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Volume 23

February, 1964

No. 2

TIPS FOR TOP CROW SHOOTING

Denny Rehder

The avid shotgunner would like a challenging feathered target all around, but when the hunting seasons close, too many put their gun away. They are missing a chance at one of the finest forms of hunting available—crow shooting.

Why crows? Find another year-round target that can offer the challenge of crow shooting. The birds are fast, wary, elusive and hard to shoot. They are numerous and easy to locate; they come in readily killed correctly; and they offer excellent off-season sport.

The Blind

The first step is to find a good blind site on a flyway leading to or from the roost. You don't shoot the roost for a good reason—the birds will scatter and break into smaller flocks. Roost-shooting was certainly one of the factors in diminishing the size of some Iowa roosts over 10,000 birds down to 2,500 birds or less. You do pick a blind that offers good concealment from the air. Birds have eyesight far superior to man and lack of concealment to hide the most necessary equipment will easily spook the target.

Arrange or build the blind so that you do not shoot through an arc over 180 degrees. Forget the birds coming from behind; they can be killed back.

Best hunters will need a few decoys to start the action and pull the birds from their line of flight. A great horned owl decoy with a lot of crow decoys is usually sufficient to start a melee. However, an experienced caller can stuff an old black sock with rags, throw it in the open, and call in more crows than most gunners could ever

Calling

There are three basic calls needed for successful crow shoots. (Don't get excited over the electronic outfits that sell for over \$100. Most hunters will tell you that the electronic call only works once for any flock of crows.) The first is the distress call used to attract the birds by telling them one of their fellows is in a jam and really needs help. Don't confuse this with the call that tells the other birds to get out of the area; commonly known as a snappy, sharp "caw! caw!"

The "come-on" call is blown just enough to attract the birds to the area. If they are in sight, calling will be held to the minimum necessary for authenticity and results. If the birds are not in sight, the caller must work at least ten minutes before giving up on that flock. This first call is the one most used by crow hunters. It should be practiced a great deal to build up the caller's confidence and skill. The second call is the "come-back" call that turns the crows and sends them back. A good "come-back" call will bring many birds back that have already been under fire. Most good predator calling can offer a good imitation of this call. This is a call telling the main body of birds that one laggard has found something they want to come back to see. Although the first call will always account for most of your birds, the "come-back" can usually supply 10 per cent of your total kill for the day.

The last of the three calls takes advantage of birds that have been shot. This is the "mourning" call that says sympathetically, "Poor fellow, this just wasn't his day." Crows are very social, and the suggestion that a few crows are back there mourning less fortunate comrades may bring a number of birds back to get in on the ceremony.

Take Two Calls

Good callers will always take more than one call with them on a

(Continued on page 14)



George Tovey Photo.

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COMMISSION MINUTES

Des Moines, January 9

FISH AND GAME

Two options were approved for the Big Marsh area in Butler County consisting of 37.5 acres of land at a total cost of \$3,000 and 16 acres including a set of buildings at a total cost of \$10,000.

The Commission gave approval for the plans and specifications for a new residence building at the Mt. Ayr Fish Hatchery in Ringgold County.

The Chief of Fish and Game gave a report on the plans of the Corps of Engineers for river channel straightening of the Skunk River in Lee County.

LANDS AND WATERS

A construction permit was granted for Bowers to construct a boat house and launching track on Lake Okoboji in Arnolds Park.

A construction permit was granted for an underground telephone cable crossing of Brown's Lake in Woodbury County.

A construction permit was granted to the Twin Lakes Restoration Association to install lights in a state-owned area adjacent to Twin Lakes in Calhoun County.

Permission was granted to the City of Storm Lake to build a toboggan slide in the City Park which would cross the shore line and pass onto the lake.

Plans for new refrigeration in the tree storage cellar at the State Forest Nursery at Ames was approved.

Bids were accepted for a well at Wild Cat Den State Park at a cost of \$2,186 and for a well at Union Grove State Park at a cost of \$3,503.50.

A resolution was adopted supporting an invitation for the National Watershed Congress to hold its 1956 meeting at Sioux City.

Approval was given to negotiate a land exchange in the Winnebago Bend area with R. L. Grovenor.

A construction permit was granted at Sioux City for fill on the river front area to the Peaney Company of Minnesota subject to the approval of the Attorney General.

The construction permit was approved for the Highway Commission for a driveway at Pine Lake State Park.

A report was given on the possible abandonment by a power company of power dams at Humboldt and Rutland on the Des Moines River.

Benton County received approval for the acquisition of 25 acres of land at a total cost of \$2,500 as an addition to their Hoeft Recreation Area along the south bank of the Cedar River. It will be developed for fishing, camping and picnicking.

Delaware County received approval for the acquisition of 30 acres of land at a total cost of \$375 as an addition to their 136-acre Fountain Spring Creek Park Area to be used principally as a forest preserve.

Palo Alto County received approval for the acquisition of 5 acres of land at a total cost of \$1,000 on the West Nishnabotna River near the town of Macedonia to be used as fishing access with limited facilities for picnicking and camping.

Palo Alto County received approval for a development plan for the Highway 18 safety rest area to be used for picnicking.

Linn County received approval for a management agreement with the Iowa State Conservation Commission, for the care and maintenance of an 89-acre tract of land lying along the south bank of the Cedar River. Called the Palisades Access area, it will be used as a fishing access. This is a renewable, 25-year agreement.

GENERAL

The Commission approved travel to the North American Wildlife Conference at Las Vegas, Nevada; the State Foresters Meeting at Milwaukee, Wisconsin; a sports show at Kansas City, Missouri; the Great Lakes Park Training Institute at Angola, Indiana; the Association of Conservation Engineers at Lansing, Michigan; and the Missouri Basin Inter-Agency at Dallas, Texas.

Travel authorization was also granted for Jack McSweeney, Area Forester and one truck driver to travel to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, to deliver forest products as needed.

An emergency travel authority was granted for the fisheries section to pick up trout in the mid-western states when available.

Permission was granted for travel to the Aquatic Weed Control Society meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

The mountain goat is not a true goat; it is an antelope. Although it goes by the name of goat, it is more closely related to the chamois.

Although the opossum is thought to be an animal of the deep south by many, it is found as far north as Vermont, New Hampshire and New York.

Books on the Outdoors

Fish and Fishing is the title of a 224-page book by one of America's foremost wildlife experts, Iowa's Maynard Reece.

The "how" of catching fish is thoroughly covered. Full-color illustrations show common baits, both artificial and natural; plus a text and illustration treatment that shows the amateur how to even bait a hook properly. Valuable information on the use of different types of fishing equipment is given—how to bait cast, fly cast, etc.

Cleaning and cooking the day's catch is also covered in detail with recipes for plain or fancy eating.

The biggest attraction of the book, however, is the wealth of illustration be it photographic or Reece's paintings. More than 200 of the 500 illustrations are in full-color.

A large part of **Fish and Fishing** is devoted to the identification, location and "how-to-catch-'em" information on the fresh-water species in North America. This also includes fish found in both salt and fresh water. All eighty species of North American fresh-water fish are shown in full-color paintings by Reece.

The book retails at \$7.95, and is published by Meredith Publishing Company of Des Moines.

How much does outdoor recreation mean to you and your family?

A practical guide is now available to citizens willing to work to help meet growing outdoor recreation needs in their communities and states.

The guide—a 36-page booklet,

"Action for Outdoor Recreation for America"—summarizes principal findings and recommendations of last year's report of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC).

The booklet also illustrates with case histories what can be accomplished through citizen leadership of vigorous community, county and state outdoor recreation programs and suggests specific projects for effective citizen action.

It is published by the Citizens Committee for the ORRRC Report, 1001 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D. C. 20036. Readers of the CONSERVATIONIST may obtain a copy free by writing to the committee.

ORRRC was established by Congress five years ago to survey outdoor recreation needs of the American people over the next 40 years.

The ORRRC Report emphasizes that while America's population will nearly double by the year 2000, outdoor recreation demand will triple.

The Citizens Committee for the ORRRC Report (CORG) was established last year to work for public understanding of the report's findings and recommendations.

Laurance S. Rockefeller, who served as chairman of ORRRC, is honorary chairman of the Citizens Committee. Joseph W. Penfold is conservation director of the Izaak Walton League of America, chairman. Sherry Fisher of the Iowa Conservation Commission is a member of the CORG Committee.

Animal Superstitions**BEAVERS**

There are a lot of "old wives tales" about animals and to the interested observer many would seem true, such as one about beavers. It has been said that trees cut by the beavers always fall toward the water. The story goes on to say that, in their extensive tree felling operations, they have gained the reputation of cutting trees so they always fall toward the water, thus saving beavers the effort of hauling logs.

This seems logical. Beavers are intelligent, industrious animals and this would save a lot of unnecessary labor.

Actually, most trees along the banks of streams or lakes have a tendency to lean toward the water and will fall toward the water no matter what the beavers' desires. Trees growing some distance from the water are straighter and when cut down by beavers will fall in any direction.

There are many stories about how beavers use their tails. It is generally thought a beaver will carry mud on its tail, use it as a plasterer's trowel, that it serves as a prop when the beaver is gnawing a tree or waddling about on its hind legs, and that it warns

other beavers of impending danger by striking the water soundly.

The mud for its lodge is carried in the beaver's front paws and no one has ever seen one carrying mud on its tail or using it as a trowel. The other tails about are true. They do smack the water with it resulting in a repetition loud enough to warn other beavers to dive under the water for safety. While gnawing a tree, they squat on their hind legs supporting with the tail. It is also used as support when the front paws are full of mud and it has to walk on the hind legs.

MOLES

Then there's the old saying that moles are blind. This one is essentially true. Moles have eyes, in many species the skin has grown over the eyeballs so they are almost completely blind.

They can distinguish between bright light and darkness but not able to define objects. Their near blindness does not seem handicap the little animals in darkness of their burrows as their hearing is acute and they are sensitive to ground vibrations. Their nose and front feet are well supplied with sensory hairs.

WINTER PARK HOPPING

Carol Buckmann

Are you tired of winter and sitting indoors, watching television or riddling your thumbs while dreaming of a hike in the woods, a weekend of camping, or just enjoying the outdoors?

Why wait for summer; plan a weekend of winter park hopping. Winter offers an entirely different type of scenery equal in beauty to summer's lush greenery and, with the addition of a few warm clothes, is enjoyable.

For the dubious who want to enjoy the outdoors but don't relish the entry air, an auto trip is the key. A good place to start is northeast Iowa's Pikes Peak, a park in scenery and activity for both the see-it-from-the-car type or the rough, adventurous

Northeast

A few miles from McGregor, the blizzard winds through the hills to Pikes Peak, the highest point on the Mississippi River. Looking north, the view of the Mississippi-Wisconsin river confluence is clear especially on a sunny day. Looking south, one sees the bridge from Moline crossing to Wisconsin and the many islands far below which the big river is famous.

Fishermen dot the mighty river and seem inconspicuous from the peak. But chances are, at each of the occupants have forgotten the cold air as they land king-sized perch and walleyes. Fishing is excellent in the Mississippi and its tributaries at all seasons but winter fishing is a real delight to both the experienced and the novice. Even the winter indoorsman is venturing out for a try and when the fish start hitting, disdains his dislike for chilly weather.

This is trout fishing country and winter trout fishing in the fast-moving streams can be rewarding to the angler familiar with the water. Hiking is another invigorating activity in any park. The trails at Pikes Peak, one leading to Pictured Rocks and one to the Wisconsin River mouth, do not seem as tiring when there's a nip in the air.

A few miles from Pikes Peak on Highway 13 is the Yellow River State Park. A trip to northeast Iowa is complete without a drive through the snow-covered hills. The car and take a walk along Paint Creek as, in winter's chances are high for spotting deer or other wildlife foraging or stopping to drink.

Don't leave out the possibility of a weekend of winter camping; parks are open all winter for both these activities.

Backbone

About 38 miles southwest of Pikes Peak on Highway 13 is Ledges State Park, another outstanding park for winter beauty.



Pilot Knob State Park near Forest City offers complete winter activity with skiing, tobogganing, ice skating and the like. The view of the frozen countryside from the tower encompasses several square miles of northern Iowa.

The trout hatchery at the park is open all year where continuous activities including hatching and rearing young fish for future release are in full swing.

The road winds through the park revealing rocky staircases, caverns and the "backbone," a high ridge of rock closely resembling a huge backbone with boulders and rocky humps forming its vertebrae. Sledding and tobogganing are enjoyed at this park as well as Wau-bonsie, Dolliver Memorial, Palisades-Kepler and any park with adequate hills and snow.

If over-all winter recreation is what you're seeking, Pilot Knob, near Forest City, is one answer. This is the only park where the lake is kept clear especially for skaters. There is a warming house and electricity for night skating.

Pilot Knob is the only park with a ski run. Sledding, bob-sledding and tobogganing are also popular. Standing on snow-covered Tower Hill discloses a panoramic view for 35 miles encompassing numerous towns where thin willows of chimney smoke circle toward the sky.

Beeds Lake is another popular winter playground where ice skating and ice fishing are leading sports. Fishing here is a year-around sport with panfish and walleyes especially hungry in the winter.

Ledges State Park, near Boone, is intriguing any time of the year. If you've never hiked along its snowy trails or seen the park dressed in winter from a high vantage point, you've missed much of Ledges' beauty.

Take along . . .

The bird population differs considerably in winter so bring a bird guide and field glasses. An animal

track guide and a tree identification book for identifying trees from their bark are helpful. Take a jug of hot coffee or chocolate and some sandwiches, they'll taste good after or during a winter hike.

In a few weeks, flowers begin peeking their heads above the ground while woodchucks and their hibernating allies begin moving about after a long winter's snooze. But flowers and animals aren't the only signs of life; warm weather to a park means PEOPLE.

So, if you want to be alone with nature, see the hills dressed in white, follow the maps left by winter's wild creatures, and enjoy your favorite park in privacy, now is the time.

PORCUPINES

One of the oldest and most widespread notions is that porcupines, often misnamed "hedgehogs," can shoot their quills into you.

They have no ability to shoot quills at all. During molting, in the spring and early summer, the quills and hair become very loose and when the animal shakes himself vigorously, some may be dislodged and fly to the sides. Both hairs and quills are so light they have little momentum and usually do not travel more than three feet. An old quill may be attached so loosely to the tail that when a porcupine gives it a quick flip, say when he's angered, the quill may travel five feet but he has no control over its direction.

It is also said that porcupines are stupid. This is not true. Laboratory experiments show the animal to be very adaptable and it can learn the way through a maze that proves entirely too much for so-called intelligent animals.

Skeet, An All-American Sport

Joe Fargo

While most of our sports do have roots in foreign lands, the sport of skeet shooting is totally American.

William H. Foster developed what he called "clock shooting," about 1915, just for a pleasant pastime and as practice for hunting. Foster, C. E. Davies and his son, H. W. Davies, used to shoot hand trap in a field near Ballard Vale, Mass., to keep their shooting eye sharp.

To achieve variety in target angles, they moved to different positions and the circular "clock" evolved. The trap—the target throwing device—was placed at 12 o'clock and set to throw target over 6 o'clock. Two shots were taken at each "hour," making 24. The 25th shot (there are 25 shells in a box) was fired on an incoming target from the center of the "dial."

The new game caught on and few changes were made over the next 10 years. Foster had joined the National Sportsman Magazine staff in Boston and his promotion of the game was effective.

In 1923, shortly after the size of the circle was reduced from 25 yards to 20, a hen farm was built in the field adjoining the Ballard Vale shooting ground. This meant that the shooters could no longer fire in the direction of the hen-house.

The problem was solved by placing another trap at 6 o'clock that threw targets over 12. Then, both angles could be fired from one side of the circle.

That farmer who raised chickens
(Continued on page 15)

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FLY FISHING—PART I

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles on fly fishing fundamentals. Later articles will cover lures and flies, fishing techniques, and tips on fly fishing for popular Iowa fish species.

Bill Tate

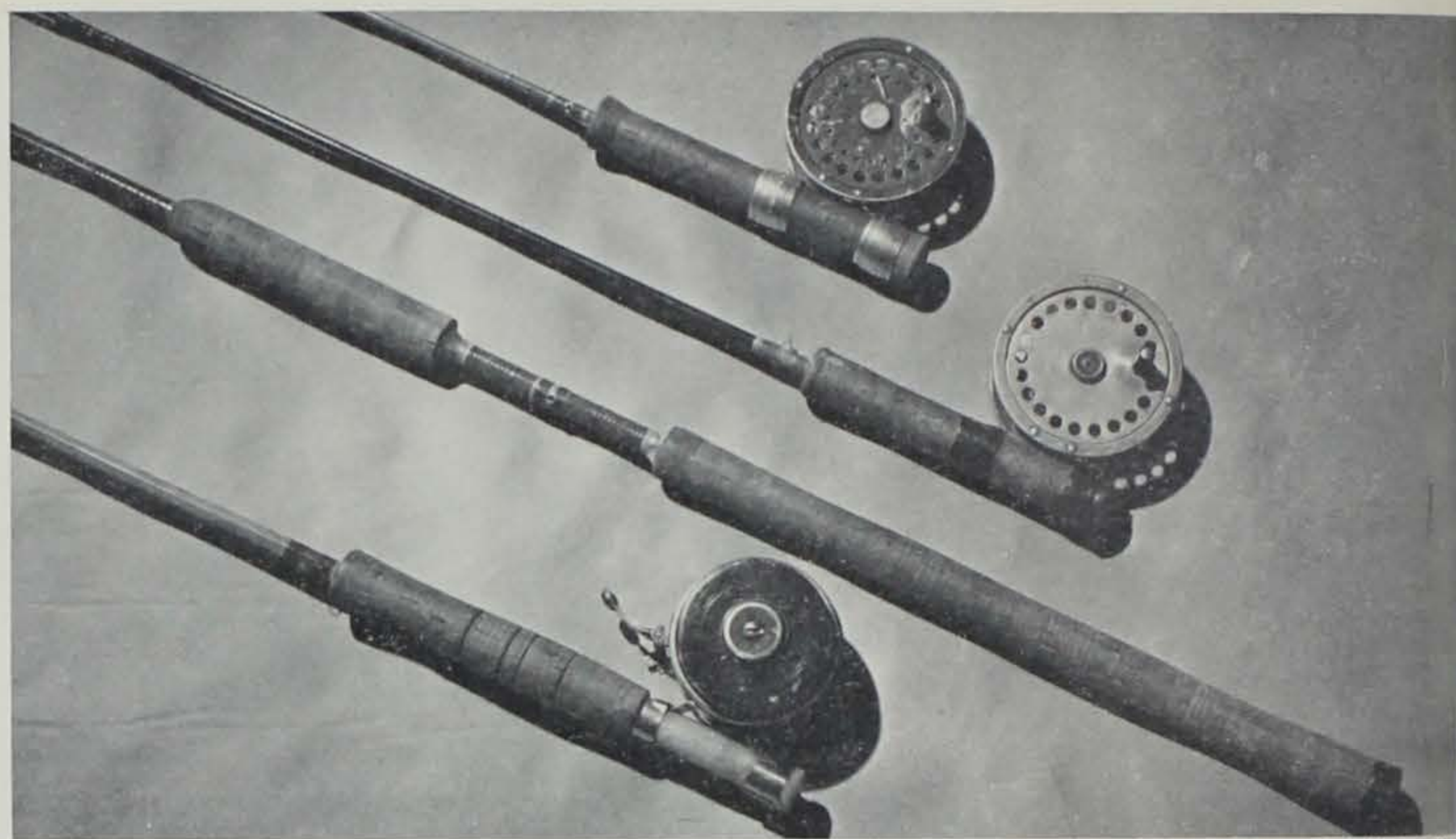
Assistant Supt. Fisheries

Is fly fishing a vanishing art in Iowa? We certainly hope not, for fly fishing is the most effective method for taking fresh water fish. In addition to catching fish, mastery of the fly rod provides a satisfaction unknown to masters of other fishing methods. Most anyone can learn enough in a few hours practice with a capable instructor, or even by reading, to be able to catch fish. A wide variety of foods eaten by many species of fish can be simulated by lures used with the fly rod. The "long" rod can also be a "killer" when used with bait. With the rise in popularity of spinning in Iowa, fly rods have been collecting dust. This is unfortunate, since flies and poppers which are so attractive to both game and pan-fish cannot be fished effectively with spinning gear.

The Rod

Prior to World War II, split bamboo was almost universally used for fly rods. There were still a few steel, or beryllium copper rods in the early 40's. Soon after the war, fibre glass started replacing bamboo, and at the present time has almost replaced it as rod material. A few manufacturers are still making quality bamboo rods. There are no longer any inexpensive bamboo rods made in this country. Fibre glass rods are available in various qualities from poor to excellent. Buy the best rod you can afford!

Fly rods are made in a variety of lengths, weights and actions, for various types of fishing. Other methods of fishing, such as spinning and bait casting, depend upon the weight of the lure to pull the line from the reel during the cast; in fly fishing, the weight of the line pulls the fly through the air during the cast. The type of flies or lures you intend to use determines the type of line and rod



These rods from the top are 5' 9" ultralight spinning rod with a single action fly reel attached with reel seat rings. This is a three piece rod. The butt section is bamboo which gives the rod backbone; the other two sections are fiber glass. A 4' 3" one-piece fibre glass fly rod with single action fly reel attached with tape. A 9' two-piece fiber glass steelhead rod without reel seat. This rod is used with the "belly winder" for long casts. The 7' two-piece bamboo fly rod with an automatic fly reel in a conventional fly reel seat.

which will propel them. There is no ideal all-round fly rod. The choice of a rod should be based upon the types of fishing available to the fisherman.

Rod Length

In the choice of a flyrod, length is one consideration. Sporting goods stores normally stock 7-9 foot fly rods. The distance cast with any given rod and line combination depends upon the speed developed at the rod tip. Most persons cannot swing an 8½ or 9 foot rod fast enough to cast properly! A 7½ or 8 foot rod should be the choice for most fishermen. Rod action, or its relative stiffness, should also be considered. A light or soft action rod bends or flexes throughout most of its length, and is best for casting wet flies. The medium action rod bends for about half its length and can be used with both wet and dry flies. With dry flies, the angler must "wait out" the slower action during the backcast. The dry fly rod has a fast tip action, which helps keep the backcast high and aids in

straightening the leader on the delivery of the forward cast. If one has to select one rod for all his fly fishing, a 7½ to 8 foot medium action rod is a wise choice. By having two or more reels each with a different line, a variety of flies and small poppers can be cast.

Special Purpose Rods

For fishing Iowa's small trout and smallmouth streams, a 4 to 7 foot fly rod is ideal. Short accurate casts are often essential for success on small streams. Short accurate casts are practically impossible with a 9 foot rod! A short rod can be used under the tree canopy found over many of the productive spots along our small streams. The overhead limbs and bank side weeds are not caught on the backcast. If you don't "build your own", some of the "ultralight" spinning rods can be used as a short fly rod. With a little experimenting, a fly line of the proper size and weight can be found to bring out the action of your particular rod. The reel seat "rings" can be used to secure a

fly reel as near the butt as possible. Adhesive or friction tape can also be used for a light, inexpensive and effective "reel seat".

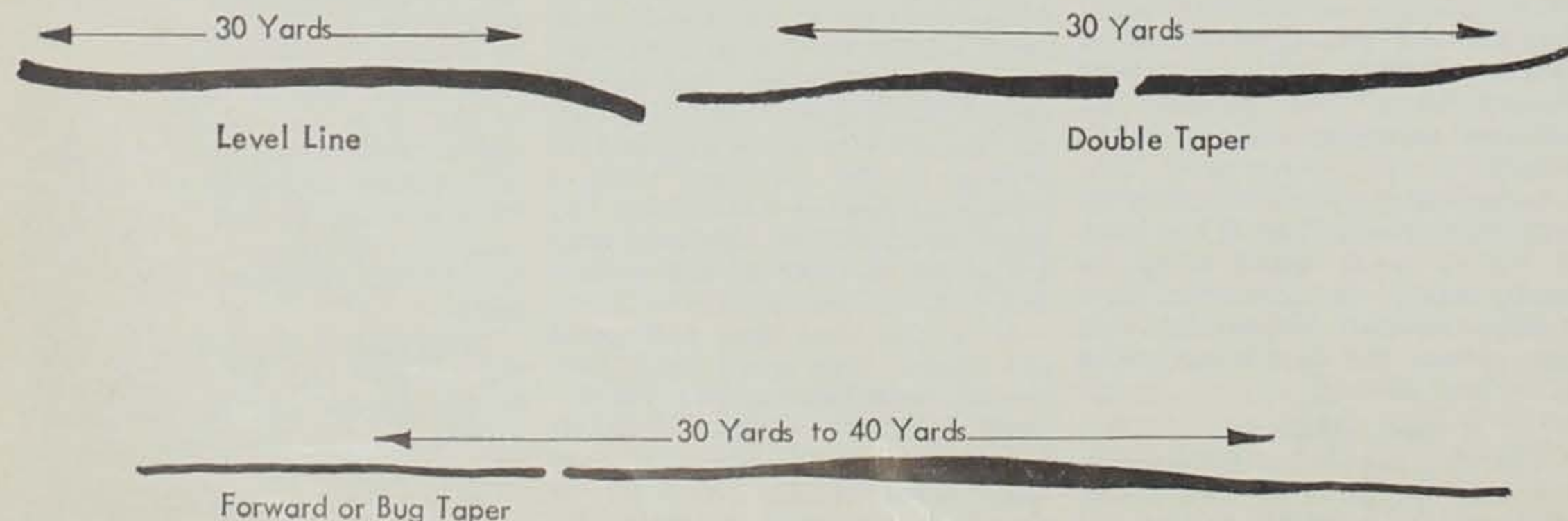
For fishing large streams with flies, a heavy rod of the type built for steelhead or salmon fishing can be used. Casts of well over 100 feet can be made with a belt type spinning reel or "Belly Winder" and "Torpedo head" fly lines of 40 to 45 feet, tied to heavy monofilament spinning line. The weight of the "torpedo head" is used to propel the leader and fly. The cast is stopped before the line strikes the water to straighten the leader and present the fly.

Fly Reels

The fly reel is not used for casting and is merely a rack for holding the line. The line is stripped from the reel prior to casting. There are two types of fly reels available, single action and automatic. The single action reel is simple in construction and light in weight. The reel spool turns only once for each turn of the handle. The single action reel is satisfactory for all fly fishing. The automatic reel contains a clock spring mechanism that rewinds the line on the reel spool when a release lever is tripped. The automatic is heavier than the single action reel and feels "out of place" on a light fly rod. This weight helps balance a heavy rod, and is particularly useful to keep extra line from engaging oar lock tackle boxes and other gear while fishing from a boat.

Many good fish will be saved if the fly fisherman reels in slack line immediately after a fish is hooked and plays the fish from

(Continued on page 13)



Three fly lines represented in diagrammatic fashion.

PLANT ROSETTES

David H. Thompson

winter our landscape is most-
affless trees silhouetted against
sky, and the dead stalks of
flowers, weeds and tall grasses
th or without a blanket of
7. Some snows lie on the
nd for only a few days. Others
ow one after another and cover
ground with white for weeks
at time. Soon the eye begins to
nager for a glimpse of something
n and growing. Then, in sun-
spots where the snow has melt-
or where youngsters have
lled it away, there appear clust-
of fresh green leaves pressed
to the soil.

Whether it is a dandelion in the
a, a pansy in a flower border,
thistle in a vacant lot, such a
al leaf cluster—called a win-
rosette—is a ring of leaves
and a short central stem. The
s are narrow at the base,
toward the tip, and spread
on the ground with little or no
ap. This arrangement gives
exposure to sunlight and close
ct with the warmer soil be-
1. Such plants continue to
g, sometimes faster, sometimes
der, even under snow, through-
winter.

Each kind of plant seems to
a calendar of its own. There
time for growing tall, a time
owering, and a time for scat-
g seed. Among those herbace-
plants that live over from one
to the next—biennials and
perennials—the winter rosette is
specially suited for temperate cli-
s. In its first summer a bi-
ly line such as a wild carrot or an
ng primrose grows a rosette
aves from a seed. This lives
the winter, shoots up a tall
the next summer, blooms,
s seed, and then the whole
dies. In many perennials,
example the hollyhock and
non plantain, the flower stalk
as the days grow shorter but
underground parts and a ros-
of green basal leaves live on
the following year when,
1, they flower and set seed.

our region the winter ro-

sette habit of growth is scattered
through many families of flower-
ing plants and over many types of
environment. Almost all of them
are viewed in different ways by
different people, depending on
where they grow and on our per-
sonal likes and dislikes. By and
large, the majority of them thrive
in poor soils and in waste places
where they furnish ground cover
and aid in breaking up and en-
riching the soil. With their hardy
underground parts they survive
fires, floods, trampling and graz-
ing.

The rosettes of dandelion, plan-
tain and buckhorn are merely lawn
pests to most people. However,
some of us enjoy a mess of dande-
lion greens in spring. In farm-
er's pastures, grain fields and hay
fields a few of these winter ro-
settes followed by their tall sum-
mer stalks are noxious weeds. Cat-
tle, sheep and horses refuse to eat
spiny thistles and teasel, the fuzzy
mullein, or the ill-flavored wild
carrot also called Queen Anne's
lace. But, on roadsides, old fields
and waste places their bold flow-
ers add welcome color. In autumn,
when dead and brown, they are
picked for winter bouquets.

Strawberries come from rosettes
which are cultivated by the thou-
sands of acres. Smaller in size but
full of flavor, ripe wild strawber-
ries abound in the forest preserves
each June. The tender leaf clus-
ters of winter cress or yellow
rocket make a salad that tastes
the same as its near relative, the
water cress.

Our wildflower season is ushered
in by the blooming of the hepatica,
usually before the last snows of
spring. Its delicate white, lavender
or pale blue flowers on their furry
stems push up from a winter ro-
sette of three-lobed liver-colored
leaves. On the other hand, the
blooming season is closed, often
after autumn snows have begun
to fly, by the purple flower spikes
of a little mint called heal-all
which also arise from a ring of
basal leaves.

Cook County Forest Preserve.



The "belly winder" made to wear about the waist can be used for both spinning and fly casting. For fly casting, a torpedo head fly line is attached to the monofilament spinning line.

ART OF FISHING—

(Continued from page 12)

reel. Many big fish are now bigger
because wayward loops of line las-
soed various obstacles resulting in
broken leaders.

Fly Lines

Although fly lines have been
improved in recent years, most of
them are far from perfect. A new
standard for line sizes has been
adopted recently which will help,
but the only way to be sure a line
matches a rod for the type fishing
you want to do is to try it! Most
lines are now made of filament
nylon which is braided and im-
pregnated and coated with syn-
thetic resins, plastics or oils. There
are many types of line that fall
into a few general categories. The
level line is the same diameter for
its entire length. It is the cheapest
fly line and its price is its only
virtue. It does not cast or "lay
out" as well as the various types
of tapered lines. The single taper
line is constructed with most of its
length of one diameter, then a

taper of several feet to a small
diameter, with several feet of
small-diameter level line at the end
of which the leader is attached.
Some of this small diameter line
may have to be removed for best
results. A tapered line will "lay
out" and present the leader and
fly better than a level line.

The double taper line has a
taper at both ends and can be
reversed after one end is worn.

The forward taper, torpedo head
or bug taper line has a small di-
ameter running or shooting line
for most of its length, then a quick
taper to a short section of a larger
diameter level line, then a quick
taper to a small diameter line to
which the leader is attached. The
forward taper is used for casting
poppers or other bulky lures or
for long casts with flies.

Some lines are made to sink,
some lines are made to float. The
sinking lines are for fishing wet
flies and nymphs; the floating lines
are for casting poppers and dry
flies.

WOODCHUCKS

Widespread belief has it that
woodchucks or ground hogs sleep
soundly and without waking the
entire winter or up to Ground Hog
Day, February 2. This is not the
case for they are sensitive to dis-
turbances such as noise and hand-
ling. During warm periods they
may even rouse and eat stored
food.

Woodchucks have often been re-
ferred to as "seven-sleepers." This
phrase refers to Grimm's tale of
the seven dwarfs who slept for
years in a case, or it may imply
that the woodchuck is one of the
seven mammals to hibernate.

The myth of Ground Hog Day
began in early Christian times.
Old World animal lore was trans-
ferred to the New World with
mythical attributes of European
mammals passing into New World
mammals.

From early Christian times,
Candlemas, the blessing of the
candles, has been celebrated in
western Europe as a festival. It

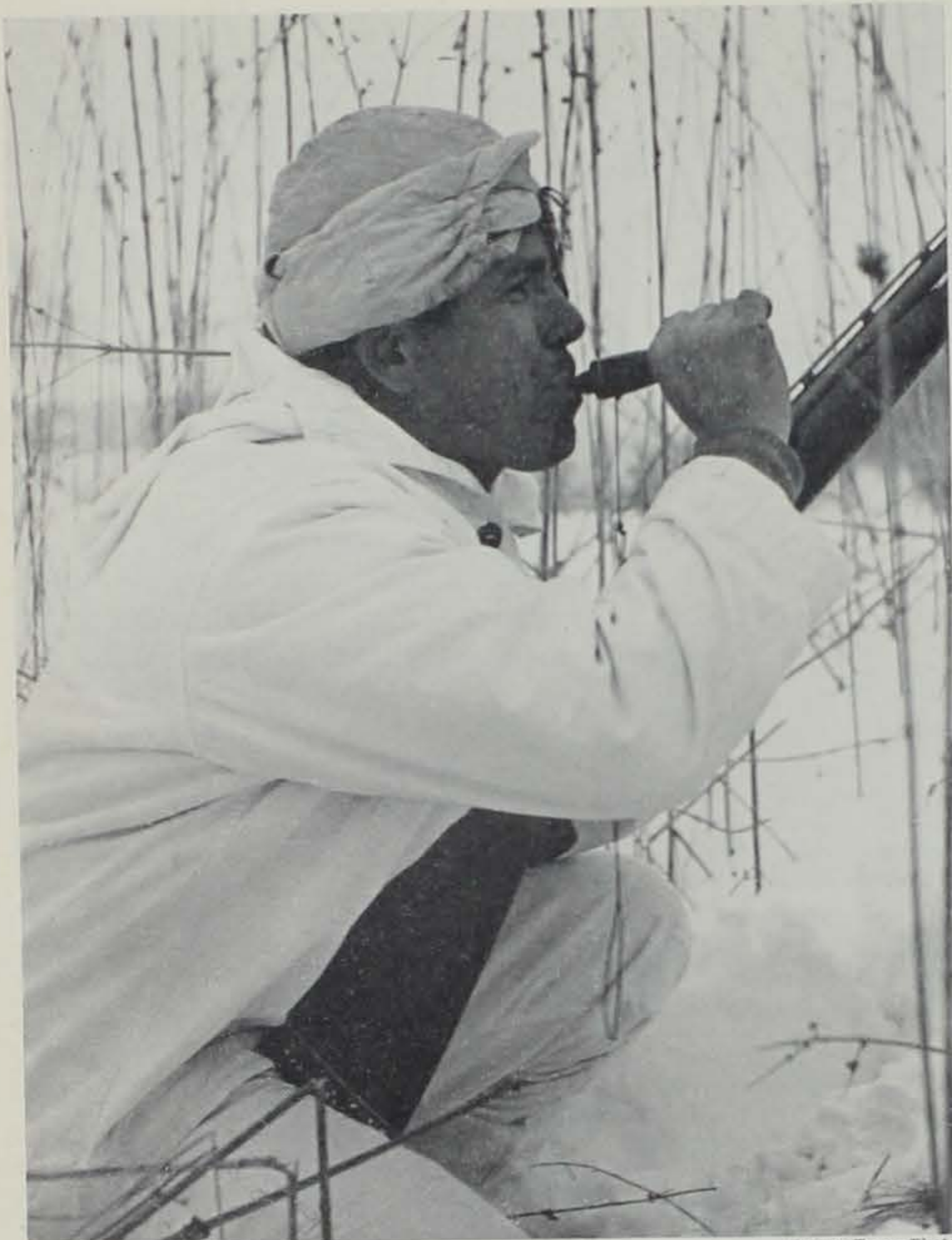
was in the eleventh century that
the blessing of the candles became
a ritualistic practice. In time, the
weather of Candlemas Day, Feb-
ruary 2, came to have particular
significance.

The common hedgehog of Europe
and the badger and bear filled the
role of weather prophets. If Feb-
ruary 2 was sunny and the animals
observed their shadows, back to
winter quarters they went for an-
other period lasting six weeks and
winter weather continued for that
period. But if February 2 was
cloudy and the animals did not see
their shadows, they became active
and an early spring could be count-
ed upon.

When the myth was transplanted
in America the woodchuck as-
sumed the role of weather prophet
in place of the European hedgehog.
The bear and badger dropped out
of the picture.

The black bear resembles man
more than any other North Amer-
ican mammal.





The good caller can wreak disaster on a crow roost. Much of the sport of crow hunting depends on competent calling during the hunt.

CROW SHOOTING—

(Continued from page 9)

hunt. There are a number of good reasons for this. First, the caller armed with a shrill call and a gravelly call can switch to the other call when the birds no longer respond to the first call. Also the shrill call carries well when the air is heavy with moisture, while the lower pitch works well in lighter air.

Two calls are handy, too, when in the excitement of the shooting the call becomes plugged, is dropped or stepped on, or accidentally loaded into the shotgun—which has happened to more crow hunters than would care to admit it.

When calling, don't depend on wind passing through the call to do the job alone. Call from the diaphragm, expelling air through the vocal cords. You then are calling from the throat as well as the call itself. This adds an undertone that lends body and substance to the sound coming from the call.

The best way to learn calling is to listen to a lot of crows and try to imitate them. The more time spent in the field practicing your calling, the more success you can expect during your hunts.

Shooting Tips

A few things should be remembered as far as the actual shooting is concerned. You will help your hunt a great deal if you get the first bird coming over your blind. This indicates to those following that the first bird saw something and dived at it. Another good practice is to set a limit of ONE SHOT PER BIRD! This can make a big difference in your percentage of hits in one hundred shots. It also encourages the hunter to take good clean shots rather than pump one bird until it hits the ground. This may sound like conservation of ammunition, and it is! You needn't worry about taking along too many shells when you get into a good crow shoot. In fact when you start talking about getting a couple hundred birds on a hunt, economy will probably limit your shooting activity.

Most good crow hunters use No. 9 shot in skeet loads. Crows are easy to kill when they are hit, but as in all shotgun shooting, the object is to place a good pattern of shot on the target. The larger shot sizes are sometimes used from 8's up to 6's. The favorite, however, remains the 9's.

So if February seems to be a transition from armchair adventure to fishing fun, try crow shooting. Added to your calendar of sports activities, crow hunting can offer a keen challenge for off-season gunning.

PERFORMANCE OF FISHING LINE GOVERNED BY SIX FACTORS

One view as to why two monofilament spinning lines which look alike can perform differently under actual use is given by a recent study of the Du Pont Company. The findings indicate that variations in behavior of all lines can be traced back to six basic factors: tensile strength, knot strength, impact strength, stretch, limpness, and color.

The study showed that small differences in any of these factors could produce striking effects on fishing performance.

Measurements of tensile strength, for example, give an indication of the inherent strength of the line material. The higher the tensile strength the thinner the line can be made. For example, standard six-pound test nylon monofilament averages 11 mils in diameter (one mil = .001 inch). Later developments will permit the same strength to be equalled at a lesser diameter.

Compactness permits sportsmen to carry extra lengths on their reels and smaller diameters also provide less resistance to wind and fast-moving currents. In trolling and bottom fishing, lighter sinkers can be used. The hair-like quality provides greater deception in seek-

ing out trout when they are particularly wary early in the season.

The second factor, knot strength, varies with line strength. The stronger the line, the stronger it is when knotted. Differences are primarily due to the type of knot selected and the care used in tying. The wind or overhand knot can cut line strength in half. As much as 100 per cent of the unknotted line strength can be obtained, however, when tied using five or more turns around the standing part of the line. Du Pont recommends three knots, the improved versions of the blood, clinch, and end loop knots.

The key to tying is in pulling the knot up slowly and tight. This prevents the tail from pulling through and forestalls the build-up of excessive stress between the turns of the knot.

Impact strength, the third factor, is a measure of ruggedness. It can differ from tensile strength, which is based on a slow pull to the breaking point. Impact results from sudden stress directly on the line, a condition which occurs from underwater obstructions or when taking the shock of a heavy strike. In both cases the usual cushioning effect of the reel brake or flexibility of the rod is minimized.

The fourth factor, degree of stretch, affects the ability of the line to transmit the feel of a strike to the fisherman. Too much stretch can reduce the angler's ability to set the hook promptly; too little can leave the angler unprotected against the extra heavy strike. Proper adjustment of this property also minimizes the build-up of compressive forces which can warp or crush the spool.

Limpness is the fifth factor. More than anything else, this property is determined by line diameter. The thinner the line for any pound test, the more flexible it will be. Even a small reduction in diameter reduces the tendency of monofilament to spring away from the reel when uncoiled, a factor which was blamed for snarls and tangles in early monofilaments. When tied to a limp line, lures can be made to wiggle sooner on reeling in, a point which can spell the difference between taking a fish and losing it.

Opossums are the only pouched mammals in North America. The female has a fur-lined pouch on her belly in which the young are carried.

The peccary has never learned to do without water as many other desert dwelling animals have.

41,000 Visitors to Spirit Lake Hatchery

An unofficial total of 41,286 people visited the new Spirit Lake Fishery after opening to the public on April 4, 1963. Included were several thousand school children, boy and girl Scout groups, church sponsored camps, civic clubs, women's organizations, plus hundreds who "just dropped in." The largest number of people visited during one day was on Dedication Day, June 29, 1963.

Visitors from 42 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia were represented in the guest register at the new building. Foreign visitors included those from Australia, Canada, the Canal Zone, East Africa, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Ireland, North Africa, Norway, Nova Scotia, Peru, and Vietnam. Comments such as "lovely, beautiful, terrific, wonderful etc.," were found written beside the names of many tourists.

Golden eagles have wingspreads of from six and one-half to seven and one-half feet.

Trapping is one of the oldest occupations of man. It is older than agriculture and even preceded the pursuit of hunting and fishing.

Teachers—Plan for Summer Credits

Tom Ballard

February isn't too early for teachers and student teachers to start planning for summer school '64. If you need three or more hours of on-campus credit, don't forget about Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp.

The dates for these three week sessions are:

BIOLOGY 105—June 7-June 27

BIOLOGY 104—June 28-July 18

BIOLOGY 105—July 19-August 8

Biology 105, rocks, minerals, soil and management, water conservation, will be offered twice; forestry, ecology, fish and wildlife management, Biology 104, is scheduled once. You can earn three hours of credit for either one or six hours if you enroll in two sessions.

The diversity of the area near Springbrook State Park, the home of ITCC since 1950, offers campers an outdoor Iowa Laboratory field trips that will surprise even seasoned Iowans. "I didn't

know we had so many interesting areas in Iowa!" is a typical reaction. Teachers discover biological and geological resources that can be found in their own school yard—resources they can use in the classroom for almost any unit from music to social science to biology.

"Learn by doing" is still the theme at ITCC. Many field trips, useful collections, a shop to build classroom projects, and most important of all, field experience in conservation education all give Iowa teachers the needed confidence to teach conservation themselves when they return to their schools.

Scholarships are available in most counties. You will be surprised to find out just how many organizations in your own city, town, or county have already given financial help to local teachers in past years.

For more details write to Mr. Bernard Clausen, Director, Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp, Science Department, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls.



Teachers at the Iowa Teachers Conservation Camp at Springbrook State Park learn some of the intricacies of modern fish management as well as a liberal education in the vast field of conservation.

ICING TURTLES

Tom Moen
Fisheries Biologist

There are as many ways to seal a turtle as there are recipes for turtle soup. The common "paper" can be trapped with mesh traps of various designs; is commonly taken in sein-perations, and by professional experienced turtle hunters who for concentrations of hibernating turtles under snags and banks of the small streams. One of the methods often over-d is spearing through the ice.

The latter requires clear ice, thick enough to be safe, but not more than about three or four inches thick. A four to five foot length of one-half inch rod with a sharp point, an ice chisel, and a length of rope complete the necessary gear. This type of turtle hunting is available for only a short period of time following formation of the first ice cover.

Snow, frost and a "rough" freeze can cancel your intended hunt as often as two years out of three.

On small ponds or lakes one can walk the entire shoreline checking shallow water out to a depth of about four feet. Most of the turtles will congregate in one fairly localized area, usually associated with or adjoining the deeper water. A day of sunshine appears to bring them out of the deeper water into the shallower water along shore. So, with spear and chisel we start looking for a dark, muddy-gray spot on the bottom. Usually your approach will bring about some movement that will let you know that the hazy gray shape is alive. Once the turtle starts moving, the light-colored feet and legs really gives him away. You then plunge the spear through the ice and the turtle, chisel a hole around the spear to bring the turtle to the surface, let him snap those jaws shut on the rope and you're off to find another.



"He comes!" Icing for turtles is strictly dependent on the weather. If the freeze is right, a few turtle hunters can come a lot of turtle.

SKEET—

(Continued from page 11)

nearby probably never knew that he influenced the format of what is today a major international sport.

Besides club events, state championships, regional matches and the National Skeet Shoot, skeet is one of the shooting events at Olympic and International Shooting Union competitions.

The modern skeet field looks much like Foster's half circle. There is a high traphouse at the left and a low house at the right. Shooting starts at Station 1, by the high house, shots are fired at targets from each house singly. The five-man squad continues around the circle, taking turns, to Station 7 by the low house.

Station 8 is right between the two traphouses and you have to be fast to catch that clay sailing almost over your head.

The squad finishes their "round" of skeet by refiring at Stations 1, 2, 6 and 7 but this time—doubles.

Both targets, from high and low houses, are thrown at once. You have to break one, then the other.

Championship shooters miss few of the flying targets but any score over 20 out of 25 is considered good. Most shooters score between 14 and 20. The beginner may break only 6 or 9 his first time out, but it doesn't take long to get the hang of it.

Since skeet targets all are broken at about 22 yards, a shotgun with an open bore is best. Events are fired with 410, 28, 20 and 12 gauge guns but it's best to learn with the 12 gauge.

Skeet shooting was used to train aerial gunners during World War II but it is a civilian sport. Hunters shoot skeet today to sharpen their skill and thousands of shooters follow the sport for the competition itself. —Winchester News Service.

The crappie is found from Vermont and New York westward through the Great Lakes region and Mississippi Valley to the Dakotas and south to Texas.

Snakes probably are unable to detect air-borne vibrations. This means that a rattlesnake has never heard its own or another's rattle.

Probably the earliest known metal spring traps were those employed for the catching of human beings in about 1750 or earlier.

The smallness of the mouth of the Rocky Mountain whitefish requires the use of hooks of very small size.

The berry of the mountain ash is a favorite food item of the Rocky Mountain marten.



Snappers will clamp on anything; even another snapper's tail. Some hunters will come home with a train of five or more turtles.

An Oasis in Iowa for Waterfowl

Jack Kirstein

Early Iowa was a waterfowl paradise, with the thousands of small marshes, ponds, and lakes producing broods of migratory waterfowl in abundance. In contrast to this, present day Iowa affords less each year in the way of wetlands due to the tiling and draining of land for agriculture.

As one effort to induce local nesting of ducks and geese, the Conservation Commission has acquired and established three fine waterfowl refuges on the Missouri River. This system of refuges consists of three cut-off Missouri River ox-bow lakes and lies entirely within the boundaries of the state.

They are Snyder Bend, 4 miles southwest of Salix; Louisville Bend, 5 miles southwest of Onawa; and California Bend, 5 miles southwest of Modale.

California Bend, the first refuge was acquired in 1956 and comprises some 500 acres. Snyder Bend acquired in 1961 is of nearly the same size. Louisville Bend, just completed in 1963, is the largest, covering approximately 700 acres.

The refuges are located approximately 25 miles apart and were so picked to induce local traffic of waterfowl between the individual refuges.

Commission employees in the game section supervise these areas. They have planted forage crops on two of the areas with about 20 acres of wheat on Snyder Bend and 40 acres of wheat on California Bend.

It is impractical to plant forage crops on Louisville Bend because of the low-lying land.

All of the refuges are inviolate from the 15th of September until the end of the waterfowl season. Hunting of any kind is prohibited at all times, but public access is permitted during the portion of the year which is not included in the inviolate season. During these months, the areas provide fine camping, boating, fishing, and picnicking for the general public.

No trapping is permitted on the areas at any time.

The purpose of the refuge system is to provide good field shooting of migratory birds during the hunting season in areas adjacent to the refuges themselves.

Ducks and geese have taken to the areas naturally. The refuges were picked because of the normal resting habits of waterfowl both in the fall and on their annual spring trek north. In 1963 Snyder Bend attracted approximately 18,000 ducks and 2,500 geese in season. Louisville Bend held about 17,500 ducks and 9,000 geese, and California Bend was host to about 9,000 ducks and 1,200 geese.

In 1958, California Bend held the



Snyder Bend.



Louisville Bend.

record with an estimated 45,000 ducks and 18,000 geese.

Many of the migratory birds remain and use the areas after the hunting season, sometimes staying until well into the month of December.

Because of the no hunting aspect of the area, it is also a refuge for many deer and pheasants who can be expected to add greatly to the hunting prospects on nearby lands for these residents.

At the present time there is no public access by land, although this is now in the process of being acquired. To reach the areas, access is by boat from the Missouri River itself.

In the past years, those who have used the areas report good panfishing with crappies in abundance particularly in the spring.

These Iowa oases should provide increased sport and enjoyment for hunters and fishermen and will add greatly to the population of migratory waterfowl each year in the Missouri Flyway and other areas.

RABBITS

Tradition says if one carries a rabbit's foot, he is sure to have good luck. This is heard in many parts of the south as well as the midwest. The animal's left hind foot is preferred as the lucky charm and the person who kills the rabbit can gain greater benefits from the foot than one who purchases it or receives it as a gift.

One reason for this superstition is that the rabbit is prolific producing large numbers of off-spring at frequent intervals. For this reason, rabbits were thought to possess a creative power superior to that of other animals and have become associated with success and prosperity.

DOGS

There are several superstitions about dogs. For instance, it's considered a bad omen to hear a dog howl at the moon. The bad luck is supposed to come usually in the form of death to some member of your family or some friend. The owl hooting signified the same

thing and if you heard either dog baying at the moon or owl hooting you would prepare for the worst, or so that story goes.

There is also the old belief that a dog crossing a hunter's path means bad luck unless the hunter hooks his two little fingers together and pulls until the dog is out of sight. And, if as the saying goes you feed gunpowder to dogs, it will make them fierce.

Changing Your Address

You won't want to miss a copy of the **Iowa Conservationist** when you move to your new home—so please notify us in advance and we'll make sure your subscription moves with you.

We will have to use both your old and your new address to make the change accurately. Send the mailing label from your last issue of the magazine if it is readable. Include the Zip code with your new address.

Deprived of its food, a mole will die in about a day.