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# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Volume 20 June, 1961 Number 6

## PRAIRIELAND SAILING

### IOWA'S LARGEST FISHING HOLE

Roger Fliger

The Mississippi River is often called the "Father of Waters"—it also be called the "Father of Fishing Waters" for no other river in the world offers the variety or caliber of fishing found on this river. From New Albin to St. Louis some type of fishing is at hand every month of the year.

It is not unusual for a party of experienced fishermen to start at dawn, make a good catch of crappie and sauger in the channels below a lock or wing dam, then switch to fly rods and catch crappie and white bass (stripers) in the sloughs and backwaters to complete the day's haul for largemouth or panfish. The abundance of fish can be surprising to those unaware of the fertile waters of the Mississippi produces.

One summer not long ago, a tremendous concentration of small shad were schooled below a dam. White bass were feeding on the shad and every few minutes a school of stripers would break through the shad snapping them up. Every morning I would spend an hour or two casting a streamer fly through the shad; one week I averaged better than a hundred fish per morning. Each one I caught didn't hurt the fish, I could easily tell if I'd caught the same one before. Each was then carefully released. The week of the experiment I marked over 900 stripers. The surprising thing is that I never caught the same fish twice that period or for a month although I fished the spot daily. You could make wild mathematical calculations on the number of fish there, that's just one example of Mississippi fishing.

With its tremendous size and abundance of fishes the beginner is confused where, when and



With spinnaker and mainsail bellying in the wind, an "E" class inland scow makes a broad reach. This size of sailing vessel requires a crew of four plus the skipper.

Earl T. Rose  
Chief, Fish and Game

"Sail Ho!" "Where away?" "Two points off the starboard bow." "Man the mainbrace—stand by to come about" . . . and a multitude of other colorful nautical calls echoed off the thundering sails of square rigged ships of yesteryear's golden days of sailing.

Just a few square riggers, coasters, government training ships and adventurers still ply the oceans of the world today. Some vessels are permanently moored at museum ports for the jet-age peoples to view and ponder the complicated rigging and graceful lines of these, the last vestiges of once proud sailing fleets. The discovery of steam as a source of power ended the era of sails just as surely as petroleum doomed the whaling industry of New Bedford and Falmouth, Massachusetts.

But the day of sails is far from being extinct. Today, pleasure craft ranging in size from the midget ocean racing class to handsome yachts, including yawls, ketches, sloops and schooners, real "gold platers" from 40 to 100 feet or more in length, crowd local seaports and engage in thrilling annual races to Bermuda, Hawaii, Sweden and other major areas. Then there are the loners who sail their craft single-handed around the world emulating the famed Captain Slocum.

Inland lakes and major river impoundments also have an increasingly great number of sailing craft ranging in size from the diminutive "sailfish," which looks like a surf-board equipped with "leg-o-mutton" sail, to tiny prams to scows and knockabouts, up to the sleek yachts equal to any of the seagoing buckets.

Almost every lake in Iowa has one or more sail enthusiasts who, when bitten by the bug, become absolute fanatics. Several lakes have sizeable yacht clubs including substantial club houses, "commanders," judges, and equipment and paraphernalia to properly conduct a wide series of races each summer. Most of these local clubs

### CHANGES IN FISHING REGULATIONS

Effective July 4, 1961:

All members of the U. S. military forces except those who are legal residents of Iowa and on active duty must purchase a license to fish and hunt in the state. Servicemen from other states will be charged the same fee for fishing and hunting licenses that their home state charges Iowans.

Stricken from the law is the section that prohibits issuance of hunting or fishing licenses to residents of states that do not sell or that place restrictions, not applicable to their own residents, on hunting and fishing licenses sold to Iowans. Anyone from any state can now purchase hunting, fishing or combination licenses in Iowa.

Henceforth it is unlawful to place a net, seine, trap or trotline of any kind within 300 yards of the farthest projection of any dam

on the Mississippi or Missouri Rivers. Formerly these devices could be set within 100 yards of the farthest projections of the dams on these rivers. This law provides uniformity with the Illinois and Wisconsin Codes.

All persons who fish for or take trout from designated trout waters in Iowa and who are required to have a resident or non-resident fishing license must purchase a special trout stamp in addition to the fishing license. The proceeds from the sale of these stamps will be used exclusively for the trout stocking program.

Already in effect is the new price for fishing licenses—\$2.50. The hunting and combination licenses have also risen proportionately to \$2.50 and \$4.50 respectively.

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**Iowa Conservationist**

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**COMMISSION MINUTES**

May 3, 1961

Travel was authorized to the National Water Safety Congress in St. Paul, Minnesota, for two people June 11 to 13.

Travel was authorized for one person to the South Dakota Centennial at Yankton, South Dakota, June 19.

Travel was authorized for two trucks and drivers when necessary for fish management work at Federal Fish Hatcheries in Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin for a period of one year.

Travel was authorized for Bill Aspelmeier to Canada June 27 to August 15 to take part in the duck banding program.

Travel was authorized for one person to Jackson, Minnesota to secure an option for land purchase.

Travel to Poynette, Wisconsin was authorized to pick up 5,000 pheasant chicks.

A motion was passed to invite the two new Conservation Commissioners to attend the June meeting of the Commission.

The Commission discussed a shoreline problem on an East Okoboji development plan with Dwight Martin of Kansas City.

Dr. Carl Stoltenberg, new head of the department of forestry at Iowa State University was introduced to the Commission.

Roy Chastain, retiring parks supervisor, received a plaque for 32 years of service to the Conservation Commission.

A delegation from Iowa City met with the Commission to discuss sewage disposal problems at Lake Macbride.

**Fish and Game**

The Commission approved a fish management agreement for Summit Lake in Union County with the Creston Country Club.

A construction permit was approved for a road in the Tama Beach area in Des Moines County.

An option was accepted for purchase of a marsh area in Dickinson County called Cory Marsh, consisting of 40 acres at \$1,140 to be used as a prairie pothole marsh. Located one and one-half

**EDITORIALLY SPEAKING**

**THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER**

Malcolm K. Johnson

To hear some Iowans heap abuse on our parks, lakes, hunting, fishing, climate, landscape and anything else even remotely connected with living, you would think the boundaries of this state enclose a veritable wildlife desert from whence all must flee to enjoy their leisure in recreational pastimes. Just beyond the state lines, they believe, lie the Elysian Fields. The assumption is not just one-sided. Folks in the surrounding states seem to have the same opinion about their own recreational facilities.

Granted that the federal government is spending a million dollars a year to drain remaining Iowa wetlands. And, too, the Conservation Commission can't point a finger in any direction and say, "We'll build a park there," because natural features and lakes fitted for parks are not everywhere available.

But—and this is a mighty big but—the 96 parks and forest preserves, plus 193 public hunting areas totaling 107,000 acres and 197 public fishing access areas, not to mention over 22,000 stocked farm ponds, all put outdoor relaxation within a few minutes of every Iowan.

Everyone takes for granted the many out-of-state cars present during the pheasant season—Iowa ranks or ties for second place in the number of pheasants harvested annually. Weekend campers though, don't come to take game. Their interest lies in absorbing sights, sounds and the quiet relaxing atmosphere found in parks. Some fish. Others follow hiking trails to reap the harvest of knowing nature. Pictures are taken, birds are watched and canoes are paddled. A multitude of activities beckon people to our parks.

Transients, of course, account for a good portion of the overnight campers. But an even larger figure results from people from neighboring states who come because Iowa's parks are more attractive or closer than their own.

To the 7,250,000 visitors who do come to our parks every year, both Iowans and out-of-staters, our park system is one of the best.

miles east of Silver Lake adjoining the Little Sioux River.

The Commission gave approval for experimental release of exotic game birds under the supervision of the biology section.

**Forestry**

Approval was given for an option for land purchase in the Yellow River area consisting of 384 acres at \$70 an acre called the Jones Farm in the eastern part of the Paint Creek unit.

**Parks**

The resignation of Paul Shuck, Lands and Waters Conservation Officer at Gull Point, was accepted.

The superintendent of parks gave a report on flood damage at George Wyth Memorial State Park.

The charge for minnows at concessions in state parks was ordered to be determined by agreement between the superintendent of state parks and the local Commission personnel.

The superintendent of state parks was instructed to negotiate with the Dickinson County board of supervisors for management of the Mini-Wakan State Park.

Action on land acquisition at Lizard Lake in Pocahontas County was deferred.

A report was given on a park roads program particularly in regards to Beeds Lake in Franklin County.

**Waters**

A report was given by the superintendent of waters on a request for a dike at Guttenberg.

No action.

**County Conservation Activities**

Approval was given to Clayton County Conservation Board for acquisition by a 25-year license of an island in the French Town Lake area to be used for boating and fishing access to the Mississippi River.

Franklin County Conservation Board was given approval for acquisition of 13½ acres known as Sheffield Community Wildlife Preserve adjacent to Baileye Creek.

Wayne County Conservation Board was given approval for a 25-year lease on the Humeston Reservoir to be developed as a county park.

Hardin County Conservation Board was given approval for acquisition of an area called the Gehrke Marsh consisting of 6.22 acres at a cost of \$100 for use as a wildlife area.

Cedar County Conservation Board received approval for a development plan for Massillon Park. A 20 acre area to be used for picnicking and boat launching located on the Wapsipinicon River.

Clayton County Conservation Board received approval for a development plan for the French Town Lake area which is an 11 acre island to be developed for fishermen and boaters.

Franklin County Conservation Board received approval for a development plan for the Oakland Valley area which is a three acre area to be used for a game management area.

Franklin County Conservation

**CATFISH CASH CROP**

A professor at Kansas State University is advocating the raising of catfish as a cash crop for farmers with farm ponds. The professor has worked out a formula for feeding catfish. Professor Tiemeier has shown that channel catfish can be raised at a cost of about 15 cents per pound—about the same as beef.

Fish grown on the new formulated diets are described as delicious—much better eating than catfish from streams or other bodies of water. Personally I would need a little proof on the statement.

The diet has to be served up in pellet form. Otherwise, the materials quickly disintegrate in water, and much of the feeding value is lost. The pellet will retain its form after sinking to the bottom so that the catfish can get at it.

Feeding channel catfish is simple operation. Catfish, like cattle, can be trained to come to a certain place at a certain time each day. The pellets should be placed in shallow water in the same place every day.

If you are interested, write Professor Otto W. Tiemeier at Kansas State University.—*Mary Lyon, Jefferson Bee*

Board received approval for a development plan for the Sheffield Wildlife area which will be used as a game management area.

Hancock County Conservation Board received approval for a development plan for Ellsworth Park which consists of 14 acres on the east shore of Crystal Lake and will be developed as a multiple use county park.

Wright County Conservation Board received approval for a development plan for Solberg Road side park. This park consists of three acres located at the Junction of Highways 3 and 69 east of Clarion, Iowa.

Fayette County Conservation Board received approval for an option for the purchase of the Tw Bridges area two and one-half miles north of Maynard where the Little Volga and Volga Rivers join. Part of the area acquired by lease and part of the area to be acquired by purchase at a cost of \$75 per acre to be used for fishing, picnicking and camping.

Fayette County Conservation Board also received approval for the Albany area located four miles northeast of Fayette on the Volga River. Six acres to be acquired by lease for ten years at a total cost of \$750 for use by fishermen, picnickers and campers.

Woodduck ducklings leap out of their nests as soon as they are dry. Some ducklings have been seen jumping from nests in tree cavities many feet off the ground.

**ING HOLE—**

(Continued from page 137)

to make good catches. A inland fisherman will have trouble adjusting himself to fertile waters.

A few hints on species and to find and catch them be as follows:

**Sunfish and Bluegill**

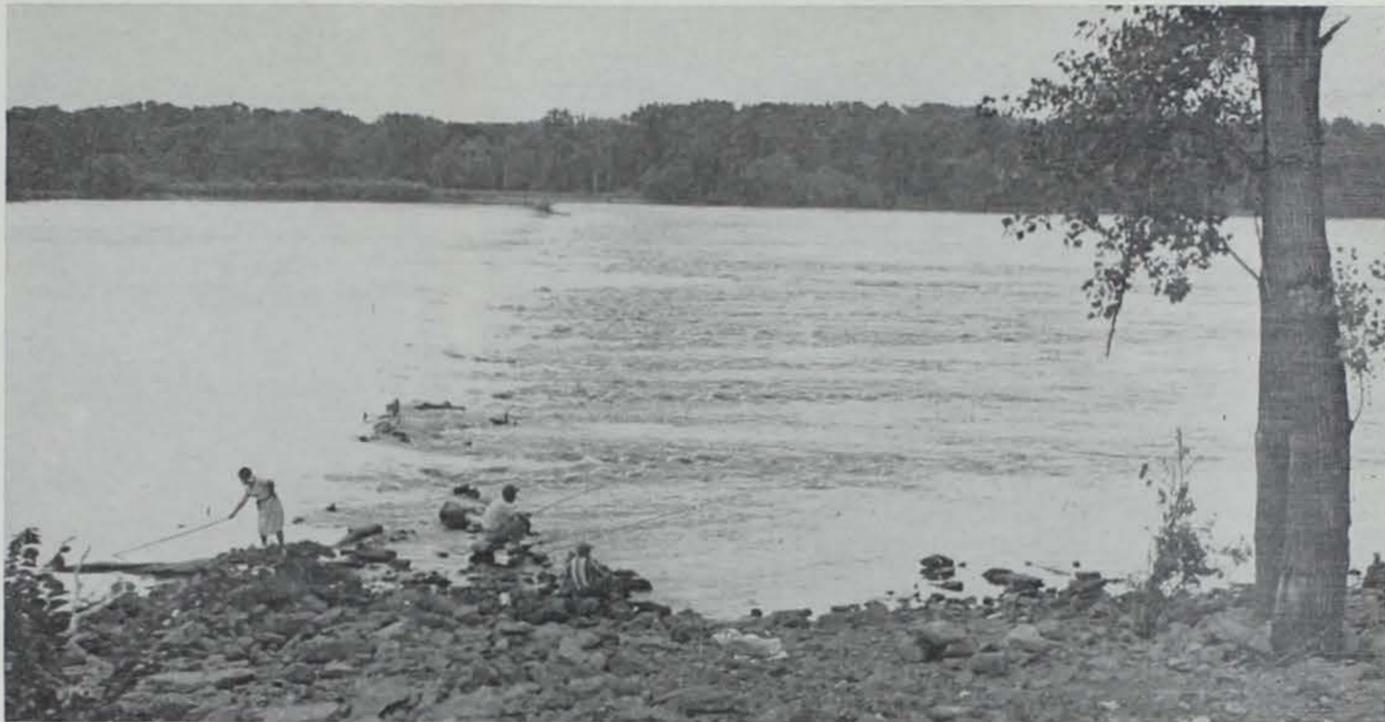
ly season finds these fish in shallow water two or three feet deep.

Don't worry about taking them from the spawning beds because there are more than enough to overcome the loss. Garden worms and split shot are the mediums. Almost any kind of wet fly will take them—dark flies like the black gnat are especially good.

When the water warms, they move into slightly deeper holes or snags, stumps and piles of brush. Fish at various depths until the school is located and then the man begins—one after another until your arm tires. Bluegills are very loving creatures. With fair weather these fish will take almost any lures vigorously and provide excellent sport for the fly enthusiast.

Wing dams were built to divert water through the main channel, making the channel more navigable. These dams are fish cafeterias. Forage fish, crayfish and larvae abound around the structures attracting a multitude of game fish. The present lock, dam and cool system has covered these areas but they are still very profitable.

Sloughs, cuts, lakes and cover thousands upon thousands of acres. The deeper or log-sloughs may produce bass, h and catfish and at times



Jim Sherman Photo.

This wing dam near lock and dam No. 18 a few miles north of Burlington gives you an idea of what to look for when walleye fishing on the Mississippi. Many other types of fish life abound near the dams—catfish, stripers, crappies and forage fish.

walleyes may even be taken in them.

Species that frequent these waters will vary with water conditions and seasons.

**Where for Walleyes**

The highly prized walleye and its cousin, the sauger, are usually associated with deep waters and heavy currents. They do spend a majority of their time in these areas but are not permanent residents. Late evening will find them feeding on wing dams, rip-rap and sand bars. These are also excellent places to catch walleye and sauger in the spring and fall. The immediate area below the large locks and dams are the "bread and butter" of walleye fishermen.

Some narrow, deep cuts back in the slough areas have also been

red hot the last couple of years.

Nightcrawlers and minnows are the important natural baits with deep-running plugs and jigs carrying first honors in the artificial class. Floating or drifting for walleyes has become popular in the last couple of years with the boat fisherman using a long, even current of water eight to twelve feet deep to just drift. A gob of nightcrawlers is often bounced along the bottom until the walleyes are located.

**Mr. Bigmouth**

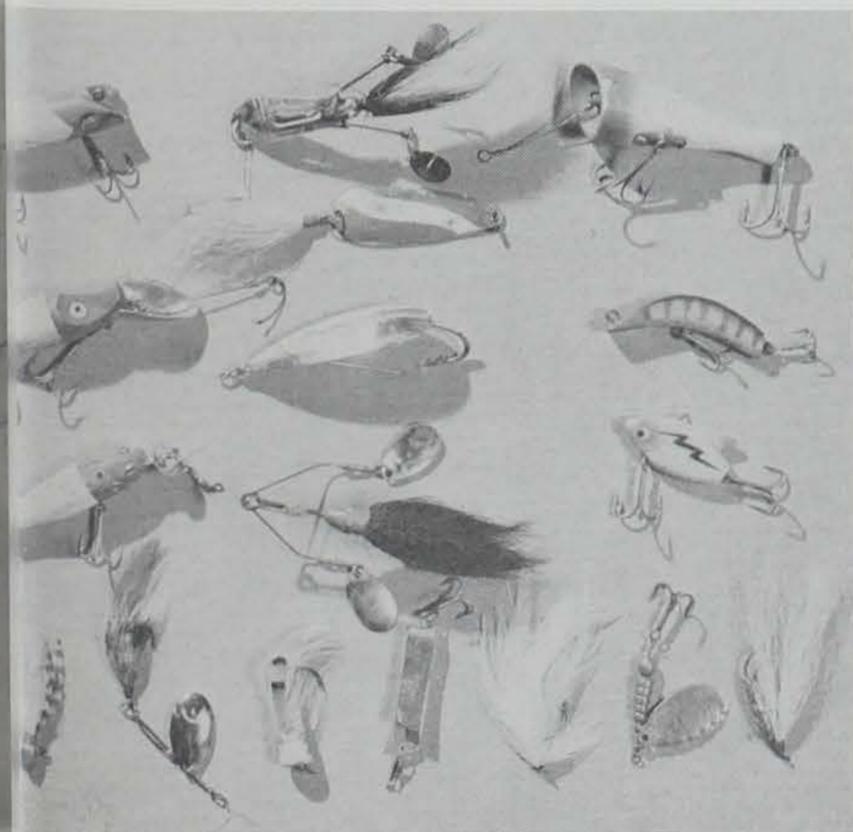
Bass are taken almost everywhere in early summer on almost every kind of bait and tackle. They spawn at that time and will hit nearly anything that comes near the nest. As the temperature of the water rises they seek cooler or shaded water around tree stumps, snags and rock piles. Any well aerated water below dams or wing dams will produce bass. With clear water in summer and

fall, artificial lures produce well. (For further information check "Bull Bass Like Live Bait"—August '60).

Winter fishing for bass has become popular the last couple years and it is startling to see wonderful winter bass fishing when it was believed they were impossible to catch only a few years ago.

The white (silver bass or stripers) bass are creatures of current and food. Almost anywhere that schools of minnows are found—sand bars, wing dams, or below the dams—you will find the stripers. I prefer a white streamer fly or surface popper, but anything that even resembles a minnow will catch white bass. Crappie sized flies are excellent and huge stripers are taken on walleye and bass size plugs. Look for scattering minnows and swirls that make a chugging sound. That's the signal that spells striper to the river man.

(Cont. on page 141)



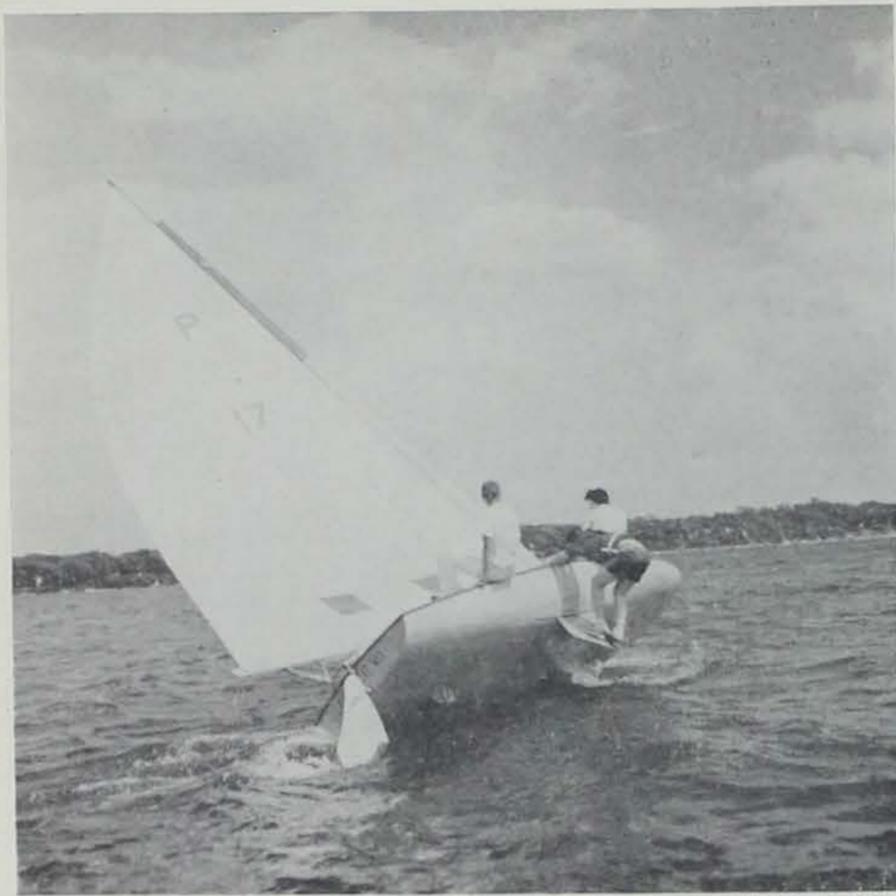
George Tovey Photo.

all, this assortment of lures from the author's tackle box has been responsible for a fish in the skillet. It includes floating and deep-running plugs, spoons, spinners and lead-heads. Effectiveness of all of them varies with conditions.



Jim Sherman Photo.

From the fishing barge just below the Lynxville Dam (No. 9) on the Mississippi near Harpers Ferry, angling activity is at times tremendous. This dam is famous for fishing.



A "C" boat on her ear.

Jim Sherman Photo.

**PRAIRIE SAILING—**

(Continued from page 137)

belong to the Inland Lake Yachting Association which sponsors interclub regattas for various class boats.

At the Okoboji Club, for example, there are several racing classes of sailboats. They range from class "X" (cub) which is a 16-foot sloop-rigged boat used only by youths up to 16 years of age. "X" boats carry 110 square feet of sail, are beamy (wide) and safe for youngsters. Next is a very similar craft, the 19-foot "Y" class, which was developed by the Inland Association. They resemble the "X's" at a distance, having the same lines—in fact was once called the "Super-X." Under main and jib, the boat can really foot (move fast) in a duster (high wind), but in a drifter (wind of five mph or less) she ponderously drags her feet. On a broad reach (quartering wind abaft the beam) or with the wind dead aft is when this little bucket really goes. Here, spinnakers (a balloon shaped foresail used with wind dead astern or on a broad reach) are used and under this huge billowing cloud of sail you really "burn water." Due to the prejudice of ownership perhaps I favor this craft above all others, except possibly the "E" class. The "Y" being sloop-rigged and having a large sail inventory (main, jib, and reacher or spinnaker) promotes sail handling and fun in sailing. Sailing, particularly competitive sailing, is to me, and I know this speaks for most modern sailors, the most thrilling of all outdoor recreation.

Unquestionably the "C" class is the most popular boat at this time at the Okoboji and Clear Lake Clubs. These are relatively flat-bottomed boats called scows. They

have only one sail cat-rigged and, unlike the "X's" or "Y's" which are equipped with centerboards, have bilgeboards rather than the customary keels of larger craft. (These and other devices will be explained in a later installment.) The "C" is an extremely fast boat, particularly on a beat (sailing with the wind forward of the beam) or reach (sailing with the wind abaft the beam). Most of the time you are sailing "on your ear" and unless a skipper knows his business in a duster, you're due for a ducking. Beginners should probably never learn to sail in a "C" unless under the direction of a competent instructor.

The 28-foot "E" boat is a very big sister of the "C." Her hull, except for length, is similar in most respects. Here the similarity ends, however. The "E" is sloop-rigged, wears a fine suit of sails including main, jib and spinnaker, and under this full press of canvas (439.375 square feet) is a splendid, efficient and beautiful craft. Next to the 38-foot "A" scow, the "E" is probably the fastest sailboat made although the new twin-hulled catamaran will take them on certain points of sailing.

Like power boating, sailing has increased tremendously in recent years. A sizable fleet of Snipes regularly uses Lake Manawa at Council Bluffs. Five years ago, a sailboat on Spirit Lake would have been a novelty, indeed. Now, a group of enthusiasts has formed their own club and conduct regularly scheduled races. As I understand it, everything from the tiny Sailfish type to moths, "X's", "C's" and rebels all battle it out on Sunday races with no holds barred and no handicaps!

Learning to sail is not difficult.



"Y" boats are among the fastest sloops.

Jim Sherman Photo.

It may look so to one who merely observes the operation of sailboats. The complex standing and running rigging on an "E" scow, for example, looks like the wiring diagram of a TV set. On smaller craft such as moths and "X's", simplicity in operation and rigging prevails. These are the boats for beginners.

While still a rank neophyte in comparison with some of Iowa's racing experts, such as Don Baxter of Sioux City, the Nortons of Spencer, and Jerry Huse and Mike

Flannigan of Nebraska, who sail on Okoboji, my enthusiasm is just as unlimited. One can learn the rudiments in an hour's time, but you'll never learn all there is to know about it. Many books have been written on sailing which are very good for the beginner and also some for the expert, and like whiskey, "they're all good, but some are better than others."

There are many uses for sailboats aside from racing. Moonlight sailing is a "cloud nine"

(Continued on next page)



Two of the smaller types of sail craft. The snipe on the left carries a small jib while the little moth on the right attempts to pass to leeward.

Jim Sherman Photo.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Three young sailors on an "X" class boat at Lake Okoboji.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Fishing at Lake Keomah State Park near Oskaloosa should be topnotch this next summer. Renovated in 1958, the lake is stocked with bass, catfish and panfish.

### ERIE SAILING—

(Continued from page 140)

Ordinary day-sailing, wandering aimlessly about, has its charms, especially if you take the family and a picnic lunch to some sandy beach. I have often used my boat for fishing. On a light wind, you can cleat the main-sheet (rope used to regulate the tension of the mainsail), operate the tiller with your knees and have both hands free to operate the tackle. A companion who doesn't want to fish can do this much better. Also if there is a stiff breeze, make a beat across the lake or here you wish to troll over, direct the sails and drift back over the same route. Of course you can select a favorite reef, lower the sails and anchor for still fishing or casting. If one could only have ducks, pheasants, quail and live aboard, you'd really have it made!

Remember how much a tank of gas costs and how soon it runs out on a big outboard? It costs you nothing to sail all summer and there are no stinking fumes or explosion dangers aboard a sailboat. Fishermen won't look down their noses as you pass, since the displacement leaves little or no wake. The only conflicts occur when fishermen are moored onto a buoy or anchored near the markers used in races. To have 50 sailboats drifting down on a fishing boat during a brisk breeze is a little disconcerting and I know tempers have flared a few times. But the sailors have the right of way in the case since all races are by the rules and the courses are clearly defined. Fishermen soon learn to give those markers a wide berth on racing days.

More on this subject is forthcoming. Meanwhile, those of you who have never witnessed or participated in the festive sailboat races given close examination to the winged watercraft should do so on your first opportunity.

### FISHING HOLE—

(Continued from page 139)

The most under-estimated fish in the river is the sheepshead. It is a channel fish as a rule and will take almost any bait—minnows, worms, or crayfish. I've seen them taken on plugs and daredevils, too. Almost every good day's catch will have a few of these deep water scrappers.

You haven't really learned the lure of the river until you hear the crooping noises of the sheepshead. It is an eerie feeling to be out on the river at sunset and realize that they are all around and under you and you wonder what they are talking about.

(For hints on cooking sheepshead read "From Creek to Meal" May '61.)

### Whiskers in the Water

Catfishing is excellent during the spawning period in June—they feed aggressively at that time. Channel catfish are taken on nightcrawlers, clam, dead minnows and prepared bait. Flatheads of alarming size are taken below the locks and deeper holes in the sloughs and backwaters. Live chubs are excellent for flatheads and they are occasionally taken while walleye fishing. The catfisherman that catches them the year around is a specialist that knows this fish's habits and haunts. Bullhead fishing, too, is good in isolated backwaters, pools and lakes.

### Ol' Evil Eye

Northern pike exist in great numbers in the Mississippi, but have few angler followers. Commercial fisherman report nets full of these fish, many of them in the 10 to 12 pound class. If diligently pursued, more northerns would be taken home.

Whether you like catching carp or walleye, whether you are a fly fisherman or run trot lines, you'll find the fish big and plentiful in the endless waters of the Mississippi, Iowa's largest fishing hole.

## LAKE KEOMAH

—named for the two counties that founded it and have made it one of the most popular playgrounds in Iowa.

*A Where to Go and What to Do Feature*

Stan Widney

Among the state parks of Iowa that offer early springtime recreation is Lake Keomah in Mahaska County, five miles east of Oskaloosa. While the lake is its center of attraction, there are many other things to do and see that are conducive to rest and relaxation. Its 366 acres are well developed and maintained and Highway 92, leading to its entrance, was refinished in 1960.

The "L" shaped lake contains 83 acres of water and plenty of fine bass, bullheads, catfish, bluegill and crappie.

Between the "arms" of the lake are shaded picnic and camping areas with running water, shower and toilet facilities, plenty of parking, fireplaces, firewood and open space for the small fry to play. . . . The beach and bathhouse are in excellent condition, a concrete boat ramp at the southeast end aids in launching your own boat.

A large building at the south end by the silt basin houses the mess hall for small groups of campers who can furnish everything, and for which a small charge is made.

Many think Keomah was named for an Indian tribe. It wasn't. You see, the lake was pretty much a community affair in the beginning. Many citizens of Mahaska and Keokuk Counties had a share in financing the project, so many in fact that it was named for both counties—Keo-Mah.

The founders kept a part of the south side of the lake and eventually the land was sold to private individuals. A number of nice summer homes have been built there.

### What to Look for at Keomah

In summertime the open water, grasslands, deep woods and swamp-like areas offer a large variety of cover to interest all types of wildlife. Careful hikers along the park's scenic trails may catch a glimpse, or even a good long look, at the following: a row of bullfrogs blowing and puffing bass solos just short of the foot bridge at the northwest end of the lake. A little farther on is a great blue heron wading in the shallows spearing minnows and tiny leopard frogs. A covey of bobwhite quail rises at your approach to the upper end of the silt basin while a hen pheasant, almost tame, walks sedately over to a dusty spot in the trail and rolls in it to rid herself of mites.

Not far from the dam, a fawn leaves the woods and stares curiously into your binoculars until a fat doe, looking very maternal, comes out and nuzzles her child back to safety. Rabbits, squirrels, ground squirrels and all kinds of bird life, including shore birds abound.

Summer is great, on or off the water, but you should see Keomah in the fall when the lake is surrounded by a riot of color. The many varieties of trees and shrubs make every bit as fine a setting as the new foliage and blossoms of—

Spring—Spring! What a season to visit Lake Keomah—when the crappies hit anything, bluegills bite like crazy, and bass—well, seeing is believing.

Winter? Sure there's fun in the ice and snow, and the park custodian keeps a part of the ice cleared of snow for skating, and ice fishing is great sport for all ages.

Any season is a good season at Lake Keomah.

The domestic Belgian hare isn't a hare but a rabbit. The jack-rabbit isn't a rabbit, but a hare.

## NATIVE IOWA TREES —THE ELMS

Professor George B. Hartman  
School of Forestry  
Iowa State University

The Elms are probably the best known of the native trees of Iowa. This is not only because they are used widely for shade, street and ornamental plantings but also because of the widespread publicity given in recent years relative to two diseases, phloem necrosis and Dutch elm disease, which have caused serious damage to elms in many parts of the country. Both diseases have been found in Iowa.

Three species of elms are native to Iowa. The American or white elm is one of the state's most prominent forest trees. It often reaches a diameter of three to four feet and a height of 90 to 100 feet. It is found throughout the state on moist slopes, bottomlands and along streams.

Leaves are oval, four to six inches long and one to three inches across, sharp pointed with leaf edges double-toothed. The leaves are dark green on the upper surface and light green beneath. The leaf surface is smooth.

The fruit is oval-shaped and winged with the seed in the center of the wing appearing in clusters on the tree. It is very easy to identify the American elm by the bark. If a piece of bark from the trunk is removed and broken crossways it will be found to consist of alternate brown and creamy white layers.

The wood of American elm is not considered durable but it is strong and tough. It is used extensively for lumber for local farm uses. Other more specialized uses are veneer, furniture, vehicle parts and staves for slack cooperage barrels.

Another native Iowa elm is the red or slippery elm. This tree resembles the American elm in appearance except that it usually has a greater length of clear trunk. It is found on moist slopes and bottomlands.

The leaves are similar to American elm but are larger being five to seven inches long and two to three inches wide. They are dark green above and light green beneath, but instead of being smooth the leaves are rough to the touch. The inner bark of this tree is fragrant and slick.

The bark does not show the alternate brown and creamy white layers of the American elm. The fruit is similar to that of American elm, except that it is larger.

The wood of this tree is more valuable than the American elm as it is used for furniture, agricultural implement parts, veneer and slack cooperage staves. Because red elm lumber is so strong and tough it is used extensively for farm construction such as gates, lot fences and the like.

The third elm native to Iowa is the rock or cork elm. This tree derives the name "rock" because

## THE FLOATING BOG ON DEAD MAN'S LAKE

Malcolm K. Johnson

Perched above the surrounding countryside in north central Iowa lies one of our rarest and most interesting water bodies. The small lake, of about eight acres, occupies the southwest corner of Pilot Knob State Park three miles east of Forest City. Nearly half of this lake is composed of a floating sphagnum bog which feels, if you chance to walk on it, as though you were walking on an extra soft bed. Following one's normal tendency to jump up and down in one spot results in wet ankles, but moving over a few feet returns the sodden boots to semi-dry terrain. Then while standing still or squatting to scrutinize the green mat closely for the small sundew plant the feet begin to sink imperceptibly. Move, sink. Move, sink; again and again until the impulse to get right down among the plants can be repressed.

The sun dew is a diminutive carnivorous plant related by feeding habits to the Venus fly-catcher and pitcher plants. It is common in this part of the country, but only in acid, peaty areas and quite possibly Dead Man's Lake may have the sole accumulation of them in Iowa.

### Why Dead Man's Lake

The name of the lake is another item that has aroused considerable interest. Several stories are told as one can well imagine with such a name. One tells of an early pioneer traveling to an unknown destination who passed by and drove his oxen out on the ice to let them drink. The ice gave way and oxen, wagon, and man sank to a spongy coffin. Another tale relates that a dead man was found on the lake shore. No one in the vicinity knew his name or the cause of his death, but many years later an ancient fowling piece was found on the same location with the root of a small tree grown through the lock. Some say he comes back when the moon is full in search of his lost weapon.

of its extremely hard, tough wood. It is less common than either the American or the red elm although it is found over much of the state growing both on moist lowlands and on dry uplands.

The leaves of the rock elm are smaller than either of its sister elms and are from two and one-half to four and one-half inches long and one and one-fourth to two and one-fourth inches wide. The smaller trunks and branches have bark characterized by corky ridges. The seed is similar to the other elms except for a velvety feel due to the presence of hairs over the entire seed.

Because the wood of this species of elm is so tough, hard and strong it is in demand for truck bodies in addition to the farm uses to which other elms are put.

### The Real Reason

Truth, always stranger than fiction, gives credence to the following. Before the advent of the white man in this territory various Indian tribes wandered in and about Pilot Knob and at times headquartered there. Sioux, Fox, Chippewa, Sac and Winnebago left mementoes of their passage. And even after settlements reached the Winnebago River (since dubbed Lime Creek) the Knob witnessed Indian pilgrimages over the flatlands and rolling hills.

One of the first homesteaders followed the meandering Winnebago River to a point just south of the high knob and climbed it to get a better view of the vast wilderness around him. From the height of his lookout he discovered the small lake in the hills and wondered at its elevation above the surrounding plain. When he walked down to visit the lake he made a further discovery—a lone Indian who permanently resided there. Patiently communicating by signs scratched on a sandy portion of the shoreline, the Indian revealed some of the history connected with the lake, his tribe and also that the water body was called "Lake of the Dead Man" by his former tribesmen.

The Indian, an old man at that time, had been an aspiring politico in his youth, but was either defeated or betrayed by his friends and soured on life in the tribe. Failure to be made head shaman (medicine man) led him to quit mingling with his fellows and sometime later when the tribe moved on he stayed behind.

Perhaps he became too closely associated with the little lake to leave it—whatever the reason, he ceased wandering and spent the rest of his solitary life at this seldom visited retreat. Here was his home when white man came. His

shelter a rude log hut that said was standing when his tribe moved in. Nearby the cabin legend has it that a natural cave opened into the Wisconsin glacial drift that mantles the area. The old would-be shaman reportedly made daily trips into the cavern for what reason no white men know. Neither did a white man ever enter the cave.

When the Indian died years later his tribesmen buried him there, sealed the cave entrance and obliterated any evidence of the opening. No one has since discovered the cave and now, of course, the lake and adjoining grounds are a part of the Pilot Knob State Park and digging is not permitted by law. So ends for a time at least, the tales of naming.

### Other Facts

For those of you interested in facts and statistics, Dead Man's Lake is the only natural one in the vicinity. Its shape is slightly like a figure eight, one loop being open water and the other containing the island-like sphagnum mat surrounded by marsh vegetation. Many varied forms of bird and plant life abound there as is natural where marshes are found. Due to the acidity of the bog end of the lake several species of plants are present that are otherwise rare in Iowa. And the congregation of birds is such that some ornithological clubs come to see them during peak migration periods. Animal life in the lake is quite limited. The highly acid water supports only the species of invertebrates that are adapted to such conditions and fish are not existent there.

A word of caution. When you visit Dead Man's Lake be careful about walking on the bog itself. Although apparently safe enough for the author, it would be tragic indeed to have the name of the lake apply to an unwary visitor.



George Tovey Photo  
Before walking out on the bog at Dead Man's Lake in Pilot Knob Park it's best to understand what you're getting into. Between the trees and the floating sphagnum mat is a narrow strip of water and marsh vegetation. This is where feet get wet.



George Tovey Photo.

The sundew plants at Dead Man's Lake live in the moss that forms a bog over the lake. Sundews are among the rarest of Iowa plants and disturbing them is a law violation.

## ROOTED CARNIVORE

### *Drosera rotundifolia*

Many animals eat plants for sustenance, but did you know that we have a plant in our state of which the reverse is true?

**FUND-LEAVED SUNDEW**, a plant that attracts, catches and eats insects, is widespread in the world but comparatively rare in Iowa. Its generic name, *Drosera*, comes from a Greek word meaning dewey and the specific name, *rotundifolia*, refers to the shape. Many hair-like red tentacles cover each leaf and at the end of the stalks are droplets of sticky gelatin that glisten in the sunlight. Enticed insects become trapped in the arterial dew and after they die the insects are digested by the plant. The sundew is a low-grower and is difficult to see unless you know what you're looking for. The green leaves, about three inches long, appear to have a pink fringe around them. Flowering in mid-summer, the

white blossoms are supported by a stem varying in height from three to ten inches.

There are about 100 species of sundews scattered throughout the world. Seven species are found in the U. S. and apparently only one kind lives in Iowa. This single species is reported from just one locality; Dead Man's Lake at Pilot Knob State Park near Forest City.

The sundews require a very moist, acid environment which the bog in the north central part of the state provides. Other peaty localities probably support this plant, but have not been discovered or made known.

The common pitcher-plant, a carnivorous relative of the sundew is listed by some sources as extending westward from the East coast to Minnesota and Iowa, but records of finding them here aren't known.

The strange carnivorous plants are just another of the many interesting natural features found in Iowa's parks and marshes.

## CONSERVATIONIST LURES TEACH HOME

generally shy away from giving space in this publication complimentary letters. One in last week though that tickled our fancy, so under column of lauds and plaudits acknowledge the following:

Well, you've gone and done it! Now it was going to happen a time ago, maybe even when I received the first copy of the CONSERVATIONIST after moving to California. I suspected even then I know—no hunter, fisherman or outdoorsman can hope to live in California while still reading and reading the IOWA

CONSERVATIONIST from his old home state.

We're moving back in June as soon as my teaching job is finished here. I'm within five minutes of ponds with bass and bluegill; deer feed in our yard; doves can be shot from our porch, but what's all that compared to a splendid snowstorm, rain squall or corn-fed deer? What's all that compared to living in Iowa?

We're coming home—thanks to you.

Sincerely,  
Dale Paterno,  
Auberry, California.

## MISSISSIPPI FISHING FROM A STATISTICIAN'S VIEWPOINT

Bob Cleary

Most production teams, in addition to pride of achievement, can expect a joyful bonus which comes with watching their product develop in stature or increase their market. Not so a biology team... their achievements are usually doomed to reduction rather than growth.

For example, this short article has evolved from a four-year study which was based on virtually reams of field notes. Over the years these field notes were reduced to less than 300 pages of summary sheets and text. A while back the bossman said: "Why don't you condense all this stuff on the Mississippi River into a single report? All that data leaves me cold." It took over a month's time to reduce the reports to a 25-page statistical summary.

More recently the public relations man said: "Say, you've got a lot of good stuff there! But those statistics leave me cold. Why don't you combine them into about a 600-word article we can use in *the Conservationist*?" Three hundred pages to 600 words, impossible? Well, not quite, and here's how I'll do it.

### The Result

The Mississippi River in Iowa is more than 300 miles long and contains more than 190,000 acres of fishing, boating and hunting waters. These waters are divided into separate navigation pools averaging about 25 miles in length.

Since many river fish prefer to exist in the pleasant conditions provided for them in the tailwaters of these dams (plenty of oxygen and first call on food floating over the pool above), the fishermen naturally gravitate there, too. A combination of good fishing and available accesses place 54 per cent of the angling activity in each pool in the first mile below the dam. Most (66 per cent) of the anglers are local, coming from less than 25 miles away. However, Pools 9, 10 and 11 (Lynxville, Guttenberg and Dubuque) consistently draw about 40 per cent of their clientele from more than 75 miles away and can be considered Iowa's "Vacation Pools." In fact, two of five anglers using the river will be found in Pools 10, 11 and 12, in the stretch from Harper's Ferry to Bellevue, Iowa.

The Mississippi angler averages a trip a week, and if you want to avoid crowds, fish on a week day; almost three times as many anglers are present on week-ends. If you consider an average of a fish an hour good fishing, the river's the place for you. Evidently a lot of anglers do, because it has been estimated that more than 570,000 trips, totaling more than two million hours, are made during an average open-water season.

Everything good must be paid for, and to fish the river regularly, you'll probably have to spend about

\$75 a year to replace and keep up your equipment as well as your other expenses for gas, oil, bait, etc. If the "Little lady" complains about man's foolish expenses after reading this, you can inform her that one of six anglers on the river is a woman. If that doesn't do the job, better get out of the house—go fishing!

"So I go fishing on the Mississippi? What am I going to catch and when's the best time to go?" Our figures show that the annual catch on the river is more than 2¼ million fish averaging nearly ¾ pound apiece. Of this total 39 per cent are panfish (sunfish and crappies), 16 per cent pike, 13 per cent white bass, 11 per cent sheepshead and 8 per cent catfish.

If you measure your angling success by numbers, panfishing in the winter and summer will boost your figures or prestige. Most trophy fish, big pike and cat, are taken in the early spring and early summer, with the smaller members of these two groups being an early fall proposition.

You're interested now and ask, "Where do I go?" For you we are in the process of preparing general feature maps of the river, showing roads and access areas to the river as well as the location and best times of year to fish certain popular areas.

Northeast Iowa in general and the Mississippi River specifically have a lot to offer, not only to anglers but to all recreation seekers. For some time now, work has been in progress to evaluate all the various recreational resources of the river. We have combined these data with an "Existing Facility" inventory (portions of which appeared in the May issue of the *Conservationist*), and devised a coordinated program of access or recreational development based on the needs of the fisherman, hunter, boater, camper, picnicker and sight-seer.

The termination of this study resulted in cutting the 300 pages of the original report to one column of 12 figures—a pool-by-pool development schedule based on a 1, 2, 3, priority listing. With just one line of numbers to cover four years of work I guess statistics leave me a little cold too.

### BOUNTY FAILURE

Ontario Province in Canada has paid bounty on wolves for 77 years. At the present time, payment is \$25 for each adult and \$15 for each pup killed. Payments have averaged \$48,000 per year for the past ten years.

Honey bees carry water, as well as honey. Special carriers bring it to the hive, dole it out, seal it in cells, or even act as storage tanks themselves until the water is needed.



George Tovey Photo.

Play safe and be sensible always while on the water. Courtesy afloat makes boating a pleasure and it works both ways between pleasure boaters and fishermen. Each should attempt to stay out of the way of the other especially during peak periods.

## WATER SAFETY

The lakes and streams of Iowa furnish recreation for thousands of boaters, water skiers, swimmers and fishermen every summer—but they are also the scene of almost daily drownings that are, for the most part, so unnecessary.

The State Conservation Commission wants you to enjoy water recreation to the utmost and, to do that, certain rules of water safety must be followed lest what starts out to be the time of your life may end up the opposite.

### Boats

Every summer sees more boats on Iowa waters. Follow these rules and avoid the vital statistics column:

Under no condition exceed the passenger capacity of your boat. Make sure your craft is seaworthy.

**ALWAYS WEAR A LIFE PRESERVER.**

If the water is rough, **STAY ASHORE.**

**DON'T ROCK THE BOAT,** or permit horseplay by other occupants.

If your craft overturns, **STAY WITH THE BOAT.** Get a good hand hold and wait for help or drift ashore with the boat.

If there is more than one person aboard when a boat overturns, get on opposite sides and take hold of hands across the bottom.

**NEVER** stand up in a boat; to hoist anchor, land a big fish or anything else.

Do **NOT** put a large motor on too small a boat.

**PRACTICE COURTESY AT ALL TIMES.**

### Water Skiers

The law says there must be an observer in addition to a boat operator when pulling a water skier. **OBEY THAT LAW,** and if you're a skier:

Learn all the safety measures of your favorite sport and know how to observe them before you venture into deep water. By all means, skier, do **NOT** get behind a boatman in whom you have the least doubt. Your confidence in him will make your skiing so much more fun. **ALWAYS WEAR A LIFE PRESERVER!** There's one designed for every water sport. They are attractive—and their greatest attraction is the fact that they might save your life!

### Swimming

The State Conservation Commission joins other safety officials in urging bathers to swim only in designated waters. Watch for signs, and if they tell you that swimming is prohibited, know that there is a very good reason for it. Swimming areas in park lakes and other waters where there is no life guard on duty are roped off, with floats at intervals to indicate where it is safe. **NEVER STRAY BEYOND THAT ROPE!**

Red Cross suggests other hints on water safety:

**DO NOT GO SWIMMING ALONE!**

Wait an hour or two after eating before going swimming.

Don't stay in the water after becoming tired.

Don't overestimate the distance you are able to swim.

River currents are dangerous—don't try to buck them.

Use the safest method possible to rescue a person in trouble in the water—use a boat or throw some floating object. When a person accidentally falls into the water he should remove all clothing possible before trying to swim out.

In all unsupervised waters where bathing is permitted, life preservers should be worn by all persons who cannot swim.

## ATTENTION—MOTOR BOATERS

The newly enacted Iowa boat numbering and registration law goes into effect July 4, 1961. Under the federally approved system, the boats propelled by machinery (wholly or in part) must be registered with the State Conservation Commission between July 4 and July 24 of this year. This includes boats already carrying Iowa numbers. The only exception is for boats registered with the Coast Guard before May 8, 1961, which have a year of grace, until July 4, 1962, to be registered with the Commission.

Registration applications may be obtained after June 19 from marine dealers, county recorders, state conservation officers, or by writing to the State Conservation Commission, East 7th and Court, Des Moines.

The cost of registration is \$4 for a two year period.

**DO NOT** send in applications before July 4. The applications for all boats not registered with the Coast Guard before May 8 must reach the State Conservation Commission between July 4 and July 24, 1961.

In order for boats not registered with the Coast Guard to be operated in Iowa waters after August 1, 1961, a temporary certificate will be issued which must be attached to the boat or in possession of the operator whenever the boat is being operated.

The number on the certificate will be the assigned number and this number should be placed on the boat in the proper size and color immediately. Boats carrying Coast Guard numbers at the time of registration with the Conservation Commission will retain the same numbers.

The identification (registration) number shall be: (a) painted on or attached to each side of the bow, read from left to right and

in such position as to provide maximum visibility; (b) in block letters of good proportion not less than three inches in height; (c) of a color contrasting to the background color, (light numbers on dark background or dark numbers on light background) and maintained so as to be clearly visible.

No other number shall be carried on the bow of the boat.

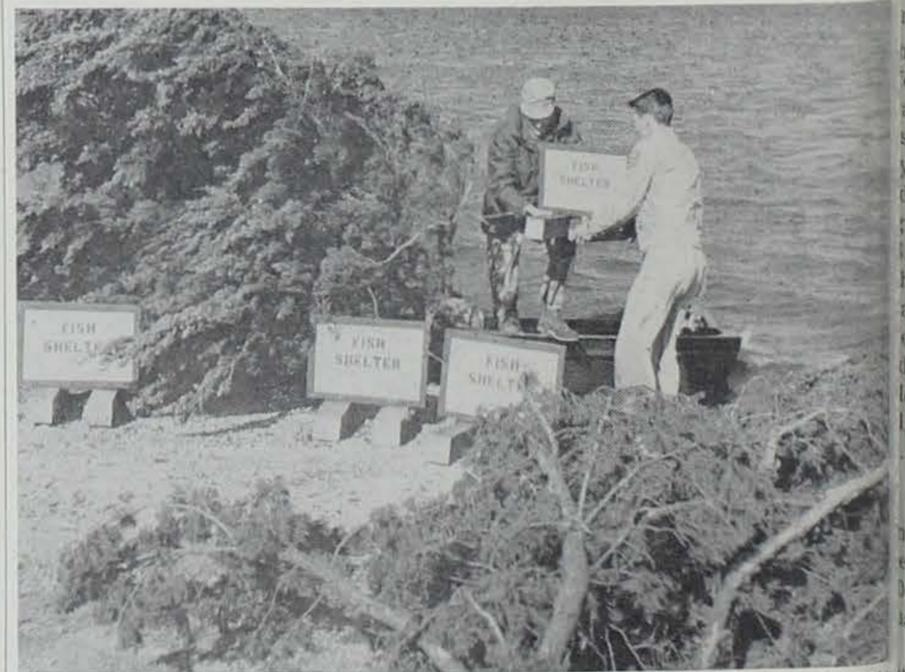
Purchase and attachment of the registration letters and numbers shall be the responsibility of the boat owner.

Until the new program becomes effective, the existing law applying to inland waters will be enforced. Boat owners desiring to operate on waters under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard before the program becomes effective must be registered with the Coast Guard. Boat owners registering with the Coast Guard after May 8, 1961, must re-register under the Iowa number system before July 24, 1961.

Commercial boat operators must have their boats inspected as usual before being offered for hire. They may use their present numbers on inland waters until 15 days after they receive the temporary registration certificate at which time the new number must be on the boats.

## WHO COOS?

Not to dispute the experts on the subject of dove cooing, the only the bachelor birds do it. We've had a pair of doves nesting in our bushes for several years and the pa and ma birds have always seemed quite happy about it. Moreove, they have been doing a heck of a lot of cooing from the same shrub. Could be a family problem, we've never gone into it that far.—John Garwood, Marshalltown, Times-Republican.



George Tovey Photo.

Headquarters areas for crappies and other panfish are posted for fishermen in several locations at Green Valley Lake near Creston. Some of the signs are floating right of the piles of cedar trees, others point the way from shore. All of the shelters are eight feet of water and from past trial operations in other lakes have proven successful in increasing the harvest of fish. Besides crappies, innumerable bluegills and some largemouth bass are attracted to and remain in the vicinity of the shelters.