

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

Volume 18

February, 1959

Number 2

AN EARLY SPRING AT HOME SHOW

MORE PROFIT FROM FURS

The fur trapper or dealer who does his utmost to get his products into first-class shape before they are marketed stands a better chance of coming away with more "jingle" in his jeans, Harold Devine of Indianola, one of Iowa's top fur collectors, said recently.

Devine knows whereof he speaks. He has been in the fur business, either as a trapper or fur collector, for the better part of his 55 years. Like many, he cut his trapping "teeth" early in life. As an 8 or 9-year-old lad, he tramped and trapped the area northwest of Indianola where he still lives. A few years later he began taking care of furs for other trappers. In time, he acquired a car and drove the countryside, picking up the furs of local trappers. That was the start of a side of the fur industry which today—some 40 years later—includes a massive operation involving hundreds of thousands of furs each year.

Devine's customers now include about 40 dealers in the midwestern states of Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin and eastern Kansas. Several of Devine's former dealers have made the trek to the 49th state where the Indianola collector's knowledge of

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Dr. John Aikman, professor of botany at Iowa State, inspects a flowering shrub outside a botany department greenhouse. Some of the shrubs had to be moved outside to stall growth that had become too rapid in the warm, sunlit greenhouses.

Spring in Iowa's woodlands will arrive a couple of months ahead of schedule for visitors to Des Moines' Home and Flower Show in Veterans' Auditorium the week of February 21.

One of the features of the Iowa Conservation Commission exhibit at the annual show will be several varieties of blooming wildflowers and flowering shrubs. They, together with fresh greenery of ferns, mosses and lichens, will provide a colorful background for another exhibit headliner—a scale model of a rustic old mill. The mill has been carefully duplicated from the real thing. Detail of the mill is most exacting, right down to the turning mill wheel and moving water.

To bring a touch of spring indoors in the dead of winter indicates quite a project, but to give full meaning to just how gigantic were some of the problems to be overcome takes a bit of backtracking and elaboration.

Ray Mitchell, Superintendent of Parks for the Conservation Commission, huddled last month with Dr. Wendell H. Bragonier and Dr. John M. Aikman of Iowa State College. Dr. Bragonier is head of the department of botany and a professor of botany; Dr. Aikman, a professor of botany. The assignment? To help select the right time to bring wildflowers and shrubs from out-of-doors, and, using the greenhouse facilities of the ISC botany department, bring as many as possible to bloom during the Home Show.

Dr. Bragonier and Dr. Aikman make no claim that they are the first or the only ones to ever undertake such a project, but if such a problem had ever been successfully handled by anyone before, the two botanists had no recollection of it. One thing is certain, Dr. Bragonier told us recently:

"It's the first time the Iowa State botany department has ever undertaken this kind of thing."

With advance planning out of the way, park supervisors, park conservation officers and ISC botanists rolled up their sleeves. Areas

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Wildlife Week March 15-21

The week of March 15-21 has been proclaimed as National Wildlife Week throughout America by the National Wildlife Federation.

Since the first National Wildlife Week was proclaimed by President Roosevelt in 1938, the special week has been dedicated to various conservation themes. The 1959 theme is "Conservation in the Schools."

Four courses of action are open to citizens with an interest in bringing conservation into schools, suggests the Federation:

... Make it your business to find out if conservation is being taught in the grade and high schools of your community.

... Start educational and publicity campaigns to show people the need for teaching conservation in their schools. Point out examples of resource mistreatment in your area.

... Set up a conservation-education committee in your com-

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Iowa Conservationist

Published Monthly by the
IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION
East 7th and Court—Des Moines, Iowa
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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE.....54,800
Two Years \$1.00

Entered as second class matter at the post office in Des Moines, Iowa, September 22, 1947, under the Act of March 24, 1912.

Subscriptions received at Iowa Conservation Commission, East Seventh Street and Court Avenue, Des Moines 9, Iowa. Send cash, check or money order.

FIRST SUBSCRIPTION CHANGE FOR CONSERVATIONIST

Effective with this issue, subscription rates for the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST will be changed as follows:

The subscription price of 40 cents for a one-year subscription will be discontinued.

A new two-year subscription rate of \$1 will be put into effect, replacing the former subscription rate of three years for \$1.

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST has maintained the same subscription price of \$1 for three years (36 issues) since the first issue of the magazine in 1942. However, the costs of printing, paper and mailing have increased to such an extent, an increase in subscription rates is an absolute necessity.

Iowa is among the last of the states to increase its subscription rates. Over the past several years and months, many states have found it necessary to increase rates to meet higher printing costs. Some have had more than one increase in the past several years.

At the new rate IOWA CONSERVATIONIST continues to be one of the greatest bargains in reading. The new rate of 24 issues for \$1 means a per issue cost of slightly more than 4 cents.

In the future, as in the past, IOWA CONSERVATIONIST will strive to bring subscribers the ultimate in reading enjoyment with more news and more features of outdoor Iowa, including hunting, fishing, parks, forestry, boating, and camping.

Editorially Speaking

The Balance of Nature

Herschel Bledsoe

Missouri Conservation Commission

Most every man at some time during his life attempts to repair his watch or fix the family clock. A few men succeed in getting the thing apart and back together in good working order. But most end up with extra wheels and screws—and a watch or clock that is useless. They completely upset the balance of the instrument.

This same thing has happened when man interfered with the clock-like precision of the balance of nature. Too many times man has been quick to condemn and exterminate some of the so-called predatory animals without considering the consequences.

Take the fox. A farmer has a fine grain field, but along comes a group of insects that begin to ruin his crop. Nature then sends rats into this field to help control the insects, but they also eat the grain. Then the fox comes in and eats the rats—and, incidentally, some insects. The farmer decides the foxes are bad for his place so he exterminates them. The rats come back and he is right back where he started.

Each animal plays an important part on each acre of land, and when one species is eliminated the balance is upset and the wheel of nature fails to turn properly.

In the past, man has attempted to repair the spoke in the wheel he destroyed by re-stocking his lands with game and birds. But even this has not always been successful. If there is not enough cover and food for the birds, they in time will leave or die. If there are too many animals on a given area, disease or some other means will reduce these animals to the carrying capacity of the land.

This same thing applies to streams. It rarely does any good to stock fish in streams since nature produces more than the stream's carrying capacity will permit to survive, anyway. Thus, when man stocks a stream he frequently upsets the balance and the result is usually unsatisfactory.

Few animals or birds have the number of predators working against them that Bobwhite quail do. From the time the eggs are laid and they start to pip, skunks, crows, 'coons, foxes, turtles, hawks, ants, dogs and cats are all working against them. However, given adequate food and cover, they survive and reproduce. With poor food and cover, they fall easy victims to predators—as well as adverse weather. Still, man often decides that only one of the predatory species is doing all the damage and tries to eradicate that species. Here again the results are disastrous. How can we put our finger on just one predator and say that it is the one responsible?

Some states have tried shipping in rabbits from out of state to areas that are depleted on these animals. Shortly after stocking, many rabbits killed in the area were found diseased and the situation was worse than before man tried to take over the job of nature. Man is learning the hard way that he must work with nature. Otherwise his projects often become as useless as the clock with parts left out.

It's within man's power to help the wheel of nature turn smoothly. And this is the time of the year when plans can be made to replace some of the missing spokes in that wheel. Lack of food and cover is readily seen during winter months, and now is the time to locate such areas. Then, come spring, plant food and cover on those areas for the game or birds desired and let Ol' Mother Nature take over.

And remember, when you see a hawk or owl or fox, he is there as part of the wheel. Man himself is a predator and often takes some of the surplus animals. But in his ignorance of the ways of the wild he can kill off more in a season than nature can replace in years.

Let's be sure that we aren't the ones to lose that little thing-a-ma-bob that makes the great wheel of nature turn.

The tapir is the biggest animal in South America and is much sought after by native hunters.

Porcupines are excellent climbers and spend a good part of their lives in trees.

The North American elk is comparable in size to the red deer of Scotland.

Some animals can glide through the air for a ways, but bats are the only animals that can fly.

The bluegill gets its name from a small blue tab that extends backward from the gill cover.

Young mallard ducks can swim as far as a third of a mile as soon as they leave the nest.

About 70,000,000 pounds of wild rabbits are harvested every year in the United States.

Foxes have several calls, the commonest being a short, yapping bark.

DECEMBER CATCH AT SPIRIT "VERY GOOD"

Anglers caught more and bigger walleyes at Spirit Lake in December than the same month a year ago, Earl Rose, fisheries biologist at the Spirit Lake (Orleans) station recently pointed out.

Rose kept a calculated total of the walleye catch on Big Spirit in December. His information disclosed walleyes averaged 2.5 pounds in weight, compared to a 2.1 pound average for December, 1957. Some of the fish ran in the six to ten-pound category, Rose said.

A total of 8,532 anglers were on Spirit in December and were rewarded with 28,000 hours of recreation, Rose reports.

One observation by Rose in his recent compilation is particularly significant to the walleye fisherman. Fishing under ice for walleyes is best when the lure is worked slowly—a technique the summer angler might keep in mind, reminds Rose.

It might also be pointed out that winter fishing is done over a relatively small area, emphasizing again the importance of sticking with a good walleye spot once it's located. *Stick with that spot like glue—there's a good chance you'll take more after the first has been creeled.* In other words, technique is more important than whether you fish under a slab of ice or mid-summer sun. It's good sport anytime, and often methods that are successful in winter turn the trick at other times of the year.

HOW ARE YOU GONNA' WIN?

If the conservation officer asks to see your license—
HE'S INSULTING.

If he takes your word for having one—
HE'S CORRUPT.

If he arrests a violator—
HE'S SHOWING HOW ROUGH HE CAN BE.

If he gives the culprit another chance—
HE'S SHOWING FAVORITISM.

If he labors day and night to enforce the law—
HE'S A TYRANT.

If he relaxes at all—
HE'S A SHIRKER AND A CROOK.

If he talks fish and game conservation—
HE'S MAUDLIN.

If he keeps quiet—
HE'S NOT INTERESTED IN HIS WORK.

If he accepts suggestions—
HE'S INCOMPETENT.

If he acts like a gentleman—
HE'S TOO EASY.

If he acts firm—
HE'S UNFAIR AND A RASCAL.

Baby skunks are usually born in April or May. Six is an average litter.



Eldon Stempel, Commission quail biologist, measures the length of primary flight feathers of a quail wing. Quail wing studies are part of management plans whose goal is better quail hunting.

Studies Aid Management

A month or so after the good and faithful quail dog has made the last staunch point of the season and the heart-bursting thrill of a bobwhite covey sputtering from cover has ebbed in the sporting breast, the game biologist sits down to scientifically tally up the score.

The time is sometime after quail wing collections from sportsmen and conservation officers winds up, usually about January 1. Bobwhite wings, dozens of them, are systematically spread on the work space before the biologist. Hundreds more in sacks, bags and sundry containers are close at hand. Each receptacle bears a notation of the area where birds were bagged, and each awaits closer scrutiny of the biologist's trained eye. Reference tables, pencils, paper and a rule with a centimeter scale comprise other essential work gear. These also are within reach—even though not always orderly amid the clutter of pile upon pile of stubby wings.

What takes place in the long hours required to examine the wings is a phase of research that tells much about the bobwhite. A count of primary flight feathers and comparison with reference tables helps the biologist determine the approximate age of the quail. Coloration of the covert feathers also is an age determinate. A small triangle of buff colors the covert wing tips of young birds. This coloration is absent in adult birds. Shape of feathers also is a clue to the quail's age. On young bobwhites, the first flight feather (feathers are numbered from the body toward the wing tip) is rounded; on adult quail, the feather is more pointed.

Eldon Stempel, Conservation Commission quail biologist, em-

ploys about the same wing investigation techniques as those carried on in other states. Notations of the area where taken, date taken and sex of each bird are carried over to a quick-reference table where age is pin-pointed more accurately. The growing primary may then be measured to the exact centimeter to determine still more accurately the age of the bobwhite.

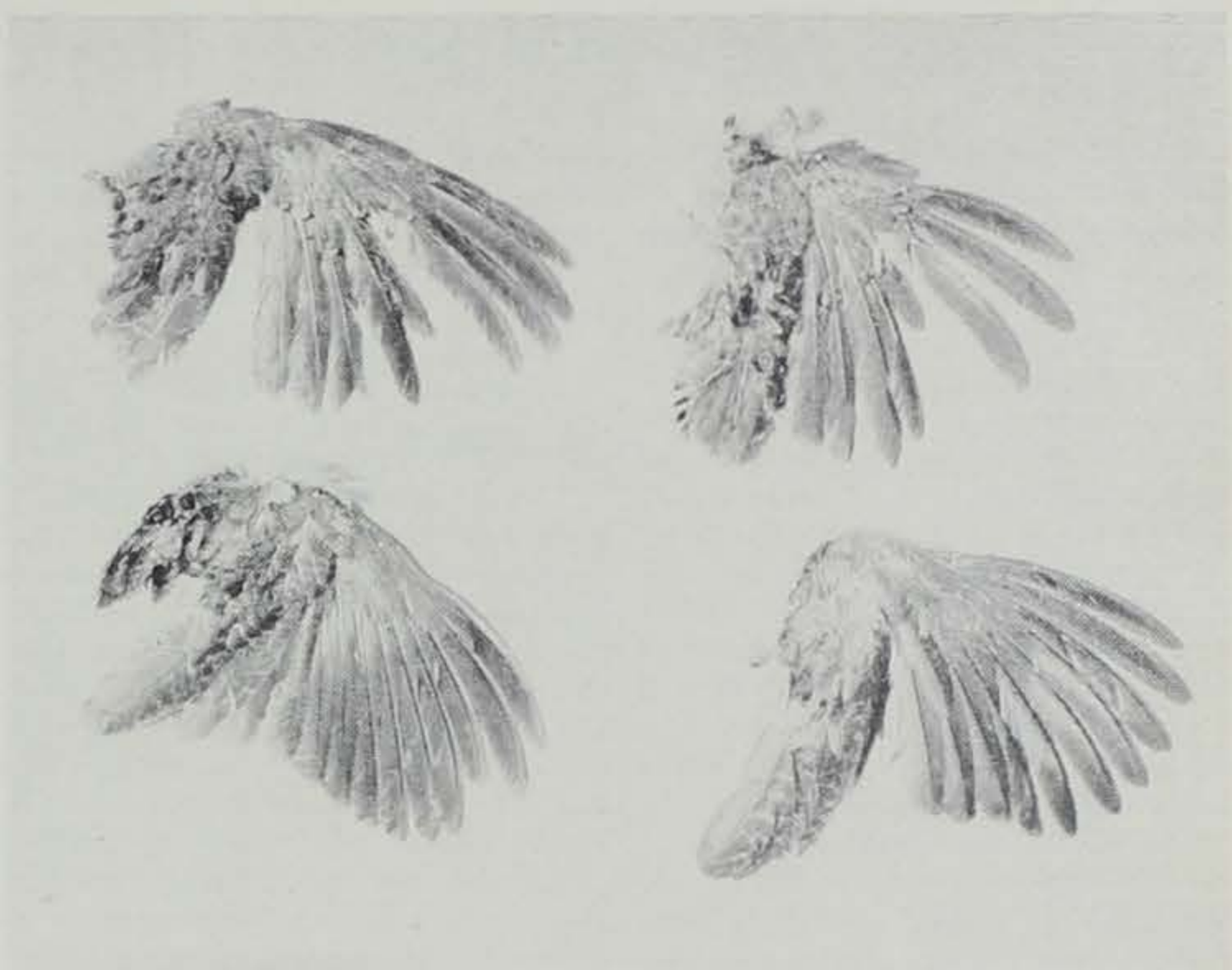
"From examination of quail wings, we can establish the earliest and latest known hatch. Earliest nesting apparently takes place in May, is in full swing in June, and at its peak in July. The hatch diminishes and is at its lowest point the first week in September. Occasionally we see some hatches in October, which indicates re-nesting of birds which lost their first broods," Stempel said.

The real value of wing studies, according to Stempel, is when this phase of research is carried on in conjunction with other observations such as sight and whistle counts and checks of dusting places.

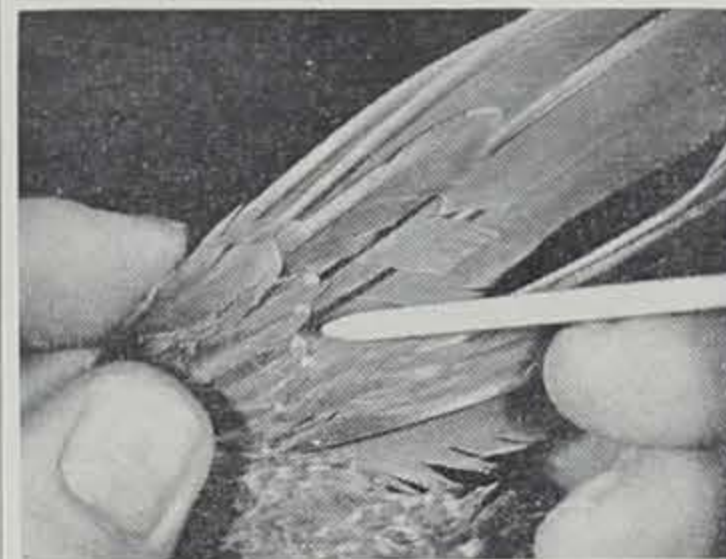
"Research is an important part of the management of quail seed stock. It's a way of making sure we have information by reliable methods and not by guesswork," Stempel said.

There are both immediate and long-range benefits of wing studies when considered in the light of other investigations. Stempel has a ready example which shows how one kind of research verifies another.

A couple of years ago, Stempel made wing studies of birds bagged in the Albia area. Heavy rainstorms with high winds and hail had hit the area in late July. Stempel was concerned, suspecting



Development of primary flight feathers is shown in this photo of quail wings from birds of different ages. Wing at top left is from a bird 68 days old. Wing at top right is from Bobwhite 93 days old. Wing at bottom left is from a quail at 127 days; bottom right, from bird over 150 days old.



One of the feather characteristics the biologist looks for is coloration on the tips of covert feathers. This coloration will be lacking on adult birds.

that a severe storm coming at a critical time in the hatching period might have disastrous effects on bobwhites in the Albia area. Aging wings after the season verified Stempel's initial fears. Birds that were up to two weeks old at the time of the storm did not show in the hunter's bag during the season. However, wing studies did show some young birds in the bag, pointing up re-nesting and recovery from early season losses. The studies also gave Stempel an idea of the extent of the recovery.

Prepares Graph

Stempel also made a graph of the Albia area, prepared from his wing studies. The graph showed a decided dip in hatching that should have occurred between July 27 and August 5. One phase of research substantiated other findings to give Stempel a better picture of exactly what took place in the Albia area.

Observations made over the space of one hatching season are important, but studies carried on over a period of several seasons makes for better overall evaluation of the quail population and the problems involved in the management of Iowa's bobwhites.

"Wing studies have revealed that the number of adult birds remains pretty constant year after year. It was once thought that the number of adult birds was the most important single factor in the suc-



Shape of feathers also tells the quail biologist something about the age of quail. Round tip at right is young bird; the more pointed one on the left belongs to an adult bird.



A rule with centimeter scale gives a more accurate measurement of the age of the Bobwhite quail.

cess of the quail hatch. However, we now believe that weather is the biggest factor in quail reproduction," Stempel said.

Continuing research on the bobwhite has particular significance for the quail hunter. Naturally, the nimrod is interested in the number of birds he may find in the field and the reasons why he may find more birds one year, and fewer—or what may appear to be fewer—the next. There are other considerations, of course, but wing studies, correlated with other research, help give a more precise picture of quail from the nest to the sportsman's bag. And, over the long haul, perhaps, it will provide the key to the ultimate in bobwhite management. For the quail hunter this means a pay-off where it counts most—in better bobwhite shooting during the season!—K.O.S.

Slalome! New Word at Park

Dr. Gordon Rahn of Mount Vernon started for the ski slopes of Winter Park, Colorado, recently, but barely got out of his own backyard!

At face value this may sound like a disappointing turn of events, particularly for such an ardent skier as Dr. Rahn. But in this instance, such just "ain't necessarily so." Instead of going to the kind of terrain that offers skiing, Dr. Rahn brought skiing to himself and a good many other Iowans with the opening of the Mount Vernon Sports Club's Ski-Pal Lodge in Palisades Kepler State Park west of Mount Vernon.

Dr. Rahn, who has made many ski outings to Winter Park and the popular slopes of Cable, Wisconsin, was never quite satisfied with the long hours involved in reaching such places. It took too much time going and coming and left too little for skiing. So instead of his usual trip to Winter Park this year, Dr. Rahn conceived the idea of bringing skiing closer to home.

Things had to move pretty fast to acquire facilities and get the ski trails in shape for use this winter. On January 6, members of the State Conservation Commission met with Dr. Rahn and discussed the operation on the tree-bordered slopes of Palisades Kepler. Commission action resulted in approval of the leasing of the Palisades Kepler lodge for use as a ski lodge during the winter months. Ski-Pal swung into operation almost immediately and the order went out for a ski tow. On January 8, Dr. Rahn outlined the layout of the ski slopes to commission members and received approval for them.

Ski-Pal had its first open night January 9. The turnout of skiers and spectators on opening night and about every weekend since

has been heartening to the operators of Ski-Pal. Many favorable comments have been directed to the operation, Dr. Rahn said recently.

"Skiers particularly like the idea of skiing during the afternoon and night and still get home in good time," Dr. Rahn said recently.

The Ski-Pal layout includes five runs served by two ski tows. The beginner's tow and trail is most popular—at least for now—although the other slopes test the skills of intermediates and even the better skiers. The beginner's layout is a 30-degree slope, 200 yards in length. Broken Tree run is 400 yards long over a 45-degree slope. Rahn's run, named for Ski-Pal's originator and manager, is a 600-yarder bordered by woodlands. The run has two 90-degree turns that are not too difficult but present some challenge to the skier's ability. Most of Rahn's run is over a 45-degree slope and is approved for intermediates. Cave Dell run is another 600-yard wooded trail.

Ski-Pal lodge has facilities and equipment for outfitting skiers. In this phase of the operation, Dr. Rahn has gone all out to make sure skiers set out with the best equipment obtainable. One example is that ski boots are of Italian and German make, considered about the finest in the world. Skis, ski poles and other equipment are of similar quality. In addition to rentals, a complete line of ski equipment and clothing is offered for sale at the lodge. Out on the run a ski instructor is on hand to help skiers master the fine points of the sport. Lights have been rigged for night skiing.

Directly across from the main ski run is a parking lot ample to take care of the many who come to watch the proceedings. But

sometimes they are dissatisfied with "just watching."

"It's interesting to watch how people take to skiing. First they

sit and watch. Then, first thing you know, they are out on the runs trying their hand at it," Dr. Rahn said.



A pause at the top of a ski trail presents an opportunity to take in the scenery at Palisades Kepler. The park lodge is leased during the winter months.



Observers watch the operation of one of Ski-Pal's two ski tows. Ski runs are lighted for night skiing.



The wooded slopes of Palisades Kepler State Park offer a challenge to beginning as well as advanced skiers.

George Tovey Photos

CONSERVATION CAMP OPEN TO ALL

Teachers, sportsmen, naturalists and youth leaders are invited to attend the Tenth Annual Conservation Camp this summer at Springbrook State Park.

The camp, sponsored by the Iowa Conservation Commission, State Department of Public Instruction and Iowa State Teachers College, begins June 7. Three sessions are offered. The second session begins June 28 and the third gets underway July 19.

Three semester hours of college credit may be earned by those attending the camp as a college course. If students desire, they may remain for six weeks and receive six hours of science credit. Six hours is usually enough for renewal of a teaching certificate.

Springbrook is seven miles northeast of Guthrie Center. During the camp, students will stay in cabins and take meals at the camp. The park has a 27-acre lake which provides opportunity for swimming and fishing. Hiking and photography are other recreational opportunities available to campers.

The camp offers nature study,

state park living and travel to various points of interest. Those attending the camp will learn more about nature by seeing and understanding the relationship between soil, water, forests and wildlife. They will travel approximately 1,000 miles during each three-week session. The camp will have five permanent instructors. One instructor will be assigned to the woodworking shop. Four others will teach conservation. Three of the four camp instructors will be conservation educators from Iowa State Teachers College, and one is from the Iowa Conservation Commission. Many conservation specialists will be called in from all parts of the state to help instruct.

Cost of the camp, including room, board and tuition, is \$98.64 for undergraduates and \$104.64 for graduate students. A charge for room and board only will be made to those who do not take the course for college credit.

Scholarships are available for those attending the camp. Information on available scholarships and other features of the camp is available by writing Dr. Verlin Lee, Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, or Duane E. DeKock, Iowa Conservation Commission, Des Moines.

NEW FISHING REGULATIONS SET

Regulations for Iowa's 1959 fishing season have been announced by the Iowa Conservation Commission.

The new regulations are essentially the same as those in force last year. Only exception is opening dates which have been set to conform to the Commission's policy of Saturday openings.

A summary of 1959 fishing regulations follows:

Kind of Fish	Open Season	Daily Catch Limit	Possession Limit	Min. Length or Weight	BOUNDARY WATERS
					Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and inland water of Lee County
Carp, Buffalo, Quillback, Gar, Dogfish, Gizzard Shad	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Sheepshead, Sucker, Redhorse, Chub, Sunfish, Bluegill	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Bullheads	Continuous	15 South of Hwy. 30 None North of Hwy. 30	30 South of Hwy. 30 None North of Hwy. 30	None	Continuous open season with no catch or possession limit
Rock Sturgeon Paddlefish	Continuous	15 each species	30 each species	5 lb.	Same as inland waters
Sand Sturgeon	Continuous	15	30	1 lb.	Same as inland waters
Crappie, Yellow Bass, Silver Bass, Warmouth Bass, Rock Bass, Perch	Continuous	15 each species	30 each species	None	Same as inland waters
Trout (All species)	Continuous	8	8	None	Same as inland waters
Minnnows	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Frogs (Except Bullfrogs)	May 9- Nov. 30	4 doz.	8 doz.	None	Same as inland waters
Bullfrogs (Rana catesbeiana)	May 9- Nov. 30	1 doz.	1 doz.	None	Same as inland waters
Catfish	Continuous	16	16	None	Continuous open season with no catch or possession limit
Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass	May 23-Feb. 15 North of Hwy. 30 Continuous South of Hwy. 30	5	10	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Walleye—Sauger	May 9-Feb. 15 North of Hwy. 30 Apr. 11-Feb. 15 South of Hwy. 30	5 each species	10 each species	None	Daily catch limit 8, possession limit 16, continuous open season
Northern Pike	May 9- Feb. 15	3	6	None	Continuous open season with no catch or possession limit



Students at the Iowa Conservation Camp this summer will have an opportunity to get practical, first-hand knowledge of Conservation in the form of field trips. Lectures and demonstrations in the open give a more vivid and meaningful picture of the benefits and problems of Conservation.

Buckskin is of a higher grade in summer than in winter. Since winter hair is coarser, winter leather is not fine grained.

Young snails do not leave their gelatinous egg mass until their shells have one or two whorls.

Land insects make up an appreciable percentage of the rainbow trout's diet in the summer.

All trout are carnivorous; that is, they feed on the flesh of other fishes or animals.

Under normal conditions brook trout reach a length of from 3 to 5 inches the first year, 6 to 8 the second and 9 to 11 the third.

Generally chipmunks have striped faces; ground squirrels do not.

Walleye pike usually feed in schools, so several can often be taken in one area of a lake.

The hermit crab lives in someone else's shell, moving each time the apartment becomes too small.

Fisheries Meeting



Conservation Commission fisheries personnel watch demonstration of tractor-driven ice auger during fisheries school at Spirit Lake held in January. A knowledge of new equipment was stressed at the school.



does your school teach CONSERVATION?

The message of conservation, carried to school children during formative years, makes impressions that last for life. Is there a course in conservation taught in your school?

WILDLIFE WEEK—

(Continued from page 105)

munity.

... Help get money to support conservation-education activities.

In announcing National Wildlife Week, the Federation makes the following statement concerning 1959 goals:

"People's concern for the lands upon which we live—and all the people of the future must live—is linked closely to a basic concern for the well-being of others. This must be instilled in our younger generations through the teaching of conservation in our schools.

"Conservation is a way of living. It calls upon us to care for the resources we require in order to live—crops from our soils, minerals, lumber from our forests, cattle

from our range lands, water, wildlife, and even the outdoor places where we seek relaxation and relief from everyday cares.

"Conservation is also a way of thinking. Like the principles of self-government that we have come to regard as the foundation of our democratic system, its basic concepts must be imbued in our children as they learn about living—from kindergarten through college. School experiences can give them opportunity to learn about conservation by practicing it, even if only on a small scale within a playground or schoolyard. Through this exposure, during their formative years, conservation can become a guiding philosophy in their lives.

"By learning about our resources and the care we must give them, our young people will see that a good share of the world's troubles stem directly from our past failures to learn to live with the land, instead of against it!"

WHOSE WATER TOMORROW?

Coming up in the ensuing decade or two are water rights fights the like of which this country has never seen before. . . .

If interested in the recreational angle (half the total population is, in one form or another), you better load up your horse pistol, podner, and stand guard over the waterhole, because somebody's going to try to take it away from you.—Bill Wolf, *Sports Afield*, Reprinted in *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin*.

Varnish for that job of fishing rod refinishing will flow more evenly if it is heated first. This can be simply done by placing the open can in a basin of hot water.

The silverfish is not a fish and does not live in the water but is a small wingless insect with a fish-like bristle tail.

Iowa has 15,000 miles of fishable streams; 45,000 acres of natural lakes; and 3,000 acres of state-owned artificial lakes.

SEEING IOWA PARKS IN WINTER

Visiting Iowa's State Parks is a popular recreation in summer. But the parks are there the year around and a visit during winter is even more fun. In summer much may be hidden by leaves and foliage. Winter opens up new views and from a vantage point one can see many things which have hitherto gone unnoticed.

Cold weather? Even at below zero temperatures the car heater will keep you warm on the way, and proper outdoor clothing will keep you warm on a hike over the trails.

It's a new world! Bright sun glinting on the clean, sparkling snow. Bare trees cast unusual shadows. The snow is a page on which nature writes the comings and goings of wildlife. Here a rabbit has hopped by—there a squirrel has left his track as he crossed from tree to tree, while a more delicate disturbance over on that old log indicates that a bird landed there in his search for food. Tiny tracks and trails around the log show that a fieldmouse has been out shopping.

Meanwhile, under the snow, many seeds lie dormant, some to be used as food for birds and animals, but most waiting for the warmth and moisture of spring.

The bright blue sky, the unusual shapes and patterns on the snow, the long unbroken view of cliff and glen, the bright winter costumes of your companions are all inviting subjects for the color film in your camera. Pictures can be made that will rival in interest the most common summer subjects.

Back home, after a hike in the open, things take on a new look. Colors seem brighter—books take on a new interest and problems are reduced to their proper proportion.

Iowa's state parks have a beauty all their own in winter. You haven't really seen your favorite until you visit it on a bright winter day. Snow covered hills and trails invite you to a new experience in outdoor beauty.—George Tovey



George Tovey Photo
Winter in Iowa parks offers a variety of opportunities for the nature lover and photographer. The quiet beauty of a park under a mantle of snow offers sanctity from everyday worries and cares.

The scaup duck sometimes dives to depths of 200 feet for food. They use only their feet in swimming under water.

A fish's nervous system is poorly developed and evidence indicates a

hooked fish experiences discomfort rather than pain.

The cinnamon teal is the one of the river and pond ducks that is confined in its range to the western portion of the continent.



In one of his storage rooms, Devine holds a 'coon pelt that has been properly stretched and pelted. Always store furs in a cool, dry place until ready for shipment.

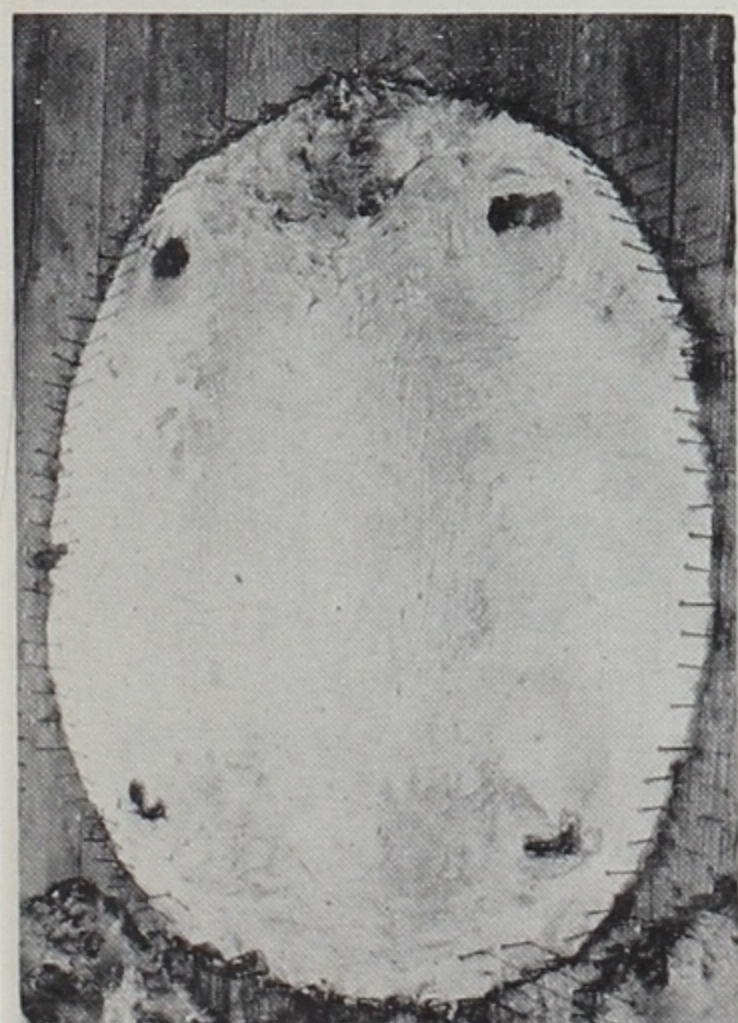
FURS—

(Continued from page 105)

the fur market gave them a boost. Until a few years ago, Devine had continued to purchase Alaskan furs while the new dealers were getting established. This, Devine believes, helped them because his business forced the Alaskan market and resulted in better local prices for the northern dealers.

Student of Market

More than a collector, Devine has been a real student of the fur trade and market for as long as he has been at the business. He watches the market and market trends on a day-by-day basis and carefully gauges the wants of fur manufacturers in this country and



All Photos by George Tovey
There is only one way to get the almost perfect circular beaver pelt such as this one of Harold Devine's. Scrape completely and use plenty of nails.

abroad. He has seen all kinds of furs come down the pike and has learned long ago that you can expect the top dollar only when you deliver top quality fur. He has demanded expert workmanship in preparation of furs of his own and has a great deal of admiration for top-flight work of others.

"I'm somewhat of a perfectionist, I guess," Devine said recently. "I sometimes steer furs to good dealers although it costs me to do so, simply because I admire well-handled furs."

Devine tries to spread the doctrine. For many years he has had a particular project of trying to educate dealers to methods that will produce better, more uniform quality furs. In more than one instance, Devine has given of his own time and facilities to show and help others master the right preparation techniques.

Any fur man who will follow these points of instruction, says Devine, will eliminate most of the common faults of fur handling and come up with furs that are uniform and of top quality:

- ... Exercise care when you kill any trapped animal that must be shot. Shoot through the head from the side so that there will be no damage to the fur farther down on the animal.
- ... Pelt your animal as soon as you can—the sooner the better.
- ... Remove all surplus flesh from the hide. Any excess fat left on the hide will spoil, resulting in slippage of hair.

- ... Keep a supply of every standard pattern of stretcher and make sure you use the correct size for whatever animal you are stretching. Devine uses steel stretchers for muskrats only.
- ... Any animal that is skinned out with tail intact, the tail bone should be removed and the tail split all the way to the end.
- ... Never stretch a fur that is wet or muddy. Wash clean and dry before stretching.
- ... How do you tell when a fur is dry enough to come off the stretcher? Devine and other veterans probably tell from the look and feel of the skin. For others a good test is that furs should be fairly rigid and hold their shape after removal from the stretcher. If they don't hold their shape they are not dry enough.
- ... After furs are skinned and stretched, store in a cool, dry place.
- ... When ready, ship your furs completely dry. Take it from Devine, you just can't ship furs wet and expect to get the top dollar for them.

As one might expect of someone who accept nothing short of first-class work, Devine has had a good many compliments tossed his way. But one bouquet is particularly

rewarding since it comes from a facet of the fur business Devine has never seen. Although he has shipped hundreds of thousands of furs to New York, Devine has never visited the large cold storage plants where his furs are stored for later delivery to fur manufacturers. One of the largest manufacturers asked him about it one day in a telephone conversation:

"Why don't you come to New York sometime and see this side of the business?" he asked Devine.

Devine declined the invitation, stating he was too busy with business matters at home and enjoying the peace and quiet of his Iowa farm too much to "go traipsin' off to New York."

The New Yorker didn't pursue the matter farther, but chose the opportunity to tell Devine:

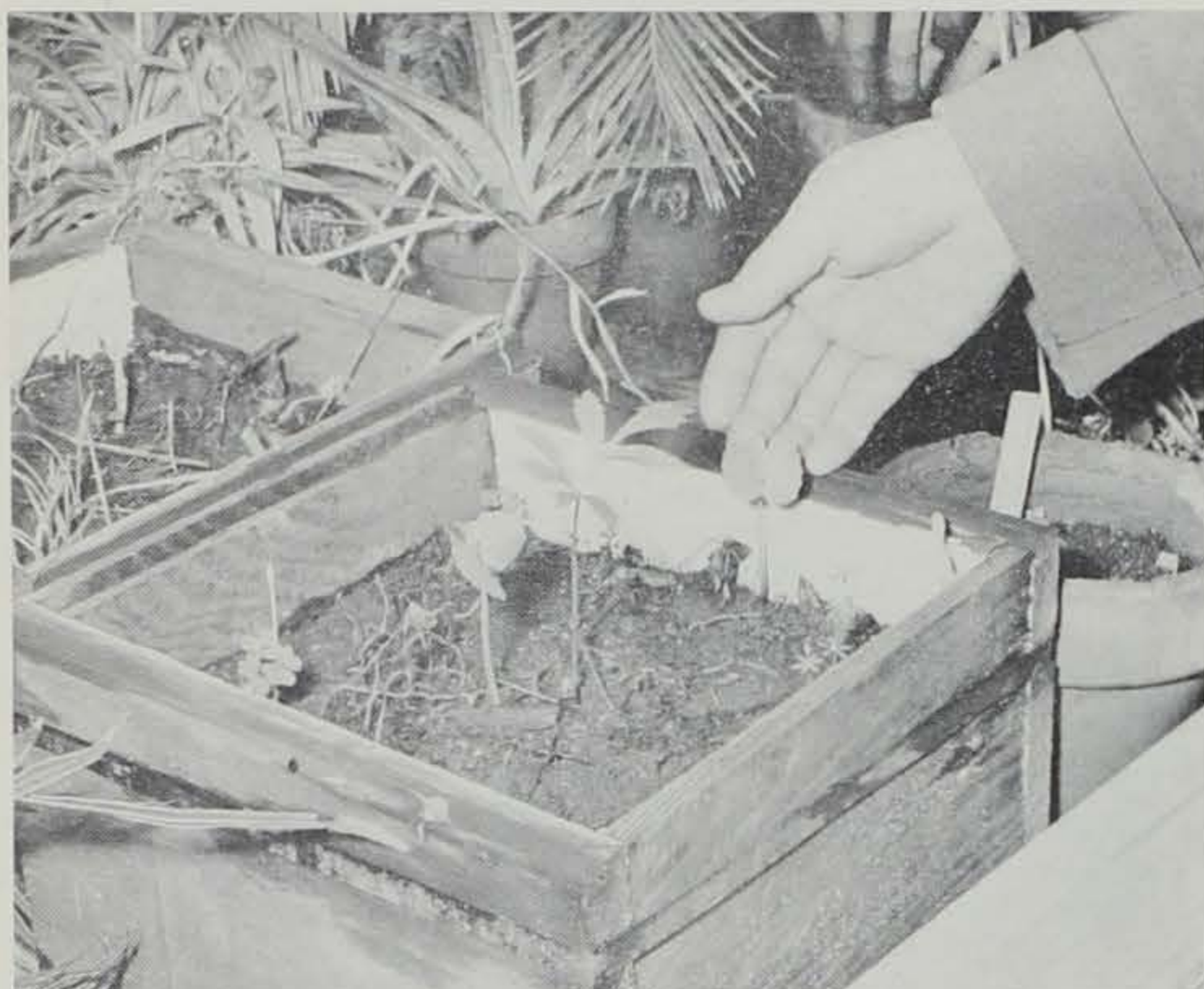
"Well, for being out in the country, you certainly operate a good business."

It's pretty obvious that one important reason for Devine's good business record has been his devotion to marketing prime quality furs. And it's money in the bank for others who will put forth the effort to improve their skills in fur preparation. As Devine puts it:

"Everyone benefits from better handled furs. Any good, reputable fur dealer benefits and is equipped and willing to help others improve the fur market."—K.C.S.



Devine here demonstrates a poor pelt and one that has been properly handled. The pelt on the left has not been scraped completely. Every glob of fat will spoil, causing fur to slip badly.



Dr. Wendell Bragonier inspects several varieties of wildflowers in this soil plot. Several kinds of wildflowers should be blooming at the time of the Home and Flower Show in Des Moines the week of February 21.

WILDFLOWERS—

(Continued from page 105)

of existing wildflowers had to be located, plotted and dug. Some identification from leaves was possible so botanists could predetermine some species at the time of plotting. Some of these same plots and others hid their secrets below what the eye could detect. The plots of soil, looking for the most part barren, devoid of life and laced with crystals of frost, were encased in wooden frameworks and moved to the greenhouses at Iowa State.

Many Areas

From many different areas of the state they came. Wildflowers from Ledges and Wildcat Den State Parks; ferns from the McGregor area; logs with fungi from Dolliver State Park and mosses and lichens from Ledges. Shrubs came from state park areas and state nurseries. Through it all, the weatherman was cooperative, presenting all involved in the project with an open fall. Everything that had to be brought from out-of-doors was dug between November 21-23, before the real hard freeze around Thanksgiving.

With delivery to the ISC greenhouses, the problems involved in pushing the calendar ahead a couple of months were carefully calculated. A scientific concept was basic in bringing the flowers and shrubs to bloom.

"The facts of science we know. Every 10-degree (centigrade) increase in temperature doubles the rate of a plant's metabolism. Knowing this, we are able to calculate more accurately how long it takes to bring plants to peak bloom," Dr. Bragonier said.

Some experimental work already conducted by horticulturists helped answer some of the problems regarding shrubs, but wildflowers were something else again. There had been no previous studies of these. They would require ex-

posure to different greenhouse temperatures, much diligent watching, calculation and patience.

Manipulations of temperature had to take into account the differences in the growing cycles of the various flowers and shrubs. For most varieties, a period of cold weather was necessary to break their dormancy. Then, as calculations dictated, certain species were moved to the 50-degree room where growth began under watchful eyes. When the time was right, flowers were brought to the 70-degree room to spur their growth. In the case of some of the shrubs, it was necessary to take them back outside to retard their growing pains.

Through the length and breadth of the project, the big problem has been one of curbing growth, rather than forcing it, Dr. Bragonier said.

Blooming Differs

The blooming periods of individual varieties added to the complexities of the project. Wildflowers like hepatica and Spring beauty have a short blooming season. Because they do, calculations and temperature controls had to be with fine-line accuracy to hope for best bloom within a specified few days.

All of the sweat and patience of the project has had unexpected rewards for those most directly involved. As flowers were forced, several that had been hidden below the surface of the soil began to appear. Among these were Virginia creeper, jack-in-the-pulpit and bublet bladder fern.

In addition to those mentioned, ISC botanists were able to force bloodroot, phlox, yellow bell flower, wild orchid, bedstraw, scouring rush, wild columbine, wild geranium, sweet cicely, golden polypody, maiden hair, ostrich and lady fern, interrupted fern, walking fern and fragile fern.



This before and after photograph shows how soil plots appeared as they came from out-of-doors (left) and after a month of water, sun and warm temperatures of ISC greenhouses. The big problem was actually curbing growth rather than forcing it.

Of the shrubs Home and Flower Show visitors may find blooming are pussy willow, hazelnut, redbud, indigo bush, June berry, wahoo (or arrowwood), basswood, sycamore, maple, Iowa crabapple, and coral berry.

It may be difficult to say which or how many of the varieties will be in bloom at the time of the Home Show, but some definitely will be. Ferns, mosses and lichens will be set in place just before the show so that they will be at their best, Dr. Bragonier said.

For those who watch changing seasons with an official eye, Spring returns March 21 when the sun crosses the equator on its journey north. More unofficially it may be the first crocus, the first warm rain, or the first thread of geese winging and clamoring to nesting grounds in the far north. But effort and cooperation of many has shortened the wait for Home Show



Virginia creeper was one of the surprises for ISC botanists. This wild plant hid its secret below the soil's surface and did not appear until it was forced.

patrons. For all practical purposes, their Spring premiers at Veterans' Auditorium February 21!—K.C.S.

Harvest



Promiscuous fishing enables public to harvest fish that would otherwise be lost to freeze-outs and low oxygen. This photo was taken on the Little Sioux River as promiscuous fishing was opened here and other critical areas in January.