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CONSERVATIONIST

Volume 20 February, 1961 Number 2

MORE COVER MEANS MORE GAME AND HUNTING

SNOWFLAKE CAMPING

Duane De Kock

Think of last summer's favorite camping spot. Now, in the evening as the sun withdraws its last warmth from the western slopes, the snow is blowing forming snow-dunes like sand dunes on a stormy sea; and that lake you swam in is covered with ice.

It is the fear of this type of weather that discourages the camper from going out in the winter when this is the very thing that should attract him. Even when the snow is knee deep, it only detracts from the enjoyment of steaming and heated tents.

Winter camping, done right, is almost as comfortable as summer camping and much more exciting. Competition for ideal camping spots is almost non-existent. It is a sport limited only to the few who are hardy enough to be potential members of a polar bear club. Some care must be taken in order to enjoy these windy, white, dreary days. The first item on your list of supplies should be warm clothing. Cold feet, the bane of wintertime, are unnecessary with the present day insulation.

Wear insulated boots, insulated underwear, wind-breaking garments, fur-lined gloves (woolen gloves worn as liners or leather gloves) plus a warm hat or cap with earflaps and your ears will be the only indicator to you it's cold out there. Include at least one complete change of clothing in your gear and at least two changes of sox.

To secure your tent, take along many spikes or railroad spikes rather than depending on tent stakes. Most tent stakes are too light to be driven into frozen ground. It is not necessary to drive the spikes very deep because if pushed all the way in they are almost impossible to pull out. When the snow is too deep to drive spikes, try burying a small log in the snow alongside your tent and attaching your tent ropes to the log. Before you stake your

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WINTER SAILS

Even in winter white sails appear on several of Iowa's ice-covered natural lakes. These two and other enthusiasts from Lake View ready their ice boats each season after ice forms on Black Hawk Lake. Cold weather goes unnoticed as the nylon sails flap and wind whistles through the rigging.

No more than a wooden skeleton balanced on three runners, these craft are things of beauty speeding down the lake under full sail. Like the sail boats of summer use, they can tack against the wind for the trip back. Some two inches of snow on the ice at the time the picture was taken slowed the progress of the boats considerably and provided some unexpected thrills. With bare, smooth ice the boats can go over a hundred miles an hour. In the snow 25 m.p.h. seemed to be about the best speed of the day. It was on

one of these runs that a runner of one of the boats struck a hidden tin can frozen in the ice and flipped the craft on its side.

Sailing vessels operating in open water normally heel to leeward when tacking against the wind (called making a beat). One would expect the ships of the ice to be quite stable and this is true to a degree. But sailing against the wind a runner will sometimes rise quite high and if an obstruction is encountered the boat will spin if not turn over. Luckily they don't generally sink.

During the winter there's little competition for space on the lakes and it's a good thing with the speed at which the ice boats travel. There is lots of room left though, and on most lakes the ice fishermen never see them. The crack of sails over ice is heard on only a few lakes, notably: Black Hawk, Spirit, Storm and Clear Lakes.

Malcolm K. Johnson

Harbored in odd-corner and fence-row jungles in and around Iowa's ultra-productive grain fields lives a large part of our small game. Though perhaps not many hunters consciously think about habitat and what it means to them and their game, they are well aware of it. The road sides, fence-rows and sloughs are generally preferred and hunted first. The fields of picked corn and beans are hunted after the primary cover has been thoroughly searched. Late in the season the shootable areas become severely restricted and hunting through the cover yet standing brings the only success—little game can survive in the bare fields mantled with snow.

A casual excursion through the country in late winter is very revealing. The once lush countryside of summer stands barren except for a few unshaven road ditches and occasional spots of hardy shrubs. With corn down and beans out little protective cover is left for the game birds and animals. What remains is a focal spot for the hungry foxes whose tracks riddle the small tracts of suitable habitat. They, too, know where to look when field mice offer slim pickin's.

Iowa sportsmen and farmers can, if they will, change the situation and alleviate the need for game cover under the terms of a simple and economical program. Sponsored by the State Conservation Commission and with help from the Soil Conservation Service, the Farmer-Sportsman Cooperative Program is a direct approach to regain lost wildlife cover. Since 1948, when the program started, more than 2,500 areas have been planted with beneficial wildlife trees and shrubs. Though every county has been signed up, only 89 counties have completed projects. All it takes to get moving is a little ground work by local rod and gun clubs (or any organization for that matter) to interest farm land owners who operate under a farm plan by the Soil Conservation Service. The trees and shrubs are

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MUTINY AT THE BOUNTY

Harking back a century or so ago to the time when our land was undergoing the westward movement, there was a class of man who, though scorned by many netted their living by running down and bringing to justice people whose names were printed under the fearsome word WANTED. The latter day bounty hunter is considerably restricted in his quarry, but there is still money being collected. In Iowa the annual bill for killing foxes, crows, rattlesnakes, gophers, and a few other species amounts to \$150,000. This averages out to a little over \$1,500 per county. In the past ten years the people of Iowa have probably contributed a million and a half dollars for the destruction of animals on the bounty list. The nation's coffers have been raided to the extent of \$15,000,000 in the last decade for extermination of the pests.

Since bounties have been paid for more than 50 years in some states the numbers of unwanted critters should be lessened to the point of extinction, but such is not the case. Instead of dropping, the bills for bounty payments are steadily increasing. From 1952, when \$145,663 was paid to Iowans, the rate has gone up to \$157,364 in 1959.

HIGH RANKED GAME BIRD

With an estimated annual hunter-take of 20 million, it could be that doves are the number one game bird in the country. They breed in 48 of the 50 states (all except Alaska and Hawaii) and are hunted in 31 states. They have a hurry-up outlook on production and it takes but 30 days from egg laying until the usual pair of young leaves the nest. With year around breeding in some areas, they manage to shuck out five, six, or even more, broods.

Gaining in popularity each year, doves not only have maintained their numbers but have managed to show good gains. And all of this with minimum assistance from management agencies.

WOOD FOR TOMORROW'S HOMES

The wood for the home that must be built 50 years hence should be growing in the forest today. Over half of the trees that will provide this wood must come from private woodlots and forests throughout the United States. There are approximately 426,000 acres (655 square miles) of commercial forest land in Iowa urgently in need of tree planting. Of this area, 99 per cent is in private ownership.

Today progressive landowners make their lands more productive by managing them in the way in which they are best suited. For the private landowner it is simply good business to receive the maximum constant returns from his investment by growing trees. Not only does his income grow, but he increases the value of his land at the same time by protecting it from erosion and further deterioration.

Some folks are still skeptical about the value and need for wood in the future. There is yet to be produced, however, a substitute with the workability, warmth, color, and utility of wood. Nearly one-third of the cost of the average house is for wood products our society will not do without.

Growing trees is not as difficult as it may seem, especially since expert technical advice is available free for the asking. Landowners interested in making the most from their land by growing trees are urged to contact the State Forester, State Conservation Commission, East 7th and Court Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa.

Private landowners can do their part to make certain that future generations will never have cause to say, "Our forests are gone; those who lived before have failed us."

COMMISSION MINUTES—JANUARY 4, 1961

A report on the Missouri River Survey was submitted to the Commission by Assistant Director Lester Faber.

A report on the Mississippi River Survey work was given to the Commission by Robert Cleary.

The Commission gave travel authorization for two people to attend the Mississippi Flyway Council at Lake Charles, Louisiana, February 15.

Travel authorization was given for three people to attend the Great Lakes Park Training Institute at Angola, Indiana, February 20-24.

Commissioner Mrs. Crabb was authorized to travel to the meeting of Board of Directors of Conference on State Parks, to be held in Washington, D. C., in January.

Director Glen Powers gave a report on budgets for the coming biennium.

Chairman George Jeck presented a plaque for 18½ years of service to Harold Cole of Clear Lake State Park who is retiring.

Carroll County was given approval for acquisition of 70½ acres of land near Glidden at a cost of \$2,820 to be used for picnicking, camping, and fishing access.

Cedar County was given approval for acquisition of 20 acres of land on the Wapsi River near the town of Massillon at a cost of \$1,500 to be used for picnicking, boat launching and baseball.

Grundy County was given approval for acquisition for two and one-half acres of land to be acquired as a gift nine miles west of Grundy Center to be used a memorial roadside park.

Hancock County was given approval to develop two acres of land near Garner for a roadside park.

Hardin County was given approval for acquisition of five acres of land at a cost of \$250 near Buckeye for use for picnicking

and as a fishing access on the south fork of the Iowa River.

Jackson County received approval for acquisition of one-half acre of land through a 20 year lease from the town of Sabula to be used for a boat launching site.

Linn County was given approval for acquisition of seven acres of land, part from the County Board of Supervisors and part through a 40 year lease at a total cost of \$1.00 located on the Wapsipinicon River near Waubeek to be used for picnicking, camping and fishing access.

Linn County received approval for acquisition of 77.12 acres of land on the Cedar River near Toddville at a cost of \$3,856 to be developed into a forest preserve.

Linn County also received approval for acquisition of six and one-fourth acres of land from the town of Coggon. This area includes the Coggon Dam and impounded waters on Buffalo Creek.

County Conservation Board Coordinator, Bill Rush, was authorized to work with Linn County Legislators to write a Bill authorizing the Iowa Conservation Commission to transfer flowage rights to the County Conservation Board.

Calhoun County received approval for a development plan for a multiple use park near Lohrville.

The State Conservation Commission accepted an agreement with the Calhoun County Conservation Board for management of the Rainbow Bend Fishing Access Area on the Raccoon River three miles southwest of Lake City.

Calhoun County also received approval for a development plan for the Rainbow Bend Area.

Polk County received approval for acquisition of 80 acres of land at a cost of \$16,800 on the Skunk River to be used as part of the Chichaqua Wildlife Preserve,

VALUE JUST BEGINNING IN 60-YEAR-OLD HARDWOOD

If you have some black walnut trees on the back forty, don't market them until they're well past 60 years of age.

Reason: A black walnut tree 60 years old is worth nine times as much as one that's just turned 60, a University of Minnesota study shows.

Forestry researchers found that at 85 years, black walnut trees in southeastern Minnesota average 355 board feet of logs each—worth \$125.20 on the current market. At 60 years, the same kind of tree averaged only \$13.20 worth of logs and contained a mere \$1.20 worth at 35 years of age.

A similar difference held true for basswood, black cherry and red elm trees—though not quite as striking. Basswood, for example averaged 37 cents worth of log per tree at 35 years, \$2.25 at 60 and \$25.60 worth at 85.

Older trees went up in value for two reasons. First, they contained more board feet. Second, the wood becomes more valuable with age. Trees sold when 35-60 years of age would have to go as saw logs. But later on, they would sell as veneer—bringing higher prices.

Buchanan County was given approval to acquire 78.26 acres of land at a cost of \$9,250 located on Buffalo Creek near Highway 20 for use as fishing access and roadside park.

Hancock County received approval for a development plan for a roadside park located on Highway 59.

The Commission granted a construction permit to the Iowa Illinois Gas and Electric Company for a highline to cross the Klondike Lake Area in Louisa County.

A motion to exercise an option for a land purchase of 16.54 acres for \$387.05 in the Banner Strata Mine Area in Warren County was carried.

Superintendent of Parks, Raymond Mitchell, reported on a request for a construction permit by the Highway Commission for a Highway Interchange in Margo Frank Woods in Polk County.

The Superintendent of Parks gave a report on state park concession contract procedures.

A 1000 foot long area in Storm Lake State Park was approved for use as a golf driving range.

A request from the State University of Iowa to hold a campsite school in Palisades-Kepler State Park next summer was granted with the stipulation that the regular camping fee would be charged.

Plans for remedial work on the dam at Wildcat Den State Park were approved.

A delegation representing the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake met with the Commission and offered suggestions for the management of Ventura Marsh and Clear Lake.



George Tovey Photo.

Tearing up ropes after a windy night at Pilot Knob State Park. These campers slept through a night of strong winds and five degrees below zero temperature in relative comfort, using sleeping bags designed for moderate weather. Hot morning coffee helped.

SNOWFLAKE CAMPING—

(Continued from page 105)

down, place a plastic sheet or cloth, face down, under the floor to keep the tent floor from freezing to the ground. A couple of inches of snow between the tent floor and the ground will offer some insulation.

TENT HEATING

If you aren't careful your tent will become too hot using some of the tent stoves available today. Danger in using such a stove is countered by not providing an outside outlet for the fumes. People have been known to be asphyxiated by an all night fire in a tent. If you don't have an outside stove pipe, depend on your sleeping bag for warmth or place a candle in a metal container to burn all night. It is unbelievable how much heat one or two candles give in moderate weather.

Another important item on your list is the sleeping bag. Many of the new "miracle fibers" are very warm, less expensive than down, and will keep you quite warm. They also have the capability of drying without damage to their insulating qualities should you get them wet. But if you are not going to buy a sleeping bag, blankets held together by blanket ties will do a fine job of containing body heat, but take plenty! Lay a waterproof ground cloth and as many blankets under as over. Remember, the most important thing you must do to keep all your clothing or your sleeping bag do their job is—keep them dry.

MEAL TIME

For those members of the well-organized clan who would rather eat than sleep, hot, spicy foods

often head the supply list. If you usually eat Mexican food only because of that waitress who serves it around the corner, try fixing some hot tamales or enchiladas yourself on a camping trip. Pull up a snowflake and sit down to a meal of hot chili followed with an apple baked in aluminum foil and cover it all with good strong camp coffee.

To extend your enjoyment of the snowy season, place bread crusts and table scraps in various areas around the tent before going to bed. The next morning there will be stories of winter visitors written in the snow. For those of you who like wildlife photography, the snow will cut off normal food supplies and make your bait of interest to all types of birds and animals who then are easy prey to your lens.

CAUTION

If there is any chance of thawing weather while you are out, pick high ground for the campsite. There is no fun in returning to your tent after a long day of ice fishing, hiking, or whatever, only to find that melting snow has added the joy of running water to your canvas home. Packing snow around the base of your tent will help to keep out drafts when the wind is forcing trees to bow to the south, but a warm tent can thaw the snow and form icy fingers of water on your tent floor. A little experience is a great teacher where the don'ts of winter camping are concerned.

IOWA CAMPING AREAS

Iowa has many areas which offer excellent winter camping. The state parks which have a water pump and therefore have water available in the wintertime are:

Lewis and Clark, Pammel, George Wyth, Union Grove, Wapsipinicon, Geode, Pilot Knob and Red Haw. Most of the other state parks have latrines, but it would be necessary for you to carry your own water. All of our state forests are open to winter camping, although in some no facilities are available. A list of your state parks and state forests may be obtained by writing to the Conservation Commission offices, East 7th and Court Avenue, Des Moines 8.

If you felt a tinge of disappointment as you put camping gear away last fall or if you were wishing all summer you could camp under less crowded conditions, bundle-up and head out this coming week-end. It won't be crowded and that old camping spot will give you a new thrill; one which the fair weather camper will never know!

SNOW GEESE FROM RUSSIA

Thousands of waterfowl are banded in the United States and Canada each year by conservation agencies to learn more of the migrations, mortality rates, and life habits of the many species. All agencies use numbered bands.

The banding program has been expanded considerably in the last 15 years and it is no longer a rarity for a hunter to bag one of these banded birds. What has become a novelty, however, is for a hunter to shoot a bird wearing a Russian band.

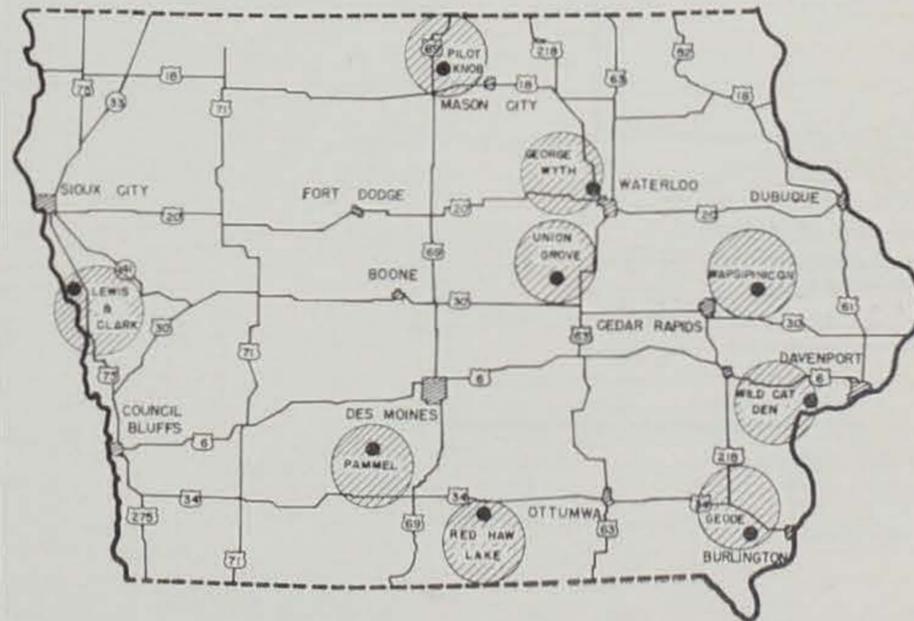
During the last waterfowl season three snow geese wearing Russian bands were bagged at Summer Lake in Oregon. On the bands was a request to notify the "Bureau of Rings, Moscow."

These geese were all young birds, having been reared last summer somewhere in northern Siberia. More than likely they were captured and banded on their breeding grounds before they could fly. The banding site will remain a mystery until the information is supplied from Moscow.

It has long been suspected that many of the fall flights of snow geese which migrate down the west coast of North America had their origin in Siberia as there are no major snow goose breeding grounds in Alaska. Many of the flights which follow inland routes come from breeding grounds on the Arctic Coast of Canada and Banks Island in the Arctic Ocean.

The recovery of these three bands is the first known instance of any bird banded in Russia being taken in the United States. There are a number of records, however, of pintails, brant, and snow geese banded in the United States being subsequently recovered in Siberia and reported through Moscow.

The Russians are known to have an extensive bird banding program but this is probably their first venture in banding waterfowl so far east.



In the nine parks circled above, both water and sanitary facilities are available to the snowflake camper. All of the state parks are open the year around for your use.

Native Iowa Trees THE OAKS

Professor George B. Hartman

School of Forestry, Iowa State University

Back in the early 1800's when the first pioneers began to settle in Iowa as a part of the westward expansion of the American West they found the uplands and moist slopes of eastern and southern Iowa well covered with forests. Although there were numerous tree species represented, the predominant trees were oaks and hickories.

R. B. Campbell, in *Trees of Iowa*, states that there are 13 species of oaks which are native to Iowa. The oaks are divided into two groups which are termed red oak and white oak. There is considerable variation in leaf and other characteristics of the oaks which makes certain identification of the species difficult. In general the trees in the red oak group produce acorns which mature at the end of the second season and have leaves or leaf lobes which are bristle-tipped. On the other hand, trees of the white oak group have acorns which mature at the end of the first season and have leaves and leaf lobes without bristle tips.

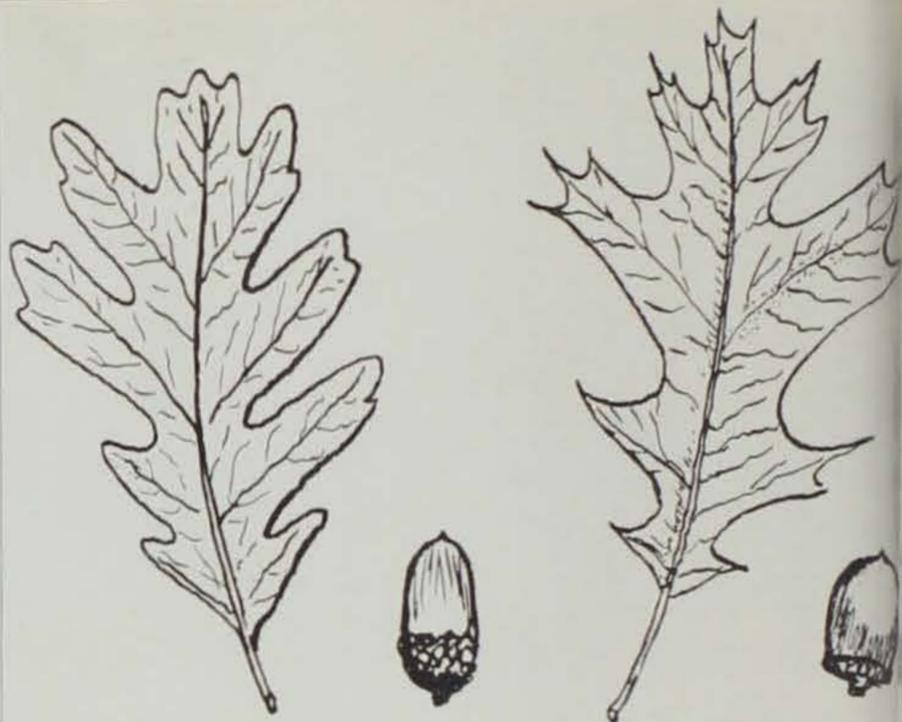
Iowa oaks classed as red oaks are red, scarlet, black jack, pin, and shingle oaks. In the white oak group are the white, bur, swamp white, chinquapin, overcup and post oaks. According to Campbell, the bur oak was selected as the most typical Iowa tree for the

Memorial Park at Golden Gate, California.

The white oak is the most important tree of the white oak group. It grows widely over Iowa except in the north. Mostly it is found on the upland clay soils. The leaves grow singly and are four to seven inches long and about half as broad as long. The leaf edge is deeply divided into from five to nine rounded, finger-like lobes. The acorn is about one inch long, elliptical in shape and covered about one-third its length by a finely scaled, rounded cup. The bark is ash gray to a very light gray and is scaled.

This tree is said to provide nearly three-fourths of the timber which is produced as white oak. Wood from this tree is put to many uses and is highly valued for making furniture. Other prominent uses are for veneer, fence posts, railroad ties, barrel staves for liquid barrels, flooring, farm implements and interior household trim.

Northern red oak is probably the most important and widely distributed of the northern oaks. It is one of Iowa's principal timber trees. It prefers moist, rich soils on north or eastern exposures and seldom grows on dry clay uplands. The tree has a single leaf five to eight inches long with from seven



The white oak leaf and acorn on the left are identified by lobes on the leaf and long acorn. The red oak leaf on the right has sharp points and the acorn is rounded.

to eleven pointed or bristle-tipped lobes. The leaves are thin, dull green on the upper surface and yellow green below. The fruit is a large, broad, rounded acorn with a very shallow saucer-shaped cup. The bark on young tree parts is smooth and gray to greenish in color. On the trunk the bark breaks into long, narrow, shallow ridges. The under bark is light red.

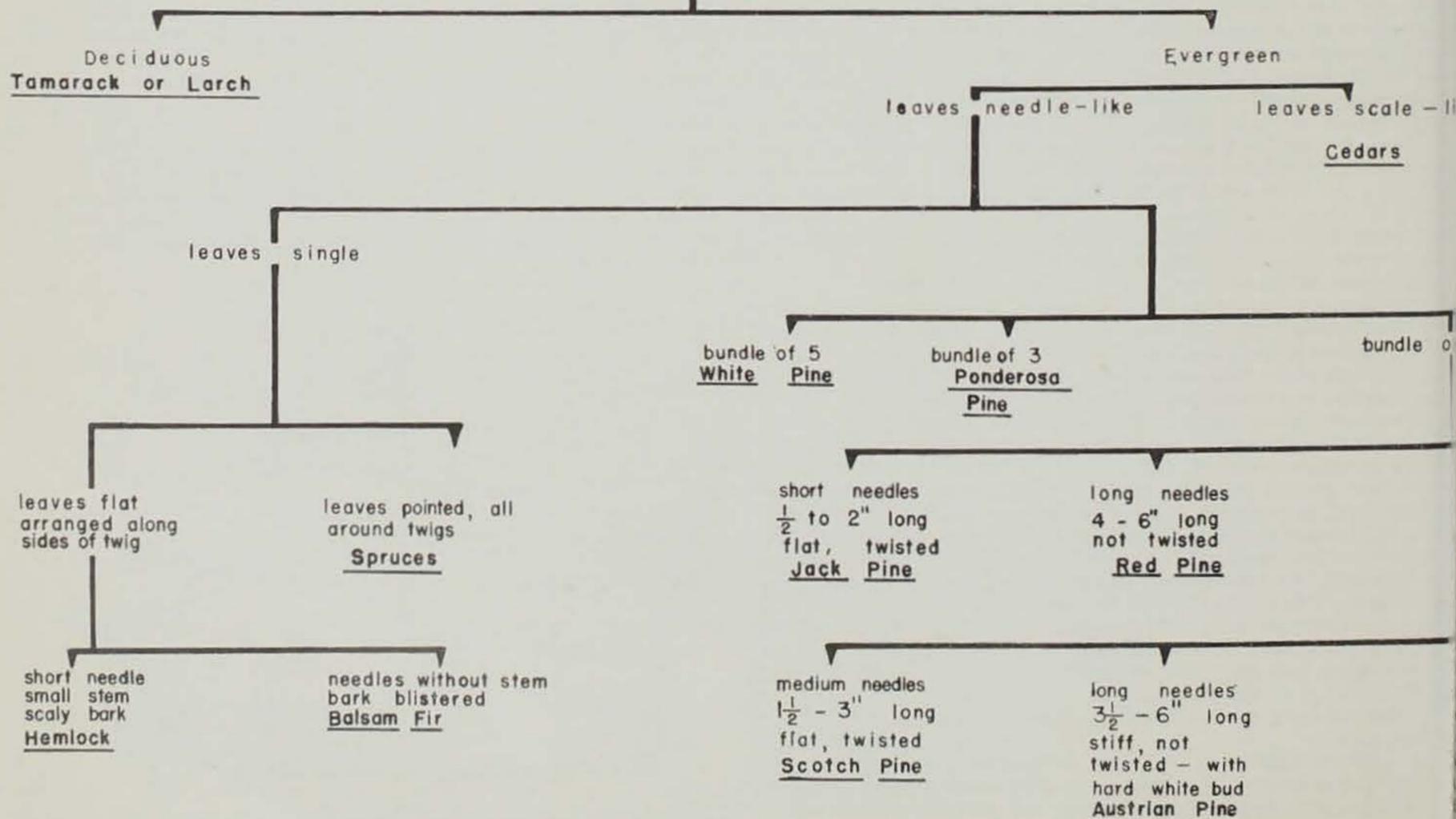
The wood of red oak is heavy, hard, strong and coarse grained. It is used extensively by Iowans

for local construction. Other uses are for barrel staves (for containers not used for liquids), flooring, furniture, railroad ties and a number of specialties.

The English Setter is America's oldest gun dog. Long before the short-haired rival, the Pointer, came into popularity the English Setter was proving a prime asset to hunters wherever American upland game birds were found.

KNOW THE CONIFERS

CONIFERS
(softwoods)



With the hardwoods denuded of their summer foliage, there is no better time to center your attention on the conifers. Above is a simple chart to help you identify

STOP WISHIN'— GO FISHIN'

Stan Widney

My son Larry sent me a hand-drawn Christmas card last December that proves how well he knows me. It was a cartoon of a Santa Claus sitting in his sleigh, but the reindeer were missing. Instead, the sleigh was floating on a lake labeled "Okoboji." There was an outboard attached to the rear of the cutter, and Santa was leaning back with his cap pulled down over one eye, fishing. The caption was, "When spring has come and the nightcrawlers rise, this is where our pleasure lies."

I dearly love to fish like that—a cane pole, cork bobber, enough

haunted hunters or head off a cross-country minded fox.

The jumped fox will bound away in a red streak with four and five foot jumps for a quarter mile or so. Then it will stop, watch its back track for a while, trot for a couple hundred yards, stop again, walk a short distance, sit down and soon lose all interest in its pursuers. Often it will fall fast asleep but for the nose and ears that never rest.

Stealth Needed

If the fox is spotted bedded down, a slow, noiseless, up-wind stalk should be made. It is better to crawl under a strand of barbed wire fence if you encounter one because a fox can hear a fence creak a half-mile away. Getting close to a fox demands the use of every trick in the art of hunting; wind direction, blending with the background and gently removing a dry twig in one's path may make the difference between success and an empty fox bed.

When other seasons are buttoned up for the year and the walls start closing in, have a try at outwitting Reynard the hard way—on foot.



George Tovey Photo.

at the end of the trail the fox hunter watches his quarry pursue and catch three field mice before firing. Note how well he blends into his environment; this is a must!

FOX THE HARD WAY

Roger Fliger

Fresh snow means one thing to many of Iowa's enthusiastic nimble-footed hunters—fox tracking time. The fox, in red and grey provide plenty of hunting thrills to those willing to trudge out a few miles on the old trail.

Another advantage of this sport is that it can be enjoyed practically anywhere on one's own back yard. The hunter need not travel half the state to find a quarry. He could spend an entire season hunting fox in two or three good fox sections.

Fox hunting equipment may be simple or expensive. Binoculars help spot a fox, and a white shirt and trousers makes stalking easier. On a bright sunny afternoon the white clad fox stalker can practically walk up to his quarry. More alert fox require a stalking approach equal to any other on Big Horn sheep or elk.

The Gun

Our favorite pheasant or duck loaded with No. 2 BB. or No. 4 shot will provide the armory. .22, .22 magnum, 22 Remington and an assortment of wildcat varminters to the maximum range of a rifle on the flat open prairie. The latter fast, flat shoot-rifles are safe to use because bullets explode on impact with the smallest twig instead of ricocheting. Like any weapon, they are as safe as the man behind them.

On the Trail

The usual hunting procedure starts with a fresh snowfall. The hunter will circle the section he wants to hunt trying to cut a fox track. If he doesn't find tracks he will stalk through white fox cover, heavy sloughs, brush patches, and grassy hillsides trying to jump fox. Often the fox is a quick running shot as it comes out of cover.

When jumped, a fox will not run far. Often, upon seeing that it is not pursued it will bed down in a mile. I've seen female

reds, even when shot at, circle the end of a large slough and bed down not three hundred yards from where it was originally jumped.

If the stalk or shot is unsuccessful the procedure can be repeated several times. It seems the fox soon loses interest in his pursuers if given a half hour to calm his nerves.

The fox hunt will progress throughout the day, sometimes as many as two and three foxes may be hunted in the same area. While a lot of leg work is required, a fox will seldom run in a straight line for more than a mile. It is more often a case of tracking back over trails made earlier in the day.

This type of hunting is often a solo performance although an extra hunter or two on the flanks of the tracker help immeasurably. The flankers can move out around likely areas and keep an eye open for fox far ahead while the tracker is busy on the trail. One member of a party can keep tab on the hunt from a car and pick up ex-



George Tovey Photo.

Oh! Red has been by and left his mark as have some crows. Tracking fox and getting close enough for a shot requires skill and perseverance. Success marks the hunter.

split shot to take the bait down just off the bottom, and the size hook that will fit the fish I'm fishing for. With nightcrawlers for bait, you might think I'm after horned pout (bullheads). True, I'll take all of those I can get, but I like to be surprised—like when a hungry bull bass hit my home made rig last spring, or the time down at Green Valley Lake near Creston when a four pound walleye chased the bullheads away to grab my bunch of 'crawlers.

What I'm getting at is, you don't need to spend a lot of money to get past the wishin' and do some fishin'. The rig described above cost me a total of 75 cents, and 60 cents of that went for the cane pole. A fishing license costs \$2.00 for a whole year—and you can fish all year in Iowa. I picked the nightcrawlers off my back yard with a flashlight. Got enough in one night to last a week of fishing every day.

But who doesn't like to go into a sporting goods department or shop and start wishin' around? I get a big kick out of it and so do a lot of other folks if you're to judge by the look on their faces. I wander all over the place, picking up this lure and that, imagining the fish I could catch with it. I take rods out of their sockets and whip them around and wonder how far they'd bend if a nine-pounder started under the boat. Weights catch my eye and I can see the river swiftening after a shower, and wonder how much lead it would take to pull my bait down to where a 12-pound cat could get at it. I even unscrew the lids on the cheese bait and wonder if catching a whopper is worth the smell—then in my mind's eye swims a 20-pound flathead and I ask the price of "Uncle Hank's Sure Fire That Makes Big Cat Go Crazy."

Then I happen by the fly rods, do a double-take and begin to wonder if my right arm has healed enough to handle one. I shut my eyes and see Cousin Newt at Coldwater Creek with four nice trout in his creel already while he flips a Royal Coachman in the exact spot in the stream where a two and one-half-pounder is waiting—

"How much for the best fly rod and reel you have in the store?"

See? You can spend as much or as little as you like and still enjoy the Sport of Kings. There's no other pastime like it. Hunting, golf, horseback riding or trap shooting can cost as much as you want to put out, but their minimum is far more than the dime you pay for a hook—and that's all that's really needed to catch fish. A willow pole cut on the spot, a lead washer, a length of string and a large cork costs next to nothing.

Next month is the time to buy your fishing license. Only \$2.00 for a whole year if you buy it then. Drop in at your favorite sporting goods store and get yours.



Walking by a snow ornamented sandstone cliff at the Ledges, a little girl explores the frozen stream and enjoys nature while others wait for warm weather to have fun.

LEDGES STATE PARK

A What to Do and Where to Go Feature

STAN WIDNEY

The Ledges, on highway 164 south of Boone, is central Iowa's most popular playground. Visitors by the thousands enjoy its fine picnic areas from early spring until late fall, and hikers are on its trails the year around. The natural beauty and historical interest of the park and its surroundings make it the ideal spot for a Sunday or holiday outing.

Outstanding among its 900 acres of scenic attractions are the unusual rock formations from which the name is derived. The "ledges" are sandstone walls from 25 to 75 feet high. These miniature cliffs border Pease Creek, named in honor of one of the prominent pioneer settlers in that vicinity. Trails lead up and down the steep slopes to scenic overlooks that offer breath-taking views.

Ledges holds great interest too, for the naturalist in its wide variety of plant life. Some of the largest specimens of elms in the state are found here and also many giant maples, cottonwoods and ash. Flowers and shrubs of every variety grow here in abundance, and some rare species, such as the closed gentian, walking ferns, pussy-toes and the rare, showy orchis. Juneberry, nine bark, blue beech and nanny-berry are just a few of the Ledge's small trees and shrubs. Bird life is bountiful and varied owing to the excellent cover and feed potential of the plant life.

The Des Moines River, flowing through the west edge of the park offers fine fishing; and an excellent boat ramp provides easy access.

Just outside the park, within easy hiking distance, is the Conservation Commission's State Game Farm, well supplied with wildlife. It is not uncommon to spot cars from every state in the

nation at this "zoo" where the representative birds and beasts of Iowa are cared for, studied and displayed. Presently closed for remodeling, the game farm should be open to the public again next summer.

There are also some very interesting Indian mounds within hiking distance of the park. While in the park itself there is an Indian Council Ledge where, according to legend, chiefs and warriors of the Sioux and, later, the Mesquakie (Sac and Fox), and other tribes gathered to boast of their wars and adventures. A guard was placed on the cliff that is known as Sentinel Rock to watch for enemies, a spot that commands a view for miles in every direction.



A winter Sunday afternoon at Ledges State Park finds young picnickers roasting wieners at the shelter's huge fireplace. Not much competition these days for privacy in parks.

BIOLOGISTS



Twenty-Three Years of Fishing on Spirit Lake

Tom Moen

Fisheries Biologist

Fisheries workers and others interested in the pole and line harvest of sport fish seldom, if ever, have a chance to work with results other than those that depict the average fisherman. We hear about the good fisherman, the expert who never goes home "skunked," and the guide that "knows the lake like the palm of his hand," but records of the actual success of any one of these fishermen over a period of time are indeed rare.

It was my pleasure and good fortune to examine the personal fishing record of Mr. Ed Andreas, a long time resident and guide on Spirit Lake. Mr. Andreas has fished the Dickinson County lakes since the early 1900's, including a number of years fishing for the market.

For many years, in his long career as a guide, he kept track of the number and species of fish he and his parties caught during the fishing season. Although a number of the note books have been misplaced, he has accurate records that cover the 23 year period of 1937 to 1959. In all but four of these years he noted the catch in

monthly totals, and in all but the years he wrote down the date and name of his party or parties.

Mr. Andreas' note books make it possible to determine that in a 23 year period he made 2,551 boat trips involving 6,810 fishermen trips, during which 53,046 fish were caught at the rate of 7.7 fish per man and an estimated 2.5 fish per hour.

The Catch

During the 23 years covered by this census twelve species were recorded: yellow perch, crappie, walleye, white bass, bullhead, sheepshead, northern pike, bluegill, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, rock bass, and channel catfish in that order of abundance.

On Spirit Lake the average fishing party hires a guide with the intention of catching walleye; then if the walleyes are not operating they turn their attention to other species. Several interesting and informative bits of information can be pointed out regard to walleye fishing over the years. The yearly catch of walleye fluctuated less than any other species, varying from a low of 1 fish in 1944 to a high of 809 fish in 1953.

When we compare the number of walleyes caught per man we find the walleye fishing in 1953 was nearly three times as good as it was in 1944 and about equal to fishing 21 years ago (1944) which was recorded by Ed as an average year.

Yellow perch and crappies were about equally important as the number one panfish, each making up about 28 per cent of the grand total for the 23 year period. Crappies appeared to be consistent in the catch over the years, but there was one peak from 1944 through 1950. This correlates with known high populations of crappies in Spirit Lake as determined through other fisheries work. Yellow perch demonstrated little no pattern with 100 per cent increases or decreases in total catch from one year to the next. Yellow perch catches were consistently below average in each of the last ten years. Late summer and early fall fishing was best for perch; September was the best month except in a few instances.

The white bass catch correlated quite well with the known population trend.

Northern pike were never important in the catch. The best year was 1945 when 56 northern pike were taken by Ed and his party. A recent high in northern pike was recorded in 1953 when 42 were reported as part of the total catch.

Mr. Andreas was not a bullhead fisherman and his notes seem to indicate that he probably took most of them by accident while trolling with night crawlers. The 1953 season marked the all-time high in bullheads when he took 5 nearly one-third of the total catch of bullheads in 23 years.

WINTER COVER—

(Continued from page 105)

... from the State Forest
... at cost price and the cost
... project is reimbursable up
... per cent by the Conservation
... mission. This includes what is
... for plants, fertilizer and
... (if any) for planting equip-
... The sponsoring club is re-
... sible for all payments and
... work. The farmer has only
... agree to the project. He will
... ably want to supervise or help,
... do the planting himself.

The average annual planting
... only about 2,000 trees
... shrubs per project. It should
... higher! The majority of the
... are multiflora rose,
... is judged to be the best
... cover plant. Other avail-
... shrubs that provide food and
... include honeysuckle,
... dogwood, Russian Olive,
... wild plum. Evergreen trees
... excellent winter cover and
... extensively used by pheasants
... times of deep snow. Wal-
... too, are available and rate
... as food producers for squir-

... the 12 years since the
... evolved the average cost of
... project has been approxi-
... ly \$30. As stated before, the
... pays back half (or \$15 of
... to the club making the ar-
... guments. Most of the projects
... contained in an area of about
... third acre, though many ex-
... this. Shelterbelts, fencerows,
... corners, farm pond perimeters,
... woodlot plantings are possible
... through the Farmer-Sportsman
... Program, any and all of
... benefit the farmer, the
... , and wildlife.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Perched atop a fence post is a common pose for our visiting short-eared owls. When spring melts begin the short-eared will retreat to their summer home in the Arctic.

Maybe grandpa wasn't so far off when he reminisced about bountiful game in former years. To be sure, deer have made tremendous gains and our famous ringneck hunting was non-existent in years back, but what of the many other birds and animals whose numbers have suffered from the changes in land use and clean farming techniques? Fencerows and unfarmed corners are all they have left. Isn't it worth looking into?

THE SHORT-EARED MOUSETRAP

Roger Fliger

Little known to the average Iowan is the annual winter invasion of short-eared owls into our state. This year the abundance of the prolific little mouser is attributed to the high population of field mice.

Often referred to as the "slough owl" it is not associated with the deep timber as are its relatives, the long-eared and barred owl. Its nests are made in dry sloughs of the northern United States through Canada and into the Arctic. While there are reports of them nesting in the northern-most counties of the state, I have never found a nest.

As fall turns to winter their numbers increase, sightings in Johnson County near Hills, Howard County close to Cresco and while traveling on Highway 6 near Atlantic indicate a state-wide distribution.

The short-eared owl is a mouser deluxe. While its erratic flipping flight would seem unsuited for catching rodents it takes a tremendous toll of mice. Their amazing hearing and sharp claws are more than adequate for their role in the wild.

It is a medium sized owl; about 14 inches long in body with a wing span over 40 inches. The flat face and partially hidden bill give it a rather unbird-like appearance. Its ear tufts are underdeveloped and may be misleading as an outstanding characteristic. Plumage varies in color from cream to yellowish brown. The soft feathers enable

SPRINGS

Roberts Mann and David H. Thompson

Springs—cold, clear springs bubbling from hillsides or welling up from secret depths—played an important part in the settlement of these United States from the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia and the Great Smokies in Tennessee to the Ozarks of Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas. Always more plentiful in mountainous and hilly country, they were much more numerous and vigorous in those days before the great forests were cut over or destroyed. Then, most of the rainfall was retained and sank into the ground. Springs are fed by ground water.

An early settler, penetrating a frontier wilderness with his family and their meager possessions, traveled and searched until he found a suitable homesite. That was determined not only by the quality of the land and what grew on it but also by the availability of water and timber. Although some preferred to dig a well, fearful that the dreaded milk sickness and "the shakes" or ague might lurk in spring water, a favorite location was near some good "strong" spring.

Usually, on such a homestead, after completing a cabin and a makeshift barn, a small shelter was built over the spring. That was the "springhouse." In time it became a masonry structure with basins through which the water flowed. Here the milk cooled, cream was skimmed, and butter, cheese, eggs, meat and other perishables were stored. They had no refrigerators then. In a way the family life was centered around it.

Today, although most of their springs are long gone, on the maps of several states you will find many towns named "something-or-other Springs."

the short-eared to approach its surprised victims with soundless flight.

Like other owls, it bolts down its food in large quantities and later regurgitates bones, feathers, and fur in a round ball. By examining these remains for rodent skulls and bones we find that they are among the most beneficial of our bird life.

Driving along any of Iowa's roads in the winter evenings would reveal the short-eareds hunting over the heavy weed patches, bogs, or marsh areas. It often will sit on fence posts and telephone poles, allowing the motorist to observe it closely.

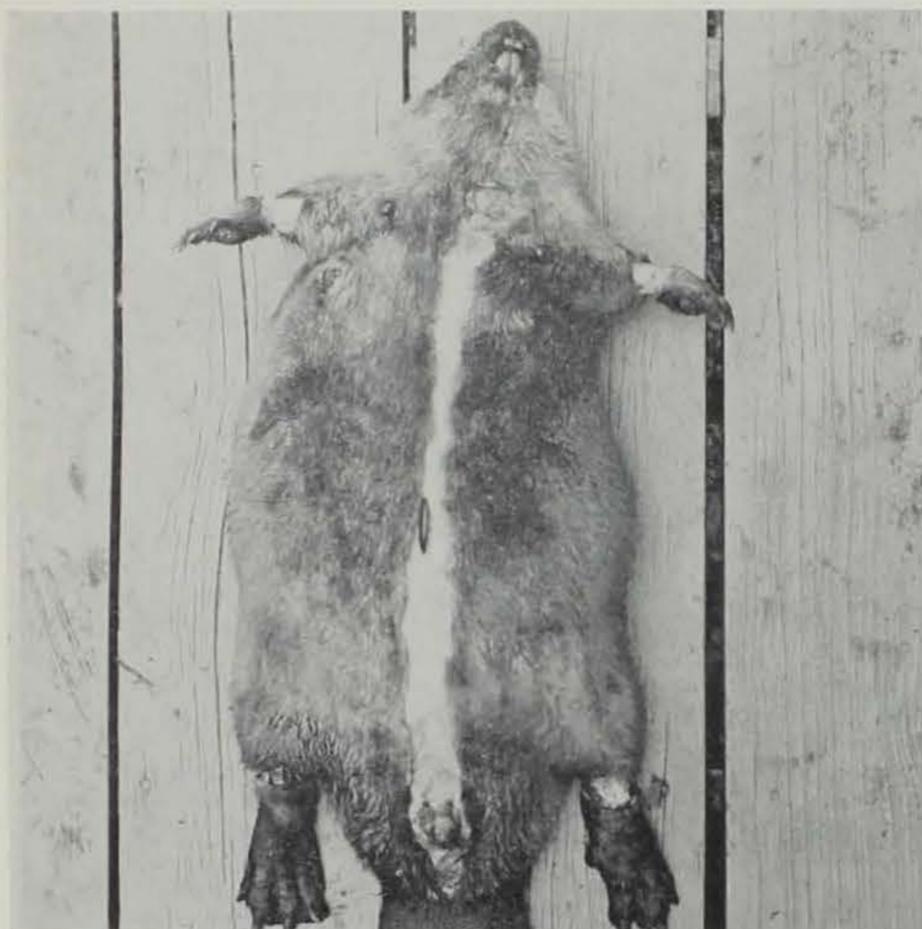
Late winter may not be the most pleasant time of the year to enjoy the out-of-doors, but to the short-eared owl, Iowa is the winter resort of his clan. Our winter sunsets would not be quite as beautiful without the sight of the short-eared owl's hunting flight.



George Tovey Photo.

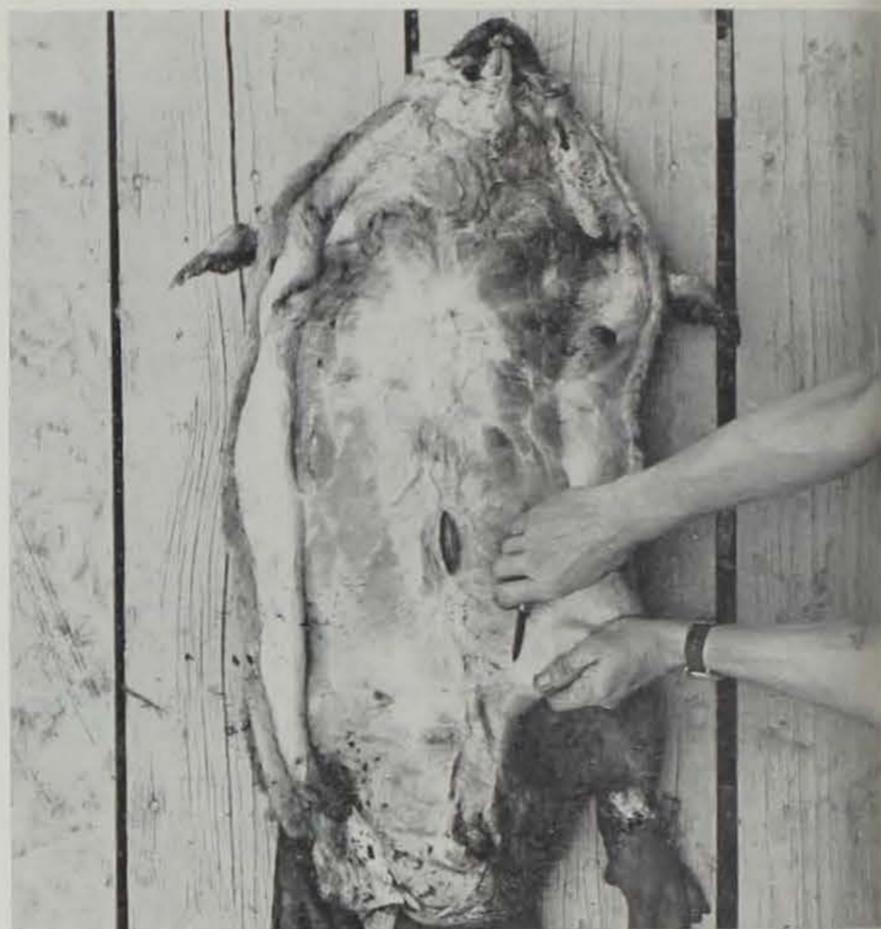
under a patch of shelter along a fencerow gives Br'er Rabbit a measure of safety. Many kinds of cover plants are available under the Farmer-Sportsman Cooperative Program to aid wildlife during all seasons. No cover means no game.

FOUR STEPS TO SKINNING YOUR BEAVER



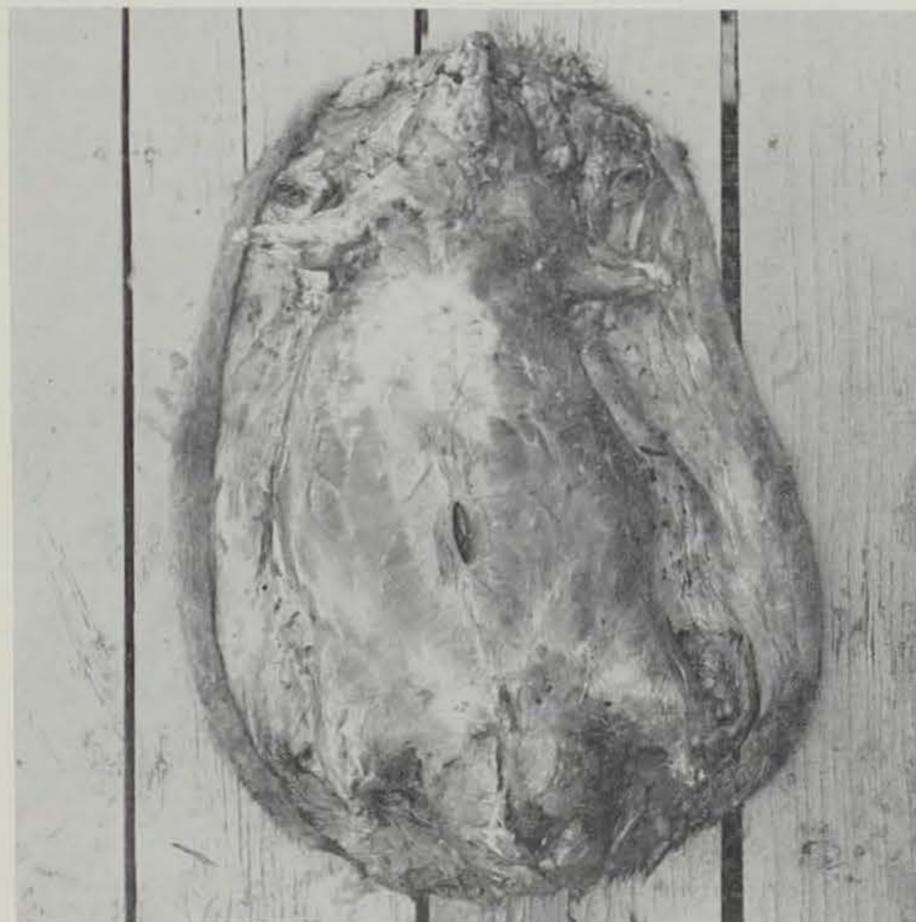
George Tovey Photo.

Loosen skin around all four legs at furline, then a cut from base of tail to chin, using care not to cut into body cavity, will insure a clean and pleasant operation.



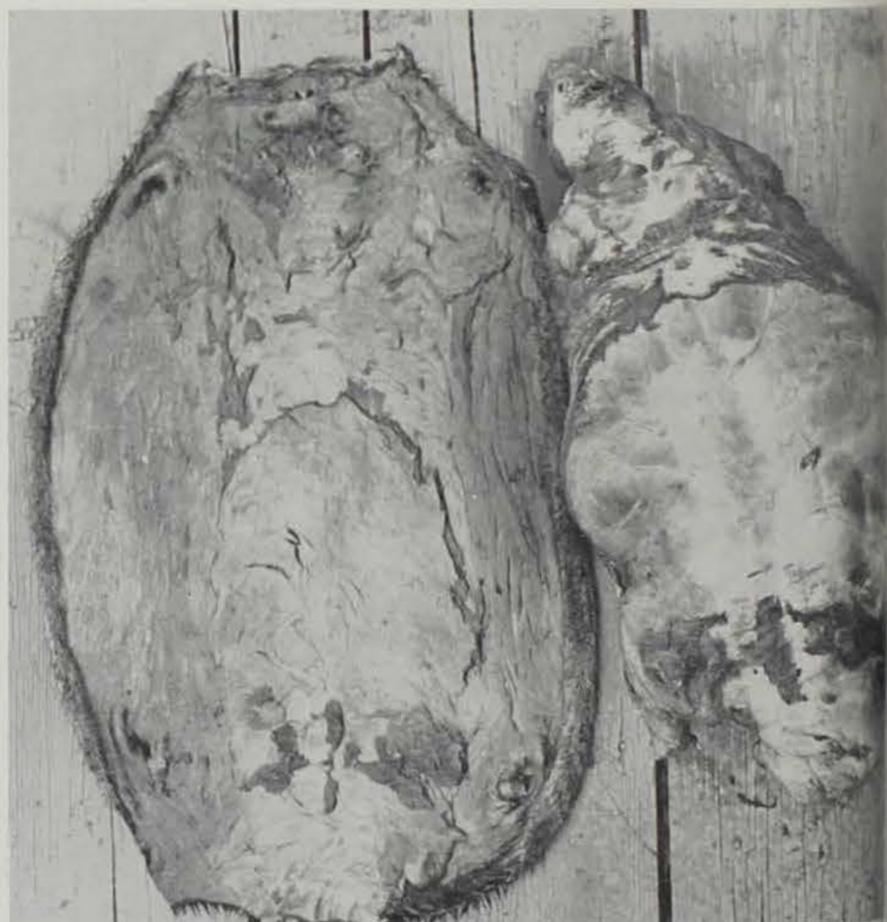
George Tovey Photo.

Using a sharp knife, peel the skin from the body. Care at this stage in leaving the flesh on the carcass will save much time later when the skin is being fleshed.



George Tovey Photo.

Continue working the hide from carcass until the legs can be pulled through holes cut at fur line as shown in picture number one. Be careful around lips, nose and eyes.



George Tovey Photo.

Roll over and finish skinning from back. Most difficulty will be encountered in the haunch area where the hide adheres tightly. Skinning completed and ready for fleshing.

ENCOUNTERED DEER IN BARN

Leonard Anderson of Linn Grove was the victim of a big surprise one morning. It was a cold and windy morning and he was doing the early chores on his farm. His stock cattle are housed in a barn a half mile from his home and not

far from the timber along the Little Sioux River.

Mr. Anderson entered the barn intending to throw down the hay from the mow for the cattle. As he got in the doorway he heard a snort. Suddenly the door was full of deer and horns. He was thrown through the air by the impact and

two more doe deer jumped over him.

Leonard is walking very carefully, he is bruised and lame and will not soon forget this Christmas.

Leonard had been in a group which had hunted during open deer season without getting a shot at

the deer.

Little did he think he was feeling them in his barn. When someone asked him, "What happened to you?" he answers, "I was run over by a bunch of deer."

They think he is joking—but really it could have been serious. *Storm Lake Pilot Tribune.*