

**JANUARY  
1970**

*For Anglers with Antifreeze —*

# Open-Water Walleyes

By Don R. Helms  
Fisheries Biologist

Winter fishing for walleye and sauger of the upper reaches of the Mississippi River is generally confined to the open water areas immediately below the navigation dams. Due to turbulence in this area, the water never freezes. For the die hard walleye fisherman who dares to brave the elements, this is the best fishing of the year.

Access to this area is not only difficult but sometimes hazardous and one must surmount many obstacles. First, boat liveries are not in operation during this season and he must supply his own boat. Frequently, he must push his boat over ice to get to open water and then maneuver through a barrage of ice cakes. Once in open water, he must be careful to stay out of the turbulent water immediately below the discharge structures. This water is restricted 100 feet immediately down stream from the roller and tainter gates. Fishing would be generally poor there anyway.

The best fishing spots are at either side of the above described hazardous zone, where the water is calm and protected from wind and current.

"Pike," as walleye and sauger are called in northeast Iowa, start congregating below dams in late fall, but the first arrivals are small and consist mostly of sauger. As the season progresses, larger fish begin showing up. During this period, many limits of nice fish are taken. As the river begins to freeze, success drops. By mid or late December, when the river has frozen and commercial navigation has ceased, the fish again begin to bite. Now, the big females are getting heavy with eggs and no longer choose to fight the current of main channels. Depending on river and design of particular dams in-ly, concentrations of these fish will build up in certain areas that make very hot fishing spots.

Specific types of fishing gear and meth-



Few "Fairweather" fishermen can match this stringer.

ods vary from one locality to another, but generally, the successful fishermen tend toward minnows or lures of a type that are heavy and sink to the bottom rapidly and can be jigged up and down rather than trolled or cast. A favorite technique used by the author is to seek out a relatively quiet area and jig a lead head or similar type lure while drifting rather than anchoring in any given spot. Extreme caution should be exercised to prevent drifting too close to the discharge gates. Back tow is often quite strong and can pull an un-

suspecting fisherman into the turbulence and upset his boat.

Most days, open faced spinning reels and rods with large guides are needed because of ice build up from wet lines. This also points out the need for warm clothing. Temperatures of 0 to 5 degrees above seem much colder when one is confined to a boat and unable to exercise even if the fish are coming fast.

Prime walleye fishing continues till the ice begins to break up in the spring. They virtually stop biting while ice is

(Continued on page 5)



# Iowa Conservationist

Vol. 29 January, 1970 No. 1

Published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, State Office Building, 300 4th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. 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  
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CIRCULATION ..... 70,000

## COMMISSION MINUTES

For Meeting Held  
November 4, 1969

Accepted an option for 13 acres (improved acreage with a set of improvements) on the Big Creek Reservoir Project, Polk County.

The following Bureau of Outdoor Recreation project was approved: Hardin County Conservation Board, Iowa River Green Belt (Leverton Segment), acquisition, 205 acres.

The following BOR development project amendment requests were approved: Linn County Conservation Board, Pinicon Ridge Park; Mills County Conservation Board, Pony Creek Park; Mason City, Georgia L. Hanford MacNider Park. The above projects were approved by the Commission for submission to the BOR.

Proposed that a site in the Yellow River Forest Area named for George Kaufman and an area near Sac City or Lake View named for Dutch Lille.

The following County Conservation Board project was approved: Guthrie County Conservation Board, development plan, Turn-of-the-Century-Museum.

Approved the classification of the following roads in the state park and institutional roads system: Springbrook State Park, Guthrie County; Wildcat Den State Park, Muscatine County; Ft. Defiance, Emmet County.

Proposed that within the next year hiking trails be opened in the park area between and including the Pikes Peak-Point Ann State Park area. With development held to a minimum when possible along the periphery and not into the area; that the periphery be so designed as to avoid extremely steep grades.

Approved a request from Scout Troop 32, McGregor, to use the small office building in McGregor which was formerly a headquarters for the district forester.

Authorized the director to award the contract for the Lake Manawa camping area construction and the Red Haw Hill State Park beach facility to the low



### I'd rather hunt than eat?

When asked to make out a Christmas list last month I didn't include a belt, fearing that someone would ask a rather embarrassing question. "What size do you wear?" The fact is, I didn't become a big strong boy by missing meals, even though hunting and fishing often take me far and away from towns and restaurants.

The answer to my "on the go" hunger pang problems has been the two-bottle lunch pack. This pack sold commercially by a number of manufacturers consists of a sandwich box flanked by

### COMMISSION MINUTES (Continued)

bidders providing the bids do not exceed 10 percent of the engineers estimate.

Authorized awarding the contract for prefabricated residences at the foregoing areas providing the bids do not exceed 10 percent of the engineers' estimate: Red Rock Park, Red Rock Waters Station, Rathbun Park, Rathbun Waters Station and Wilson Island Waters Station.

Authorized the staff to dispose of two tracts of abandoned railroad right-of-way totaling 14.51 acres in Crawford County with the stipulation that the staff investigate acquisition of the public hunting access in Crawford County to replace these two tracts.

two quart-sized vacuum bottles, all contained in a leather-like case, about 16"x16"x6". These handy food carriers have provided nourishing consolation to many hapless hunters, frustrated fishermen, trail-weary trappers, cramped campers, bulwarked boaters, slush-snarled snowmobilers, and (whew) so on. My idea of a good January pack is as follows:

Coffee or tea is a must for one of the bottles. For the other, I like hot beef or chicken broth. It's nourishing, warming, inexpensive (sold in the soups section) and is easier to pour and drink, leaving less mess than soup.

I like nearly any kind of sandwich, including peanut butter and jelly. My preferences would include the usual beef or ham with cheese or tuna salad, or weiners, fried, on rye. Allow the weiners to cool and dry before placing on the bread to prevent a soggy sandwich.

Pieces of pheasant, chicken, or quail, wrapped, are especially good; potato salad covered in a cup beats chips for my money; and apples leave no peels.

Pickles, carrots, radishes, and olives all are tasty relishes and a pocket-sized box of raisins "for later" round out a pretty decent make-shift meal. Pack all but the coffee and broth the night before unless you like to get up earlier than I, and by noon, you'll feel the time was well spent.

### Winter Lunch Pack

- 1-Bottle hot coffee or tea
- 1-Bottle hot broth, chicken or beef
- 1-2 sandwiches—any kind, or . . .
- 3-4 pieces pheasant, chicken, or quail, wrapped
- 1 cup potato salad, covered
- relishes, raisins, to suit
- salt, pepper, in small container



# Winter Cover:

By Roger Sparks

Water, food, shelter, and the ability to reproduce, are man's basic necessities to survive here on earth. Without any one of these for any length of time, his entire population would certainly perish. Wildlife too have the same basic needs, food, water, shelter from the elements during Iowa's cold, harsh winters, and conditions favorable to successful regeneration. The old problem of lack of adequate nesting cover is compounded by the lack of protective cover during cold snowy months, resulting in winter kill.

Iowa's small game, particularly in heavily farmed areas (which include most of the state) are finding it more difficult to find adequate winter cover. A balance between cultivated areas, and brush and grass cover is needed.

The problem stems from the fact that many supposedly "profitable" farming practices mean less winter cover for wildlife: Shaggy, weedy corn rows permit smaller yields than clean ones; trees and shrubs are obstacles; barren fence rows seem easier to maintain; and brushy sloughs appear to be "cleanable" and "farmable." To complicate matters, heavily planted corn, bean, sorghum, and other crops which provide excellent cover through fall and early winter, provide game with attractive protection early, then are left barren during the critical late winter months when dwindling natural cover areas have been beaten down by winter's icy wrath.

One certainly cannot ask farmers not to harvest crops or begrudge his attempt to turn a chunk of land into a profitable business. But, there is a brighter side and steps that can be taken.

On nearly every farm there is a waste area or fence row that can be developed for wildlife habitat. Windbreak plantings may serve several purposes. Windbreaks curb wind erosion. If planted near the farm house and lots, windbreaks can cut down on household fuel bills and hold livestock consumption of feed down by keeping them "sheltered" during the windy, bitter cold months. When windbreaks are supplemented by cover close to the ground such as honeysuckle or multiflora rose, the area also provides a sub-zero protection habitat for wildlife as well.

Ditch bank plantings of trees or shrubs be made along drainage ditches and erways preventing soil erosion and protecting wildlife.

Planting shrub fence rows also benefits wise farmers. When a sod and shrub fence row are compared, it has been found through studies that each, per mile, will contain:

	Shrub	Sod
Lady bird beetles (beneficial):	20,000	500
Insects injurious to crops:	54,000	79,000
Nesting birds:	21	1.5
Small animals (harmful):	21	84
Small animals (beneficial):	28	8

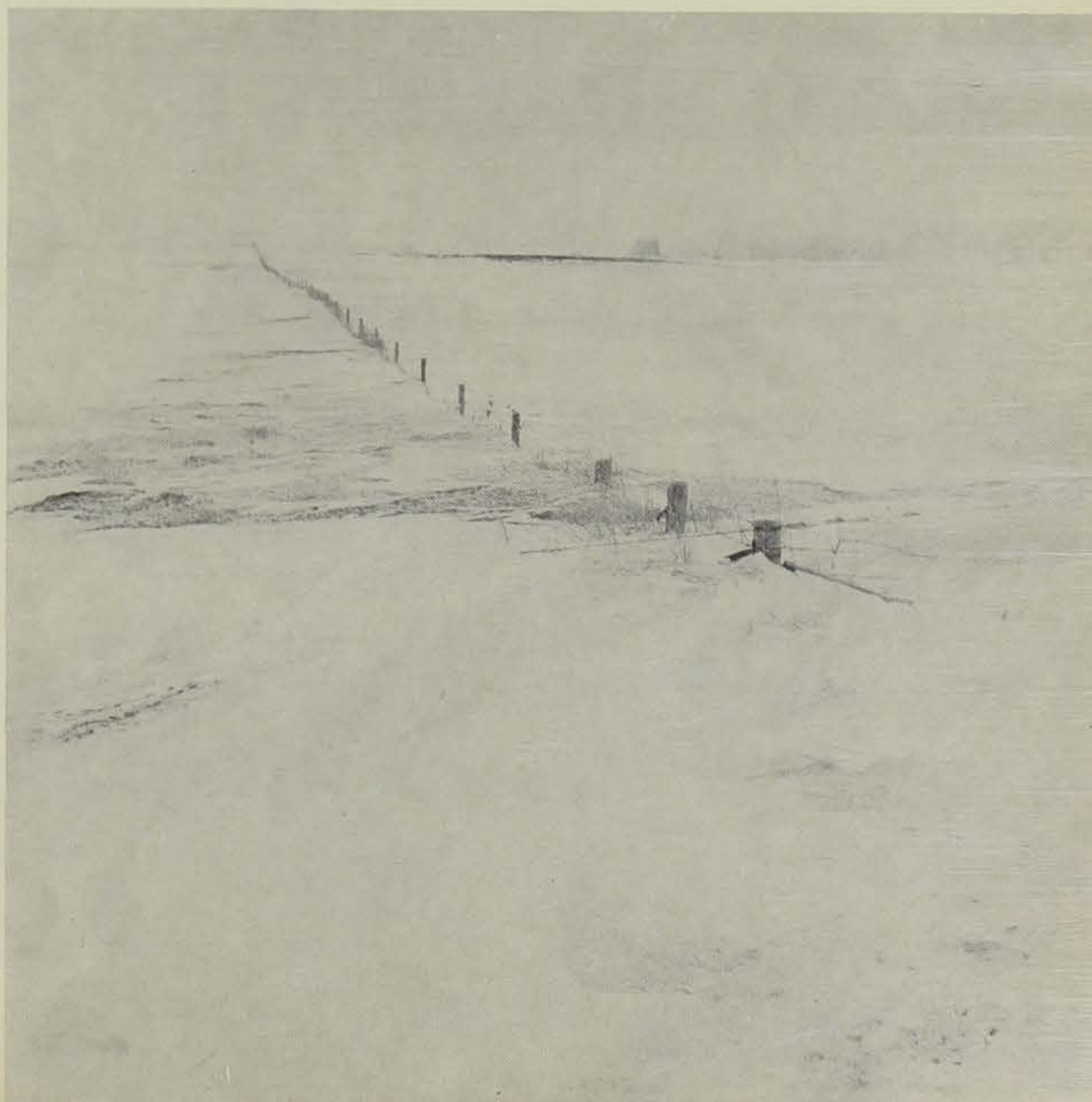
In view of the farmers' fight for pest control, plantings such as these offer very real economic returns.

Farm pond areas doubling as recreational areas can provide excellent cover; as can "waste" corners separated from the rest of the field by a waterway, gully,

## Necessity For Small Game Survival

or run that makes it unhandy or unprofitable to waste time and equipment on. These areas, when developed according to suggestions by local conservation officers, unit game managers, and S.C.S. representatives, provide a winter home for our small non-migratory game.

Many of Iowa's land owners are conservation minded and apply these cover-saving tactics to their present farming practices, because they enjoy wildlife simply for the sake of wildlife. Those who do not see fit to provide winter cover, or refuse the help of service organizations like 4-H clubs and Boy Scouts to restore winter cover, need not use the old argument that wildlife habitat is too costly to maintain. The success or failure of maintaining cover for pheasants, rabbits, quail, and Hungarian partridge rests mainly on the shoulders of the Iowa farmer.



321260 No home on this range (for pheasants, quail, rabbits)



## Winter Duck Banding Report:

# Mallards Have Cold Feet

and Like it!

By Rockney Bridges  
Unit Game Supervisor

To the surprise of many sportsmen some waterfowl does remain in Iowa throughout the winter. These hardy wintering birds are mainly the prized mallard. During freezing weather the ducks keep the water open as a result of their body heat combined with the vigorous churning of their feet. If the weather is very severe the ducks will even take turns going to feed so some are busy maintaining the open water at all times. The majority of these ducks stay along our two boundary rivers. A major concentration of these

ducks is located, in the southwest corner of the state, on ditch number 6 in Fremont County. These mallards remain in this ditch throughout the winter some 70,000 strong.

The Iowa Conservation Commission, cooperating with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, realized that little was known about certain aspects of wintering populations of mallards in Iowa. Proper waterfowl management requires knowing as much as possible about waterfowl as well as their habitat. This information can then be used

in helping the public receive maximum benefits from this resource.

The best method of gathering useful information about waterfowl is through the use of bands. This technique involves capturing live ducks and placing a numbered band on one of their legs. Before each duck is again returned to the wild, information is gathered as to its species, age, sex, and date and location of capture. This information is then put on IBM cards at the bird banding laboratory at Laurel, Maryland for future reference.

Ducks are banded on the wintering grounds in an attempt to establish the breeding grounds and flight lanes used by specific populations. We also wanted to see if the same birds were returning each year to winter in this particular area. Also information could be obtained concerning where birds are reared that winter in Iowa. The biologists can utilize this information plus that gathered on sex and age ratios in helping to determine the general condition of the populations for their recommendations on seasons and limits.

Since migratory game birds are not confined by political boundaries, it is essential that banding programs be coordinated with all agencies. Iowa's banding program is designed to supplement a master program for the entire Mississippi Flyway. Several sites were selected for banding part of the wintering waterfowl in Iowa. One site was the one previously described in Fremont County.

Waterfowl banders in the past were only moderately successful in trapping and banding at this location. Then in the fall of 1966 the idea of a large bait trap completely enclosing a portion of the ditch was conceived. The trap when completed was 75 feet wide and 150 feet long. It is constructed of a two by four frame and completely covered with 2" mesh chicken wire. On each end there is a large swinging door which is manually tripped when it is felt there are enough birds in the trap. The birds are encouraged to enter the trap by covering the enclosed banks and stream with shelled corn. Since the ducks feed mainly in the early morning and late evening this was the optimum time for trapping these birds. The game section personnel spent many days starting at 6:00 a.m. and continuing until 10:00 p.m. at night. The trap proved to be most effective during severe weather when the ground was snow covered and so many numb fingers and toes were proudly exhibited. However, it was well worth the extra effort as the trap has proven very successful and several times over 300 ducks have been captured with one trip of the huge doors. The banding quota for this location was 2,000 mallards per year. During the three year period this trap captured 5,512 ducks of which all but 18 were mallards. The additional 18 were mainly black ducks with a few pintails and widgeon. Up until last year we had never reached our



Traps are baited with corn



quota. But last year with only 15 days of actual banding we banded 2,103 mallards. Our biggest problem is warm weather which results in the birds having an easy time finding food and open water. Under these conditions the ducks show little interest in our trap.

The recovery of a banded bird is always a most fascinating part of a banding operation. A number of banded birds have been captured in the past three years. Some ducks recaptured with the trap were originally banded in the following areas; Oklahoma, Missouri, South Carolina, Michigan, Illinois, Alberta, and Manitoba. From these few banded birds it is easy to see the interesting histories of the individual birds which have grouped together to form a wintering population. Eighteen ducks captured in the past two years were returns previously banded at this same site during 1967 and 68 with the same trap. These birds provide interesting data, and substantiate the belief that many of these birds return to the same vicinity to winter each year. These birds eat Iowa corn and stay in this six foot wide drainage ditch until the next spring when they will travel to their nesting grounds to produce more of their own kind for the next fall's waterfowl hunters.

The 1970 winter banding project is in full swing this month, and we would like to remind you that even after the bands are placed on the bird's leg and the records completed the job is only half done. For full benefit to be received from any



banding operation it is fundamental that the majority of the bands be returned. Since most bands are recovered by hunters it is their vital responsibility to return these bands to the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C., as instructed on each band. The hunter will then receive a card notifying him of the rec-

ords of that birds known history. In this way the sportsman can help the biologists and game managers learn more about the waterfowl he enjoys to hunt. Every hunter who desires the continuation of this sport should realize the benefits from this type of program not only for himself but for his children.

## Snowmobile Safety Check

People are taking to them like a kid to a new toy! Snowmobiles are not toys, however, they are powerful, motorized machines, capable of high speeds. Like the automobile they can be extremely dangerous. Snowmobiles often travel over unstable terrain, during unstable weather and unfortunately, are sometimes placed in the hands of seemingly unstable people.

Because of the novelty of this form of winter recreation, snowmobile operators are relatively inexperienced. Good sound judgment and caution are the next best things.

Most newly formed snowmobile clubs have set up codes of safety, and some of the multitude of manufacturers prescribe written rules for the safe handling of their machines. The following general rules of safety may also help:

- 1) CHART YOUR ROUTE, if possible, before you leave. Be sure to ask permission on private land. For information concerning State Parks designated for snowmobiling, check with the Superintendent of Parks, Iowa Conservation

Commission, 300 4th street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. It's wise to let someone at home know where you're going.

- 2) DRESS WARMLY. Wear clothes enough to walk back from your most distant point. Also, snowmobiles are "open-air" machines and the wind on your body when traveling 25 mph can be 40 degrees colder than the actual temperature. Wear your long flannels and check the weather!

- 3) CHECK FOR MECHANICAL PROBLEMS (consult the owner's manual). Not enough track tension and a sticking throttle lever are a couple important ones. A small tool box can come in handy and, oh yes, I nearly forgot; carry plenty of gasoline.

- 4) KEEP OFF FROZEN BODIES OF WATER where current may thin the ice. Even on lakes where ice looks safe air bubbles and currents may produce thin ice all year long. Testing by foot doesn't prove ice safe because the weight of snowmobiles is much greater than yours.

- 5) WATCH OUT FOR OBSTACLES. Speed combined with a low-profile limits

vision which can add up to trouble for the snowmobiler. Goggles help. The edges of riverbanks and gullies are often undercut and could crumble easily under the weight of your machine, so "steer clear".

These rules will not limit the excitement of the sport. Snowmobiling is wild and thrilling when pursued safely; you don't need danger to make it that way. Laws will be only as tough as legislators are forced to make them for your own protection, so a little restraint and common sense will help keep the sport relatively limitation-free.

Walleyes . . . Continued from page 1

flowing through the dam. Then the spring run begins. The boat liveries open and the fishing barges go back into operation. Then, it seems everyone gets the urge to fish, and most everyone will catch fish. But the hardy fishermen who braved the ice and cold of January to catch his limit of lunkers has known "pike" fishing at its best.



# Winter CARP CAPER

By Julius "Sonny" Satre

Winter spearing for carp on secluded areas of the Boone River in Hamilton County was quite a fad when I was in high school during the middle fifties. On exceptionally productive days it didn't take long to weight down a gunny sack with a bunch of carp. Incidentally, this sometimes made it rather difficult trudging on the ice and snow back to the car but it was well worth the effort.

One time in particular still stands out in my mind as if it were yesterday. The Boone River was open for promiscuous fishing because of low water conditions and extreme cold temperatures. There were three of us on the spearing expedition. We were walking along nonchalantly down stream, identifying various wildlife tracks on the snow when we came to a bend in the river. As we were going around the bend we heard a peculiar sound which aroused our curiosity. The sound was unfamiliar to us.

As we proceeded we observed some open water in a riffle. But the next thing we saw and heard made our eyes almost bug out of our craniums. In the open water before us was a "herd" of carp sucking up oxygen with their backs protruding out of the water. We hastily planned our strategy together and charged the carp with our spears. The ordeal which took place was almost as wild as the melee in Shea Stadium after the Mets won the World Series.

Besides spearing more than a dozen of these alien fish, two of us fell into the knee-deep high icy water during the blitz. The carp we managed to gig ranged from 2-8 pounds in weight. We took the fish to a local meat processor and had them smoked. I will let you in on a secret if you don't know it already, smoked carp is nothing but delicious. By the way, the Iowa Conservation Commission has a brochure available on how to build a fish smoker. If you are interested, simply write to the Iowa Conservation Commission, Information and Education Section, 300 Fourth St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

For you novices who haven't tried winter carp gigging or spearing (both terms have the same meaning), here is a run down of equipment you will need. The most important item is the gig itself. It resembles a miniature pitch fork with barbs on the tines. They can be purchased in most sporting goods shops and they come in various sizes and shapes.

You will also need a handle for the gig.

Making a hole in the ice is done with a variety of different equipment. I always used an ax. Other equipment used range from spud bars, augers to even power chain saws.

When gigging in deeper depths, it is sometimes difficult to observe the fish in the water because of the low density of light. One remedy for this is to scatter some shelled corn on the river bottom. When a fish moves over the corn background you can see it much easier.

It is illegal to spear game fish such as catfish, northern and walleyes, so you must be able to identify the fish carefully before spearing. Carp, buffalo, quillback, gar, sheepshead and dogfish may be speared throughout the year between the hours of sunrise and sunset on most waters of the state.

Most streams in Iowa are excellent for winter carp gigging. I prefer the smaller streams primarily because of the safety angle and the shallower depths in the water. Good areas to look for on a stream are springs running into the river, riffles that don't quite freeze over and around snags such as fallen trees and other debris. Areas such as these



are normally excellent carp hang outs.

This sport is quite challenging and rewarding. Carp have surprised many people for their good edibility, especially out of that cold winter water. Besides being excellent smoked, carp can be prepared successfully by various frying and baking methods. The following recipe is for German pickled carp which is well worth trying. If you like pickled herring you will have to try this on your taste buds.

All you have to do is pour 2 cups of water in a container, 2 cups of vinegar, add salt and pepper to suit your taste, add 1/2 cup of sugar, add pickling spice to suit your judgment, add one sliced medium onion. The solution should now be brought to a boil until the onion is almost done. Now add pieces or chunks of fish into the solution and boil for 5-10 minutes. The fish is now ready to be placed in sealed jars for two weeks before sampling. This recipe is recommended for approximately a four pound carp.

When dressing carp or buffalo, remove that dark strip of meat which is found on both sides of the fish. If not removed, it taints the flavor of the fish.





# Tree Orders: a wise investment

SPECIES	AGE CLASS	AGE CLASS			
		250	500	750	1,000
Austrian Pine	2-0	\$6.25	\$12.50	\$18.75	\$25.00
Jack Pine	2-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Ponderosa Pine	2-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Red Pine	3-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Scotch Pine	2-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
White Pine	3-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Norway Spruce	3-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Green Ash	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00
Red Oak	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00
White Oak	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00
Black Walnut (seedlings)*	1-0	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Multiflora Rose	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00
Dogwood	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00
Honeysuckle	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00
Ninebark	1-0	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00

## SPECIAL WILDLIFE PACKET .....\$5.00

The SPECIAL WILDLIFE PACKET contains 250 plants including 50 evergreens, 25 ninebark, 25 honeysuckle, 25 Dogwood, 25 wild grape, 25 multiflora rose and 75 other plants beneficial to wildlife. Illustrative suggestions for odd areas and farm pond plantings will be furnished with each packet.

\*Maximum order for black walnut seedlings will be 1,500 per landowner. A special minimum of 50 has been set for this species with multiples of 50 thereafter until the maximum is reached in order to supply as many landowners as possible.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** The nursery reserves the right to substitute species of a suitable type if a shortage occurs. Each order must total 500 plants (250 each of two species may make up the order). Wildlife packets may be ordered singly, however.

## TABLES OF PREPAID SHIPPING AND HANDLING (CHARGES) COSTS

No. of Plants	Shipping Cost	No. of Plants	Shipping Cost	No. of Plants	Shipping Cost
250	\$1.35	3,500	\$5.15	6,750	\$ 9.85
500	2.25	3,750	5.25	7,000	9.90
750	3.05	4,000	6.55	7,250	10.20
1,000	3.35	4,250	7.45	7,500	10.40
1,250	3.70	4,500	8.25	7,750	11.75
1,500	3.90	4,750	8.55	8,000	12.65
1,750	4.10	5,000	9.00	8,250	13.45
2,000	4.30	5,250	9.20	8,500	13.75
2,250	4.50	5,500	9.30	8,750	14.10
2,500	4.55	5,750	9.50	9,000	14.30
2,750	4.65	6,000	9.70	9,250	14.50
3,000	4.70	6,250	9.75	9,500	14.70
3,250	5.00	6,500	9.80	9,750	14.90
				10,000	14.95

Shipping charges for wildlife packets can be figured on the basis of 250 plants per packet.

Trees and shrubs provide many benefits including erosion control, financial return, wildlife cover and natural beauty. The establishment of a successful planting can protect one of our basic resources—the soil—against the ravages of wind or water. Whether the planting is on an area of blow-sand or an eroding loess hillside, the land will be conserved for future use. Land without permanent stabilization may be lost to productive use forever.

Nursery stock is produced at the State Forest Nursery at Ames to encourage planting for such conservation purposes. Further encouragement is offered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service through

cost-sharing assistance for tree and shrub planting. State grown stock may not be used for windbreak or ornamental planting. Free forestry service is provided by Conservation Commission foresters with offices at Adel, Chariton, Marshalltown, Anamosa, Fairfield, Muscatine, Charles City, Red Oak, Elkader and Le Mars. These district foresters are available to give free advice in tree planting. They can assist landowners in deciding the kind of trees to plant and in determining the cost-sharing available under the Agricultural Conservation Program.

If you have land upon which planting is a possible soil-conserving use, why not contact one of the agencies in

your county, the State Conservation Commission in Des Moines or the nursery forester, State Forest Nursery, Route 2, Ames, Iowa 50010. A cooperative effort by agencies and landowner can result in a better environment—now and in the future.

Applications for obtaining trees and shrubs to be planted this spring are now being accepted by the State Conservation Commission. Rural landowners planning to establish plantings for erosion control or wildlife cover may get the special application form from Commission employees and county personnel of the Soil Conservation Districts, Extension Service and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

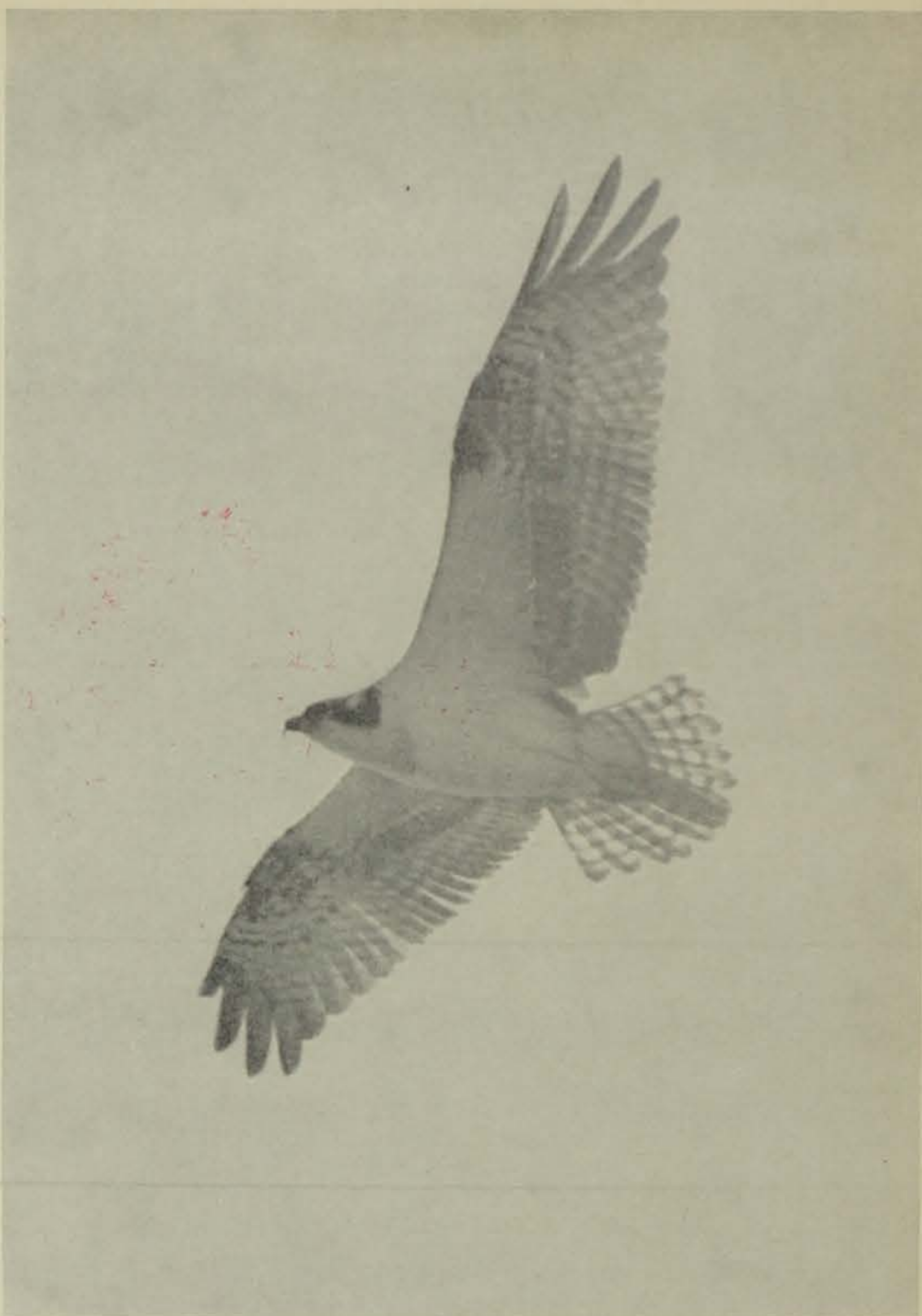


In this day of man's growing concern for dwindling populations of birdlife one particular specie that has been labeled potentially endangered is the American Osprey. Primarily found along coastal and large inland water areas osprey range the entire North American continent.

Biologists studying this fish eating hawk believe the decline has been brought about through residual chemical build up in fish the birds devour. The chemical residues lingering in the bird are then believed to affect its reproductive system. Affected not only by this, osprey nesting sites are rapidly becoming limited through man's encroachment of these secluded areas. Just as recently as last fall the first nesting refuge for this bird was established in an Oregon forest.

Occasional sightings of osprey in Iowa occur during spring and fall migrations. They are usually seen soaring above the larger rivers and lakes in search for small fish swimming near the surface of the water. At a distance from below osprey appear very light in color with nearly a white head and body. Its wingspread is normally 54 to 72 inches long. A noticeable kink or crook in the wing position while soaring is a definite mark of this bird. Another positive sign is the dark feathers located at the bend or wrist of the wing. Somewhat smaller than the eagle, osprey are well equipped with powerful talons for snagging the fish they seek. Their diet is made up chiefly of fish. Very little carrion if any is taken.

To watch an osprey diving for fish can be an exciting experience. The bird will hover seeking its catch from heights above. As quick as lightning the bird dives with legs and talons outstretched. A spray of water fills the air as the bird strikes the water grabbing its prey.



# Osprey Overhead

By Kenneth Formanek  
Information Specialist

Invariably the catch is carried, with its head facing the direction of flight, to a nearby perch where it is eaten.

Nesting osprey in Iowa were last recorded in 1892 near the Cedar River north of Cedar Rapids. Their nests are large bulky affairs situated atop the highest tree branches. Three richly colored eggs are usually laid. A series of short, sharp, cheeping whistles make up the bird's voice.

During fall migrations of recent years this writer has observed osprey soaring over Eagle Lake in Hancock County and above the Mississippi River in Jackson County. Capturing the accompanying photo of the bird as it fished below the outlet of the Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County last fall was an experience long to be remembered.

The future of the osprey is dependent upon man and his stewardship of his natural resources. Through state laws man is protecting this bird from being killed. But, man will have to be more concerned if we are to continue seeing Osprey Overhead.

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