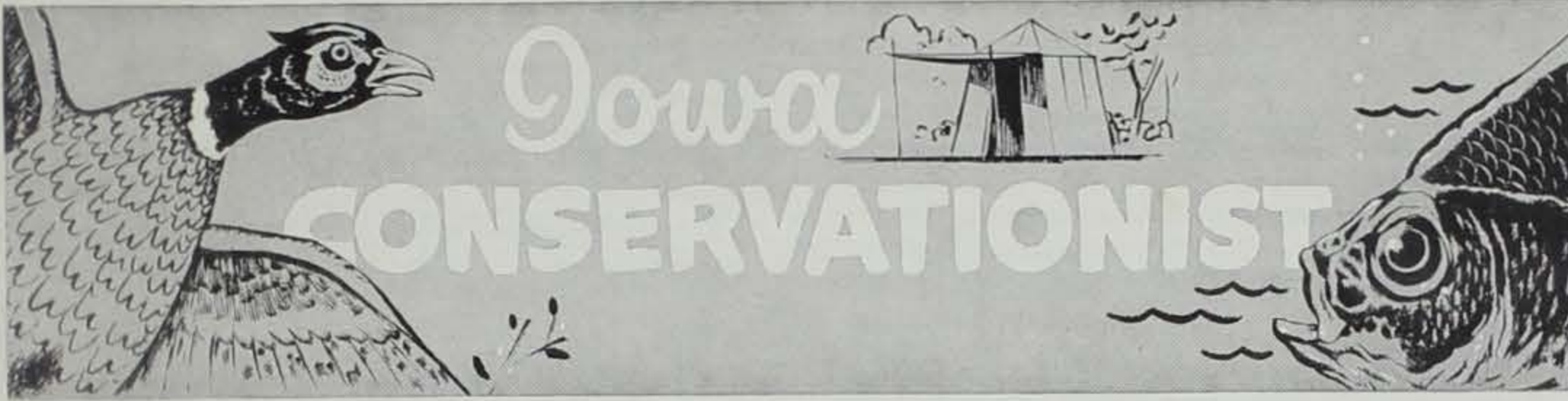


11-67
THOMAS A BARTON
839 BROOKRIDGE
AMES IA 50010



.....
September, 1967

Volume 26

Number 9
.....



These bobwhites were taken in southern Iowa, the state's finest quail territory.



QUAIL Over The Years

By M. E. Stempel
Quail Biologist

More than a million bobwhites were reported taken by over 60,000 Iowa hunters during the 1966-67 quail hunting season. The past fall and winter offered Iowa quail shooters some of the best gunning in recent years.

Since we now have many licensed shooters, let's compare 1966 hunting with seasons when there were less than 100 quail seekers in individual counties within the main

quail range of southern Iowa. If you ask men who hunted 50 years ago, they'll probably say quail were of minor importance until late fall when cold weather moved in. In early autumn, the favored shooting was for prairie chickens.

Young "chickens" held well for dogs and the dog owners could enjoy watching the performance in open country. In early fall, the birds were in small family groups. Later, the prairie chickens collected into flocks of 20 to over 1,000 and

these matured birds were wary and could seldom be hunted successfully with pointing dogs. However, the quail did continue to hold well, and so quail hunting was considered to be highly suitable for late autumn.

Early 1900's

Let's take a closer look at quail hunting since the early 1900's. In 1913, quail hunting was legal from November 1 to December 15. There was a bag limit of 25. The legal possession limit was one day's bag. A severe winter of this caused

losses in some areas, and it was decided that recovery would be hastened if quail hunting was prohibited. In 1916 the quail shooting was stopped. Until 1933 no quail could legally be shot in Iowa.

In spite of protection, there seemed to be little change in populations, and 15 years later a survey was made of the best coverts. This check of good territory in southern Iowa was made for the Conservation Commission by the use of bird

(Continued on page 68)

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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE 61,850

EASY WILDLIFE HABITAT PRACTICES

By John Beamer, Unit Game Manager

With increased emphasis placed on conservation, many groups have been taking an active part in programs that preserve cover and food for wild birds and animals. Many clubs have tree and wildlife cover planting programs. Some farmers set aside an unused corner of their farm for wildlife. These organizations have helped that an individual may not be able to acquire. A person interested in constructing a wildlife habitat encounters such terms as palatability index, food habit tabulations, and animal-plant food ratios. Most people have neither time nor facilities to pursue these studies. They may feel that constructing a wildlife habitat on their own is almost impossible.

There are, however, certain practices that require a minimum of time and equipment to produce results. These methods also afford the interested observer a private window into the workings of nature. One of these is the plow-perch method.

People observing nature often wonder how a particular tree or plant happens to be in a certain spot. Upon examination, a seed plant of the same variety could not be found. It probably was planted in the same manner employed in the plow-perch method.

A strip of ground approximately 6 feet wide should be plowed in the late summer or early fall. The length is not important, but the surface area should not be less than 100 square feet. If on a hillside, it should be plowed on the contour. Locating the strip near a pond or small creek helps. The strip is prepared like a seed bed for the planting of corn or beans. In the middle of the strip, fence posts are set approximately 20 feet apart. Between the posts one strand of wire or binder twine is strung. This provides a perch for birds. Fruit eating birds will then plant their choice of foods available in the area in the plow-perch strip.

Minimum Maintenance

The only maintenance required is to see that the strip is not mowed or sprayed. Some of the plants that might be expected to appear are wild cherries, blackberries, dogwood, and mulberries.



IOWA FISH QUIZ

By Lloyd Huff

State Conservation Officer

1. Which species of fish has been known to spawn twelve times in eleven weeks?
2. Is the lake sturgeon native to Iowa lakes?
3. There are three major groups in the sunfish family. Name them.
4. Which of the white or yellow bass usually feed considerably below the surface of the water?
5. Which fish never eat food after reaching maturity?
6. Fish in the sucker family have the ability to survive where some other fish cannot exist. What special ability do they have?
7. Which species of fish spawns from early May through August, has an incubation period of five to six days, and is one of the most extensively used bait fish in Iowa?
8. Which species of fish native to Iowa does not spawn in Iowa waters?
9. Which fish start spawning in February?
10. Which fish becomes toothless at maturity?

(Answers on this page)

THE MUDDY MISSOURI?

By Bill Welker

Fisheries Biologist

At one time in our history, these three words were a fact and not a question. But man has constantly changed his environment to improve his standard of living. It is, therefore, not surprising that man early began to control the major streams in this country, which form such an important part of the economic development in any region. A good example of this environmental change by man is contained in the history of the Missouri River.

During our early American history, the river was often wild and uncontrolled with numerous meandering channels which ranged widely over the vast flood plain. High water during spring rains often inundated this entire flood plain. Lewis and Clark recorded vivid accounts of this early river during their long trip over its waters. This vast, muddy torrent of water must have greatly impressed the early Indians, since the word "missouri" literally means "muddy water" in some Indian tribal languages.

Basin Loses Topsoil

This river is the longest single river in North America, extending approximately 2,464 miles from southwestern Montana to its junction with the Mississippi River 20 miles above St. Louis. The Missouri River Basin includes portions of ten midwestern states and comprises an area of 529,350 square miles, or approximately one sixth of the continental United States.

For centuries many tons of rich topsoil were swept down the river during periods of high water. Many other small rivers and streams flowing into the Missouri also added their silt-laden waters. Destruction of lives and property caused by these periodic floods was immense. As recently as 1952, the river had a devastating flood. As more settlers began moving onto the rich farming lands of the Mis-

(Continued on page 67)



Foresters and game management men survey a wildlife cover planting.

Another method is strip plowing in a sequence of years. The first year one strip not less than 5 feet nor more than 30 feet wide is plowed. The next year another strip is plowed and worked up until the five year sequence is completed. A plowing sequence such as 1-3-5-2-4 is followed. Then the sequence is started over again. The length of sequence prevents trees from growing in the strip. This practice is for seed eating birds. Birds such as goldfinches, tree sparrows, mourning doves, and juncos will be seen. The method affords the observer an accurate demonstration of a five year plant succession and will also show the animals and birds that depend on this succession.

Both of these methods do more than just provide animals and birds to watch or hunt. They demonstrate how closely particular animals and birds are tied to their special environment. It will show which animals and birds eat certain types of plants and how those plants are transported into new areas.

FISH QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The fathead minnow.
2. No. Lake sturgeon are largely confined to the Mississippi River proper.
3. Black bass, crappie and the sunfish.
4. The yellow bass.
5. American brook lamprey.
6. The ability to find food by touch and taste.
7. The fathead minnow.
8. The American eel. They return to salt water and produce only in the tropical Atlantic.
9. The rainbow trout.
10. The paddlefish.



A thrill for any sportsman—pintails rising from the surface of Lake Odessa.

LAKE ODESSA — SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE

By Dave Vollink
Unit Game Manager

The Lake Odessa area encompasses about 6,000 acres. Of this, about 2,500 acres are managed and maintained as a wildlife refuge by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The remaining 3,500 acres are managed and maintained as a public hunting area by the Game Section of the Iowa Conservation Commission.

Lake Odessa lies adjacent to the Mississippi River in Louisa County. The area is separated from the river by a levee. The area has a water inlet from pool No. 17 of the Mississippi River, and water outlet into pool No. 18. The water level control structures are rising stem gates which can be opened to either take water into the lake from pool No. 17,

or let water out into pool No. 18. Thus the water level of the lake can be fluctuated to any desired level. Much of the public hunting area is timber, interspersed with small lakes, ponds, and sloughs interconnected with ditches and channels.

Level Lowered

In order to have a prime waterfowl area, the water level of the lake is lowered six to twelve inches in the spring and early summer. This serves to expose some of the mud flats to sunshine and air, and vegetation such as smartweed and wild millet will grow. These plants are natural food for waterfowl and help to attract ducks to the area in the fall. Also, while the water level is low in the spring and early summer, crops such as buckwheat are

planted in the low places in the refuge portion of the area. These crops are not harvested. They are left standing for migratory waterfowl to feed upon.

In the fall the water level of the lake is raised two to three feet. Both the natural food and the planted crops are then standing in water. To migratory ducks this is a real banquet! They pour into the area by the thousands to partake of the feast.

Mallards make up well over 90 percent of the peak concentrations on the area. The fall peak concentration of 1965 was estimated at 250,000 ducks. The fall of 1966 brought a concentration of 200,000 ducks.

"The Flats"

A form of semi-controlled hunting was started on a portion of

Lake Odessa a few years ago. A group of hunting sites, collectively known as "the flats," were crowded with hunters almost every day. In order to better the quality of hunting in "the flats," hunting sites were marked with a stake, each stake far enough from any other stake to insure no crowded conditions. Hunting parties were compelled to hunt at a staked site while hunting in this portion of the area. This system has worked well, and is still in effect. The public hunting area is large and can accommodate many hunters. There have been days when there were over 250 hunting parties on the lake with no serious overcrowding. Waterfowl hunters in southeast Iowa know Lake Odessa as one of the best mallard hunting areas in the midwest.

MUDDY MISSOURI . . . (Continued from page 66)

souri River Basin, it became apparent that control of the river would be necessary before extensive development of the area could be accomplished. The United States Congress, endeavoring to reduce the destruction caused by these floods, passed the first nation-wide general Flood Control Act in 1936. The responsibility to carry out this flood control work was given to the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Channel Desired

The first phase of this work consisted of stabilizing the river banks, narrowing the main channel, and eliminating large wide-sweeping bends in the river by relocating the channel. The ultimate goal is

to create a navigation channel nine feet deep and not less than 300 feet wide below Sioux City. This is to be completed by approximately 1970. Stabilizing devices consist of rock and wooden piling structures which literally line many miles of the new channel between St. Louis and Sioux City. This phase of the work is over 80 percent completed below Sioux City.

A second important phase has been the construction of upstream reservoirs which control the volume of water flowing downstream, thus reducing flood danger. At present, there are six reservoirs completed or under construction along the upper reaches of the Missouri River. This series of reser-

voirs, extending over a 1,180 mile reach of river in four states, has a combined total length of 877 river miles. Fort Peck Reservoir, located the farthest upstream at Glasgow, Montana, has the world's largest earth dam, built 250 feet high and four miles long. In addition to the main stem reservoirs, dams have been constructed on the major streams flowing into the Missouri River, which further help flood protection along the Missouri itself.

Dams Affect Flow

The construction of dams in the Missouri River Basin has greatly affected the annual volume of water flowing downstream. Between 1898 and 1955 there was an average annual flow of approximately 36,000

cubic-feet per second at Omaha. The annual flow varied greatly from a low of 2,200 second-feet to a high of 396,000 second-feet. The mean annual flow at Omaha since 1955 has been less than 30,000 cubic feet per second.

Controlling the river by channel stabilization and construction of dams does much more than provide only flood protection. Large volumes of water can be stored in the upstream reservoirs, then released in the proper amount to assure adequate water depth downstream for barge navigation. The dams also provide for the production of hydroelectric power. The developmental plan of the Corps of

(Continued on page 70)



Liberalized quail seasons have resulted in full game bags for more hunters.

QUAIL . . . (Continued from page 65)

dogs handled by Conservation Officers with the aid of interested quail hunters. Quail were located in a high percentage of top grade coverts where brushy cover was near grain fields.

For this reason the Iowa 1933 game law booklet contained a regulation which made quail hunting legal after a public hearing, but only in specified areas in Appanoose, Davis, Van Buren, Jefferson, Keokuk, Monroe, Wapello and Wayne counties. The season opened November 22, and in various counties the number of days varied from three to 10. A total of 541 persons hunted for 2,518 hours to get 1,396 quail.

Longer Seasons

Since 1933 the seasons have been liberalized. The 45-day quail season was common in recent years with opening day about November 1. The daily bag limit varied from five to eight quail per day. Shooting hours ranged from 8 or 9 a.m. to as late as 5 p.m.

From 1900 to 1966, quail survival was high during moderate winters when there were at least a few pleasant days. The winter of 1966-67 is an example. It was often cold, but there were many moderate days when quail could be comfortable in the sun, and food was plentiful.

For unfavorable years, with cold, snowy, blustery or wet days, the results were not good. Typical of such years were 1912, 1936 and 1960. In 1960 there was heavy snowfall until March and the depressing cold weather continued through spring.

Losses do occur during any year. This loss may be as high as 75 percent of the birds hatched, and loss may take place before late fall. For this reason it is practical for hunters to take quail as soon as a preponderance of young are near adult size. Hunters will take many of their quail from the segment which suffers early losses, which will have little effect on next year's quail

crop. Shooting does not materially increase the so-called natural loss.

Hunters usually take quail only as long as they can get them at a rate of less than one per two hours. If success is lower, the quail seeker will tend not to go out often.

New Regulations

When all this knowledge from the past was applied last summer to preparing to set the 1966-67 quail regulations, an opening date of October 22 was set because the records indicated that a large number of young reached a near-maturity size by that time.

(Continued on page 69)



Hunters harvested quail in 1966 at a rate of 2.7 birds per trip.

QUAIL . . .

The 1966 quail crop was a result of a five-year population increase. Hunting success, according to a state-wide postcard survey, was at a rate of 2.7 birds per trip, and 1.5 hours per quail. When quail were aged according to the primary feather growth state in over 1,000 wings taken in November, 86 percent were young. Of these, 74 percent were mature or nearly so.

During the 1965-66 quail shooting period, which opened in November, of birds taken before November 19, 85 percent were young. Eighty-one percent were over 90 days old, or they were nearing mature size. In 1964, 77 percent of young were in this latter category. As you can see, each season a large percentage

HUNTING SEASONS

(All dates inclusive)

- Pheasant—Nov. 11, 1967—Jan. 1, 1968
- Ducks—Oct. 21, 1967—Nov. 29, 1967
- Geese—Sept. 30, 1967—Dec. 8, 1967
- Coot—Oct. 21, 1967—Nov. 29, 1967
- Squirrel—Sept. 9, 1967—Jan. 1, 1968
- Rabbit—Sept. 9, 1967—Feb. 18, 1968
- Raccoon—Nov. 10, 1967—Feb. 28, 1968
- Bobwhite Quail—Oct. 21, 1967—Jan. 28, 1968
- Wilson Snipe—Oct. 7, 1967—Nov. 25, 1967

(Continued from page 68)
of young matures by the time shooting is legal.

A short summary of last season reveals that success was high. Further, three-quarters of the number shot in October were nearing mature size, or they were mature. This was similar to when seasons opened at a later date.

One enthusiastic quail shooter carefully recorded his success for the entire hunting period. He took an unbelievable number of quail with some fantastic shooting (60 quail shot with 19 boxes of shells).

The 1967 adult quail population was higher than that of 1966. The summer has been mostly favorable. The 1967 spring was mostly cool to cold, but with some pleasant weather. We can expect good summer production with fair spring production. If August and September are favorable, the late quail production will be high.



FINDING THAT QUAIL DOG

By M. E. Stempel
Quail Biologist

"Do you know where I can find a good quail dog?"

This question is often asked in southern Iowa. Quail dogs or working dogs are in demand because the quail population has been high. It is desirable to try to locate such a dog a year in advance.

Finding and owning a good quail dog is a real accomplishment. Even fairly good dogs are not plentiful, and really good dogs are few. Nevertheless, a willing dog with some ability can be a fine hunting companion if he minds reasonably well and stays in sight most of the time. So before trying to find a dog, it is imperative that the prospective owner make up his mind as to just what he wants in the way of a dog. A desirable well-trained quail dog will cost upwards from \$250. But most of us are willing to settle for an animal that is a good worker with just ordinary abilities.

Several Types Will Do

Many dogs of several types do have ability to be hunters. In order to get an idea of how many dogs of this kind are in Wapello County (which is typical of quail range) several sources were contacted. These were the County Auditor, veterinarians in two offices and the Animal Relief League. This county should be representative of other typical southern Iowa and northern Missouri communities as far as numbers of dogs are concerned.

Combined information of all sources mentioned above shows that in 1966 there were about 4,000 dogs in the county. This is one dog per 10 to 15 persons, and

about 15 percent of the animals are of the working varieties popular with quail shooters. These dogs are the pointers, setters, and brittany.

Of course, many of these are house pets, and have never had training which would suit them for hunting. Most do have the inherited instinct to point and to hunt, and even some of the house pets would make fine hunting dogs if given a chance.

This information does indicate that there are many possible chances to find dogs in southern Iowa. However, as much as a year may elapse before desirable dogs or pups are available. Occasionally acceptable creatures can be found in summer or in early autumn, but dogs with hunting possibilities are not going to be available in the hunting season.

"Bird Sense"

According to owners of good quail hunting dogs, a necessary quality in an animal is willingness to learn with a maximum number of other good traits such as gentleness and "bird sense."

The only way to make sure that a dog has ability is to take him into the field and try him out. He should locate quail, not sparrows or chickens, and he should be steady on point, stay within 100 yards of the hunter and come if called. Some good performers that I have seen are shepherd spaniel cross, pointers, setters, cockers, and a German shepherd terrier cross. While good breeding and a long line of field trial ancestors make good conversation material, it does not necessarily mean that one of this line will always be that "good quail dog."



A good quail dog has "bird sense" and a willingness to learn.

MUDDY MISSOURI . . . (Continued from page 67)

Engineers will ultimately provide for the production of 3,000,000 kilowatts from all of the dams in the Missouri River Basin. Another benefit of the stabilization and flood control work is the expansion of new recreational areas. Since the river channel has been shortened and relocated in many areas, numerous sections of the old channel remain as oxbow lakes providing areas for fishing and boating activity. The reservoirs also furnish large new areas of water for sportsmen.

River Less Turbid

Now to get back to our title — The Muddy Missouri. The muddy, turbid appearance of the river is due to the sediment suspended in the water which is composed mainly of clay particles. Prior to the construction of the upstream reservoirs, this sediment load averaged 175 million tons a year at Omaha. At present the river at Omaha is noticeably less turbid than in previous years. Each new reservoir will provide sufficient storage to hold all inflowing sediment for periods ranging from 250 years to over 1,000 years. Although there is still some turbid water, especially during the spring rain sea-

son, the river below the dams to approximately St. Joseph, Missouri, is less turbid more of each year than in the period preceding reservoir construction. Clarity of the water is a common index used to measure turbidity. It is now common to see objects over 20 inches below the water surface in the river above Omaha during late summer, fall and winter. Another index to water clarity is the composition of the fish population. Sight-feeding fish such as largemouth bass, northern pike, and walleye pike, would naturally have difficulty adapting to any extremely turbid environment; therefore few of these fish were collected from the Missouri River during its earlier history. However, since many miles of the river are now much less turbid than during former years, all of these fish are found in the upper reaches of the river.

The Missouri River has, indeed, been greatly changed by man. Improvement of clarity and general quality of the water has been one of the important contributions of this change; therefore, the descriptive phrase, "the muddy Missouri," is no longer a valid account of the actual condition along many miles of this important waterway.

GUN OWNERSHIP — A TRUST

Individual gun ownership is a mutual trust between a citizen and his government. Gun ownership is a citizen's right, a part of his American heritage to bear arms.

That's the viewpoint of Charles Olofson, the State Conservation Commission's Hunter Safety Officer. To Olofson, the key word in the gun regulation controversy is "trust."

"If my government will trust me and believe that I'll be responsible in keeping and using firearms, then I'll trust my government to use good judgment in making firearms laws that are not too restrictive for responsible citizens," Olofson said recently.

In speaking for sportsmen and responsible citizens, Olofson said that since they greatly outnumber criminal gun users, these people should receive more consideration for their arguments about unduly restrictive firearm laws.

In order to deserve such consideration, Olofson said, sportsmen must consider the following:

Must Know Laws

They must know the local gun laws of their states and develop the respect of themselves and others for those laws. They must also know game laws and be able to identify species that are in season.

They must know how to handle firearms safely. Responsible sportsmen treat every gun as if it were loaded and never point it in an unsafe direction. Hunters should insist that their hunting companions respect private ownership of land. In Iowa, 95 percent of all land is privately owned. Therefore, hunters must ask permission to hunt, and should always leave the area as they found it.

They must believe in and support good law enforcement. They should furnish accurate, detailed information to law enforcement officers. Sportsmen should realize that if the present laws are well enforced, and that if sportsmen respect them, there will not be a need for more restrictions on firearms.

Sportsmen should keep themselves informed on present firearm laws and should know the values of gun ownership.

Olofson believes there are several sides to the gunowner's point of view that need more attention. One of these is the self-defense value of guns.

"If we're familiar with the use of firearms," he said, "we have an advantage over enemies of our country. A disarmed citizen is what any enemy would want." He said citizens need firearms also to protect themselves from criminals and to resist intrusions or assaults upon their homes and families.

Aid Conservation

According to Olofson, another little-recognized point is the contributions made to conservation by sportsmen.

"Hunters make possible an annual harvest and control of game

birds and animals," he said. "I know that every time I buy a hunting license, I help provide funds for more and better game management. Every time a sportsman buys a shotgun or rifle, and every time he pulls the trigger and expends a shell, he contributes tax money for acquiring and developing land on which waterfowl and upland game can be hunted."

Olofson said the 11 percent tax on all sporting arms and ammunition sold is collected by the federal government and prorated back to the states according to the number of licenses sold and the area of each state. Iowa has acquired and developed over 30,000 acres of land with these funds, he said.

Olofson called his final reason for advocating more attention to the sportsmen's viewpoint a personal one.



A boy well-trained in gun practices can learn to use guns responsibly as an adult also.

"I want my boy to enjoy the sport of hunting as much as I have," he said, "and for him to be able to watch a sunrise from a blind on a duck marsh and experience the thrill of a covey of quail flushing."

"I want him to know," he went on, "that as a parent, I trust him to handle firearms safely and have respect for his country's laws. I want him to feel that his government, also, will trust him with his gun."

COMMISSIONERS TAKE OATH OF OFFICE

Mike F. Zack, of Mason City (right), Chairman of the State Conservation Commission, administers the oath of office to William E. Noble, of Oelwein (left). Noble was recently appointed to a six-year term on the Commission. Edward Weinheimer, of Greenfield (center), who was recently re-appointed to a second six-year term, also received the oath of office. The ceremony took place at the Commission meeting in Clear Lake July 28.

SCULL BOATING ON THE MISSISSIPPI

By Bob Fagerland
Assistant Supt. of Land Acquisition

In the gray dawn, a narrow, strange looking craft glides silently toward a flock of ducks resting on the Mississippi. A lone hunter propels the camouflaged boat by using a single oar protruding from the stern. Crouching low, he peers through holes bored in the hull. When the hunter is within range, he rises, takes aim, and—crack!—crack!—another duck for the table.

Along the eastern border of Iowa, this long-established form of water fowling is still being carried on. Because of the distinctive nature of the Mississippi River, this hunting method, called sculling, has become established among a small group of people in the river towns. Let's investigate how sculling evolved.

In earlier times, Indians used hollow tubes for breathing while they swam submerged under waterfowl. The birds were gripped by the feet and pulled under water. Later, Indians learned they could hold clumps of vegetation in front of them while they stalked the fowl with their heads above water. Later still, after watercraft were in use, they drifted with the wind into the flocks.

The English developed this art to its fullest. Their boats were long and narrow and were propelled by hand paddles while the operator lay breast down and facing forward. A muzzle loading gun of 4 gauge or larger was fired when the boat was in killing range of the resting fowl. This rig is used in England today, except that a breach loading weapon is now used. These "guns" are capable of firing a pound of shot at a time. In American fowling, federal law restricts weapons to shoulder-fired guns of 10 gauge or smaller.

Variations in America

When sculling came to America, hunters introduced variations. In some areas a small sail was erected in the front of the boat to serve as both propulsion and hide. In others, a long oar was introduced through the transom and the figure eight motion of the Venetian gondolier or the Chinese junk boatman was used for power. This both cut down on the motion observed by the birds, and also got a hunter's hands out of the cold water!

Scull boating in Iowa got its start in the Clinton and Bellevue areas. Here among the chutes and islands of the Mississippi, the bulk of the midwest waterfowl gathered each spring and fall. The boats were pumpkin seed shaped and very light. The usual method of hunting was to take the railroad train upstream 20 miles and then float back down. The boat was carried in the baggage car, and this necessitated a portable boat. The boat was made about 12 feet long and 4 feet wide so that shallow areas and snags could be negotiated without too much difficulty.

Camouflage Debated

One of the points debated by hunters is the value of camouflage. Some hunters dress their boats in cedar branches, others tree bark, while still others use nothing at all. It really doesn't seem to matter. In fact, in England an off-white color is preferred, something that would make a certain writer, the late William Leffingwell, turn over in his grave.

It was Leffingwell, writing in the late 1880's, who probably did more to popularize scull boating in America than anyone else. Although the sport in America began around the bay areas of the east coast, shooting from batteries was always more popular eastern fare. Leffingwell's



Some hunters like to camouflage scull boats.

writings are most valuable as they express the philosophy of hunting in a time of plentiful game, as well as describe the sculling process in great detail.

Wood is still the favorite material for scull boat construction. Cedar and white oak are the most commonly used types. Whereas the old boats were canvas covered, today fiberglass is used. This increases the weight of the boat so it is not as portable. But, no longer is maintenance so time consuming, and the ice that once was the death of wooden boats is no longer a problem. Fiberglass boats made by using an existing boat for a form have been built, but these boats are generally too noisy for successful sculling. Wood has proven to be the best material yet.

Skill Required

In the average hunter's mind, scull boating may conjure up visions of tremendous bags of game. However, it is not any deadlier than the person employing it. Just as mallards fresh from the north work Odessa and Riverton like long lost souls, so blue bills fresh on the pool can be sculled easily. However, let them be sculled once or twice and they depart before you are within 400 yards. The supreme test is a mixed flock of pintails and coot. Anyone who can consistently scull such a group is good!

Sculling can only be successful in areas of open water. Because the scull oar can't be operated in weed beds, the average natural marsh is not suitable. This is why the scull boater frequents the areas such as the Mississippi pools and channels. This tends to resolve any conflict between the shoreline hunter and scull boater. The former likes to place his decoys in openings among vegetation, while the latter frequents the larger open water areas where large numbers of waterfowl congregate.

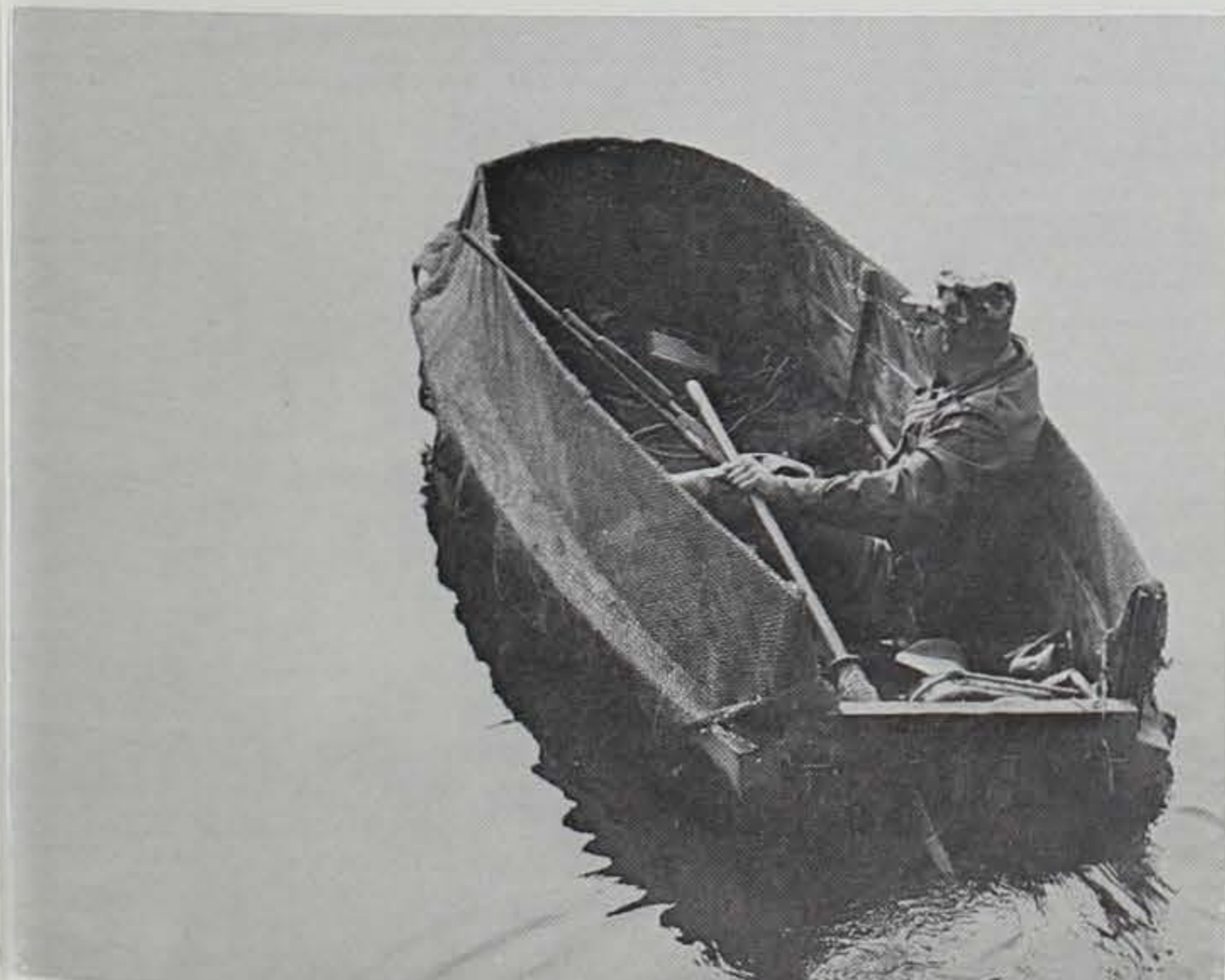
The sporting aspect is probably the most discussed phase of sculling. Actually, it can be, under ideal conditions, as "sporting" as sneaking a farm pond, or as challenging as shooting a pass. The attitude of the hunter, rather than his method, determines the sporting aspects of a hunt.

This form of hunting presents some fine challenges. The bobbing boat makes the shot trickier than one taken from firm footing. I have seen good shots miss three times on a rise within 20 yards. The greatest factor affecting aim is probably a form of buck fever that comes over the hunter while he inches his way toward the flock.

A Lost Art

Most of the boats in use today were built years ago and lovingly repaired and preserved. The building of these boats is almost a lost art. Fred Schaub of Bellevue has built some in recent years, but the preservation of this sport will probably depend on the continued pampering of the boats now in use.

The list of towns near where sculling is practiced, which includes Dubuque, Bellevue, Clinton, Camanche, LeClaire, Burlington and Montrose, reads like early Iowa history. I hope there will always be a place in Iowa where this unique form of waterfowling is kept alive. As an old sculler once said, "It's a gentleman's way to hunt."



A stern oar lets the scull move silently.

WHY CONTROLLED HUNTING?



Blue and snow geese feeding in fields during spring migration.

By Rock Bridges, Unit Game Manager

Have you ever stood on the Missouri River bottoms and watched the seemingly endless procession of blue and snow geese? This umbrella of feathers passes this way twice a year, once in the spring on the way to their native nesting grounds in the Baffin Islands and once in the fall on the way to their winter home on the gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas. This spectacle of nature is free to all.

Imagine, if you will, the fall of the year with its multitude of color and deep blue sky. Outlined in this sky are wave after wave of blue and snow geese. These geese are returning after what we hope has been a successful nesting season. This fall migration in western Iowa provides us with a chance to harvest some of nature's surplus.

These geese and their ancestors have migrated for untold years along the Missouri River Valley and during this time have established resting areas. At these points during their migration they stop and feed, resulting in excellent hunting. One of the major rest areas in the Midwest is Forney Lake located in southwest Iowa in Fremont County. This Missouri River cutoff lake, like so many others, was formed by the meandering Missouri in the years before the Army Corps of Engineers put structures on the river to control its course. With the river under control the major portion of the bottom land could be farmed. The result has been the concentration of waterfowl on state and federal refuges along the flyway.

Crowded Conditions

With the large concentration of birds on Forney Lake, there is a likewise concentration of hunters. At the present time this area is the major harvest point for blue and snow geese in the state. As a result, this area receives a large influx of hunters from all of Iowa and from other states during the waterfowl season.

The total area of Forney's Lake is only 1,069 acres and the perimeter often becomes "elbow to elbow" with goose hunters. This competitive type of hunting often results in poor sportsmanship, short tempers, and a disregard for safety. Hunters eager to get the first shot often fire at birds before they are in "knock-down" range. The result is many birds picking up shot in the body only fly on to a later death with no benefit to the hunter.

Because of these mounting problems, the Conservation Commission decided to control a portion of the area to provide quality hunting as well as protect the hunters from each other. During the last waterfowl season, the north and west sides of the lake were closed to public hunting. Within this area 25 blinds were spaced approximately 200 yards apart, 40 yards from the shooting line, and 115 yards from the refuge line. These were four feet by eight feet dry land blinds of a one-half inch exterior plywood construction. In front of each blind an area was mowed to provide a location for a decoy spread if so desired.

The service building on the area was modified and utilized as a check station for incoming and outgoing hunters. At all times, two game section personnel were on duty at the station from one and one-half hours before sunrise until sunset. These men were present to handle the controlled area and answer all questions. They also processed all birds taken in the controlled area for determination of sex and age information.

Program Successful

After last year's hunting season, game personnel who worked in the check station were able to analyze the results of the controlled hunting area. The hunter comments and observations indicated the ma-

jority of the hunters in the controlled area were satisfied with the program. The main resistance to the controlled hunting was from the local people. The controlled portion of the area did result in a lessening of the problems of crowding, safety, and enforcement of game laws. These problems were very evident and could be observed every day along the south side of the area which was kept open to public hunting. With the blinds spaced 200 yards apart, the chance of one hunter shooting another was practically eliminated. There was still some "sky-busting" in the controlled area but by having fewer hunters along this area the effect on the birds was lessened.

Due to the success of last year's program, there again will be blind hunting on Forney Lake this year. Goose hunters will save money when they rent blinds this fall at Forney Lake for \$1.00 per day, plus \$1.00 per hunter registration fee.

All reservations must be accompanied by a certified check, bank draft, or postal money order made payable to the State Conservation Commission in the amount of \$1.00. Reservations will be accepted at the Des Moines office until September 15, 1967, after which they should be sent to Forney Lake. Blind sites will be allotted by a drawing each day and a party must hunt from that blind.

With the rapid increase in hunters on prime public hunting areas, controls will have to be placed on these areas for the safety of the hunter and conservation of wildlife. Many people resist these controls because they enjoy hunting the way it is. This was one of the reasons a portion of the Forney Lake area was not controlled.



Increasing numbers of geese returning from this spring migration provide sport for hunters in fall.

Last year a total of 797 geese and 68 mallards were taken from the blinds in the controlled area. This success of last year's goose hunter in the controlled area should encourage hunters to try this type of hunting. Even if you merely enjoy the sight and sound of thousands of geese, this is quite a spectacle.

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