

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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OLD BOB: IOWA'S WILD GHOST

THE "ART" OF TRAPPING COYOTES

By Tom Berkley
Area Game Manager

Iowa's "brush wolves," which are really big coyotes, have been increasing in the state for many years. They're smart, have the ability to adapt themselves quickly to changes in environment, and can live almost at man's back door — usually at man's expense. They are wary and clever, but in spite of common belief they are not hard to trap.

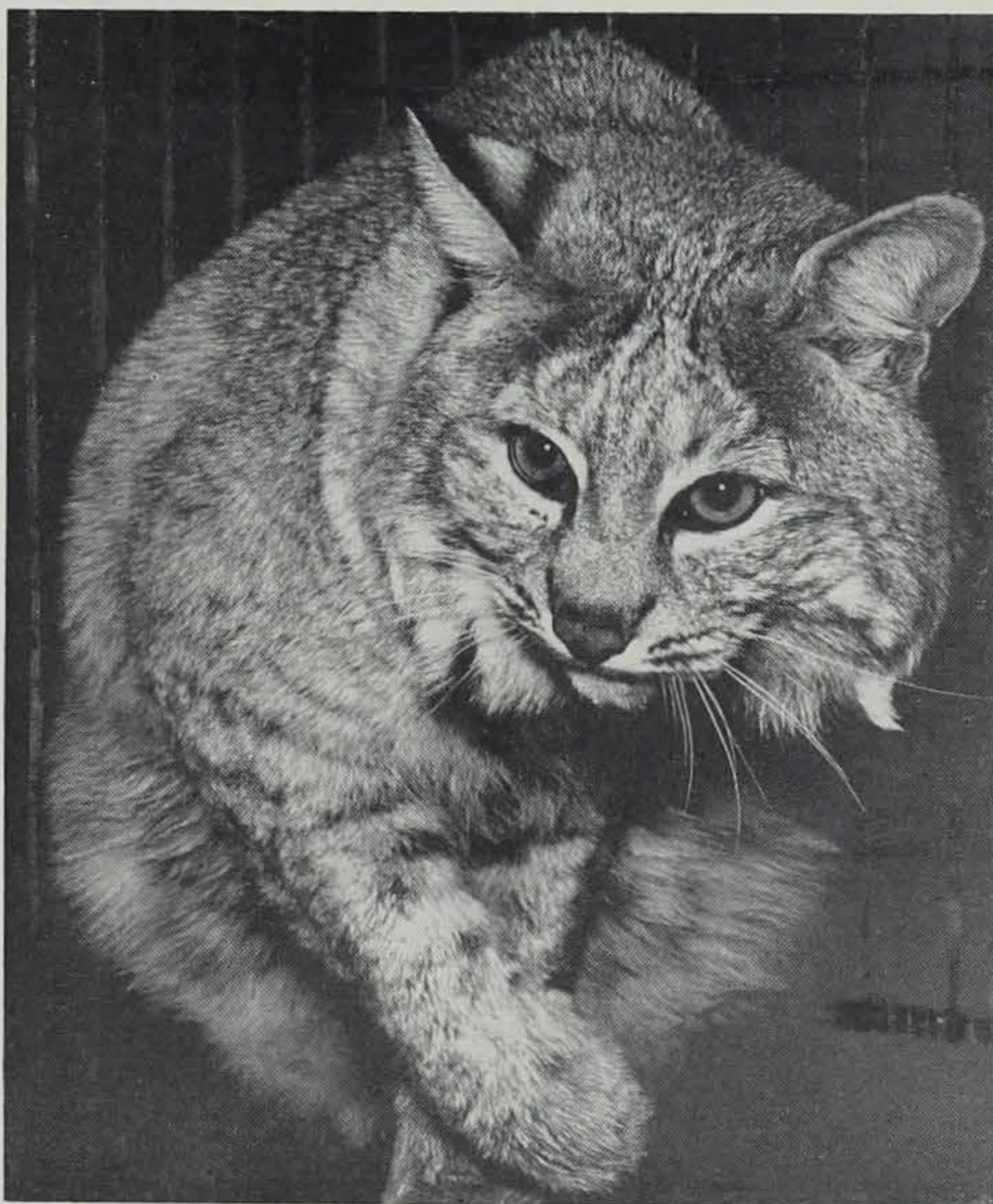
To trap coyotes, you'll need some No. 3N Victor traps, a small hatchet for digging and driving stakes, a small trowel, a dirt sifter, some drag hooks, trap pan covers (five by seven inch waxed paper), a packsack, scent, trap stakes, and a three-foot square canvas ground cloth to kneel on while making sets.

If there is any real secret in trapping coyotes, it is locating the trap set in the proper place. You won't catch a coyote in an area not used by him. The travel lanes of coyotes are most often on open ridges, meadows and pasture lands. The animals commonly use trails of cattle and sheep, farm work roads, and dry ditches and washes. Look for coyote sign in these areas: tracks, droppings or scent posts.

Coyotes are doglike in establishing scent posts; places used for deposits of urine along their regular travel routes. These scent posts may be pieces of dead wood, brushes, or dry cow or horse manure, and are used not only by local animals, but are also visited by coyotes just travelling through. After depositing urine on the scent posts, the animal invariably scratches around the area like a dog. Because of this habit, sets made as scent posts established by the animals themselves are very effective.

If it is impossible to find a natural scent post, make an artificial one. Good fox and coyote

(Continued on page 72)



Des Moines Register Photo.
A portrait of Iowa's finest hunter. Old Bob resembles a huge, stub-tailed housecat until he's cornered, and there the resemblance ends.

Canoeing The Yellow River—Volney To The Mississippi

By Ralph Church and
Harold Allen

The Yellow is one of the smaller streams of Iowa's "Little Switzerland" district, but without question is one of the state's most beautiful and interesting rivers.

This little river and its narrow forty mile valley has seen a lot of history. In prehistoric times Indians built burial mounds on the valley's bluffs. The earliest white explorers of the upper Mississippi knew the river by name, the French traders referring to Le Jaun Riviere as far back as the

early 1700's. The first water mill in Iowa was built on its banks in the 1830's by Lt. Jefferson Davis, later President of the Confederacy, to saw lumber for the construction of nearby Fort Crawford. In the 1850's and 1860's other mills, for grist, flour, lumber, and wool, as well as numerous towns, were located on its banks. Today the mills and most of the towns have disappeared and the canoeist seeking to rediscover their sites finds it difficult to comprehend that a century ago this valley was considered

(Continued on page 71)

Ask any hunter about Iowa bobcats. Not just the casual sportsman, but one of the boys who really works at it. He'll probably snort, give you a strange look and edge away. He's hunted for years and never seen a bobcat. He's never heard of one being shot, and has never seen tracks or signs. He'll tell you "There ain't any bobcats left."

But there are.

Oh, you won't flush them like rabbits. You'll hunt a lifetime and never see one unless you're part cat yourself. Sometime you may hear a scream from a dark, rocky valley near Lansing, or see a big, clawless pad mark in the snow of Black Hawk County. Chances are you'll never see the cat that made them. The bobcat is Iowa's wild ghost; practically never seen and almost never shot or trapped.

But now and then a bobcat turns up. Eight years ago it was believed that they were practically extinct in Iowa. Then, in the winter of 1947, Iowa fur dealers reported receiving eight pelts. There were probably others that never reached the dealers, for such pelts are valued trophies.

We called up a north Iowa conservation officer the other day and asked him, "Got any reports of bobcats up that way? Seen any, or know of any being killed?"

There was a pause at the other end of the line. "Yeah, but don't quote me—the boys up here will think I'm nuts. I found a young bobcat dead by the highway last spring. Last winter I saw two big toms crossing roads."

"Are you sure they were bobcats?"

"I got a good look at both of them. Besides, no housecat leaves tracks almost three inches across."

Last year two conservation officers trailed a wounded bobcat to his den. Crawling inside, the men found that the cat had escaped into one of several small passages off the main cave, and all the officers found was sign. The scats and other material in the cave were identified by a biologist as definitely belonging to a wildcat.

(Continued on page 70)

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1954 IOWA DEER SEASON SET

Iowa's second modern deer season has been set by the State Conservation Commission, with open season dates running from December 1 through December 12.

The season is a split one, with part of the hunting season open for bow and arrow only and the remainder of the season open both to bow and arrow and shotgun.

Deer of any age or sex may be taken by bow and arrow only from December 1, 1954 through December 12, 1954, in Cherokee, Black Hawk, Clinton, Polk, Wapello and that part of Pottawattamie County lying east of County Road V.

Deer of any age or sex may be taken with shotgun and bow and arrow from December 10 through December 12 in Lyon, Osceola, Sioux, Plymouth, Woodbury, Monona, Harrison, Mills, Fremont, Montgomery, Page, Taylor, Adams, Union, Ringgold, Decatur, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe, Guthrie, Adair, Dallas, Madison, Warren, Marion, Mahaska, Keokuk, Iowa, Johnson,



Bips II, "pointing" a squirrel. He was a gallant, bandy-legged, lop-eared, thoroughbred feist.

Cedar, Benton, Linn, Jones, Jackson, Dubuque, Delaware, Buchanan, Clayton, Fayette, Allamakee, Winneshiek, Howard, Chickasaw, Bremer, Butler, Floyd, Mitchell, Worth, Winnebago, Hancock, Kosuth and that part of Pottawattamie County lying west of County Road V.

All other counties are closed to deer hunting.

The daily bag limit is one deer, (Continued on page 69)

THE UNFORGETTABLE FEISTS

This being the hunting season, let's talk about hunting dogs. Not the blooded champions of stately grace and noble birth, but the bandy-legged heroes of a million squirrel and rabbit hunts—the feists.

Webster defines *feist* as a "small dog." The hunting feist is almost always found in the company of small boys and single shot .22's. He is of mixed ancestry and to most dog fanciers he is a nondescript mongrel. This is true, but the fanciers overlook the fact that a good feist can be a thoroughbred, too. Here are some of the things to look for in such a dog:

1. All good hunting feists are small and yip. Feist authorities say that the best hunting feist is never more than 12 or 15 inches at the shoulder. He must have a high, shrill voice and be happy to use it. He must be willing and able to get under barns, corncribs, log piles and into culverts and gooseberry thickets.

2. A good feist always runs on the bias. That is, when he travels east his foreparts are running northeast and his hindparts are trailing southwest. As he runs he sometimes holds one leg off the ground as if his foot was sore. His foot is not sore; the dog is simply saving it for later use. Or something.

3. All goot feists can go over, under or through barbed wire fences without being cut. Don't ask how they do it, but they can. While going to and from a hunting area, a feist will often carry something in his mouth to relieve the boredom of travel. This may be a stick, a stone, or a piece of corn cob.

4. A good feist must be able to climb, dig and swim expertly, and hunt constantly. He must be absolutely fearless. And every hunting feist of any value is able to salute at least three trees out of five, no matter how large the forest.

Color and shape are not judging points. It is best to have these little mongrels in a neutral color rather than light yellow or white. You have many colors to choose from: gray, black, tan, or brown in a wide variety of blotches, stripes and spots—colors of every known breed. The best feists are usually crosses of terriers, beagles, spitz, dachshund and anything else that happened along. Because of his patchwork ancestry the feist lacks the bone-headed timidity of some finely bred hunting dogs, and is consistently loyal, rugged and calm.

Good squirrel dogs are becoming rare. It's a shame, because a feist is specially designed to drive squirrels crazy. He likes to surprise a squirrel by a silent, furious assault, putting the squirrel up an isolated tree and cutting off its escape route to the home den. While the little dog is yipping his head off and jockeying the squirrel into position, you can amble quietly up and slip around to the opposite side of the tree. There's your squirrel, practically in the pan.

Feists make good rabbit dogs, too, for they like to poke around in heavy brush and horseweeds. In fact, they're good for almost anything. We've seen them tangle with woodchucks, badgers, snakes and catfish. They'll fight badgers into their dens and climb up inside hollow trees for big 'coons and possums. For some reason they love to fight skunks. Colonel James Corbett, in *Maneaters of Kumaon*, tells of Robin, a little feist who travelled in Corbett's hunting coat because of his weak heart but who would challenge a raging leopard.

This is a feist's philosophy: "I'm too ugly to be a show dog, and don't have enough tail to be a pointer. I don't have the ringing voice of a Walker hound, and I can't stand icy water like a Labrador. I'm too small to be dangerous. All I can do is bark a lot and be brave. So I'll do that."

Such a dog doesn't come along often, but when he does he is remembered. Many hunters think of their boyhood feists long after they have forgotten the pointers and setters of manhood. That is because being a good gun dog isn't just a matter of pastern, stifle, and spring of rib. It's a matter of heart.—J. M.



Most Iowa hunters were new at deer hunting last winter, but nearly two out of every three killed a deer. Jim Sherman Photo.

1954 IOWA WATERFOWL SEASON

The 1954 Iowa waterfowl season has been set by the State Conservation Commission, with few changes over last year's regulations.

This year's waterfowl shooting will open at noon, October 15, and extend through December 8. Daily shooting hours will be from one-half hour before sunrise to one hour before sunset, except on Iowa portions of the Missouri River, where shooting will extend to sunset. This extension was set because Nebraska waterfowl regulations provide for shooting until sunset.

During last year's season, daily shooting ended at sunset. This year, because of a slight decline in the Mississippi's flyway's 1954 duck supply, the Iowa Conservation Commission shortened Iowa's shooting day by one hour. The commission had been given its choice by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to end daily shooting at either one hour before sunset or at sunset. The Mississippi Flyway Committee had recommended the earlier closing.

Commission spokesmen said that an earlier daily closing might offset this year's smaller duck crop, since shooting until sunset often results in crippling losses that better light conditions would prevent. The earlier closing would also permit ducks to use the last daylight hour to return to water and settle for the night.

Bag limits on most ducks and geese will remain unchanged, except that there will be a 1954 closed season on wood ducks in all states in the Mississippi Flyway. The bag limit of ducks will be four, which is also the possession limit for the first day's shooting. Thereafter the possession limit will be eight ducks. The bag limit for American and red-breasted mergansers is four, with a possession limit of eight. No more than one hooded merganser may be possessed at any time.

Bag and possession limits of geese will be five. Not more than two of the goose limit may be Canada, Hutchins', Cackling, or white-fronted geese. The entire bag may be made up of either blue or snow geese or any combination of them. The bag and possession limit of coot (mudhens) will be 10.

Iowa's 1954 jacksnipe season will open at noon, October 15 and extend through October 29. Daily shooting hours are the same as for ducks and geese. The bag and possession limit of jacksnipe is eight birds.

Shotguns used for migratory waterfowl must be limited to a 3-shell capacity, and all hunters over 16 years of age must carry a migratory waterfowl stamp, or "duck stamp," while hunting migratory waterfowl.

A schedule of sunrise and sunset times for the waterfowl season will be released by the Conservation Commission before the season's opening.



The regulations are about the same as last year's, but there are more pheasants. Jim Sherman Photo.

1954 PHEASANT SEASON

The 1954 pheasant season has been set with few changes from last year's regulations, but with a few more birds.

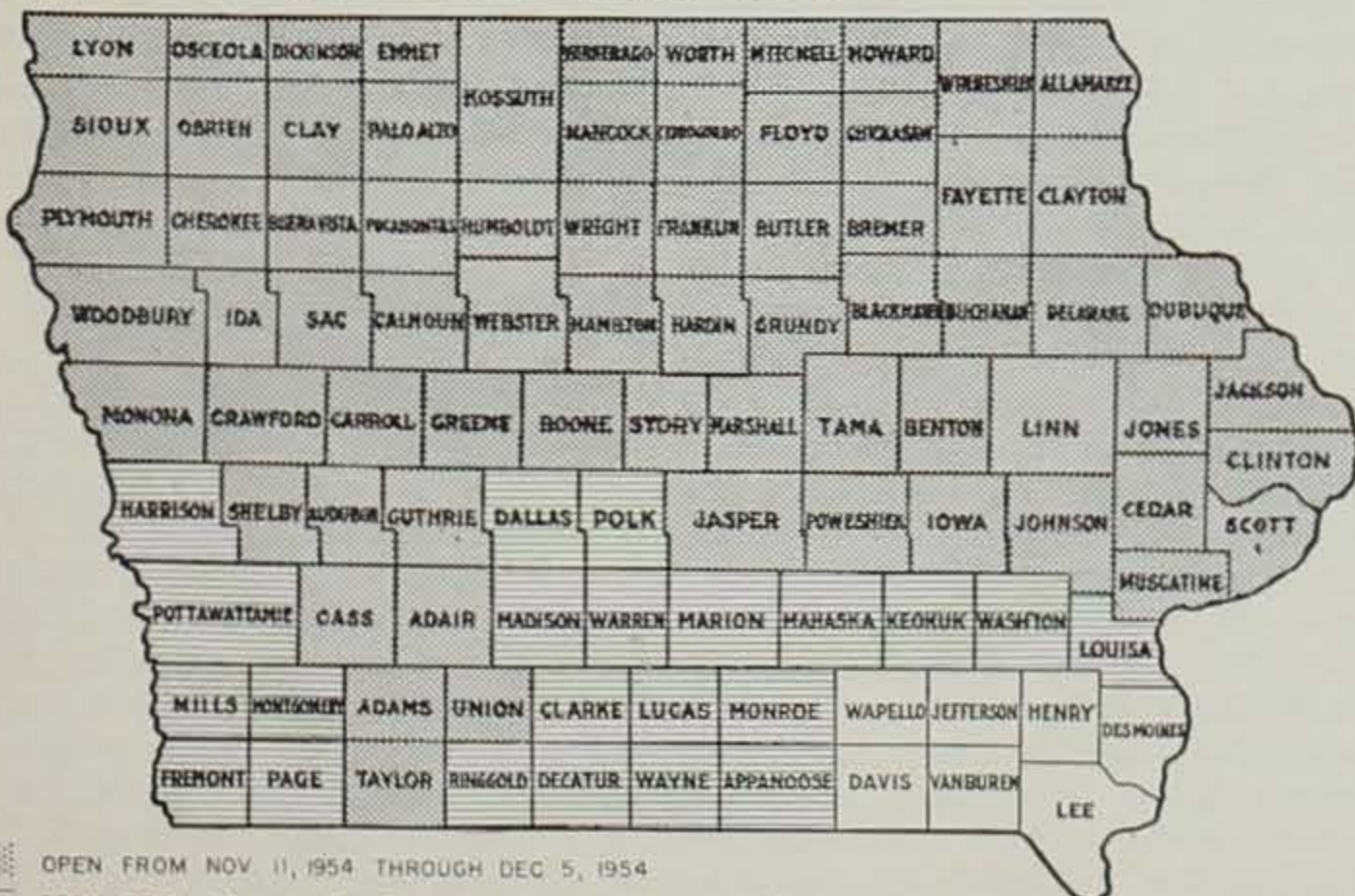
The season will open on November 11, 1954 at noon, and extend through December 5 in the long shooting zone. Daily shooting hours in each zone are from 12 o'clock noon to 4:30 p.m. The bag and possession limits in both shooting zones are three cock birds.

Counties included in the long shooting zone are: Lyon, Osceola, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Win-

nebago, Worth, Mitchell, Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Chickasaw, Floyd, Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Palo Alto, Clay, O'Brien, Sioux, Plymouth, Cherokee, Buena Vista, Pocahontas, Humboldt, Wright, Franklin, Butler, Bremer, Woodbury, Ida, Sac, Calhoun, Webster, Hamilton, Hardin, Grundy, Black Hawk, Buchanan, Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson, Clinton, Scott, Jones, Linn, Benton, Tama, Marshall, Story, Boone, Greene, Carroll, Crawford, Monona, Shelby, Audubon, Guthrie, Jasper, Poweshiek, Iowa, Johnson, Cedar, Muscatine, Cass, Adair, Adams, Union and Taylor.

The 1954 season in the short (Continued on page 71)

1954 PHEASANT HUNTING SEASON



■ OPEN FROM NOV. 11, 1954 THROUGH DEC. 5, 1954
 ■ OPEN FROM NOV. 11, 1954 THROUGH NOV. 22, 1954



Jim Sherman Photo.

From the nesting grounds comes word that Iowa's duck supply will be smaller.

LAKE WAPELLO STATE PARK

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

Lake Wapello is in a section of Iowa lacking in natural lakes. The basin in which the lake lies was made by damming up a valley, a tributary of Soap Creek. One might say that the lake was made for the park which bears its name. The park has an area of 1,130 acres, of which 287 acres is lake. It is located west of Drakesville and nine miles northwest of Bloomfield in northwestern Davis County.

Possibly there once were natural lakes in this part of Iowa and neighboring Missouri. The area has been glaciated and lake basins are commonly present on the surface of the deposits left by glaciers. Lakes, however, are temporary features of the geological story. If there ever were lakes formed by glacial action in southern Iowa they have long since disappeared as the result of sedimentation and cutting down of the outlet. Left to itself Lake Wapello would in time disappear in the same way. The tributary of Soap Creek, now dammed up to form the lake, would resume its uninterrupted flow through the valley.

Presumably when the glacial ice last receded from southern Iowa, some hundreds of thousands of years ago, it left a country not much unlike the north-central Iowa of today. Running water has been at work since the recession of the ice. That is why so much of this part of the country is rough and hilly. Thus came into being the valley of Soap Creek and of the tributary valley in which Lake Wapello lies. North-central Iowa on the other hand is generally a gently rolling country. It was occupied by a much more recent glacier, one which finally melted away 10 or 12 thousand years ago.

The shape of the lake is a re-

fection of post-glacial erosion by running water. The three southern arms are valleys drowned by the lake waters. The smaller inlets occupy drowned ravines. The points out into the lake are the ends of ridges between drowned valleys.

While it is true that this area has been glaciated there is little evidence of it within the park. There are no exposures of the drift, the deposit left by the glacier, although possibly stones brought in by the glacier may be found along the shore, eroded from the drift. But the drift is there, a jumbled mass of clay, silt, sand and stones beneath everything. It is overlain by loess, wind-blown silt, deposited in glacial times.

Beneath the loess and the drift lies the bedrock. In this part of the world the upper part is mostly limestone, sandstone, and shale, in layers. These are the hardened sediments of ancient seas. Though not visible in the park they may be found at the surface and along streams elsewhere in this part of Iowa. However, the park building offers a fine display of some of these rocks.

One is bluish-gray limestone, which came from a quarry near Centerville, about 20 miles west of the park. The same rock has also been used as a rip-rap to protect the shore. Its marine origin is indicated by the numerous small fossils, the impressions or replacements of the shells of animals which lived in the ancient seas. Like most sedimentary rocks this limestone occurs in beds or layers, accounting in part for the shapes of the blocks used in the building. The side faces of these blocks of stone have been chiseled to shape.

The light buff-colored rock of the building, terraces, and walks is recognized as dolomite from the Niagara series of rock of eastern Iowa. This rock has a faint delicate stratification, prominent or weathered faces. The stratification resulted from changing conditions



Hold the "drumhead" coin tightly, not letting it slip. Because of their larger size and louder tone, silver dollars are best.

of sedimentation on the sea bottom. few of the slabs on the terraces and walks also show an abundance of fossil imprints on their surfaces each somewhat less than one inch long. These were made by a primitive form of marine life.

The rock also has irregular masses of chert. This is a hard substance, a form of the mineral quartz. Some of the slabs of the terraces and walks have irregular deposits of this material. It is very noticeable, since it is white in color. It resembles porcelain in appearance and looks almost as if it has been poured on.

This Niagara dolomite also started out as a deposit in ancient sea. Most of it came from solution in the sea water. The chert was a jelly-like form of silica on the sea bottom, which later hardened. The element magnesium was introduced as a partial replacement of the element calcium.

The third rock of the building, variably brown in color, came from a quarry located about four miles northeast of the park, on the side of the Soap Creek valley. This is sandstone, a hardened deposit of sand. The sand grains are the mineral quartz and most of the cement the mineral calcite. The latter was deposited between the grains by circulating ground water. The brown color is due to variable amounts of the mineral limonite, a form of iron oxide. The banded appearance is due to the way limonite has been deposited by the ground water. This rock is also rather irregularly stratified in a form called by geologists cross-bedding or cross-lamination, the result of deposition of the sand by shifting currents.

Many changes have taken place at the site of Lake Wapello, over the millions of years of earth history. Only these of recent geological times are revealed to the visitor, by the configuration of the lake, the rolling landscape, and the surface material, the loess. But beneath lies the record of ancient seas. Some of the details of this record are revealed in the stone of the fine park building.

MONEY TALKS— LIKE A SQUIRREL

Here's the slickest squirrel call that we've heard for a long time; it may be an old trick, but we've never seen it used.

It calls for two fifty-cent pieces . . . ones with their milled edges in good shape. Curl your left forefinger around the edge of one, grasping it firmly and holding it in next to your left thumb. This coin will act as a drumhead; the rest of your left thumb will be a sort of sounding board.

With the other four-bit piece in your right hand, strike and scrape its milled edge against the edge and surface of the coin in your left hand. The result will be a barking, angry squirrel. Remember how the first few notes of a squirrel's bark are high, diminishing to a lower, steady chatter? This change in tone can be controlled by opening and closing the left hand below the "drumhead" coin.

It's a lot harder to explain than to do. Simplest thing in the world, and fifteen minutes of practice will give you one of the most realistic squirrels you've heard. We haven't tried it with silver dollars, but they might be better because it is sometimes hard to hold the smaller fifty-cent piece.

But come to think of it, that's not such a good idea. Squirrel season opened September 15, and who has two bucks in the middle of the month?

1954 HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE SEASON

There will be no changes in the 1954 Iowa Hungarian Partridge season, the State Conservation Commission has announced.

This year's "hun" season will be open from November 11 through November 15, with shooting hours from 12 o'clock noon to 4:30 p.m. daily. Bag limit and possession limit is two birds. Open counties are Lyon, Osceola, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Sioux, O'Brien, Clay and Palo Alto.



At Lake Wapello, or any other Iowa lake, autumn picnicking has a wonderful flavor.

PHEASANT PRODUCTION IN WINNEBAGO RESEARCH AREA—1954

By Eugene D. Klönglan
Iowa Cooperative Wildlife
Research Unit
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and Entomology
Iowa State College

What kind of luck did Mrs. Pheasant have this summer in trying to provide some targets for Iowa's sportsmen during the coming season? Was she able to withstand the onslaught of heavy rains, floods, haymowing and other dangers threatening her nest? In an effort to find the answer to these and other questions, the activities of the pheasant population on the 1520-acre Winnebago County Pheasant Research Area have been followed in detail since mid-April.

The largest spring breeding population since the early forties—about 55 hens and 20 males per section—entered the 1954 nesting season. The extreme mildness of the past winter resulted in a much lighter winter loss of birds than usual. Prospects for large crop of pheasants looked good. As one farmer remarked, "Looks like we'll be knee-deep in pheasants this fall."

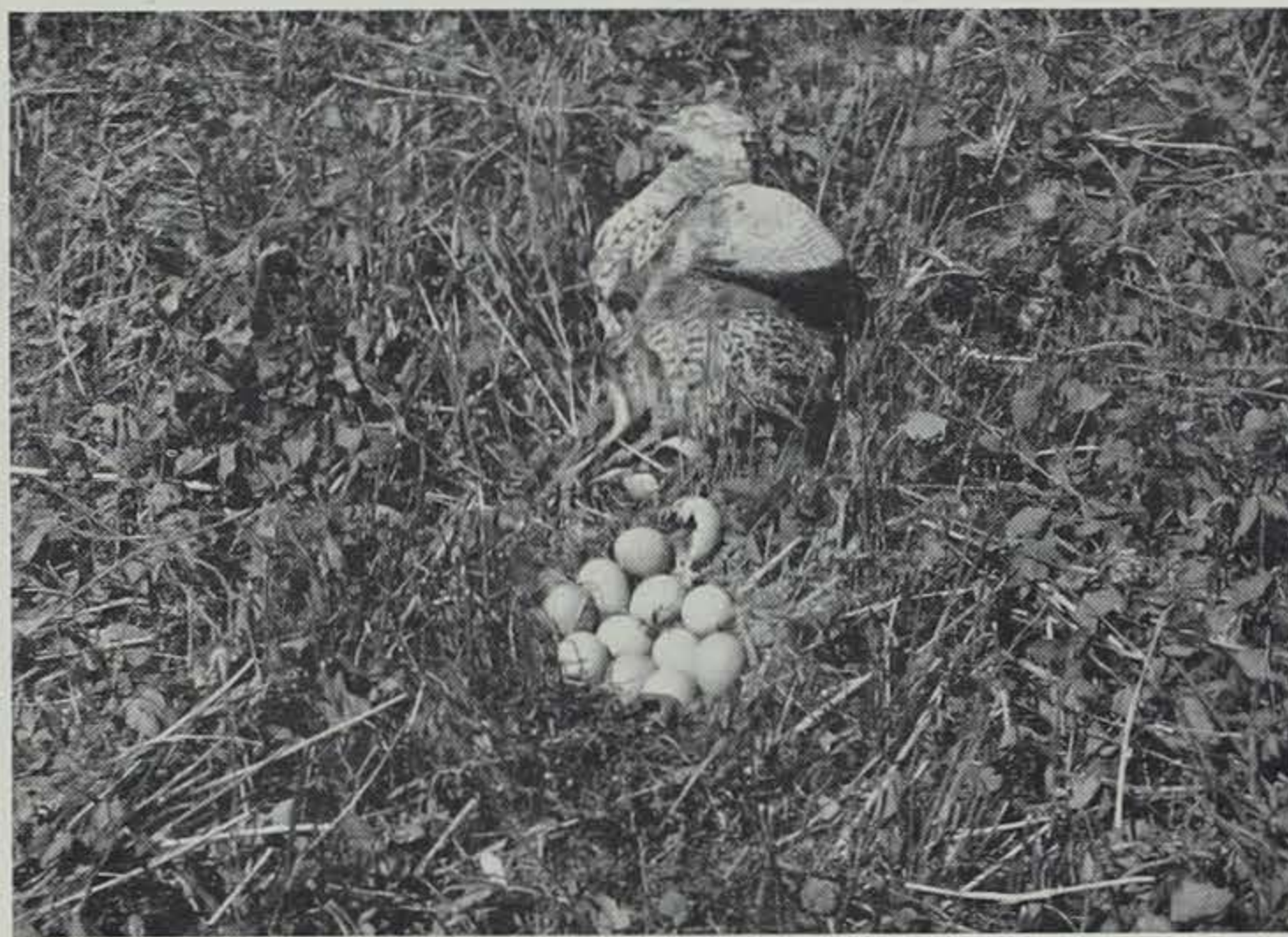
However, as usual, anticipation will be greater than realization. Of 161 nests found on the area, only 27, or about 17 per cent, were successful. Five out of every six nests were destroyed before they could hatch.

Why didn't more nests hatch? The major reason for the poorer than usual nesting success can be summed up in the words "late nesting season." In an average year, the peak of nest establishment occurs during early May. This year, however, the majority of nests were not started until after June 1.

Why did the hens wait so long to get started? Apparently because they could not find suitable nesting cover. Three successive nights of frost during the first week of May gave the oat and hay crops, preferred nesting cover, quite a set-back. The oats suffered the most and alfalfa the least. Red clover stands, in general, were not too good even before the frost.

As a result, many of those hens who did not happen to be in the vicinity of a good alfalfa field tended to wander around for about three weeks, dropping their nest eggs at random or in one of several "dump" nests. The record number of "dropped" eggs and "dump" nests found during this period served as a good indicator of the frustration of many hens.

Though the nesting season was late, about three weeks, the field work of the farmers progressed on schedule. Mowing of the first crop of hay took place as usual during the last two weeks of June. Of 60 nests in hay fields, only one hatched—a nest which the farmer mowed around and the crows did not find. This almost total destruction of hay field nests has been



Iowa State College Photo.
Five out of every six nests on the area were destroyed by the pheasants' deadliest enemy—the power mower.

the usual occurrence during the last five years.

Where the pheasant nests really "got the axe" in comparison with former years was in the oat fields. Only nine of 48 nests, about 19 per cent, were successful, as compared to about 60 per cent success in previous years. On the latter basis, about 30 of the 48 would have been expected to hatch—a big difference on 1520 acres. Many of the ruined nests were less than a week away from hatching, and several were actually in the process of hatching when run over by the tractor and windrower. Normally, most of the nests would be started in May—only two were this year. The oats just were not tall enough to suit the fancy of hens looking for nesting sites, making them wait until June—a fatal delay for most.

The combination of a high hen population and scarcity of early nesting cover in oat and hay fields forced many hens to nest in other locations. Some hens who just couldn't wait started nests in poor cover. Of such nests, 18 were destroyed by various species of predators, no one of which was of particular importance with the possible exception of the crow. Some of these nests were also deserted by the hens.

However, eight of 27 nests in road ditches hatched, compared to one in 1952 and none in 1953. Three of 17 fencerow nests were successful—only one of 14 in 1953. Three of five nests in slough areas hatched, two of five in pastures and one of three in farm groves—about the same as in previous years. Thus, 17 of the 27 successful nests (about 60 per cent) hatched in what might be considered primarily non-agricultural areas—a much higher figure than usual—and probably the difference between having a fairly decent pheasant crop or hardly any at all.

About 37 different broods have been seen on the area up to mid-

August. Comparison of the hatching dates of the broods showed that no real "hatching peak" occurred as is true most years. The hatch was about evenly scattered throughout June and the first half of July. This probably happened because nests were hatching in so many types of cover, with no single type dominating and each with a different "peak time" of nest establishment.

How important were the heavy rains and flooding in June from the pheasants' standpoint? About eight and one-half inches fell from June 17 to 21, and a little over 10 per cent of the study area was under water at the peak of flooding. Yet, only nine nests, or a little over five per cent of all nests found, were destroyed. Some of these would have later been broken up by farming activities before they could have hatched. There were a little over six chicks per brood at an age of about four to eight weeks. This is average, so apparently the rains did not affect the broods too greatly as most of them had not yet hatched. The rain apparently had no effect on eggs being incubated. An average

of one egg per successful nest failed to hatch, and this is about usual for pheasants.

No—the rains and floods were responsible for only a minor portion of the nesting loss on the study area. The fate of the 1954 pheasant crop had been practically sealed due to the late nesting season before the rains arrived. Actually, it appears that three nights of frost during early May were more important than four nights and three days of rain in mid-June as far as northern Iowa's pheasants were concerned.

How many pheasants will be around on opening day on the Winnebago Area? It is evident that the potential present in the large spring brood stock was not realized. On the basis of data obtained up till mid-August, it would appear that the 1954 fall population does not differ greatly from that of 1953. There will be pheasants for those nimrods anxiously awaiting the first shot on the Winnebago Area, but there will not be any "bumper crop."

Deer Season . . .

(Continued from page 66)

and the possession limit is one deer.

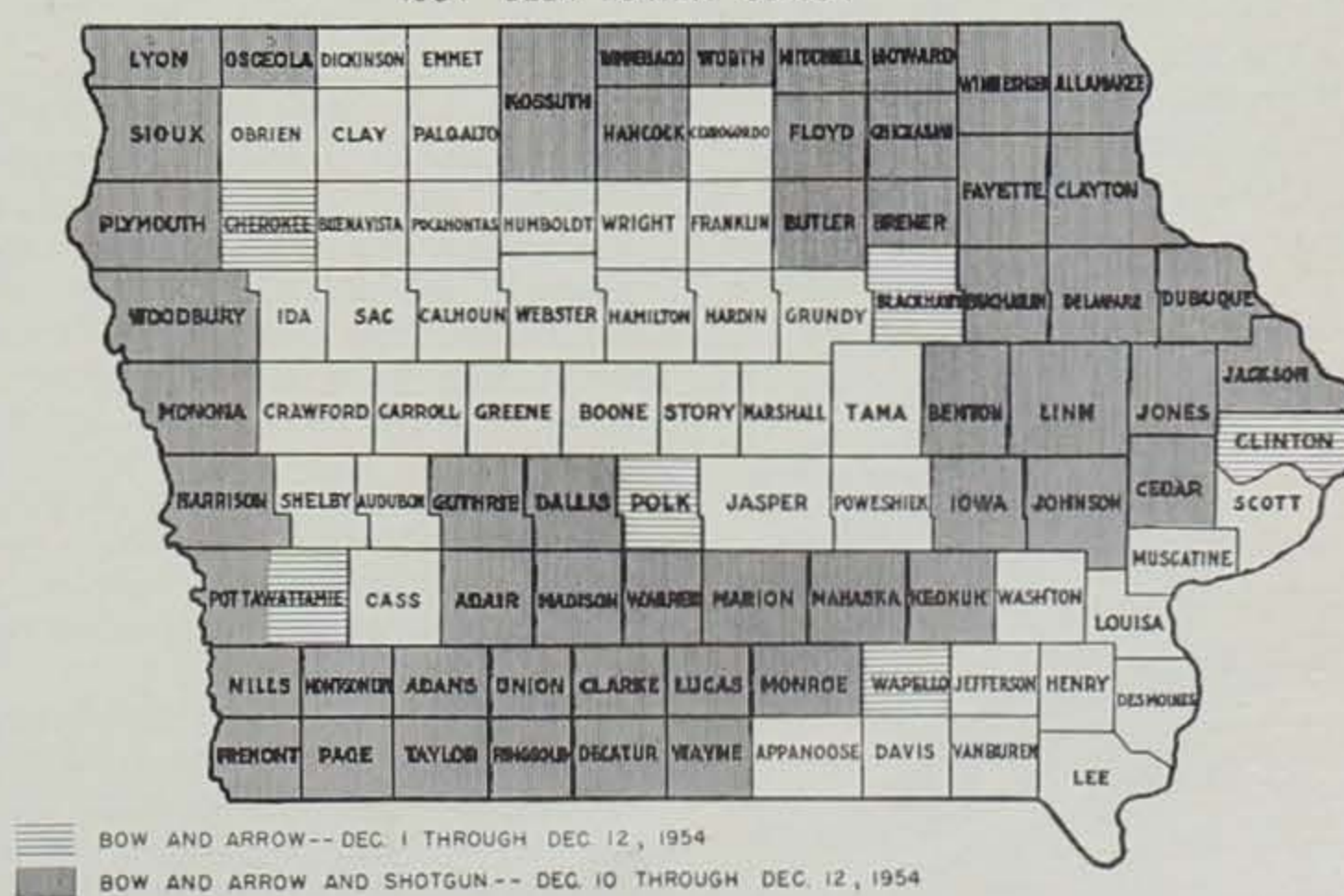
Shooting hours each open day are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Ten, 12, 16 and 20-gauge shotguns shooting rifled slugs and bows of 40-pound pull or more shooting broadhead arrows only will be permitted. Crossbows or any mechanically operated bow is prohibited.

The use of dogs, domestic animals, automobiles, aircraft, or any mechanical conveyance, salt or bait is prohibited.

A metal locking seal bearing the license number of the hunter and year of issuance must be affixed to the carcass of each deer between the tendon and bone of the hind leg before the carcass can be transported. Owners and tenants of land and their children living on said land may hunt, kill and possess one deer, provided it is not removed from said land,

(Continued on page 72)

1954 DEER HUNTING SEASON





An Iowa bobcat is—and should be—a valued hunting trophy. These pheasant hunters killed their bobcat in a slough north of Waterloo. Waterloo Courier Photo.

Old Bob . . .

(Continued from page 65)

Two young Waterloo hunters recently killed a small bobcat while hunting pheasants in a slough.

Another conservation officer trapped one near the Missouri River in 1938. The cat weighed 27 pounds, was 38 inches long, and had dragged a trap and heavy drag through a hundred yards of dense willow growth.

Tracks were seen this spring in a remote stretch of Bear Creek near Lime Springs. Now and then fox and 'coon hounds in northeastern Iowa mix it up with some nocturnal warrior and come back to the car cut to ribbons. As one old hunter puts it: "There ain't nothing in the world that can comb burrs out of a hound like a big bobcat!"

If bobcats are here at all, why aren't they better known? Most of Iowa is heavily farmed and hunted . . . farmers and hunters should surely see them some time.

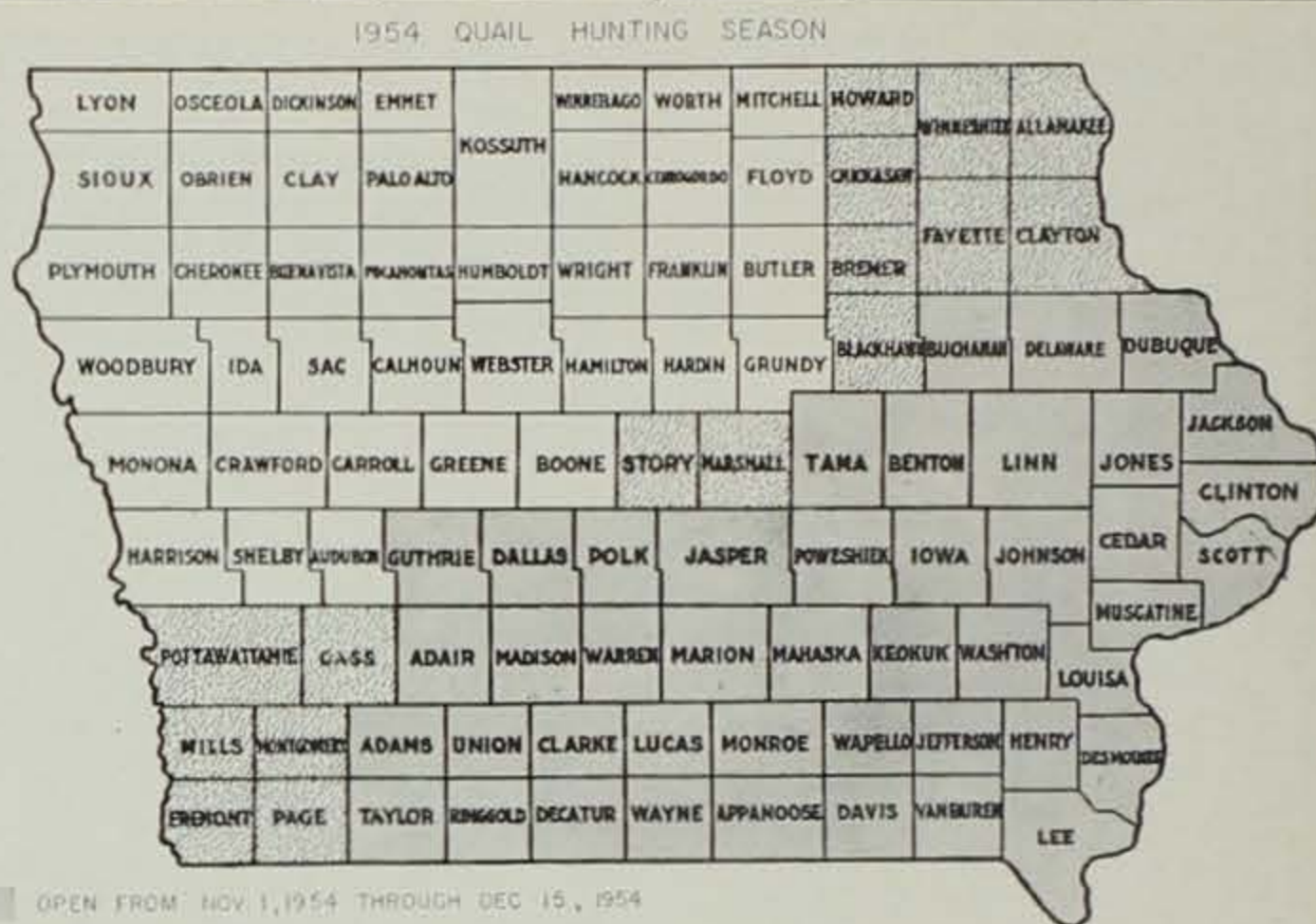
For one reason, the cats are not common. And secondly, like all wild felines, they are extremely secretive. A bobcat is the world's

finest hunter. He moves like a wraith on padded feet, and few animals have his gifts of sight and hearing. At the distant approach of a man or dog he will leave his thicket and fade away into the rocks like a puff of smoke. He moves without weight or sound, a bundle of spring steel wrapped in gray, and he hates to be seen by man. Another reason is that the bobcats prefer rocky, wooded areas like those in eastern and northeastern Iowa. These include the wildest places in the state and rugged valleys that are seldom, if ever, hunted by man.

But Old Bob hunts them, ranging over his midnight hunting grounds like a moccasined ghost. Without fuss or fanfare he works every thicket, log pile and wind-fall. His bobbedtail is barometer of his success, and the closer he is to his prey the more the stub twitches. An old story claims that the bobcat, hidden in dense cover, attracts game by his rapidly twitching tail.

A thorough hunter, Old Bob may cover several square miles in a night, usually ending up a short distance from where he started. Behind him he leaves a wavering, twisting line of footprints spaced one before the other. The footprints may turn to investigate a candy wrapper or dead fire left by a hunter or lead along a ridge above a sleeping farm. The tracks may lead to a dead tree where the big cat, feeling his oats, reared up and whetted his priceless claws on the dead wood.

Old Bob is one of the world's most efficient killers. Most of his hunting is for chipmunks, tree squirrels, rabbits and other small animals and birds. He loves to eat



1954 QUAIL HUNTING SEASON SET

The 1954 Iowa quail season has been set, with populations of birds and regulations much the same as last year's.

The season in both the long and short zones will begin November 1, at 8:30 a.m., to 4:30 p.m. daily. In the long shooting zone the season will extend from November 1 through December 15, and in the short zone, from November 1 through November 15. Bag and possession limits of quail in both zones are 6 birds.

Counties in the long shooting zone are: Tama, Benton, Linn, Jones, Jackson, Jasper, Poweshiek, Iowa, Johnson, Cedar, Clinton,

Scott, Madison, Warren, Marion, Mahaska, Keokuk, Washington, Muscatine, Louisa, Adair, Union, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe, Wapello, Jefferson, Henry, Des Moines, Taylor, Ringgold, Decatur, Wayne, Appanoose, Davis, Van Buren, Lee, Buchanan, Delaware, Dubuque, Guthrie, Dallas, Polk and Adams.

Counties in the short shooting zone are: Winneshiek, Allamakee, Fayette, Clayton, Black Hawk, Montgomery, Story, Marshall, Page, Bremer, Chickasaw, Howard, Pottawattamie, Mills, Fremont and Cass.

Some observers claim that crows, when they believe they are unobserved, have a sweet song somewhat like a robin's.—J. M.

domestic housecats. Unlike the dog tribe he doesn't break into his prey's home. The wild cats almost never dig, for their valuable claws are weapons, not tools. In recent years it has been definitely found that a 20-pound bobcat can and will kill a large deer. In hunting deer, success depends more on the silence and efficiency of the stalk than the condition of the victim. The bobcat drifts stealthily within range, covers 10 feet with a bound, and bites the deer high in the neck. He lacks the power of the cougar, and cannot break the deer's neck, but a deer attacked by a big bobcat won't get far as a rule.

Like any cat, he is soundless while hunting. Only in the late fall mating season does he cut loose and squall like an out-sized alley cat. His range and volume are surprising. These mating screams, coming at a season when any sensible man is snugly inside, are seldom heard. From a great distance they may be mistaken for an owl or other animal. A conservation officer in north-central Iowa was serenaded by a bobcat just outside his cabin. "He couldn't have been more than a hundred yards away," the officer explains, "and it brought me to my feet out of a sound sleep. Never heard such a racket."

There are only two practical ways of hunting bobcats—with

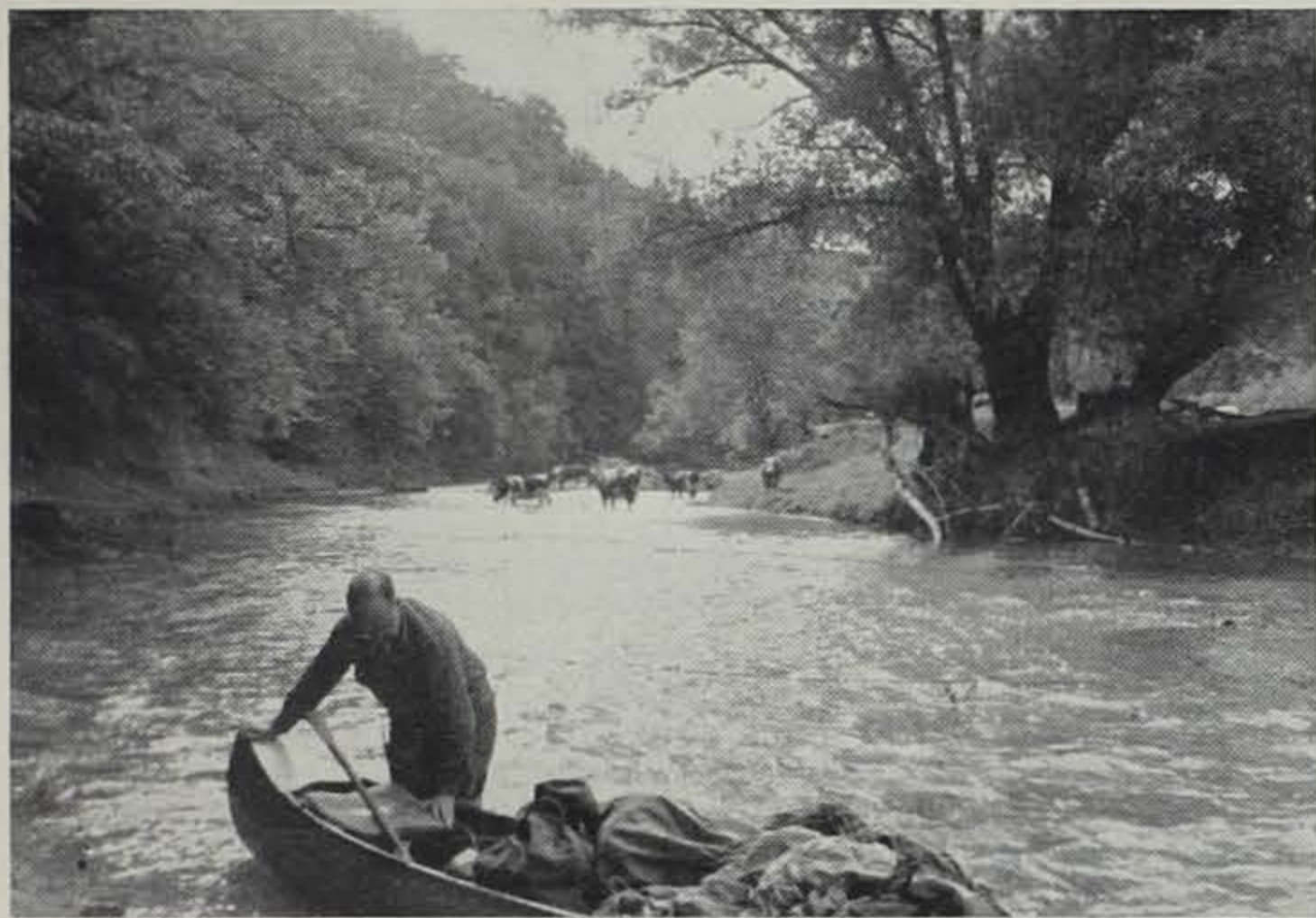
trained dogs and by still-hunting. A "cat dog" is usually a foxhound or a foxhound-bloodhound cross, the same type used for cougar in the southwest. A bobcat is trailed much like a fox, and is usually brought to bay in a rocky den, and rarely in a tree. Almost no single dog is a match for a wildcat; even a full pack of dogs may be badly mauled before a big cat is killed.

Stillhunters operate by finding a known bobcat trail and calling them with predator calls, usually those that imitate rabbit yelps. Some hunters have good shooting by squeaking on the backs of their hands with their lips, imitating an injured animal.

This kind of hunting takes sharp eyes and good nerves, for a bobcat can be almost at a hunter's elbow before he is seen or heard. When called within gunshot it is said that they are easily taken, for they will often crouch and curiously inspect the hunter. Soft-skinned and not too durable, they are easily killed. The trick is to get a shot at them.

Even if Iowa hunters brought in some good cat dogs and learned to hunt bobcats, there wouldn't be many killed. There just aren't enough cats—we think. The Conservation Commission will never know just how common or rare they really are. How can you take a census of the wind, or make a population estimate of shadows?





Church and Allen Photo.

If you canoe the Yellow River in midsummer, you'll do some wading. Fences aren't a major problem, but they'll bear watching.

Yellow River . . .

(Continued from page 65)

one of the "liveliest industrial centers west of the Mississippi."

Now as to the river itself, it rises in southeastern Winneshiek County and flows across southern Allamakee County to enter the Mississippi about three miles north of Marquette. The valley is narrow, sharply winding, and bounded by abrupt, heavily timbered bluffs. The stream is small, never exceeding about fifty feet in width. It is rather shallow, with a rocky bed, and its rate of fall is greater than that of any stream in the state navigable by canoe. The stream rises rapidly after a hard rain and becomes very discolored by the clay on its banks. Seen at that time it is not difficult to guess the origin of the name "Yellow."

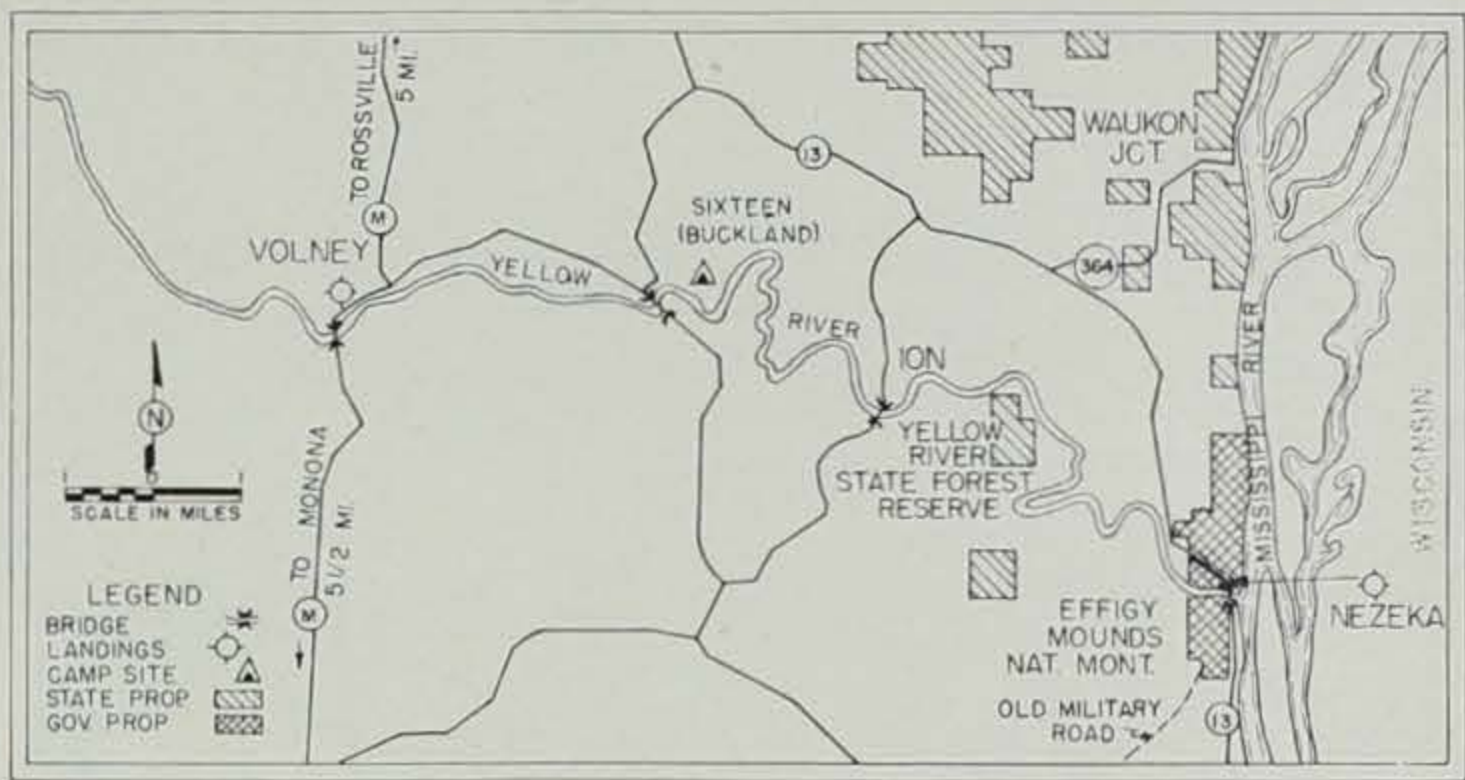
The river becomes large enough for canoeing in the vicinity of Volney. From the bridge just above Volney to the Mississippi is about 18 river miles. This is a little long for one day but makes a good overnight trip with lots of time for fishing. It cannot be described as an easy trip, but is well worth the

effort. The rate of fall varies from about six feet per mile to about 25 in the vicinity of the Ion bridge and below. The rapids are very numerous, shallow, rocky, fast and hard on the canoe. It is important to travel as light as possible. Be prepared to do a lot of wading. In picking a camp site keep in mind the high water that follows hard rains. The river may rise several feet overnight. There are no dams. The rapids are not dangerous, but some of them are very fast and should be treated with respect.

All distances mentioned have been converted into approximate traveling time. Total traveling time will be about nine hours. The times shown are for normal water levels prevailing in late June. In particularly low water these times should be increased.

The bridge above Volney can be reached by traveling five miles south from Rossville or five and one-half miles north from Monona on Highway M. There is a convenient put-in place just below the bridge on the left bank.

For the first three and one-half miles (two hours) the river flows through open meadow land. The



buildings of Volney on the left bank, and a bridge under construction, will be passed one and one-half miles (one hour) below the starting point. In the next two miles (one hour) two electrified fences and a suspension foot bridge cross the stream.

Soon after passing the suspension bridge the river leaves the meadows. Heavily timbered bluffs close in on both banks. The river makes several sharp turns through a succession of long pools separated by shallow rapids. One and one-half miles (one hour) below the suspension bridge is the Sixteen bridge, named for its location in Section 16 of Linton Township. This is the site of the extinct mill town of Buckland. Above and below the bridge are long, deep holes as the river narrows and makes an S turn against steep rock bluffs. The most likely looking camp sites of the trip are in this region.

For the next four and one-half miles (two hours) there is a succession of more long, placid pools followed by fast rapids. This is superb smallmouth bass water. The terrain is rugged and wild with a heavy forest growth. The steep hills are close to the river and huge blocks of moss covered stones lie on the banks and in the stream bed. Ferns and wild flowers are abundant. Overhanging trees make cool, shady caverns over the pools.

It is one and one-half miles (three-fourths hour) to the next bridge, which marks the site of Ion, another extinct early mill town. That stretch, and downstream for the next five miles (one and one-fourth hours) has the fastest water of the trip. Somewhere in the lower part of this fast water, about three miles above the junction of the Yellow with the Mississippi River, the old Jeff Davis Mill was located. The Winnebago Indian Mission School which had a brief existence in the late 1830's is said to have stood in this vicinity, a few miles upriver.

In the next two miles (one and three-fourths hours) to the take-out point at the Highway 13 bridge the river widens and the current slackens. The banks continue to be heavily wooded as the river proceeds in wide bends to the break through the bluffs where it enters

the Mississippi. The take-out place is just above the bridge abutment on the right bank which, incidentally, once was the site of the "paper" town of Nezeke.

No trip down the Yellow would be complete without a visit to the Effigy Mounds National Monument, the only unit of America's National Park system located in Iowa. The land of the monument area of 1,204 acres was donated to the Federal government by the state of Iowa through the Conservation Commission in 1949. It extends north and south of the mouth of the Yellow, on the summits of towering bluffs. There is an excellent trail to the mound sites of the Fire Point Mound Group which is located one-quarter of a mile north of the Highway 13 bridge, the take-out point.

In the less accessible portion of the monument area, south of the Yellow, are traces of the Old Military Road from Fort Crawford, near historic Prairie du Chien, to Fort Atkinson in present day Winneshiek County.

After your canoe trip and tour of the Effigy Mounds, stand on the Fire Point scenic lookouts and survey the magnificent Mississippi Valley with the Wisconsin River in the distance. With two days, eighteen miles and a little imagination you will have relived history, and will have seen some of the most beautiful scenery in the middle west. Your canoe trip down the little Yellow, the "River of Lost Mills," will have given you a rich experience.

Pheasant Season . . .

(Continued from page 67)

shooting zone will extend from November 11, 1954, through November 22. Counties in the short shooting zone are: Harrison, Pottawattamie, Madison, Clarke, Lucas, Ringgold, Decatur, Wayne, Louisa, Washington, Keokuk, Mahaska, Dallas, Mills, Montgomery, Fremont, Page, Monroe, Appanoose, Polk, Warren and Marion.

According to Conservation Commission spokesmen, this year's pheasant supply is a little better than in 1953. Although heavy spring rains in northern Iowa caused some mortality to eggs and young birds, it is believed that there may be 10 per cent more pheasants this year than last.



Church and Allen Photo.

Where the Yellow River ends—the Mississippi. Just above the mouth of "The River of Lost Mills" is Effigy Mounds National Monument.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Pan covers permit the trap to spring easily. In wet, freezing weather, always use waxed paper under trap and over the trap pan.

Coyotes . . .

(Continued from page 65)

scent may be obtained from the National Scent Company, Chilhowee, Missouri. The set should be made near the natural travel lanes of the coyotes or in an area of hunting grounds, den sites, or resting areas.

One of the most effective sets for coyotes is the double trap set. When you've found evidence of brush wolves in the area to be trapped, pick out an open area and walk directly to the site of the trap set. Spread out the ground-cloth, kneel on it, and stay there as much as possible during the trap setting.

Dig a flat-bottomed trench seven inches wide, one and one-half inches deep, and 36 inches long. Place all dirt and vegetation on the ground cloth. Connect the trap to a drag (steel hook and chain) and place the drag in the center of the trench. If the trap is to be staked, drive the stake flush with the bottom of the trench after wiring trap to stake. Place

a trap in each end of the trench so that the traps are about 1/2 inch below the surface of the surrounding ground. In freezing weather place waxed paper under each trap so it will not freeze down.

Cover trap, springs, chain and drags with fine, dry dirt. Embed the traps firmly, so they will not tip under the animal's weight. Place dirt around the trap jaws, but make sure no dirt gets under the trap pan. Place a five by seven inch pan cover over the pan and under the jaws of the trap. Never place the pan over the jaws of the trap. Then cover the entire set with dry dirt sifted from the sifter, and smooth out the trap set with a feather or twig. The finished set should be covered with no more than one-half inch of dry dirt, free of clods and vegetation. Leave as little sign as possible in the area.

The scent post can be a chunk of rotten wood, coyote droppings, or dry horse or cow manure. Place this scent post between the

traps, add 8 or 10 drops of scent, and move out of the area. Leave things just as natural as when you came, and brush out any footprints you may have made.

Another deadly coyote set is the trail set, in which one or more traps are set in travel lanes such as breaks in fences or gates, dead-furrows, or any place where the animals are more or less forced to travel. No scent post is used on this type of set, but the traps are set and buried as in the preceding method. The traps should be set so that the coyote steps into them over the hinges, rather than over the jaws. Otherwise, the closing jaws may throw the animal's foot out of the trap.

Another old favorite is the "dirt hole bait set", which is usually made beside a gopher mound, low bush, or grass clump. In this case the coyote is attracted by buried bait. Spread a ground cloth and with a trowel dig a hole two inches wide, five inches deep, and sloping at about a 45 degree angle to the mound selected. Then make an excavation directly in front of the trap, stake or drag. Secure the trap stake in the center of this trap hole, placing the trap so that the pan will be six inches from the bait hole. Place on a pan cover, and cover the trap with one-half inch of fine dirt, smooth with twig, and bait the set.

Place the bait in the bait hole and cover with a handful of dry grass. A scent placed to one side of the set will help remove any suspicion. For bait, use fresh or tainted meat from housecats, muskrats, rabbits, mice or chickens. A coyote will come to the bait set, believing it is a kill hidden by another animal.

This short explanation of coyote trapping has left out a few details, but there's everything here that you need to know about successfully trapping coyotes. Try it and see.

Deer Season . . .

(Continued from page 69)

whole or in part, unless tagged with a seal affixed to animal.

All hunters required to purchase licenses must possess a 1954 deer license and wear red license number and insignia provided when hunting deer. Owners or tenants of land and their children must wear red insignia provided when hunting deer. Although farmers do not need licenses to hunt on their own lands, they must make application for identification card, deer tag and safety insignia. The identification card must show a description of the lands under the farmer's control, and must be in his possession while hunting.

A hunt report postal card provided with each license must be mailed to the State Conservation Commission in Des Moines within three days after close of the season, stating whether a deer is killed or not. Licensees failing to return

this card may be refused licenses for subsequent seasons.

Applications for deer hunting licenses for the 1954 season must be made on forms provided by the State Conservation Commission and returned to the Commission offices in Des Moines, accompanied by check or money order for \$15 not later than November 15, 1954. Only Iowa residents may obtain deer licenses.

If the number of applications for deer licenses exceeds 5,000, a drawing will be held to determine applicants who will receive licenses.

IT'S ALL IN THE ANGLE

For riflemen who want to take the guesswork out of the shooting, a handy table has been issued by the Remington-Peters Arms Company.

You've probably noticed that shooting at a target either above or below you, you usually shoot high. Long-range uphill or downhill can be mighty tricky. This is explained by the fact that the "slant range" along the slope is greater than the actual horizontal range, and although your bullet is travelling 300 yards or so "slantwise," it isn't travelling 300 yards on the level. As a result, it doesn't drop as much and you usually over-shoot.

The new table lists conversion factors to be used when shooting uphill or downhill, giving the corrected ranges and sight settings.

ANGLES OF SLOPE (up or down)	DIVIDE ESTIMATED RANGE By:
0 degrees	1.0
5 degrees	1.0
10 degrees	1.02
15 degrees	1.04
20 degrees	1.06
25 degrees	1.10
30 degrees	1.15
35 degrees	1.22
40 degrees	1.31
45 degrees	1.41

To use this table, estimate range to target. Then estimate the angles of the slope—the angle of the target off the horizontal. Opposite this angle on the chart there is a matching number. Divide the estimated range by this number. The result will be a number smaller than your estimated range. This number, the corrected range, can be set into your rifle sights and you're in business.

1954 RACCOON HUNTING SEASON SET

A four-month raccoon hunting season has been set by the State Conservation Commission, running from noon October 10 to midnight February 10. There is no bag or possession limit, and the entire state is open.

Iowa hunters are reminded by the Commission that it is unlawful to train fox hounds, raccoon hounds or trailing dogs on any fur-bearing animal between sunrise and sunset from September 10 to October 10.

Trapping season for raccoons and other fur-bearers has not yet been set.



Rex Pendry Photo.

Baiting a "dirt hole bait set." Place some scent nearby to remove the coyote's suspicion.