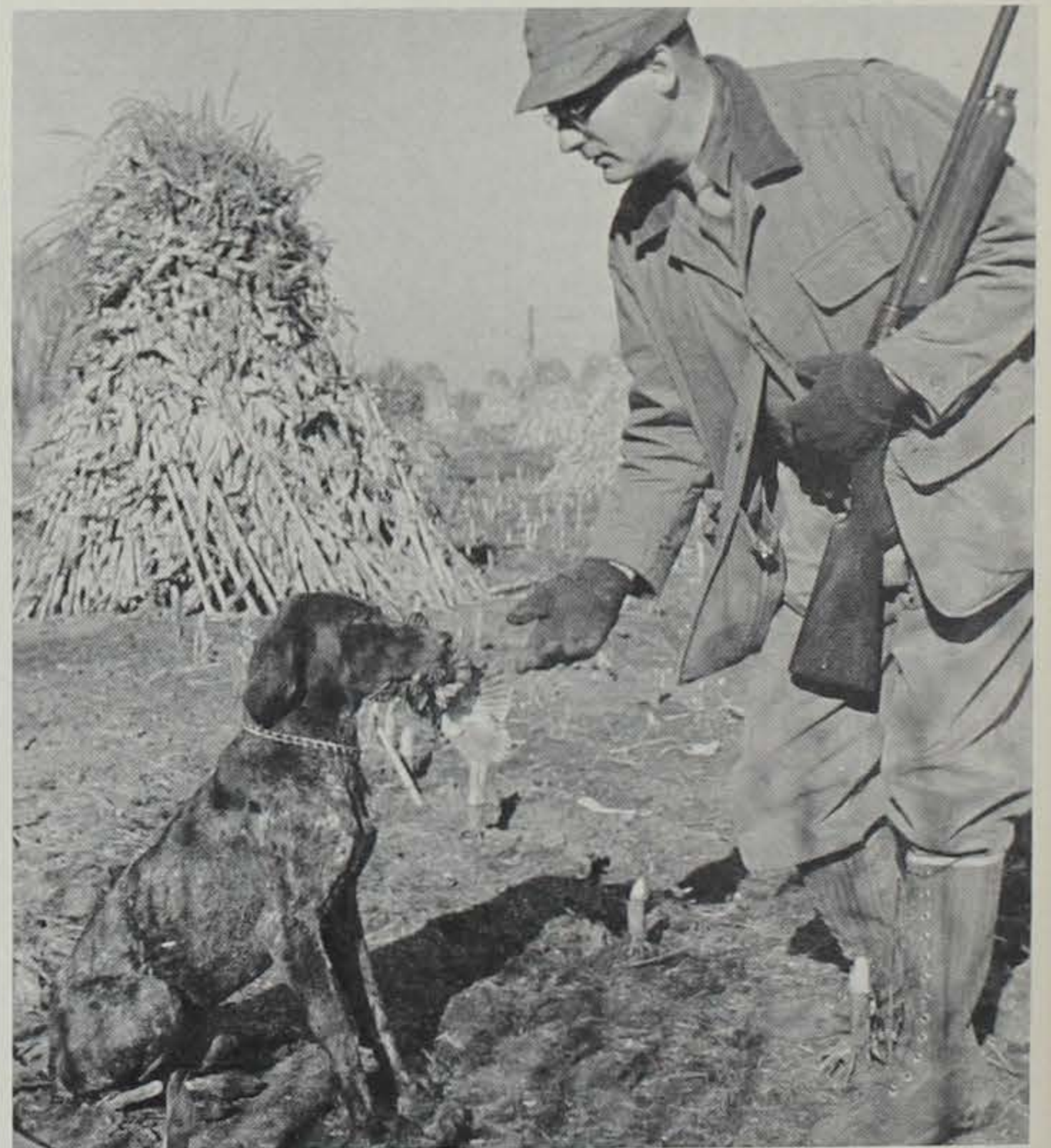
It is a curious fact that often the worst vandal is a skilled hunter or an exceptional angler. His enthusiasm and greed overshadows the precepts of character or fair play, which we like to call sportsmanship.

I know of a hunter in a mountain county of West Virginia who is a skilled woodsman and a remarkable shot. It is common knowledge too that he kills wild turkeys, grouse and squirrels out of season, and is reputed to be a chronic deer-spotlighter. Yet I once attended a sportsmen's meeting in his locality and he was affectionately introduced as a "real" sportsman.

A few springs ago I was trout fishing with an official of a sportsmen's club. He was fishing the pool below when I saw that he had hooked a nice fish and was carefully playing it on his surging fly-rod. I hurried down where I could watch my acquaintance land the fish. Finally he netted a beautiful smallmouth bass, which was illegal to keep, and he calmly dropped it in his creel. Although I was not trying to be "noble," I asked, "You're not going to keep that bass?" I was so stubborn in my argument that he finally released the fish. This man was popularly regarded as an "outstanding" sportsman and was elected as an officer in his club.

In the last two deer seasons I have noticed in the Conservation Commission's list of prosecutions that two of the convicted violators were either past or current presidents of sportsmen's clubs. Of course, these examples are exceptions but it serves to point out how loosely the definition of sportsman is used. As you are more likely to find Christians in a church, the percentages are good

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Jim Sherman Photo.

"I believe a sportsman is a man who faithfully obeys without compromising the laws of nature, the game and fish laws and the decencies of human behavior."



An Osage orange hedgerow on its way out via the bulldozer route. Notice the rabbit tracks in the foreground. Jim Sherman Photo.

Hedgerow . . .

(Continued from page 81)

"Bodark." Another name in the Midwest is "Osajern," or simply "Hedge."

It was called "bow wood" because of its tough, elastic wood which the Indians (and frontier whites) prized for hunting bows. In the early 1800's a good Osage orange bow was valued as equal to a horse and blanket. It is still preferred by a few archers, although the new laminated wood and plastic bows are more popular with most. "Osajern" was friendly to the pioneers in other ways. From the bark of the roots and from chips of its lovely yellow wood they were able to boil out a yellow dyestuff with which to stain their homespun. And kids, even to the present day, love to take the rough, bright green "oranges" and war with one another. Plenty of moms have tried vainly to wash the sticky, congealed sap out of the youngsters' hair following such a battle.

Osage orange was a good hedge plant for its day and time. was native to the region where it was used, it was readily available and it grew rapidly on the rich prairie soils. Its use was not strictly limited to the prairies, however. The old plantations of the South used Osage orange to delineate their boundaries, and many easterners, appreciating its orange-like foliage, took the plant into their yards as an ornamental.

But chiefly, Osage orange was a hedgerow plant. Like the crowded, tight little fields of Normandy, the wider, expansive fields of the Midwest became walled-in with Osage orange. Trysting couples from 1860 to as late as 1920 frequently caught their glimpses of the moon between the spreading arms of the "Osajern" fencerows, as old Dobbin plodded slowly down the

country lanes. A buggy rider was almost constantly hedged-in by the thick, thorny fence throughout the Midwest.

But there were forces at work that meant the overthrow of the Osage orange. In the late 19th century someone invented barbed wire, and prairie farmers found that it was quicker and easier to put in a wire fence. The old Osage orange required a couple of years of cultivation, besides the planting efforts. Osage orange needed more or less constant attention, and special tools (now just museum pieces) had been invented to facilitate trimming the thorny fence. Wire was put in and forgotten. Machinery made wire cheaper.

World War I and the years following hastened the decline of the hedgerow. High prices made the farmers want to utilize every inch of ground and the long "turn-around" of the old horse plow was a thing of the past with the new tractors. Tractors meant a farmer could handle more land, and rubber-tired tractors had too many tires punctured by the thorny canes of the Osage orange. Furthermore, Osage orange claimed a few yards of ground for its own sustenance and wire fences draw nothing from the earth in competition with crops. Down went the hedges; professional crews bulldozed them out, and their burning made the hazy blue smoke drift over the land for days.

Wildlife lost a good food and cover source as well as travel lanes when the hedges were swept from the fields. Men turned instead to grassy field borders (they looked so much neater) but they found to their chagrin that increasing hordes of harmful insects were despoiling their crops. A moment's reflection will show why. Most of our cultivated crops are grasses. A grassy border is much more likely to harbor grass-

injurious insects. Grassy borders furnish no nesting spots for insect-loving birds. An Ohio scientist found that a shrubby border as considerably better from many standpoints so far as cereal crops were concerned. Sportsmen learned that shrubby hedgerows helped wildlife, too. Quail, turkeys, squirrels, and furbearers were turned out of their source of food and their homes when the hedgerow passed.

But the Osage orange did not pass completely out of the picture. Agriculturalists found that fence posts from Osage orange lasted from 10 to 40 years, rot-resistant and strong. This wood is one of the best for fence posts. It was also good for erosion control and as windbreaks for cattle on the windy prairie lands. In these capacities it still proudly serves today, but a new shrub has come into its own now. Multiflora rose, requiring less space and taking less space from the soil, is answering the need for shrubby fencing that modern farmers know is better than a grass border. The fencerow has taken another step in its evolution, and the old makes way for the new. The "Bodark" has had its day.—*Missouri Conservationist*.

FOOLING THE DUCKS

Four local gents have been getting up before daybreak every day since the season opened. Fortified with a husky breakfast they have jaunted to their favorite spots . . . but as we gather they have yet to shoot at a wild fowl. Thursday morning they met as usual . . . loaded their gear in their cars and went into the house for their breakfast. Following breakfast they went out to the cars, unloaded their equipment and went back into the house and played pitch until office hours. That's what you call foolin' the ducks!—*Marshalltown Times Republican*.

WILD GEESE CALLING

Have you noticed the honking of the wild geese far overhead and usually at night. How mysterious and awesome it is.

We wonder what they are saying and if it is a goose that is lost or are they just calling one another to keep themselves together. There is an urgency in their call that always makes us wonder what will happen to them on this dangerous journey.

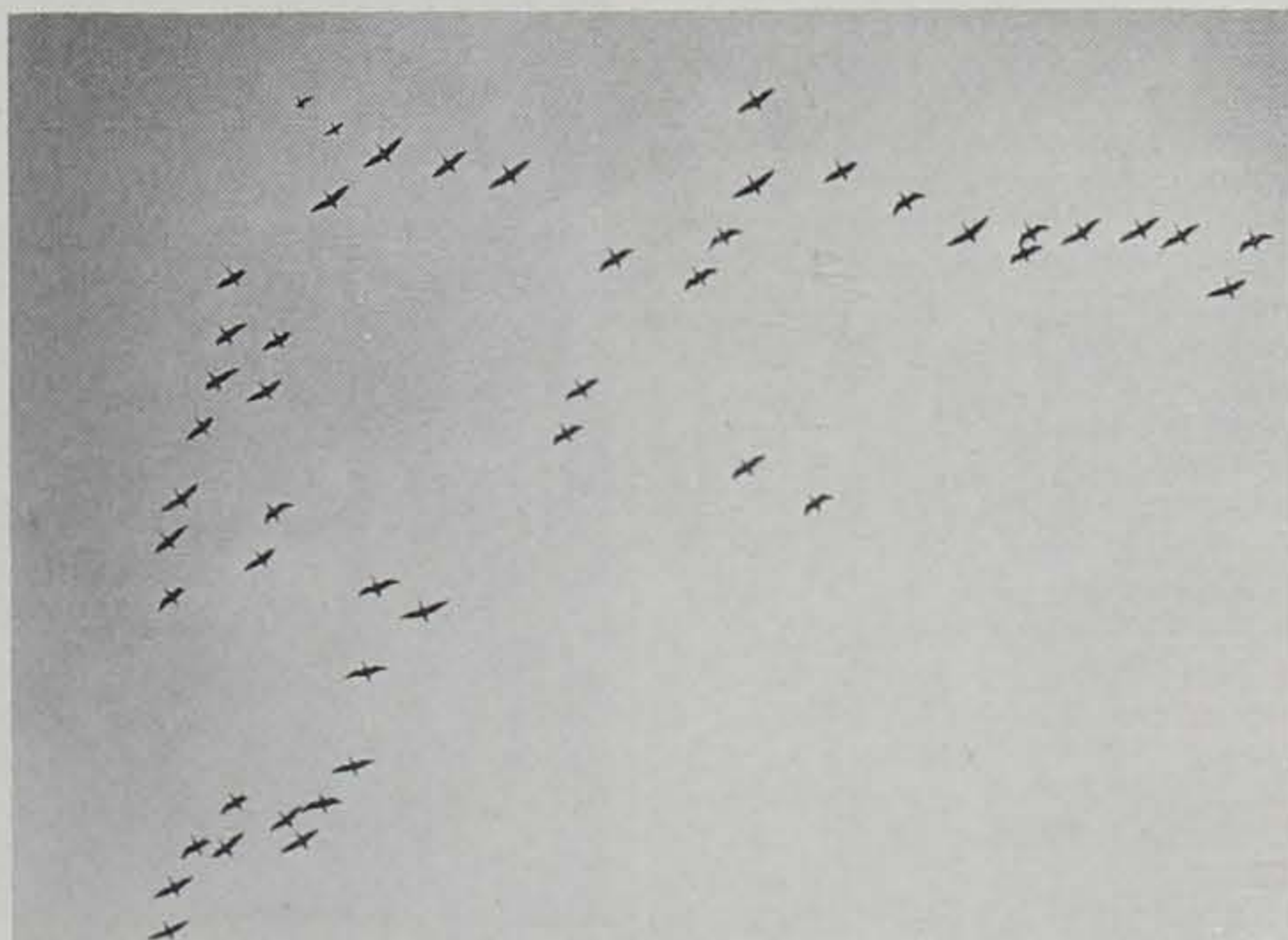
They tell us they fly a mile high and in the well-known "V" formation, with a strong male leader at the front and scouts out at each side and to the rear, in a really perfect organization. In other words, each follows the one ahead of him and the scouts at the rear and the side keep them in line.

As they near the Gulf swamp-lands they fly lower. They come from all directions from Alaska and Labrador and converge together as they near the Gulf feeding places. So in southern Mississippi and Florida, flights of geese are noticed almost daily during October and November.

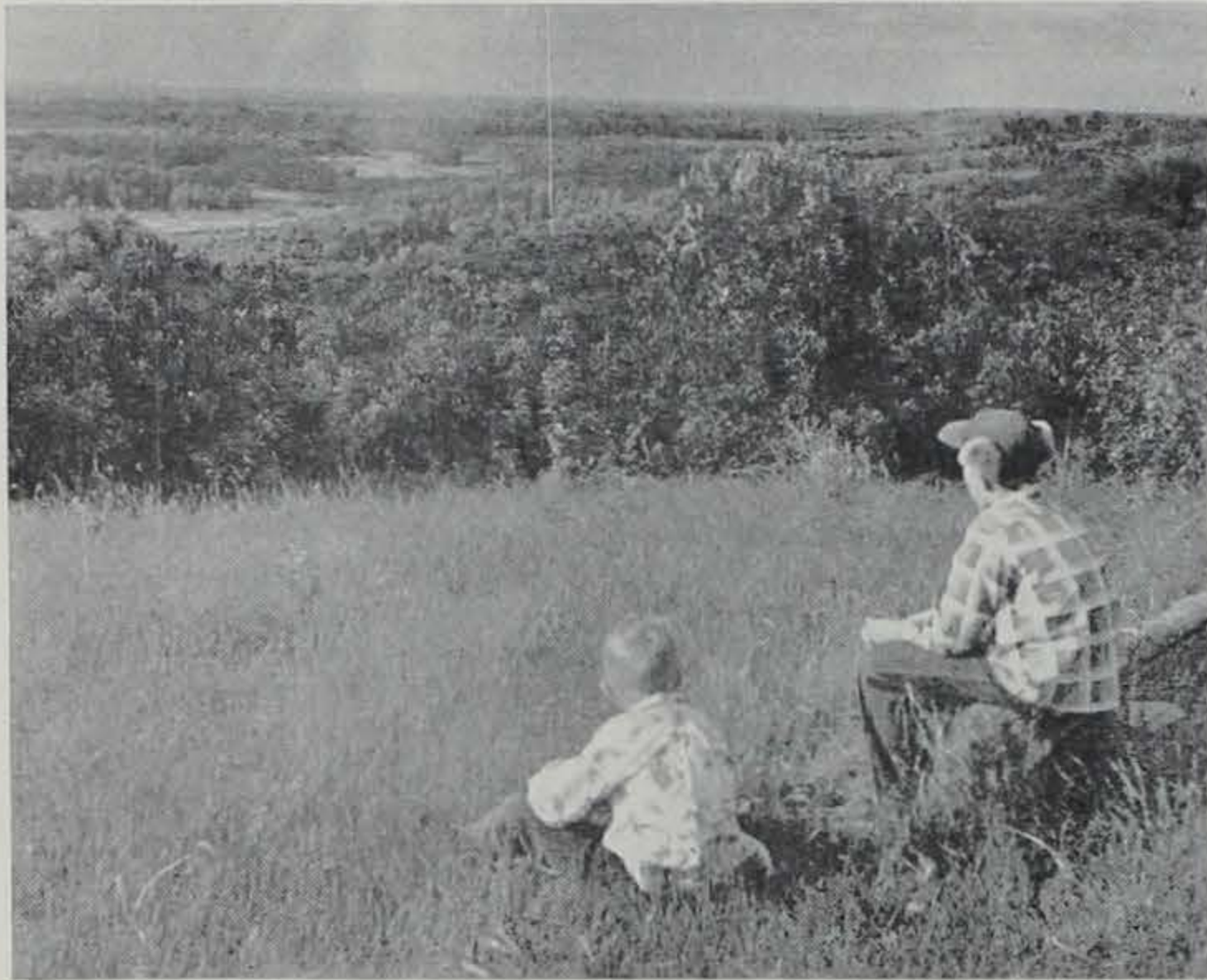
But how do the wild geese know when and where to go? Geese often leave their northern haunts weeks ahead of freezing weather. Who tells them? It seems to be generally agreed at least that once they start the geese do have an excellent sense of direction.

But birds do make mistakes. A flight of some 200 Bobolinks came on a ship 200 miles off the coast of Georgia. Obviously they were lost or stray goose will spend a day or two around his barn lot, perhaps visiting domestic relations and sometimes love affairs take place.

One farm boy decided he would capture the visitor and have him for Thanksgiving dinner. But the goose was off in a sudden and frightening thunderation and the boy told us later he was a beautiful bird and he was glad that he got away.—C. L. N., *Anamosa Eureka*.



There is an urgency in their call that always makes us wonder what will happen to them on this dangerous journey. Jim Sherman Photo.



Oak Grove State Park is most interesting to the visitor because of the fine view it affords of the country to the west. Jim Sherman Photo.

Much Has Happened . . .

(Continued from page 81)

not gone as far in the change from peat to coal.

The subsoil of the park area, 100 feet or more in thickness, is directly underlain by shale of the Cretaceous system. There are piles of this shale, a thin flakey material, in the northern part of the park, near the base of the valley side. These piles evidently accumulated as a result of some small-scale prospecting for coal many years ago. Small crystals of gypsum of the variety called selenite occur intermingled with the flakes of shale. Selenite looks somewhat like mica. It is flexible but not elastic. Many of these crystals are perfectly formed.

Fragments of septarian limestone concretions also are present on these piles of shale. Concretions are rounded objects formed in the shale by subsurface waters. Strains set up in their formation cause them to crack. The cracks later fill up with mineral matter, thus forming a septarian concretion. The filled cracks, called veins, are composed of the mineral calcite, the same as the limestone. The septarian concretions on the shale piles have been broken up by weathering.

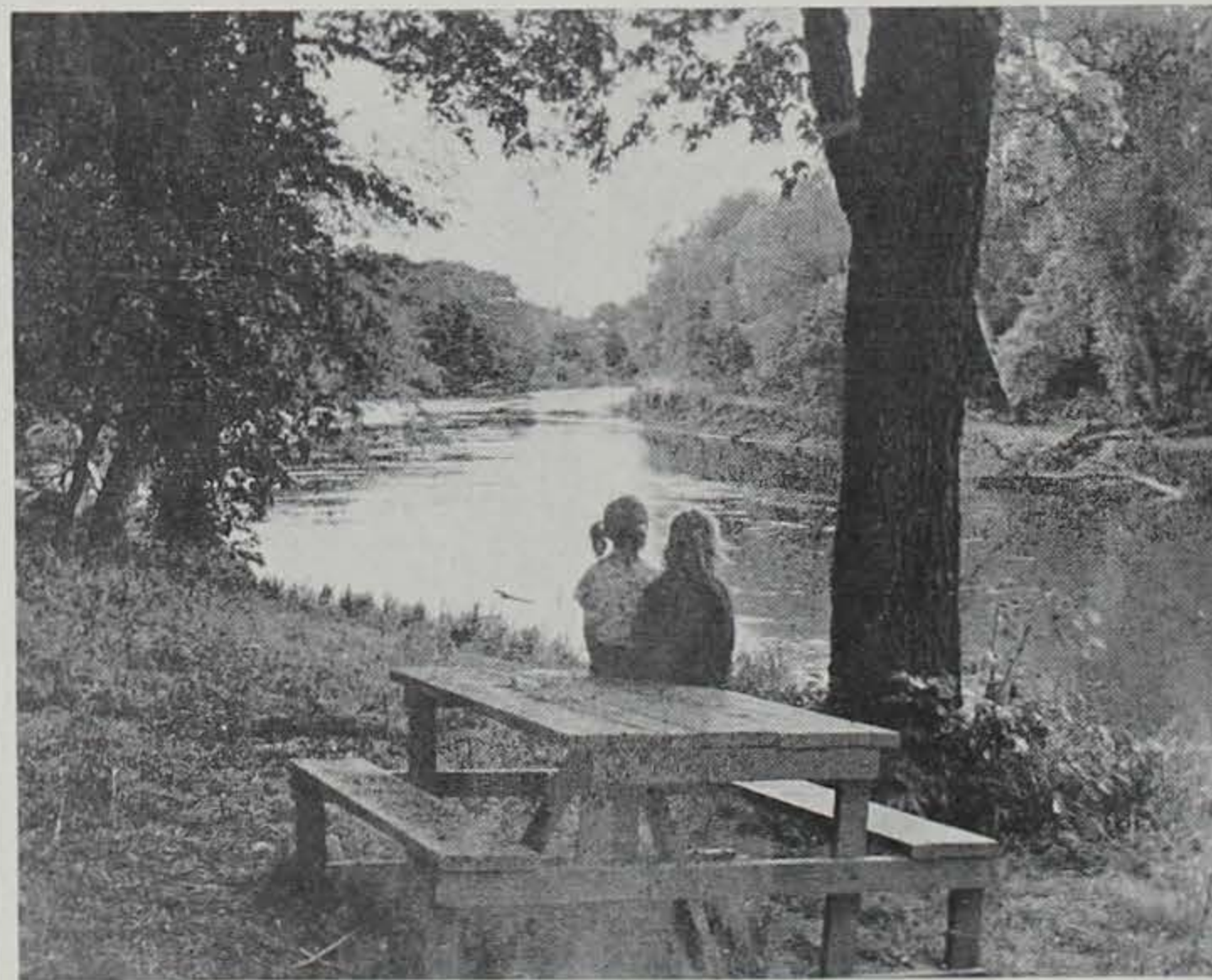
These beds of the Cretaceous system here lie in a shallow syncline. A syncline is a downfold in the stratified rocks. The dips of the rocks are very gentle. They dip northward from Sioux City and southward from the northern part of Lyon County, and the deepest part of the syncline is in the vicinity of the park. Of course this syncline cannot be "seen." It can only be recognized from a study of the exposures of Cretaceous rocks along the Big Sioux River, and of well records.

After the Cretaceous sea had been in existence for millions of years a great change occurred.

The sea bottom was slowly raised and the water withdrew. Then the land became subject to weathering and erosion by wind and water, just as it is today. The up-raised sea bottom became dissected into ridges and valleys by running water. It was probably at this time also that the valley of the Big Sioux came into existence.

Millions of years went by and then came the change of climate which brought down the glaciers. They left a deposit of glacial drift over everything. The park area and all the surrounding country has a deposit of drift above the bedrock.

In close association with the glaciation, deposits of loess were formed, and these crown the hills in the park and all the country to the east. Loess is a wind-blown material, and here it had its source in the wide bottom land of



The later part of the geological story of Oak Grove State Park is one of erosion by running water during post-glacial times. Jim Sherman Photo.

the Big Sioux River to the west. The belief is that as the glaciers retreated to the north they released great floods of meltwater during their intervals of melting. The flood waters spread out over the wide valley of the Big Sioux, leaving deposits of clay, silt, and sand as they subsided. The deposits dried out as a barren flat. Then high winds swept the lighter clay and silt into the air. The prevailing winds were from the west and so the dust clouds swept eastward. The country east of the Big Sioux valley had vegetation growing on it at this time, which served to catch the coarser silt. Most of the clay was blown far eastward and widely dispersed, but the silt accumulated to a thickness of as much as 100 feet on the upland near the river.

The later part of the story is one of erosion by running water during post-glacial times. The Big Sioux River, rounding a curve, cut a steep bank in the vicinity of the park. Then water running down the bank curved ravines and gullies which have grown to their present size. Thus much of the park area is classified as broken land.

Recent changes in the course of the Big Sioux have carried it away from the side of the valley, so there is a narrow lowland area below the bluff.

From the lookout point not far from the park entrance there is a splendid view of the country west of the Big Sioux, far into South Dakota. From this elevation the flood plain appears to extend several miles westward. However, much of this flat land is terrace, or second bottom, at an elevation of about 20 feet above the flood plain. This represents an ancient level of the river. The terrace is underlain with deposits of sand and gravel.

Beyond the terrace in South

Dakota lie the Newell Hills at a slightly higher level. This area is one of ridges and valleys, a hilly country, although the hills are not very high.

So—although on a quiet Sunday afternoon it may appear that "nothing has happened here," as a matter of fact much has happened. Those happenings, as revealed in topography, subsoil, and bedrock, add to our pleasure in this park area.

Wardens Tales . . .

(Continued from page 83)

never having had seen the man before. "I knew you the minute you came down the bank. The boys said you were a big fellow with a mole high on your cheek just under your left eye."

Ecil Benson, conservation officer in charge of Lee and Van Buren counties, has a story about mathematical odds. While checking hunting licenses on the opening day of squirrel season, he examined the license of Mr. C. P. Conlee. Mr. Conlee showed Ecil his new license, purchased on September 12. Its serial number was 66176. He then produced last year's license, purchased on September 12, 1951. It was also 66176.

If anyone would care to figure out the probability of this happening, Ecil would like to hear of it. Probably about one chance in five or six million.



FISHING A TONIC? MUST BE!

Ohio conservation officers were checking fishing licenses last summer.

They stared unbelievably when one angler handed them a license yielding the following information:

Name—George Cunningham
Address—Toledo
Age—110

It was on the level. Cunningham, a Negro, was born a slave in Tennessee in 1842. Officers reported they found him spry, keen of mind, and with a string of fish. "Until someone contests it," The Ohio Conservation Bulletin carefully hedged, "Cunningham will hold the title of Ohio's oldest fisherman." — *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin.*



Jim Sherman Photo.

There are fourteen thousand one hundred farm ponds in Iowa. Many provide splendid recreation opportunities.

Farm Ponds . . .

(Continued from page 81)

farmer who was interested in farm ponds. He likes to fish, but admitted he was a one-gallon fisherman more interested in bullheads than bass. But unfortunately a bullhead pond doesn't work out. A pond stocked with bullheads alone usually results in a large population of stunted fish. Growth is retarded and the bullheads become a race of dwarfs fighting to make ends meet.

We brought that up to show that many desirable fish just don't work out in farm ponds. Take channel catfish. They have been used, but they do not reproduce well in ponds and an owner has to stock new fish every year. Northern pike have also been tried, but they need plenty of flowing water for breeding, usually in shallow, marshy areas. Smallmouth bass do not work well since they require cold, clear water with sand and gravel shallows for spawning. Carp, of course, are out of the question. They reproduce all too well, and soon the pond becomes useless for anything but a hog wallow.

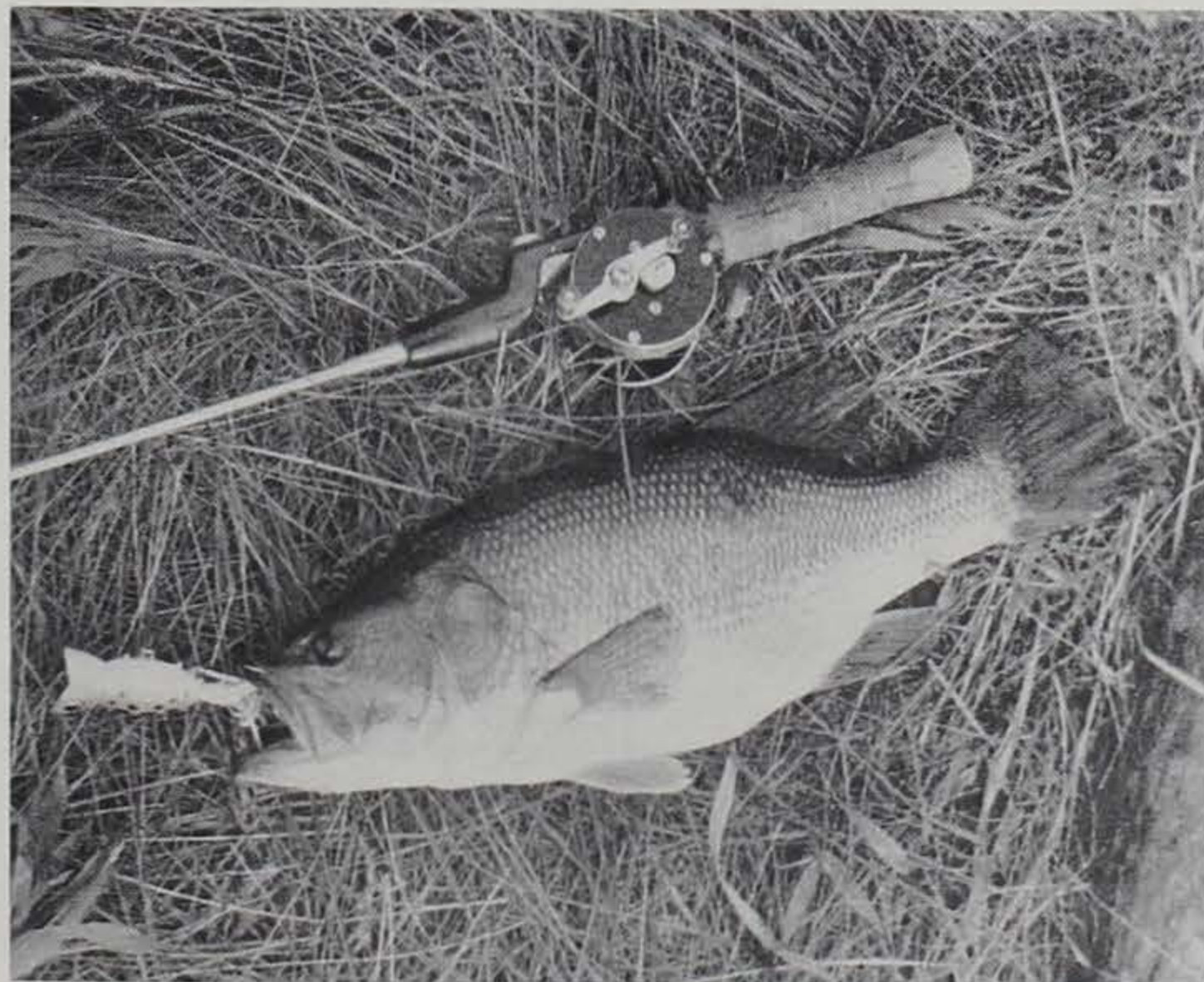
The best results in Iowa have been from the largemouth bass-bluegill stocking. This combination has a lot of wrinkles which haven't been ironed out yet, but it's the best idea so far. Several European countries have been so impressed by bass-bluegill success in ponds that they have requested fish for foreign stocking.

The success of this combination lies in the fact that bluegills spawn throughout the summer, furnishing a constant supply of bass food. Without the bass, bluegills in ponds would reach tremendous, stunted populations like bullheads, and no one would be happy. But when controlled by bass, the bluegills reach a good size and furnish fine fishing for mom and the kids. As for yourself, there will probably be some

bass around that can put a permanent set in your rod. Four and five pound fish aren't unusual in Iowa ponds.

The beauty of having a stocked pond is that you have to fish it if you want fishing. That is, the main problem of farm ponds is underfishing, not overfishing. The pond must be kept in balance if the fish are to thrive. So, with clear conscience, you can take your tackle and say, "Sorry, dear, but I have to go down and balance the pond. Don't really want to, but it's like mending fence . . . it just has to be done."

Any farm pond with the right design will be stocked without cost by the Conservation Commission. There are certain requirements to be met for stocking, though, and for good reasons. In Iowa, no fish pond should be less than eight feet deep. If less than that, severe winter kills can result. The pond should have a watershed of



Jim Sherman Photo.

Four- and five-pound largemouth bass are not unusual in Iowa's farm ponds, and many much larger fish are taken each year.

RESTOCK GEESE

If all goes well, Wisconsin may soon be producing many more wild Canada geese.

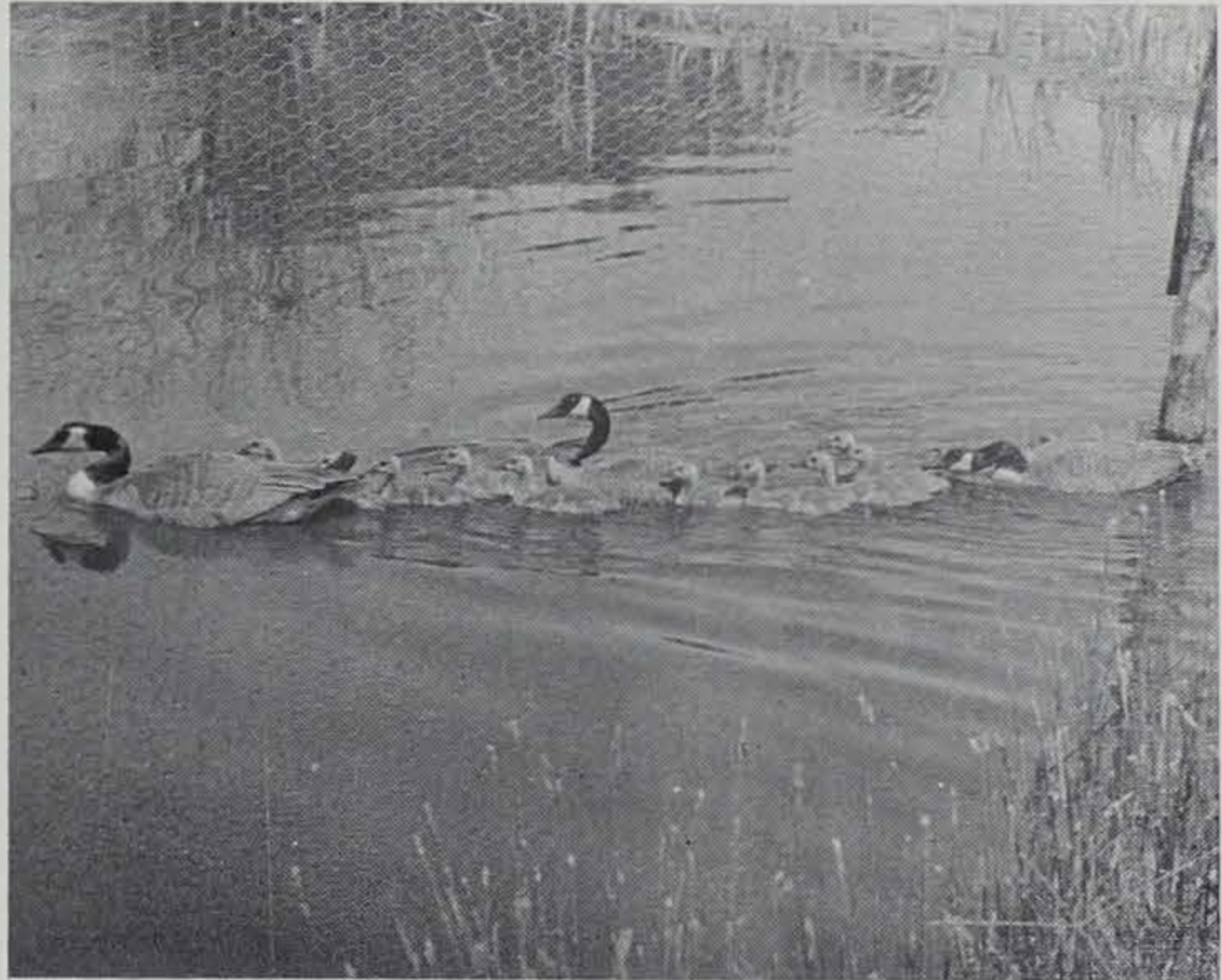
Captive flocks that are allowed to raise free-flying young are held at Horicon marsh, Necedah National Wildlife refuge and Green Bay. The young then return to the same area to breed.

At least 20 such wild pairs are

known to have raised broods this summer. This is an increase over 1951.

Other geese have been released at Crex Meadows in Burnett County and the Rainbow flowage in Oneida County.

So far our goose restoration program is paying off in more wild broods produced and more areas restocked.—*Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin.*



Jim Sherman Photo.

Two resident flocks of Canada geese are being reared in Iowa. One at Rice Lake and one at Ingham High.

from eight to twelve acres, depending on location. If less than eight acres there may not be enough water, and if more than twelve, there will be too much and dam will go out. And finally, the pond should be more than one-half acre in size. If smaller it is difficult to keep the pond in balance.

In general, a relatively small pond is better than a large one because of the management head-

aches of a big pond. Ten one-acre ponds will produce more fish and be easier to take care of than one ten-acre pond.

Farm ponds can add a lot of sparkle to rural life. Some owners go all out and sod the banks, plant trees without long tap roots, and put up picnic tables and fireplaces. The end result is their own private park and a fine place to spend summer evenings, to say nothing of ice skating parties in the winter. To top it all off, the best bluegill and bass fishing is late in the day, when the family is together and has some leisure time.

The trouble is, your wife will probably note this good fishing early in the game. You can bet that if you have a fishing woman and a good pond in back of the house, there'll be a lot of late, cold suppers.

Some tasty snacks can be easily prepared when you are fishing or hunting and no pots or pans are needed. If you want a meal of meat and spuds, simply wrap them up in a double thickness of foil and place the package in a bed of hot coals.

The sharp, curved teeth of the northern pike and other carnivorous fish are not used for chewing food but merely to hold and direct the food down the throat. B.C.

No bird of prey except the shrike has the power of song.

*For your hunting buddy,
your boy, or your farmer friend*

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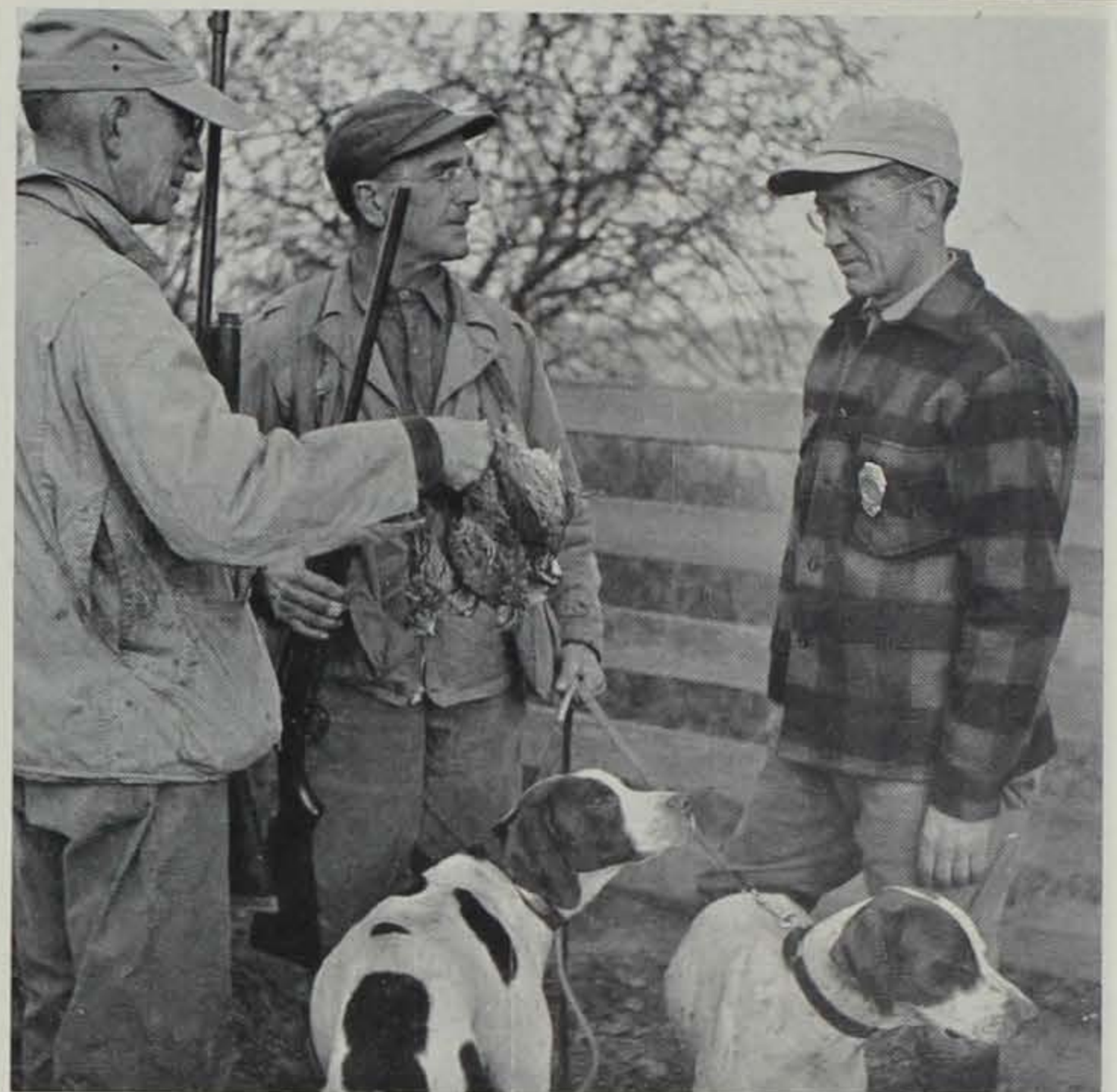
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Jim Sherman Photo. "A man may violently disagree with game and fish laws for their administration, but a sportsman obeys them."

Sportsman . . .

(Continued from page 84)
for finding sportsmen in a sportsmen's club.

Simple human nature give the definition of a sportsman its most serious challenge. How many anglers would release a five-pound bass they caught out of season when no one was around? How many hunters would lower their guns if they flushed an illegal ringneck far back in the country or would hold their fire if a flock of geese flew over low, even though it were unlawful?

There are men—doctors, lawyers, churchmen, farmers and others—who are recognized as outstanding citizens yet who will not hesitate to hunt squirrels in September when they are cutting on hickory and are easy to kill. Yet they will justify or excuse themselves by saying "the law came in too late" or "other people are hunting and I might as well get mine while the getting's good." But these people would be highly insulted if you accused them of not being sportsmen.

Sportsmen are of many personalities and are being present in every segment of our society. They are crusaders, zealots, dignified, critics, or meek, but **sportsmen are characteristically honest with their sport and its government.**

A man may violently disagree with game and fish laws for their administration but a sportsman obeys them. A sportsman is, above all, courteous and respectful of the rights of others along the stream or in the field.

Of all the best attributes of a sportsman, none overshadows tolerance for the rights and opinions of others. Honest disagreements

founded this nation and it is the lubricant of the conservation movement.

A sportsman is a man who has a vision of tomorrow today, with a genuine sense of fairness and honesty to others and himself.—*Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin.*

**PELICANS VISIT EMMETS-
BURG**

An estimated 400 pelicans have been visiting Emmetsburg on their annual trip to the south. We first heard of them when a member of our staff (who shall remain unidentified) rushed back to tell us a lot of wild geese were flying over town. We got into the act by rushing out into the street and looking up at 400 pelicans. These birds are great artists on the wing, soaring in pleasing circles and gentle dives and all "keeping step." This might not be as easy as it looks, especially if you had a nose as big as a pelican's to throw you off balance. Half the town watched the birds, off and on, and we suppose the old pelican rhyme, which was strictly risqué in the days of our youth, was recalled dozens of times. We heard a new version we'd never heard before but we're skipping it. Their beaks can hold a lot of fish, as we all know. Floyd Conlon said a bunch of pelicans took over a slough near his place the other day and it was something to see, the way they scooped up the minnows like so many steam shovels. It's early for these white, goose-necked birds to be here, which we hope doesn't mean an early winter.—*Emmetsburg Democrat.*

The estimated maximum speed of the fastest fish is approximately 30 miles per hour. E.R.