

11-67
THOMAS A BARTON
939 BROOKBRIDGE
AMES IA 50010



Volume 25

September, 1966

Number 9



Jim Sherman Photo.

Plantings, such as this multiflora rose fence, offers the farmer beauty and practicality and also houses beneficial birds and animals. The amount of winter protection to both livestock and wildlife is uncalculable.

Iowa's Wildlife Management

POLICIES AND PHILOSOPHIES

Earl Rose,
Chief of Fish and Game

The practice of wildlife management is as old as man himself. The Mosaic laws include references to the subject. Kublai Khan hired game keepers and established seasons for certain game, in Mongolia during the 13th century. Feudal kings established seasons and strict penalties for violations. For instance under Henry I, killing of a stag by a peasant was the equivalent of murder and carried the same penalty. Henry IV established the seasons on red deer hunting between St. John's Tide (June 24) and Holy Rood Day (September 14). Henry VII closed the season on waterfowl between May 31 and August 31. The game, of course, belonged to the crown and all commoners who dared to poach were severely dealt with.

Some of these laws or modifications of them were carried over on the Mayflower. In 1720 for instance, Deer Reeves—or informers—were employed and poachers were sentenced up to 4 months of involuntary servitude and sold at auction for violation of deer protection laws. As game became scarcer in the colonies, increasing legislation was enacted to provide for protection. At present, all states have more or less

uniform legislation for seasons and protection of game animals. Thus, the legal approach to game management has been the basis and foundation of our modern concepts of wildlife management. Paralleling the development of the legal aspects of wildlife management, came the understanding that this approach alone was insufficient to provide for survival, adequate standing crops, or harvestable surpluses. Thus, the ecological approach was initiated, including detailed life history studies, inter- and intra-specific relationships, and multitudes of other studies that have been conducted to determine habitat requirements for most species of game animals on this continent.

Unfortunately, fulfillment of the desires and needs of man often conflicts with the desires and needs of wildlife. Usually, but not always, wildlife populations have decreased or been exterminated in deference to the higher priority. The prairie chicken, the bison, elk, antelope and black bear are gone from the state of Iowa because of human pressures (2 black bears have recently been seen in Iowa). On the other side of the ledger, and doubtless because of man, the bobwhite quail, the white-tailed deer, Hungarian partridge and ringnecked pheasant are present in numbers far surpassing pristine conditions in this state. The pheasant and the partridge were, of course, introduced, and the pheasant is our No. 1 game animal. Year in and year out, Iowa probably ranks second in the nation in total annual kill of this magnificent game bird.

(Continued on page 67)

Iowa Conservationist

Vol. 25 September, 1966 No. 9
Published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, East 7th Street and Court Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50308. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579, manuscripts, mail items) to above address. Subscription price: two years at \$1.00. Second class postage paid at Des Moines, Iowa (No Rights Reserved)

HAROLD E. HUGHES, Governor
E. B. SPEAKER, Director
JAMES R. SHERMAN, Editor
JACK HIGGINS, Managing Editor
JACK KIRSTEIN, Photographer
MICHAEL WOOLDRIDGE, Circulation
MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
LAURENCE N. NELSON, Chairman, Bellevue
MIKE F. ZACK, Vice Chairman, Mason City
ED WEINHEIMER, Greenfield
EARL E. JARVIS, Wilton Junction
JAMES R. HAMILTON, Storm Lake
ROBERT E. BEEBE, Sioux City
KEITH A. McNURLEN, Ames

CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE 58,691

COMMISSION MINUTES

State Conservation Commission Meeting Held in Storm Lake, Iowa, August 2 and 3, 1966

The Commission met with Mrs. A. C. Pearsall, Jr. and Mrs. Carolyn Hunter of Des Moines, concerning use of the Governor Lucas Home grounds in Iowa City and voted to continue the present use of the grounds.

The Commission met with Gerald Cox and William Zwemke of Storm Lake concerning the construction of a Marina and asked them to prepare a detailed plan of their Marina proposal for study and evaluation by the Commission Staff.

Lands and Waters

Approval was given to exercise an option at Rock Creek State Park for the purchase of 40 acres and one lot at a cost of \$13,000.00.

Approval was given for an amendment to Administrative Order No. 307 concerning the reporting of boating accidents.

A request to renew a construction permit using car bodies for riprapping in the Belle Fountain Levee District on the Des Moines River in Mahaska County was not renewed.

Approval was given to accept funds from the Pine Lake Improvement Committee for the purchase of materials to construct a shelter house at Pine Lake.

The Commission instructed the Supt. of Land Acquisition to determine the status of a fencing obligation adjacent to Wildcat Den.

The number of Water Safety Officers available, and the number needed, was discussed in relation to legislation and budgeting proposals for the Water Section.

The Commission voted a deadline of October 1 for the completion of an agreement by Fred Wirtzer of Lake View to obtain a lagoon construction permit.

Fish and Game

The Commission gave approval to exercise two options from Wurtle and from Steinhart on the Missouri River adjacent to the Highway No. 2 bridge at \$100 per acre for about 45 acres.

Approval was given to exercise options from Hauger and from

Thoreson for Fallow Marsh Project in Palo Alto County consisting of 16.5 acres at \$4,150 and 9 acres at \$1,750.

An option for 80 acres at \$40 an acre adjacent to the Eldon Game Area in Davis County from Scherf was rejected.

Approval was given for condemnation proceedings to proceed on lands belonging to Antoine and to Christ adjacent to Schwob Marsh in Kossuth County.

Authorization was given to spend \$1,200 in cooperation with various states to finance a goose research project in Canada.

Approval was given to appoint the Commission Pilot as a Special Law Enforcement Officer.

The sale of Keokuk Lake to the highest bidder for \$12,250 for 413 acres was recommended to the Executive Council.

County Conservation Board Projects

Mitchell County received approval for the acquisition of 11.8 acres of land called Sleeping Duck Marsh located 1½ miles southwest of Riceville at a total cost of \$590.

Calhoun County received approval for a management agreement on Muddy Bay at North Twin Lake for a 25-year management agreement between the State Conservation Commission and the Calhoun County Board of Supervisors for 35.7 acres of dredge fill area on the northwest shore of North Twin Lake for camping, picnicking and lake access.

Appanoose County received approval for a development plan for Unionville Park which will consist of 16 acres with a tent and trailer camping area, picnicking area, softball diamond, and childrens playground at an estimated development cost of \$4,300.

Dallas County received approval for a letter of intent to participate in the recreational development of the proposed Walnut Creek Flood Control Reservoir. This cost sharing would entail the acquisition of an additional 160 acres of land for developing recreational facilities plus the installation of three or four boat launching ramps. The estimated cost is \$88,000, of which \$44,000 will be paid by the Dallas County Conservation Board.

General

Travel was approved to a Short Course on Management and Promotion of Shooting Preserves at Nilo Farms, East Alton, Illinois; to the International Association of Game, Fish & Conservation Commissioners and American Fisheries Society at Kansas City, Missouri; the National Conference on State Parks at Kentucky Dam Village State Park; the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Demand Study at Ann Arbor, Michigan and the American Association for Conservation Information Executive Committee Meeting at Oklahoma City.

Approval was given to increase the Commission commitment an

Conservation Forum

Gentlemen:

Would like to have the requirements on bringing dogs into the state, and the best hunting areas. . . .

C. B.

Independence, Mo.

"Under Departmental Rule Section V "Dogs" (under Rules and Regulations governing the importation of livestock into the State of Iowa,) you would be required to have a health certificate issued by an accredited veterinarian stating that the dog was free from symptoms of infection, contagious or communicable disease and that they have been vaccinated against rabies by one of the following methods:

1. Modified live virus vaccine (chick embryo origin) not more than three (3) years prior to entry.
2. Killed virus vaccine (caprine origin) not more than one (1) year prior to entry. The above does not apply to puppies under three (3) months of age."—State Veterinarian, State Capitol.

Dear Sir:

I have been fishing Prairie Rose Lake a few times this year and I have been told you are not allowed to fish there after 10:30 p.m. If so, why; and does this mean just out of a boat, or does this pertain to shore fishing also?

K. S.

Denison, Iowa

Our Parks Section says: Section 111.46 of the Code of Iowa states in part, "all persons shall vacate state parks and preserves before 10:30 p.m. The provisions of this section shall not apply to authorized camping in areas provided for that purpose." This would mean that the public would have to vacate the park by 10:30 p.m. and that the campers would have to be in the authorized camp area by 10:30 p.m. On natural lakes this would apply only to that portion within the state park boundary.

Dear Sir:

Would you please send information on what state lakes it is lawful to use 25 h.p. motors. Can a motor that large be used on Wall Lake at Jewell?

Mrs. R. R.

Toledo, Iowa

Little Wall Lake, Jewell, Iowa, is one of the 36 natural lakes in the state. For this reason, one may use any size motor there as long as the boat is properly registered. The law governing artificial lakes under the jurisdiction of the Commission states that only on lakes of 100 acres or more will motor boats be permitted, and then only if the motor doesn't exceed 6 h.p.—Editor.

Dear Sir:

For many years I have been fishing in your state because of your boat landings. Is there any place where I can get a map showing the wing dams, etc., on the Mississippi?

G. N.

Midlothian, Ill.

A buck and a half will get you a copy of "Navigation Charts of the Middle and Upper Mississippi from Cairo, Illinois, to Minneapolis, Minnesota." Send your request to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters in Rock Island, Illinois.—Editor.

Dear Sirs:

Why do you open squirrel season so early? I have talked to a lot of hunters and they all say it is to soon . . . They all say it should be about Oct. 1.

L. M.

Dubuque, Iowa

Iowa's squirrel season has opened near mid-September for a number of years. Many states open much earlier—June or July. Squirrel populations have a high annual mortality regardless of hunting pressure. To delay the opening means that a part of this population would already have disappeared from natural causes, and, therefore, would be unavailable to the hunter. Squirrel populations are never harvested to a maximum; to delay season opening would deprive hunters of additional hours of outdoor recreation.—Bob Barratt, Supt. of Game.

additional \$61,613 above the \$284,380 approved previously for the Badger Creek watershed in Madison County, provided funds for the project are approved by the State Legislature.

Approval was given to a policy concerning coordination with the Iowa Development Commission.

Approval was given to the 1966-67 Commission budget which totals \$5,363,650.

A progress report about legal

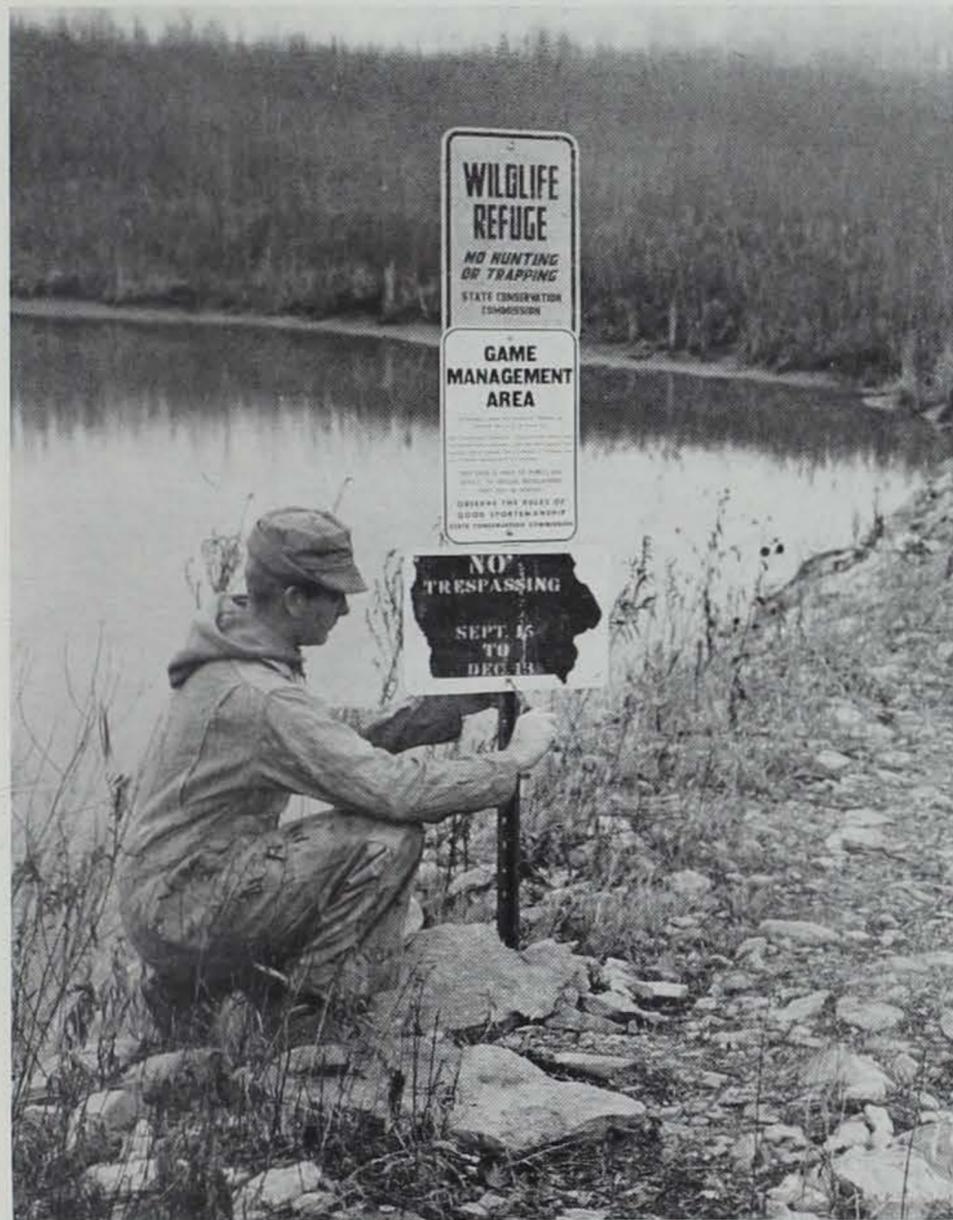
negotiations with the Concrete Materials Company on a sand and gravel removal permit request was discussed.

A brief report was given on progress of development at the Bussey Lake project at Guttenberg.

The Commission made a boat tour of Storm Lake and inspected dredging work now in progress. They also made an automobile tour of various Little Sioux River areas.

IOWA'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT—

(Continued from page 65)



Jack Kirshen Photo.

Some habitat must be set aside as "rest" areas for various species—particularly for waterfowl.

THE IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The State Conservation Commission in Iowa is composed of seven commissioners appointed by the Governor for six-year terms. No more than four are permissible from the incumbent party. The Commission employs a Director who selects his staff. This is essentially the type of administration recommended in the Model Game Law of 1934 by the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners.

The Commission has a very broad spectrum of duties and powers. It sets seasons and bag limits on fish and game under authority of Iowa's Biological Balance Law. Through departmental rules, state lands and waters under the jurisdiction of the State Conservation Commission are administered as required by statute. Fish and Game Law Enforcement, Research, Fisheries, Game, Federal Aid, Parks, Navigation and Boat Registration, Forestry, Historical Sites, Engineering, Land Acquisition, and Accounts and Records are involved as lawful responsibilities. The Commission has an enviable record of reliance on the staff for fisheries and wildlife management programs. We believe the commission type of administration is very good for Iowa and will remain so.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN IOWA

First of all, it should be pointed out that Iowa has less publicly-owned land, percentage-wise, than any state in the Union. Iowa contains 25 per cent of the Grade A land in the nation. Consequently, it is not possible for the state to provide adequate state-owned public hunting areas for its people. A large part of the annual fish and game budget is earmarked for acquisition of wetlands, streams and adjacent upland game habitat areas. Due to the high costs of these lands, intensive game management practices are conducted on every one of our over 100,000 acres of state lands to provide a maximum production of game for public hunting, but this cannot begin to provide sufficient areas for the half million hunters of this state. Thus, we place strong emphasis on development of game habitat on private lands through various direct and cooperative practices. This follows the Leopold philosophy of "practicing game management by citizens, which is the opposite of the conception of game management for citizens."

The Iowa Conservation Commission operates its wildlife management program similar to most of the states. We don't feel that ours is espe-

cially unique, but emphasis is placed on an integration of all concerned sections of the Commission including Biology, Game, Enforcement and Public Relations. Close collaboration with the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife and Fisheries Research Units at Iowa State University in all phases of research and management is also maintained.

Iowa's research has uncovered many of the basic biological facts that are used in our wildlife management. These have been most significant for the pheasant, quail, waterfowl, rabbit, fox and deer. Errington's contributions on the ecology of predation have received world-wide recognition. Annual inventories of our game animals are made using techniques developed at the University and by our own biologists. Game managers, biologists and our enforcement personnel collaborate closely on these, and are all represented in determining recommendations for hunting seasons. Without adequate and continuing research as a basis, management programs may well founder in the long run.

Our Game Section has several programs designed to improve habitat conditions. A sizeable portion of our annual fish and game budget goes for land acquisition. Every available marsh is purchased as funds permit, and we plan to buy all that are left plus restoring as many drained marshes as possible. These are, of course, intensively developed by planting of beneficial shrubs, trees and food plots in the upland areas. Water levels are manipulated to promote waterfowl habitat in the marsh proper.

Landowners throughout the major pheasant range are encouraged to plant wildlife cover on whatever small areas are not intensively farmed. Several programs have been used to very good advantage, including our Farmer-Sportsman Cooperative and Farm Game Habitat projects. ASCS programs have been used extensively to promote habitat.

Perhaps the greatest limiting factor to Iowa pheasant abundance is the lack of suitable winter cover. Blizzards such as the two that occurred in the spring of 1965 take a heavy toll of brood stock birds resulting in pressure for curtailed seasons and terrific public relations problems. It is difficult for an uninformed public to accept many basic biological facts when open seasons are permitted following severe winterkills. Much of the good winter habitat for pheasants is gone in Iowa, and it is doubtful that it can be adequately restored in the former major range. Farm groves formerly provided a splendid last-ditch haven, but these are rapidly disappearing. A new program is now under way to restore them, but this will take many years.

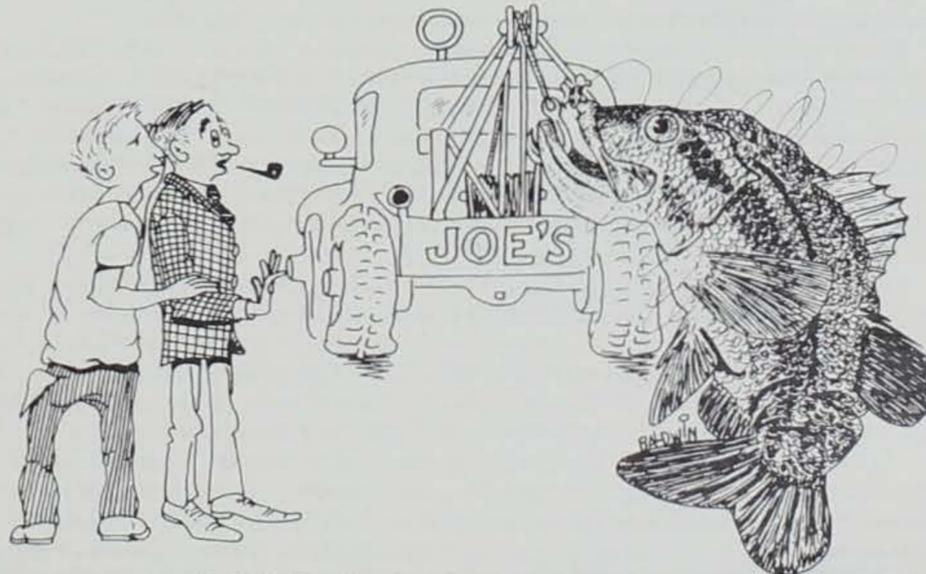
Basic to any wildlife management is an efficient law enforcement program. Hunting laws are a key tool for managing populations and, of course, without good enforcement, license revenues would decline. And, of course, money is the lifeblood of any program. Laws must be enforced and must have public acceptance.

Education is most important. It has been said that one of the greatest obstacles to an intelligent wildlife program is the lack of public comprehension. Our ability to manage wildlife far surpasses our ability to manage people. Only when the public fully understands and is convinced of the desirability of our programs will they support them. We can advance as the public permits and no faster.

Well trained personnel are vital. Well qualified personnel with the guts to make and stand by their judgments and knowledge are paramount if an intelligent wildlife management program is to be achieved. Continuity and professional purpose is necessary, and this also means job security and freedom from political interference. Sociological and biological facts may, and often do, conflict. Consequently, the wildlife manager cannot be oblivious to the former. If he wants an open season on elephants, he'd better convince his Commission and the public his population will stand the hunting pressure.

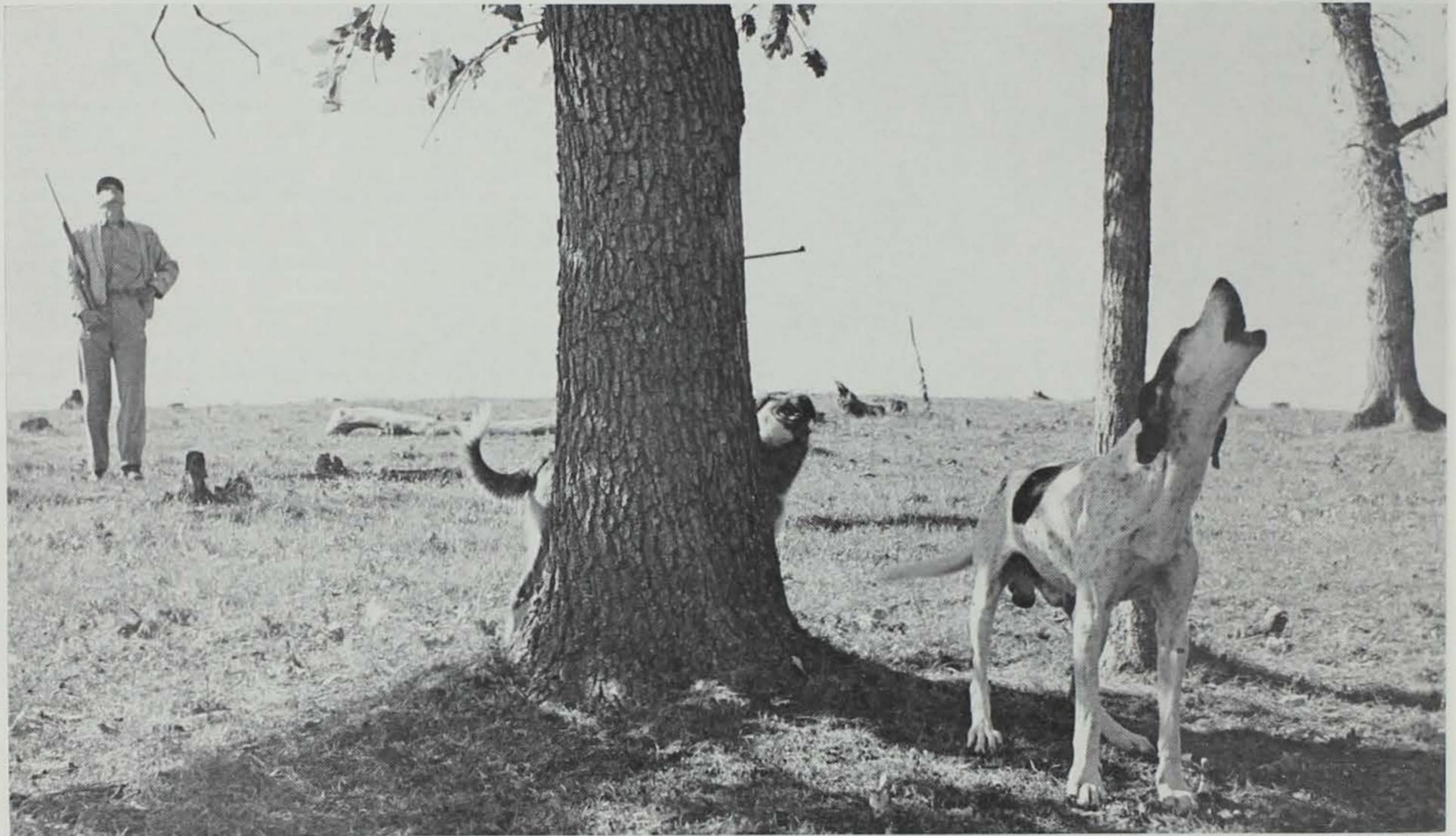
The need for good farmer-sportsman relations and a continuing "Free Hunting" concept is of utmost importance in Iowa. It is the American tradition that wildlife belongs to the people. However, in Iowa the wild-

(Continued on page 70)



Don't believe it—that Joe always did exaggerate!

1966 HUNTING PROSPECTS



Jim Sherman Photo.

Squirrels, like rabbits and quail, suffer a tremendous natural mortality each year. (See "Conservation Forum," page 66.) Hunters in search of "brushy tail" can expect an excellent season.

Bob Barratt, Superintendent of Game

As the first cool nights of autumn approach, Iowa sportsmen's thoughts turn to hunting. Guns come out of storage and are cleaned. Ammunition stocks are inventoried and renewed if necessary. Boots are oiled, hunting clothes are brought out of mothballs and all the other items of equipment are inspected and repaired, for fall is the harvest season, and game birds and mammals are the crop.

This year promises to provide a bumper harvest. In 1965, Iowa hunters took about six million game birds and mammals, and 1966 promises to be even better.

For the most part, game species are like any other Iowa-grown crop. With good seed and good growing conditions, our rich Iowa lands will produce a high yield of game, as well as agricultural crops. Like farm commodities, crops of game provide a substantial yield over and above that needed for seed the following year. This surplus can and should be harvested.

Hunting regulations are devised to provide an opportunity for Iowa hunters to partake of this harvest. Seasons, bag limits and other rules are geared to two basic objectives. First, we must provide an adequate seed stock for the following year. Secondly, we must provide for an equitable opportunity for everyone to share in this harvest.

Each species of wildlife has different habitat requirements. Factors favoring one species may be detrimental to another. Each one must be managed separately. Thus, season regulations usually differ for each species. Pheasant populations, for example, are not depleted by hunting, since only cock birds are taken. With the hens safeguarded, the number of the polygamous roosters left in the population after the hunting season is more than adequate to assure fertility of the eggs the following spring.

Other species, like the quail, pair off during the breeding season and are not polygamous. Neither are the sexes readily separable in the field as are the pheasants. Hence selective shooting of the male birds is neither desirable nor practical. Hunters, however, take only a small portion of the annual crop; natural mortality will reduce the population by the following spring whether they were hunted or not.

Rabbit and squirrel populations also experience a high annual mortality and so are little affected by hunting pressure. On study areas in Southern Iowa, biologists found that rabbit populations sometimes reached a level of one rabbit per acre in early fall. Studying the animals carefully, they found that by late winter 80 to 90 per cent

of the population had disappeared on both the areas which were hunted heavily and those with no hunting. Again, hunting had no appreciable effect on the following year's breeding population; if the hunters had not harvested the surplus, they would have disappeared anyway.

Of Iowa's small game, only waterfowl are harvested at a rate anywhere near approaching the annual surplus. Waterfowl populations are limited by the availability of suitable wetlands for nesting. Unlike most small game species, they do not have a high annual mortality rate and can be "stockpiled" to a degree. In years when drought conditions have reduced the breeding habitat, populations decline. When habitat improves we must increase the seed stock to fill the voids. Over-gunning under these conditions could result in an under supply of breeding birds.

Iowa's only big game species, the deer, is like the waterfowl in that it could be overharvested. With fairly low annual mortality and a low reproductive rate compared to most upland small game, hunting must be carefully regulated if we are to continue the steady rise in the statewide population. There is an annual surplus in many areas, however, and this surplus can be harvested under careful management.

Considering all of the points enumerated so far then, here are the predictions by species for the 1966 hunting seasons:

PHEASANTS:

The ringneck still rates as the great favorite of Iowa hunters. Last year's harvest was somewhat below that of the peak years of 1963 and 1964. Populations were lower and the bag was reduced. This year should see the hardy pheasant come bouncing back. Spring populations were far above the storm-riddled numbers in 1965. Reproduction has been excellent. Look for a near bumper crop in most areas with the best populations in west-central and north-central portions of the state. Good hunting will be found in many areas, notably east-central and northwest regions. The rest of the state, with the exception of the southeast corner, will have fair to good hunting.

The pheasant season opens November 12 and closes January 2, 1967. The daily bag is 3 cock birds with a possession of 6.

RABBITS:

The tremendous capability of cottontails to reproduce will pay big dividends to those who will be pursuing fleetfoot in 1966. Rabbit populations, as pointed out earlier, are always best in early fall. Don't wait for snow before going rabbit hunting; by then half the population has

(Continued on page 69)

Hunting Prospects

(Continued from page 68)

already disappeared. Cottontails are unusually abundant in southern and western portions of the state, with substantial increases in most of the rest of Iowa. In 1965, rabbit hunters took more than two million animals and we can expect to exceed this in 1966. Jack rabbits, popular with many hunters in northern and western Iowa, have also increased this year.

The rabbit season opens September 10 and closes February 19, 1967. Daily bag limit is 10.

QUAIL:

Hunters who love pointing dogs and exploding coveys of bobwhites should have a banner year in 1966. Quail populations are probably the highest in history in the Hawkeye State. Southern and southeastern portions of the state will be best with other areas having good populations wherever the habitat is suitable.

Quail season opens October 22 and closes January 31, 1967. Bag limit is 8 and possession limit 16.

SQUIRRELS:

Early season favorite of many Iowa hunters is the "brushy tail," lover of the oak-hickory woodlands. For many years, squirrel hunters have failed to harvest the annual surplus of either the fox or gray squirrels. Both species are abundant and hunting should be excellent. Grays will be found in the heavy timber in the eastern half of the state. Fox squirrels are found throughout the state wherever there are trees. Don't overlook the farm groves for fox squirrels.

Squirrel season will open September 10 and close January 2, 1967. Bag limit is 6 and possession limit 12.

WATERFOWL:

A restricted season in 1965 resulted in more ducks going north to the breeding grounds this spring. Production was excellent in 1966 but many potholes still were short of breeding pairs to occupy the available habitat. If we can send back even more breeders next spring we should be back to flyway populations approaching the 1950's. However, with the great improvement this year, regulations are somewhat more liberal than in 1965, and we can still look forward to even better hunting in 1967.

The regular duck season will open October 15 and close November 23. The experimental teal season for those who obtained permits will



Pheasant populations are up again this year. Quail numbers are called the highest in history.

open September 17 and close September 25. Bag limit for either season is four birds; limited to teal during the experimental season, and with special restrictions on mallards, canvasback and wood ducks during the regular season.

The goose season will open October 1 and close December 9. Goose populations remain about static and should provide good hunting.

The majority of the waterfowl hunting in Iowa is on or near state-owned public hunting areas. A list of these hunting access areas is available upon written request.*

DEER:

Iowa's deer herd continues to increase under carefully regulated hunting. In the prairie areas of northern Iowa, deer habitat is not

abundant and the animals are highly susceptible to hunting pressure. To control the take in this area, only 3,000 shotgun deer licenses were issued in the short zone. In the long zone of eastern, southern and western Iowa, deer are more abundant and less vulnerable to hunting pressure. In this long zone, 25,000 shotgun licenses were issued.

The shotgun season in the short zone is November 19-20 and in the long zone November 19-22. Bag limit is one deer per season.

The bow and arrow season for deer is split this year; the first part opens October 15 and closes November 13, and then reopens on November 26 and closes December 16. In this manner the two types of deer hunting seasons do not run concurrently. There is no limit on the number of bow licenses.

The shotgun season for deer is some three weeks earlier in 1966 than in recent years. Some of the reasons for this are: Hunters will have available for harvest most of the deer normally killed by automobiles during late November and early December; deer are more active during this period, thereby providing more hunting opportunity; hunters should find the weather more acceptable in the early season.

OTHERS:

Don't overlook some of the other species of birds and mammals which provide a great deal of hunting recreation.

The hunting season on raccoon opens October 15 and closes February 28, 1967. If you've never followed a pack of coonhounds through the woods at night, you have missed out on a lot of sport. Raccoon are abundant throughout the state.

A great game bird overlooked by most wing-shooters is the jacksnipe or Wilson's snipe. This little speedster of the bogs and marshy meadows is a test of anyone's skill with the shotgun.

The season opens October 1 and closes November 19. Bag limit is 8 daily.

The Hungarian partridge, found in northwest Iowa, often provides a surprise bonus for the pheasant hunter. The season is concurrent with the pheasant season and the bag limit is 2 birds daily.

Several important species hunted by Iowans have no closed season. Fox and coyote hunters in this state enjoy nearly 1,000,000 hours of hunting recreation annually from these species. Another favorite with many hunters is the crow, often hunted with decoys and the aid of a good caller.

Hunting opportunity is abundant in Iowa and 1966 should be a banner year. We urge you to participate in this great outdoor recreation.

Remember, most of the hunting you do will be on privately owned property so **Please, Ask The Farmer First.**

*Editor's Note—Pamphlets showing the Iowa distribution, together with hunting tips for the species are available for most of the birds and animals mentioned above. Write: State Conservation Commission, E. 7th & Court, Des Moines, Iowa.

GUN HANDLING AND CARE

It has been said that at least ninety-five per cent of all hunting accidents due to firearms can be avoided if every gunner will acquaint himself with the fundamentals of gun handling and constantly practice them.

Here are the ten commandments of shooting safety:

1. Treat every gun with the respect due a loaded gun.
2. Watch that muzzle! Carry your gun safely; keep the safety on until you are ready to shoot.
3. Unload guns when they are not in use. Take the gun down or have its actions open. Guns should be carried in a case to the shooting area.
4. Be sure that the barrel is clear of obstructions, and that you have ammunition only of the proper size for the gun you carry.
5. Be sure of your target before you pull the trigger; know the identifying features of the game you hunt.
6. Never point a gun at anything you do not want to shoot; avoid all horseplay.
7. Never climb a tree or fence or jump a ditch with a loaded gun; never pull a gun toward you by the muzzle.
8. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or water; at target practice, be sure your backstop is adequate.
9. Store guns and ammunition separately, beyond reach of children.
10. Avoid alcoholic beverages before or during shooting.

These fundamentals are simple and serve a dual purpose. First, they help keep hunting a safe sport; and second, they insure better marksmanship. For the nation's safety never fire a rifle or shotgun at power or telephone lines. Telephone and electric cables poles, their cross-arms, insulators and other equipment are never fair targets. Remember, this equipment provides power and communications necessary to the life of the community, and often vital to our national defense.

Long Haired Pelts Make Market Comeback

Tom Berkley, District Game Manager
Bob Phillips, Game Biologist

Raw furs sold by Iowa trappers during the 1965-1966 season were valued at \$753,832.30 according to reports submitted by 174 licensed fur buyers. Of particular interest is the substantial increase in the values of some of the so-called long haired pelts, namely red and gray fox, coyote and raccoon.

Red fox pelts sold for an average of \$5.80 apiece. This is the highest average price paid since the 1943-1944 season when the pelts sold for \$10.00. During the past ten years fox pelt prices have averaged about \$1.00. (Average value and the per cent of increase in prices is indicated on the adjacent summary of fur prices for the 1965-66 season. Only three species of fur bearers show a decline in price from that paid during the previous season.)

The demand for long-haired furs is believed to have been caused by changes in the styles of ladies fall and winter coats. Last year, coat manufacturers needed a supply of long-haired fur to use on collar and sleeve trim. Iowa trappers responded by contributing over 80,000 coon, 10,000 fox and 4,000 coyote pelts to the fashion world.

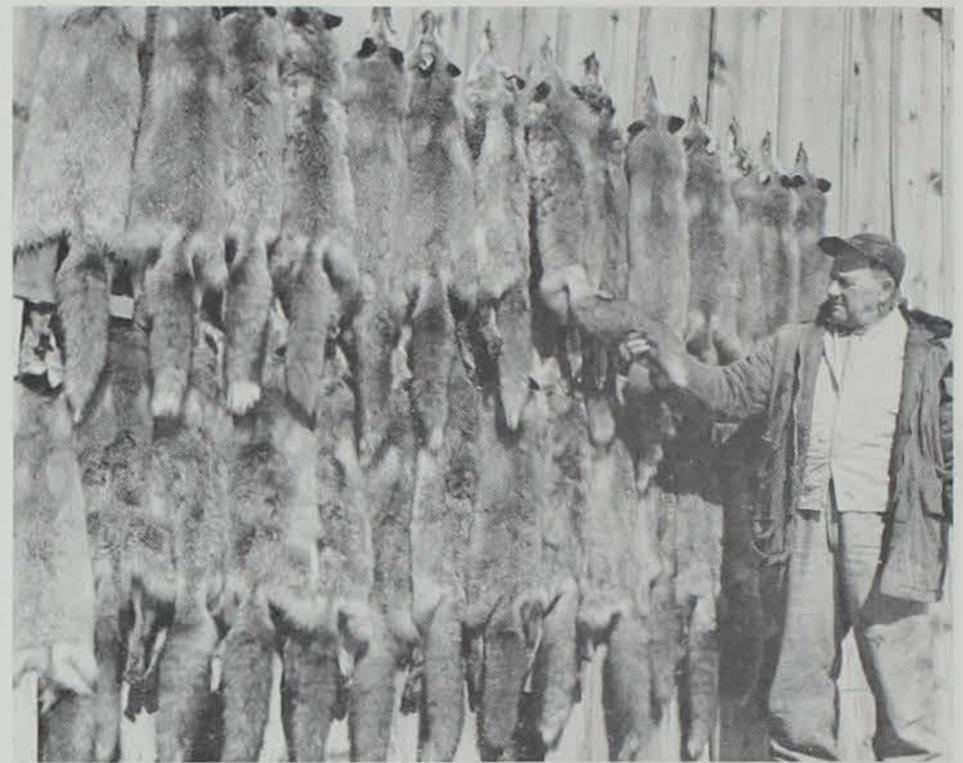
Last year, most pelts sold in the United States were sent to Japan for distribution to the world markets. Apparently the cheap labor available in Japan has allowed this country to process raw furs from other countries and still make a sizeable profit.

During February and March many Iowa hunters and trappers sold fox pelts for as much as \$10.00. Fox shot with hi-powered rifles were sold to fur buyers and if the back fur on the animal was not damaged, it would still sell for about \$5.00.

One central Iowa farmer who traps during his spare time in the winter months took advantage of last years high fox prices. While trapping within ten miles of his home from November through January, he caught 104 fox. These fox were sold for an average price of \$8.75 in February. This must be considered as a sizeable income in comparison to the effort expended.

In general, prospects are good for the coming trapping season. Raccoon populations are believed to be high in all areas of the state. With a constant conflict existing between high raccoon numbers and present agricultural practices, it would be beneficial if more of this species were harvested. With a reduced season last year, beaver should be abundant on all the major streams of the state. Mink and muskrat populations are also believed to be thriving in all existing habitat. Foxes are found in good statewide numbers with the highest populations occurring in the northeast quarter of the state. With high prices being paid for long-haired furs, trappers and hunters would do well by spending their time in pursuit of such animals as raccoons, foxes and coyotes.

Current prices paid for the pelts of the two main predators, the fox and coyote, should contribute greatly to an increased harvest of these species. The fact that most counties no longer pay bounties on foxes should permit more foxes to reach maturity and be available for the hunter and trapper during fall and winter months. With the bounty system in effect many young were destroyed annually at den sites for the bounty only.



Jim Sherman Photo.

These fox pelts represent hunting skill AND cash in the pocket!

Certainly the increased prices paid for fox, raccoon and coyotes will result in better pay for the trapper who at the same time is enjoying the benefits of outdoor activities and recreation while on the trap line.

FURS PURCHASED FROM IOWA TRAPPERS By DEALERS IN 1965-1966

Iowa State Conservation Commission
East 7th and Court Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa

Species	Number Taken	% Change From 1964-65	Avg. Price Per Pelt	Total Value
Raccoon	80,801	+ 24	\$2.47	\$199,578.47
Opossum	3,559	+ 37	0.40	1,343.60
Muskrat	261,549	+ 1	1.32	345,244.68
Mink	13,105	- 9	7.83	102,612.15
Civet	1,121	- 22	2.56	2,869.76
Skunk	1,097	+ .148	0.91	998.27
Badger	147	+ 39	1.90	222.30
Red Fox	10,853	+ 75	5.80	62,947.40
Gray Fox	303	+112	1.39	421.17
Weasel	52	- 70	0.43	22.36
Coyote	732	+115	4.22	3,089.04
Beaver	4,273	0	8.07	34,483.11
TOTAL VALUE				\$753,832.31

Compiled by Game Biologist Robert Phillips from reports of Fur Dealers submitted to Supt. of Licenses, Don Criswell. (174 Licensed Dealers Reporting)

IOWA'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT—

(Continued from page 67)

life lives on private land. Few farmers charge a fee for hunting on their lands. Most do not expect economic gain from their crops of wildlife. Landowners enjoy having wildlife on their farms for themselves and friends. Steadily increasing hunting pressures and vandalism create problems for farmers, which must be solved if free hunting privileges are to continue.

Sportsmen's clubs are a real value to our wildlife program. Strong emphasis is placed on our educational program with these organizations. They support our Commission in desired legislation and vigorously oppose crack-pot measures. Many clubs sponsors wildlife cover plantings on private farms thus promoting good relationships. Iowa was the first state in the nation to develop County Conservation Board systems. A total of eighty-three counties now have these agencies and many are purchasing and developing excellent game habitat in their programs.

In lieu of habitat, some states maintain stocking programs especially for pheasants to provide some hunting recreation for their people. This is a costly program that can scarcely be a justifiable expenditure of state funds. We do maintain a game farm and stock some areas where we hope to enlarge the pheasant range and where habitat seems ideal. Through selective breeding, a southern Iowa strain of pheasant is being developed which we feel confident will produce higher populations and better hunting than in our former prime northern Iowa areas. Artificial stocking is a sound practice only as it is used to furnish seedstock in areas where habitat is deemed suitable and the species not already

present. This, of course, seldom occurs since if the environment is present the species is likely to be there in proportion to the carrying capacity of the habitat. Laymen should not make the decision as to the capability of the range to support re-introduced native or exotic species.

The stocking of exotics is of unquestioned value. Without it, we would not have the pheasant. On the other hand, neither would we have the starling or English sparrow. The stocking of native species should have first consideration, and only where they are now absent and you can justify habitat requirements. We are re-introducing the ruffed grouse into several southeastern forest areas from native stock. Also, wild turkeys are being released with some indication of success. We have followed the herd in stocking Reeves pheasants in forest areas, but are not ready to proclaim success. The face of the land is constantly changing and with these changes wildlife either thrives or dies. Hundreds of miles of hedgerows have disappeared from southern Iowa prime quail range via the bulldozer. Grassland ranches are replacing the small farms in much of this part of Iowa. The quail appears doomed in these areas, so we must find a suitable game bird. The Hungarian partridge may be the answer.

The question of predator bounties as a wildlife management tool must be mentioned in any discourse on the subject. We feel bounties are unwarranted. Where and when predators become too abundant for human interests, other control steps should be taken. Foxes and coyotes are splendid game animals providing much recreation for hunters who like to pit skill against cunning. Few Iowan's have an opportunity to see or hear the coyote. Their "Call of the Wild" should not be ex-

(Continued on page 72)

HELP PREVENT WILDFIRES IN IOWA

Jim Foster
District Forester

Each year one reads of spectacular wildfires and forest fires that occur in the Rocky Mountain region and in California. Occasionally some of the more serious fires in the pine forests of the Great Lakes region get national publicity. And wildfires in Iowa? Well, they're almost unheard of.

Wildfires, at least small ones, do occur in Iowa, however. Seventy-five fires burned 2,278 acres in 1963 causing an estimated damage of \$135,140. In 1964, 90 fires destroyed 2,361 acres with a dollar loss approaching \$85,000. During 1965, 41 fires burned 678 acres with a loss of \$38,964. Nineteen sixty-six fire reports continue to come in. The total to date is 108 fires which have burned over 1,980 acres. If conditions turn dry as fall approaches, everyone's help will be needed to reduce this needless waste.

While it is true that wildfires in Iowa do not cover the great areas or cause the complete destruction that they do in some other regions, one cannot avoid seeing some of the many bad effects of wildfires even in Iowa.

Perhaps of greatest general concern is the condition in which a watershed is left as a result of wildfires. Normally the impact of a raindrop is absorbed by the organic matter lying on the forest floor. Upon striking a leaf or twig, a raindrop becomes still water, in-



Frank A. Heidelbauer Photo.

Fall wildfires can destroy acres of valuable habitat which our wildlife needs for winter food and protection.

capable of eroding any soil. This still water is then absorbed by the humus which acts very much like a sponge.

When fire has destroyed the organic matter either in grasslands or forest, a raindrop hits the exposed soil surface with a force that breaks soil particles apart so that they may be easily washed away. When the flow of water is not immediately checked by absorption into the humus layer, it begins to run off carrying with it the loosened soil particles to be later deposited in rivers and streams causing clogged channels, a deterioration of fish habitat and loss of recreational values.

Soil fertility is lost forever because of the loss of topsoil and mineral elements. People far removed from burned woodlands or grasslands suffer from the mistakes of a misguided woodland

farmer, a careless squirrel hunter or whoever might have started the fire.

In addition to the watershed destruction, damage is done directly to trees, both young and old, standing in the burned woodland. Young trees are easily killed by fire, and with this resulting absence of reproduction, the larger trees will be replaced only by brush when they are removed from the forest.

The damage to larger trees is often not evident for some time after the fire occurs. Fires burning uphill or with a headwind will swirl around a tree and create a natural chimney on the uphill or downhill side of the tree. This natural flue causes high tempera-

tures very close to the bark of the tree. This kills the cambium layer under the bark which is the living and growing part of the tree and, as a result, within a few years the bark sloughs off in the deadened area. This leaves wood exposed for the entry of insects and diseases, and wildlife forage as homes of animals is destroyed.

The spread of wildfires to build-ings is not to be forgotten either. It happens infrequently, but the fact that it happens at all is reason enough for concern.

With the coming of fall and its usually high fire danger, all Iowans should be alert to avoid starting wildfires and be ready to report and help suppress fires started by less careful persons.

THE MAGIC GIMMICK

John Madson

Backpackers say that the less you carry in your head, the more you must carry on your back.

It's like that with hunting, too, and sportsmen who know the least may own the most. In fact, there's a whole new breed of sportsmen who don't really know much about the outdoors, but who are ring-tailed wizards with outdoor gadgets.

To such men, the joy of consumer goods is a substitute for basic outdoor skills. They may never learn to use iron sights, or how to row a boat, use snowshoes, cook on an open fire, or swing an axe. What's more, they couldn't care less. Dan'l Boone might have felt the same way, if he'd had our gadgets.

When an outdoor situation demands special skill or physical endurance, many modern sportsmen can't rest until they have found a gadget that substitutes for both. They have traded woodcraft for technology, and consider it a bargain.

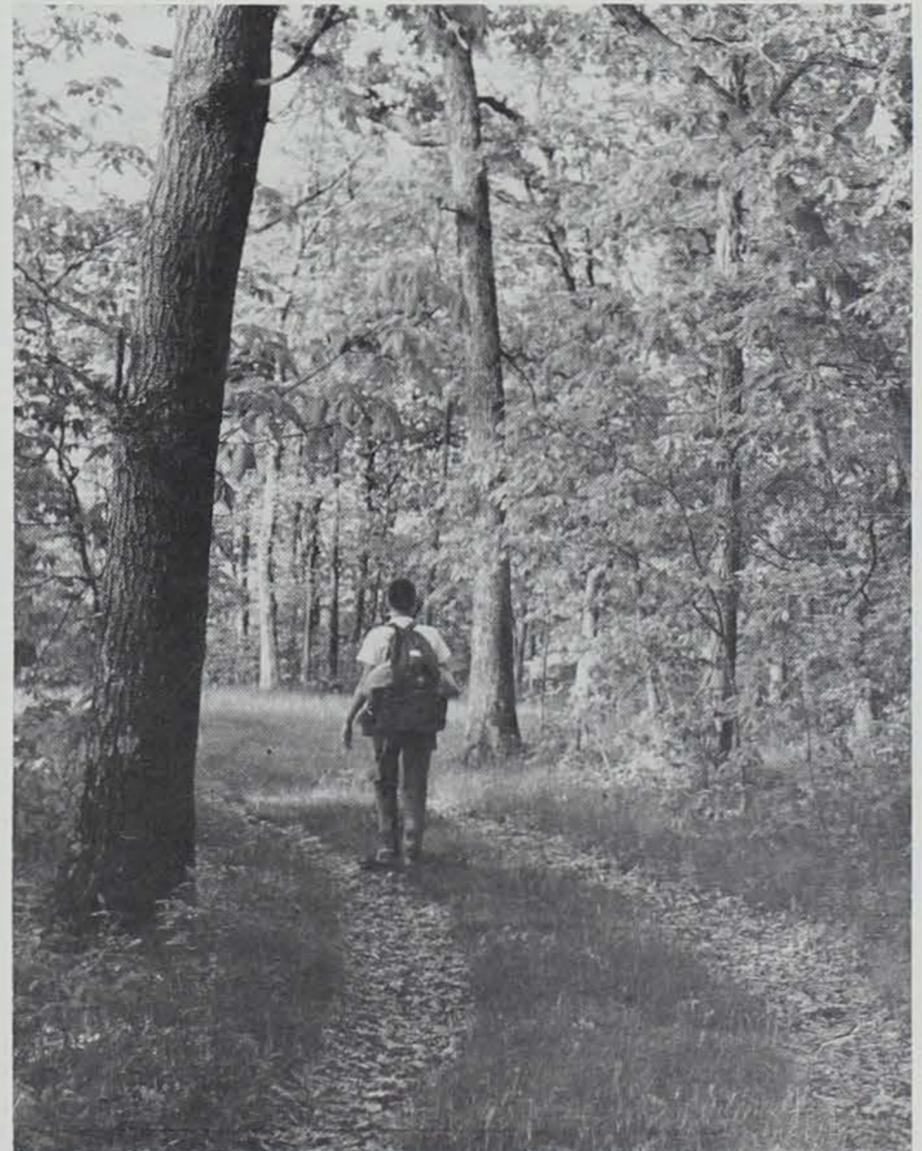
Maybe it is. It gets people outdoors, puts roses in the economy's cheeks, and saves time—the most important item in outdoor recreation.

The real rub comes when the hunter extends this philosophy into game management. He figures that if his own needs can be solved with gimmicks, so can wildlife's. So he substitutes legislation for a basic land ethic, buys duck stamps instead of squelching federal drainage subsidies, and builds artificial lakes when sick watersheds can no longer support healthy rivers. He invents artificial wood duck nests, water guzzlers for desert quail, nesting tubs for geese, and rubber-tire squirrel nests.

There's nothing wrong with these, as far as they go. Even such patent medicines as stocking, bounties, predator control and winter feeding can be useful, as aspirin is useful. But they aren't cures!

The only real cure for ailing wildlife crops is basic land and water conservation, with some attention to wildlife habitat. There is no magic gimmick for producing good supplies of wildlife without good supplies of soil and water. If there were, nature would already have found it, and there'd be mallards in Death Valley and moose in Manhattan.—“News from Nilo”

The raccoon's Latin name *Lotor* means “the washer.” It is noted for washing food when near water.



Woodcraft and the “feel for the out of doors” that once characterized the sportsman is being submersed in technology.

THE UNWANTED STUMP—WHAT TO DO

John Stokes, State Forester

More and more landowners in Iowa are faced with a new problem of what to do with the stump after a tree has died and its crown is removed. Several solutions are practical and this article will discuss some of them.

The most efficient method of stump removal is to hire the services of a tree service company who uses the new powered stump remover. This machine grinds up the stump into small chips to a suitable depth so that dirt and sod can be replaced in the area where the stump was located. Usually, the chips can be easily mixed with the soil. The application of a fertilizer, relatively high in nitrogen, is recommended when wood chips are added to the soil.

In many cases the stump is left for the landowner to dispose of after the tree has been cut down and hauled away. One important thing to keep in mind is that sprouting must be discouraged as this keeps the stump alive.

Some fine proven methods are acceptable for rural owners, but do not lend themselves to city folks. These include the use of dynamite for people in a hurry who know how to set the charge and who are not concerned with property damage or lawsuits. Another method is to pile burnable materials such as old tires, rags, etc. around the stumps. The entire area is wet down with kerosene and set afire. The resulting smoke from the piled material and a green stump will give you an activity and smoke for months to come.

A method used by many with good results, but not actually proven by research tests, involves the boring of a 1"-1½" hole into the stump in the fall of the year. The hole should be 18"-20" deep and located in the center of the stump. Put two ounces of salt peter (available at most drugstores) into the hole and fill with water. Then, plug the opening so it is airtight. The plug is removed in the Spring, and enough oil to fill the hole is poured in and ignited. The stump will smolder, without blazing, until the stump is reduced to white ashes.

For the man of the house who wants physical labor on weekends, the stump presents a fine project for chopping exercise. Those who tire easily or are out of shape may wish to rent a chain saw to finish the job, but the saw must be used with caution.



Motorized rigs such as this can make short work of stump removal.

Families do often learn to live with the stump and it's not too bad for the planting area. Some excellent seats can be made on stumps which are located at convenient spots in the yard. The simple way is to nail a board across the top. More elaborate benches can be made by leaving a high stump and notching out a seat with a saw. Some home carpenters build circular seats around the stump which then serves as a base or table.

Ideas are never-ending when dealing with tree stumps. It is quite likely that after the stump removal project is done, you may even wish you had it back.

Stumps are often made into attractive planters by merely placing a tub on top of the stump, or by building up brick, block or rock cribs around the edges. Dirt can be placed between crib and stump an idea, either. Stakes can be nailed to the stump to train climbing roses or vines which will create an attractive addition to the landscape.

IOWA'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

(Continued from page 67)

terminated from Iowa by bounty incentive or the revolting use of poison.

In recent years, all state conservation agencies have developed planning programs in order to qualify for Federal funds under the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation program. Planning is necessary, of course, but in our zeal to accommodate the desires of the so-called "recreation market" we must fight and plan for areas where we believe wildlife interests are paramount, and especially for the rights of wildlife in all multiple-use planning. Better to leave a remote and inaccessible wilderness as a "primitive area" than to construct a network of roads and posh facilities, degrading it to a "sylvan slum."

CONCLUSION

One of the basic philosophies of our Commission in regard to wildlife management has been to provide the maximum amount of hunting recreation from our renewable resources while safeguarding perpetuation of the species. Now, and especially in the future, we will be faced with the seeming paradox of providing quality hunting for increasing numbers of people. It can be done, but there must be a better approach than we've used in the past or we will lose our hunters. A long time ago Aldo Leopold proposed a plan that should be dusted off and reviewed—"Recognize the non-shooting protectionist and the scientist as sharing with sportsmen and landowners the responsibility for conservation of wildlife as a whole. Insist on a joint conservation program, jointly financed." Why shouldn't the bird watchers, nature lovers, trail riders, hikers, cyclists and others who enjoy the out-of-doors, the forests, the marshes, the prairies and man-created lakes help finance areas now being purchased with fish and game funds. If the proper approach is made, they'll welcome the opportunity I'm sure.

DID YOU KNOW

Despite their size, pheasants are deceptively fast fliers and hard to kill.

The number of licensed hunters in the United States rose to 14,330,549—an increase of 207,890 over 1964.

Sale of fishing licenses in the 50 states during 1965 totaled 20,496,517—an increase of 277,060 over the previous year.

Because of conservation efforts by hunters, the American elk population has jumped from 50,000 to about 250,000 in less than 50 years.



An investment of time, money and management effort resulted in the reclamation of this old strip mine area near Pella.

There are about 800,000 active gun collectors in America.

Pheasants are essentially seed eaters. They rarely eat the buds of shrubs and trees as many upland game birds do.

When necessary to escape a trap, the mule deer has been known to jump eight feet from a running start of only a few feet.

The sandhill crane is a long-legged, long-necked gray bird with a bald red forehead.

All bears swim readily, occasionally five miles at a time. Sometimes in hot weather they do so just to cool off.

The Least Shrew is our smallest mammal—the newly born weighing only 1/50 oz.