



NOVEMBER, 1971



# conservationist

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# conservationist

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### Iowa Conservationist

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## Forum

Dear Editor:

Can you please answer a question that has bothered me for quite some time?

Why won't pine or spruce trees reseed themselves in Iowa?

I notice an abundance of cedar trees but wherever people have planted pine or spruce the young trees grow, bear cones and seeds but never sprout new trees. Please explain.

T. J. Schwenker  
 Maquoketa, Iowa

Dear Mrs. Schwenker:

Germinating seedlings of pine and spruce require an acid soil and the presence of specific soil organisms to become

successfully established. Seeds falling on Iowa's prairie soils do not often have these conditions. Moisture is also extremely important to successful germination and early growth.

Natural seeding does occur in larger plantations with species such as Scotch Pine, Virginia pine and white pine and in natural white pine groves. Soil conditions in these isolated areas are favorable. Soils organisms, soil acidity (which holds early diseases in check and offers a naturally good growing site) and moisture conditions have been met.

Seedlings, on the other hand, are more easily established. Necessary soil organisms are "planted" with the seedlings, moisture is less critical and the woody seedling isn't attacked by the diseases of the tender germinating plant.

Eastern red cedar is native to the state of Iowa and is adapted to our soils and growing conditions. Thus, it is seen re-seeding throughout the state. ☆

### Commission Minutes

August 18, 1971

Passed the following resolution: "The Iowa Conservation Commission, by this resolution, makes known its sincere regret at the death of Mansford (Mans) Ellerhoff, who during many years of service had made significant contributions to conservation. His lifelong dedication toward a cooperative spirit between governmental agencies to further the accomplishments in conservation of our natural resources will always be remembered."

Adopted the following resolution: "The Conservation Commission wishes to express its appreciation to the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake and Chamber of Commerce of Clear Lake for their assistance, service, and hospitality during the Commission's regular meeting and Governor's Days at Clear Lake. While it's not possible to thank individually everyone who helped make the stay pleasant, a special thanks is extended to Max and Boney Minott for their hospitality."

The Commission by the following action, endorsed Congressional support of a National Hunting and Fishing Day. The director was instructed to prepare and send a letter to Iowa's congressional delegation emphasizing Commission support of Senate Joint Resolution 117 to establish a National Hunting and Fishing Day.

Approved the following development projects for submission to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation: Black Hawk County Conservation Board, Hickory Hills Park; Linn County Conservation Board, Pinicon Ridge Park; City of Ankeny, Sunrise, Hawkeye and Sunset Parks (all amendment requests).

The following County Conservation Board Development Plans and Reports were approved: Dubuque County, Massey Marina Revision; Harrison County, Harrison County Recreation Area; Linn County, Wakema Park Revision.

Approved a land exchange of 53 acres of state-owned land for 30 acres of city-owned land and an easement from the city of Marshalltown for

fishing access on 16 acres and that a management agreement be entered into between the Commission and the City of Marshalltown. The City of Marshalltown desired to acquire title to lands for possible eventual expansion of their sewage treatment facilities and a current flood control project.

September 7, 1971

The following land acquisition options were approved: Big Creek Lake, Polk County, 56 acres; Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo County, proposed contract on McIntosh land, 218.6 acres; Badger Creek, Madison County, flow-age easement.

The following projects were approved for submission to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation: Dubuque County Conservation Board, New Wine Park, development; Hardin County Conservation Board, Eagle City Segment-Iowa River Green Belt, acquisition 19 acres; City of Council Bluffs, Manawa Park, acquisition .81 acres; Clinton County Conservation Board, Rock Creek Park, development; Town of North Liberty, City Park, development; Jasper County Conservation Board Mariposa Recreation Area, acquisition 40 acres; Black Hawk County Conservation Board, West Fork River Green Belt, acquisition approximately 238 acres; City of Indianola, Indianola Community Tennis Center, development (project amendment request).

The following County Conservation Board projects were approved: Adams County, Spring Lake Park, acquisition 27 acres; Monroe County Conservation Board, Miami Lake County Park Revision, development plan; Wayne County, Corydon Lake County Park, development plan; Dickinson County, Horseshoe Bend Recreation Area, development plan.

Granted authority to prepare a management agreement by which approximately eight acres of land known as Hawkeye Wildlife Area and under license to the State Conservation Commission from the Army Corps of Engineers would be turned over to Johnson County for operation,

(Continued on Page 12)



**hunting is  
part of good  
pheasant  
management**

Iowa's first pheasant hunting season was held back in 1925 — so not too many of the nearly 300,000 pheasant hunters who will take to the fields during the 1971 season will be able to say they were out chasing the elusive ringneck on that first day 46 years ago. Those early seasons were run on a more or less trial and error basis, for little was then known about the inner workings of this recent immigrant to the Iowa scene. The scientific study of pheasants, particularly as related to hunting, was still several years away. When such research was begun in the mid-30's, it was quickly dis-

*By Eugene D. Klongan* Wildlife Research Supervisor



covered that there was a lot more to pheasant population dynamics than meets the casual eye, and that things are not always as simple and straight forward as they seem when we get down to measuring cause and effect relationships.

Why all this interest in and concern about pheasants — can't they pretty well take care of themselves? The interest and concern are there because the ringneck is the most important game species in the state, ranking number one on most hunter's preference list. And, with all of the expanding pressures of the modern day environment, his odds for taking good care of himself have become rather chancy. The proper management of our pheasant population, according to established scientific principles, is now more important than ever if we are to obtain the maximum sport and outdoor recreation possible without jeopardizing future pheasant population levels.

How then can we go about the matter of managing a pheasant population? After all, we do not have control over the wild birds like the farmer does over the hens in his chicken house or the cattle in his feedlot. Basically, the things we can do fall into two major areas. We can try to manage the environment, which determines how many birds can be produced each year, in such a way that numbers produced increases; or we can try to manage the bird itself. Boiled down, this means habitat improvement and hunting seasons. There are other aspects than habitat (cover and food is what we mean here) to the bird's environmental pressures, but so far we are not able to manage the weather in any significant sense, and the others (pesticides, predators, disease, accidents, etc.) so far do not amount to that much in the overall scheme of things.

One theme that has evolved from wildlife research the world over, and pheasants are no exception, is that **habitat is the key to game abundance**. The corollary of this then is that most of our pheasant management should be

directed toward developing and maintaining better habitat. This is precisely the main function of the Wildlife Section of the State Conservation Commission, with effort being put forth in this direction the year round. However, judging from the comments received from many quarters, there is still a sizeable portion of the public, including both hunters and non-hunters, who still cling to the sole belief that "hunting is the key to game abundance."

The truth is that, depending on the species and the particular cir-

bring all of their technical skills to bear on the problem, and to integrate the knowledge of their professional colleagues — game managers, conservation officers, etc. — and experienced hunters—into the picture. From this composite the biologist can then recommend what he feels is the best course of action — type of hunting season, for example — and what are some possible alternative solutions that should likewise achieve the desired objectives. The opinions and wishes of the public must also be brought



cumstances, either or both can be factors in determining abundance. In the case of small game, such as pheasants, habitat is the prime consideration with hunting of minor concern. With waterfowl, both habitat and hunting are very important. And if we look at the deer situation in Iowa we find that hunting (including poaching) is presently the major deterrent to population increase, for there is a considerable available unfilled habitat. Thus it is not right to make blanket statements blaming hunting for the supposed woes of all our game populations. Each species and situation must be examined separately and critically.

Such intensive study and evaluation should be carried out by highly trained wildlife biologists. These men are in a position to

into perspective at this stage of the decision-making process. This is primarily the responsibility of the administrative staff—all men with long experience in various aspects of wildlife conservation.

Maintaining this perspective between public opinion and biological fact can get into a real tight-rope balancing act. For example, the public — hunters and non-hunters alike — should recognize that it does not make sense to believe that someone who observes pheasants out of the car window several times a year, perhaps flushes a few birds while working in the fields, and maybe goes hunting a few times in the fall, suddenly becomes far more expert in ringnecks than the man who devotes most of his energies year round to trying to get right inside the bird to see what makes

him tick. However, the biologist must also be careful not to become so hidebound to his scientific facts that he forgets that he is, after all, working for a public agency and the thoughts and wishes of the people who are, in effect, supporting him are also important.

Here is where the problem can really get sticky though, because it is a rare case when all, or even very many, of the different factions that make up the "public" can agree on what they want. One thing the professional wild-

Keep in mind that these are not new facts that suddenly popped out of the woodwork just last year. The current hunting season is the end product of what has been learned from 45 previous pheasant seasons in Iowa — plus what has been gleaned from other states. This involves the knowledge and experience of a great number of individuals past and present—Conservation Commission staff, hunters, farmers, and a host of other interested people.

One cardinal fact emerges from

herd — not if he wanted to get the maximum use out of feed and facilities (habitat to a pheasant) he has available. In principle, there is often not that much difference in good livestock husbandry practices and what should be applied to our wild populations. The sad part is that we have done this so infrequently.

Let us look at a few statistics that shed further light on this under-utilization of pheasant cocks. During the last eight years, 1963-70, we have had "long" pheasant seasons, actually ranging from 51 to 58 days, averaging 53 — or about 7½ weeks. This is more than double the number of days allowed during the 1950's. However the number of hours of potential hunting time during this same period has more than quadrupled, as a result of permitting earlier shooting (see accompanying table). Yet the percent of our total pheasant rooster population that is taken each year has increased less than 10 percent—certainly not the wholesale slaughter some people would have you believe is taking place.

But think of the more than two million extra hours of outdoor recreation provided by the longer season, without jeopardizing in any way future pheasant populations (a more detailed discussion of the many ramifications of this late season hunting will appear in the December issue of the Conservationist).

Let us take some of these same data and show them in a different fashion. During the eight long seasons, pheasant hunters in Iowa have harvested just over 12 million pheasants. This averages out to 1.5 million per year, and has ranged from a low of 1.1 to high of 1.9 during this span. Since just over two-thirds of the cocks were taken, this means there were some 18 million available for harvest. We have already said we need around 10 percent of these for the next spring's breeding stock, or 1.8 million — let's call it an even two million just to give us a cushion. This means we could have taken 16 million birds



Weather and predators take their toll on unharvested birds.

life man soon learns is that there is absolutely no way he can draw up a set of hunting season regulations that will satisfy everybody — not even within the hunting fraternity, let alone considering farmers, non-hunters, or other groups. There must be a "Parkinson's Law" that as soon as a particular regulation has been revised so that the majority is happy, they instantaneously become the minority and a heretofore unheard from contingent on the opposing side becomes the new "majority!"

Now that we are all agreed that there is no way to construct a pheasant hunting season that will completely satisfy everybody, let us examine a few of the facts that are basic to the role of the hunting season in our overall pheasant management program.

the long years of pheasant research and pheasant seasons — **we have underharvested our ring-neck roosters every year!** This comes about because we are able to take advantage of the pheasant being a polygamous critter—each rooster tries to collect as big a harem of hens as he can. Research has shown that a spring ratio of one cock per ten hens is more than adequate to ensure that all eggs laid are fertile — and that really is the only important function the rooster plays in the pheasant's biological scheme of things. This means we need only ten cocks per 100 hens in the spring breeding population. Yet every year we wind up with more than 30 cocks per 100 hens. No farmer in his right mind would keep three times as many bulls as he needed for his cow



A surplus of "seed stock" after the season includes more than enough roosters

— an average of two million per year instead of 1.5, or we might say the harvest could have been increased an average of one-third each year. What this boils down to is that **four million pheasant roosters were wasted** from the hunter's standpoint during the past eight years.

Now we do not set the pheasant season each year just with the harvest of a specific number of birds as the primary goal. The main objective of making hunting a part of good pheasant management is to permit maximum hunting recreation only to the extent that it will not have any effect on future pheasant population levels. In order to help measure what is happening we need to know the number of birds that could safely be taken, and then work backward from there. What we find so far is that Iowa hunters are not even coming close to the break-off point. This means there is still more room for liberalizing season regulations to permit a higher rate of harvest — be it through juggling of season dates, number of days, shooting hours, bag or possession limits, or combination thereof. At what point we might reach that "theoretical maximum" no one knows for sure.

In fact, if we give due weight to the ability of the pheasant to "get smart" and evade hunters in the type of field and cover conditions found here in Iowa during the hunting season, we might be hard put to reach that point with any reasonably acceptable set of regulations. The reason for this is the "law of diminishing returns." The hunter takes to the field with

#### Effect of Season Length on Percent of Pheasants Harvested

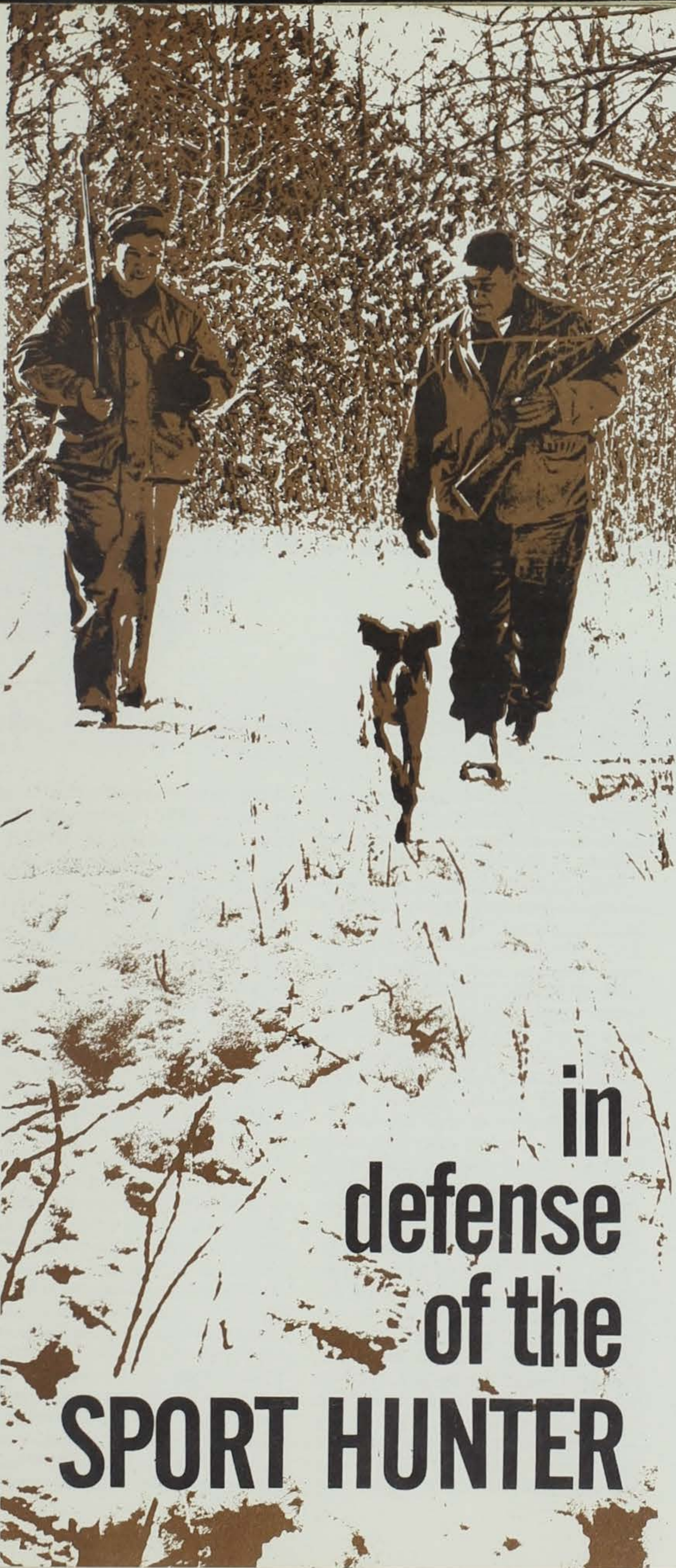
Year	Season Length in Days	Season in Hours	Percent of Cocks Harvested	Avg.
1955	24	108	62%	59%
1956	24	108	65%	
1957	24	108	50%	
1958	24	156	62%	60%
1959	24	180	60%	
1960	24	180	58%	
1961	35	262	62%	61%
1962	35	262	60%	
1963	54	459	67%	68%
1964	58	493	73%	
1965	51	382	63%	
1966	52	442	66%	
1967	52	442	71%	
1968	53	450	66%	
1969	54	459	67%	
1970	51	434	68%	

the aim of shooting a pheasant, and when it gets too difficult for him to do so, he will likely decide to stay home and watch the pro football game or take part in some other activity. Experience teaches us that most hunters reach this attitude when there are still a good number of unneeded cocks yet in the field. Of course, some people give up a lot easier than others, but just because one fellow quits after the easy opening weekend blast is no reason to deprive the dyed-in-the-wool hunter of a chance to try to out-wit those smart-alec roosters several weeks later.

Another principle that is ex-

tremely important in the use of hunting seasons as a management tool is that of "compensation." This says that harvest by the gun can be substituted for natural losses. The high peak in all wildlife populations — game or non-game — comes right after the annual reproductive season is over. The low point automatically comes in the spring just before the new production period begins. A certain percentage of the population is going to be lost over the winter from one cause or another, hunted or not. This is why hunting seasons are generally pegged around the fall season. Hunting merely jumps the gun and allows man to utilize some of this predestined loss before Mother Nature takes her toll.

Small game or non-game cannot be stockpiled from year to year. Stop and think — do you see any great yearly changes in the many kinds of common songbirds? Not hunting meadowlarks, blue jays and cardinals does not make for big increases in their population each year! Some people seem to think that if a pheasant is shot there will forever more be one less pheasant in the state's population. This is no more true than that digging one dandelion means there will always be one less of these in your yard. Harvesting those four million extra pheasant roosters over the past eight years would have had no effect whatsoever on the number of pheasants we have in the state of Iowa this fall. Let us always keep this thought in mind when discussing the pros and cons of pheasant hunting regulations. ☆



# in defense of the SPORT HUNTER

*By Maynard M. Nelson*

Assistant Supervisor of  
Game Division of Game and Fish  
Minnesota Department of  
Natural Resources

"Say Goodbye," the recent NBC television special about vanishing wildlife, capitalized on the new ecological conscience of our society. The ingredients were all there: Beautiful close-ups of rare birds and animals, a popular theme and a sad-voiced commentator.

Conservationists must endorse their distaste for the elimination of prairie dogs from vast regions by poisoned baits, the drastic decline of coastal pelicans by DDT, and the pressures brought to bear on numerous other species by ever increasing human populations.

But the producers of "Say Goodbye" failed to convey the differences between sport hunting and commercial harvesting of wild animals. It was the commercial hunter, not the sport hunter, who exploited the great blue whale, the sea otter, the egret and the passenger pigeon. Those who kill animals and destroy their habitat for quick profits are the ones who have endangered much of our wildlife.

The vast majority of rare and endangered wildlife species are not now, and never were, game animals.

True sportsmen do not slaughter female polar bears, leaving tiny cubs as orphans. But, the producers of "Say Goodbye" apparently did this — and more. The hunter was one of their targets, and they used all the tricks of the camera to label the American sportsman as a part of the problem of vanishing wildlife.

Is such an indictment justice? Are sportsmen really this cal-

(Continued on Page 12)

# the ridgerunners

By Robert Sheets  
Research Biologist

Ask yourself what type of wildlife in Iowa deserves such a name? In this case there is no direct reference to a game species. Instead, the name begins a "hats off" tribute to the Iowa sportsmen that are again ready to take on the most challenging upland bird hunting our state has to offer — hunting **the ruffed grouse**. Only they know what it is like to tackle the rugged, ridgetop terrain in Northeast Iowa that harbors this interesting game bird.

The legend of hunting grouse has been growing steadily since the first recent hunting season began in 1968. That first year approximately 1,100 sporting individuals gave it a try. 1969 followed with about 1,600 hunters and last year the number of hunters rose even higher. In the face of increasing hunter interest the bird population remains stable. What makes this little known sport so attractive? Basically, it can be packed into two simple

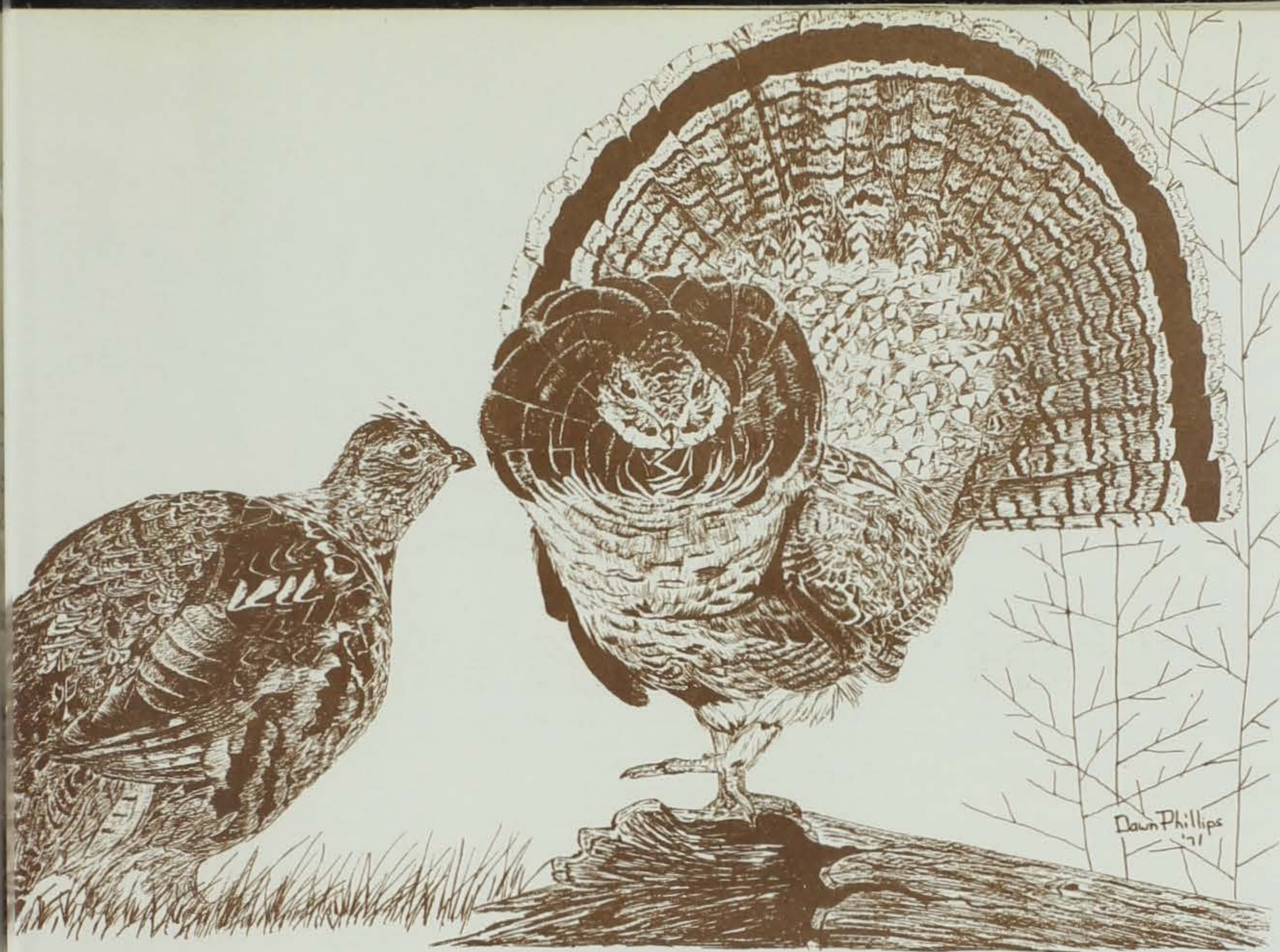
words: adventure and challenge! To satisfy the curiosity of those hunters that have never hunted grouse I offer the following.

Most Iowans have at one time or another visited Northeast Iowa in the summer. They come to enjoy a comfortable picnic or weekend camp out in the rugged forest covered valleys surrounding the small river towns that dot the map from Dubuque to the Minnesota border. Flowers are seen, songbirds are photographed, fish are caught and all go home with fond memories of that fun weekend in Northeast Iowa. For many this is where it ends. Following the Labor Day weekend a rapid decline in outdoor recreation occurs and the Northeast Iowa forests again take on a quiet solitude. Night temperatures lower, leaves begin to brighten and the only regular sound is that of acorns hitting the forest floor. As October approaches a new and strange noise begins to occur in the timber that is unknown even by many natives. On a calm and cold morning in October an average listener, knowing what to listen for, can pick up a sound that

somewhat resembles distant drums. This drumming sound described literally by a "pud pud pud-pud-pud" noise is created by none other than young male ruffed grouse testing their wings and newly found drumming logs. The birds, for the first time are developing their territories and practicing their advertising ability for the upcoming spring's mating season. This activity is largely due to decreasing day lengths that begin to resemble those days in the spring when the birds will mate. The phenomenon is known as photoperiodism.

As fall progresses and young grouse become more independent they seek out the fall food items they like best. Insect matter that provided protein when they were growing chicks become less important and the attraction of ripened dogwood berries on the ridgetops begins to draw them. The ridgetops also offer good vantage points for male birds to broadcast their new territories. They will normally select two or three fallen logs at least 18 inches thick, perch on one log and pro-





ceed to whip their wings at tremendous speeds. The resulting drumming noise is actually caused by the "implosion" of air behind the wing as it is drawn forward and **not** from striking their body. As the days roll on, they become more and more situated in these high forest fringes. The young dense growth found on these ridges is exactly what they are adapted for. If disturbed they can swiftly fly through what would seem a jungle for any creature to walk through. As October draws to a close little do they know that an event is about to occur that will raise the I.Q. for many of them and make a few of them a tasty meal for some lucky hunter.

This year the month of November has been selected as open season for hunting ruffed grouse. Season dates run from October 30 through November 28 with daily bag limit of two birds and possession limit of four. The portion of the state open to grouse hunting is bordered on the South by Highway 3 and on the West by U.S. Highway 63.

Within this boundary are found

the highest and most rugged watersheds in the state. Many average 200 to 300 feet from ridgetop to valley floor at their upper end, with ridges approaching 500 to 600 feet above streams as they enter the Mississippi River.

Grouse hunting in this country requires several extra qualities in a hunter but three basic ones come to mind as flat out requirements! First off, be in **good shape**. You may be lucky enough to find upland access to a "grousy" looking ridgetop but before you're finished you will have had a lot of ups and downs. If you're lucky enough to hit a bird he will probably drop halfway to the valley floor. That brings up the second point, **be quick**. The main objective of a flushing grouse is to put as many trees and shrubs between you and he as he possibly can and as fast as he can! Surprisingly, a pheasant flies faster than a grouse once in full flight, but when it comes to flushing speeds, wily ringneck does not hold a candle to a ruffed grouse! A hunter realizes that when he

stands, knees knocking, heart pounding and a gun half drawn wondering what happened to that exploding bomb of feathers that just disappeared through the trees. My third point is **courtesy**. Many country roads in Northeast Iowa follow valley floors and some pass by some good looking ridges. But remember, the roads were all built to provide access to landowners homes. So use them for that purpose and ask permission to hunt! The owner may clue you in on where grouse have been seen and how to get to them.

One tip I lend is to obtain a road map of the county in which you plan to hunt. From this point on, adventure and challenge are both in store.

If you are lucky enough to bag your first bird, consider yourself a newly initiated member of the "Northeast Iowa Ridgerunners" for you will then know what goes into hunting ruffed grouse.

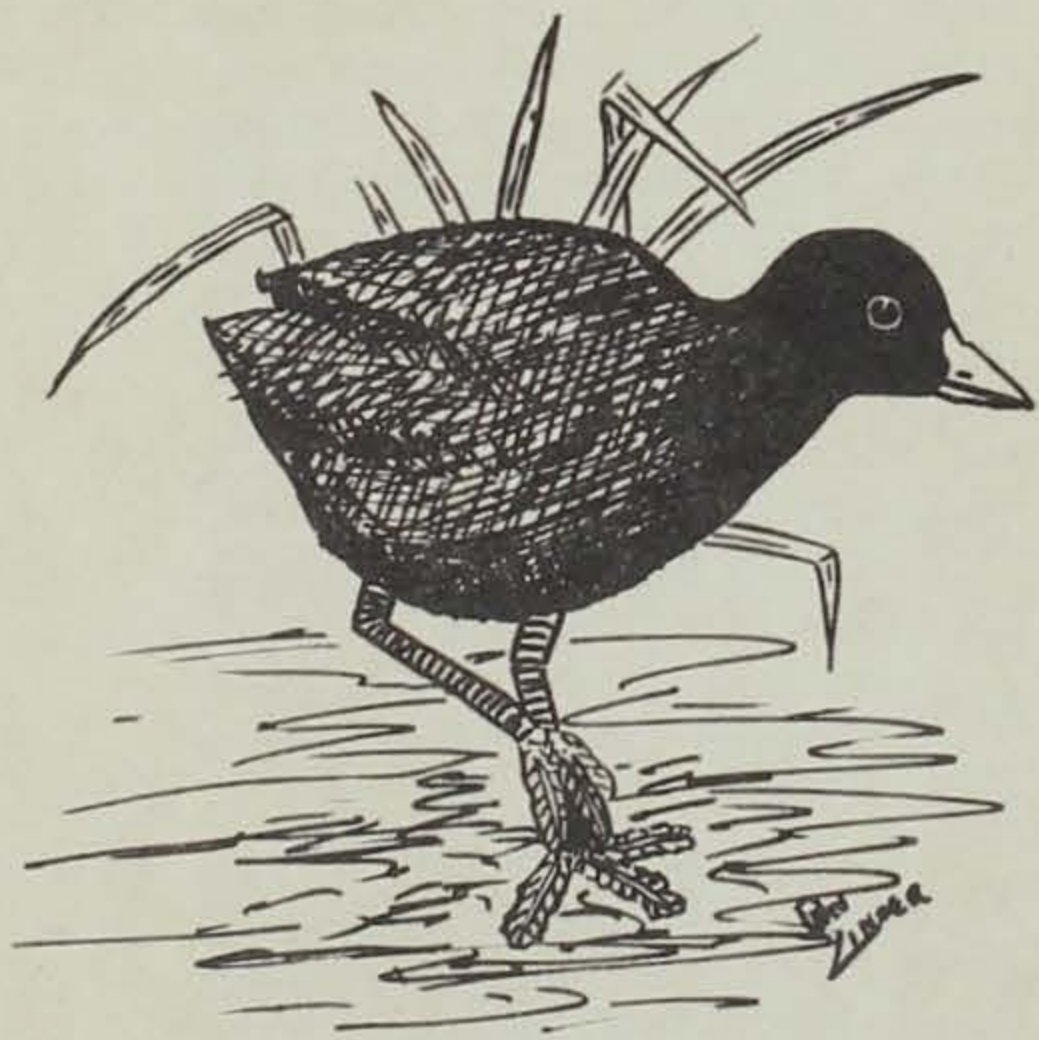
If you plan a grouse hunt this fall and need specific questions answered, feel free to write or call the Iowa Conservation Commission. ☆



## Campfire Cookery

By Dick Ranney

# POODLE DOO



The late Clarence Faulk who was a world champion goose caller and the maker of the famous Faulk game calls, once said to me, "Dick, do you have any poodle doo decoys?" I can honestly say I didn't know what he was talking about. He went on to say one time he had been in his duck blind for several hours and hadn't shot a duck. The spikes (pintails) would pass him by and go winging down the swamp and dive into the water. After watching the pintails' funny pattern for quite a while he decided to pole his swamp boat down and see what was attracting the ducks away from his spread.

He found several hundred poodle-doo and a large flock of ducks sitting on the water. Clarence said he shot 10 poodle-doo and stacked them around his decoys. In a matter of minutes a limit of pintails was taken for everyone in the blind.

About a week after Clarence Faulk returned to his home in Lake Charles, Louisiana and his beloved swamp, I received two large boxes by railroad express. Upon opening the boxes I found out what Clarence Faulk meant when he asked about poodle-doo. In the boxes were two dozen coot decoys. I used that set of mud hens for many years. I still use mud hen decoys around decoy spreads and might suggest you try a few, not in, but around your set. It will give a more natural look.

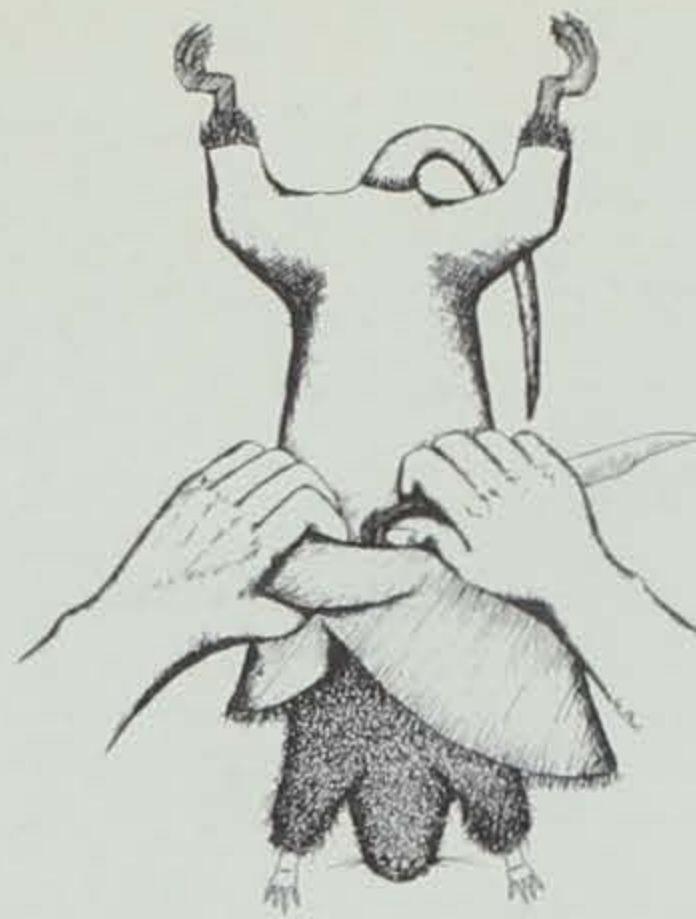
Coot, belonging to the scientific family Rallidea, genus Fulica, species Americana, are from 13 to

16 inches long and weigh a pound or more. Coot are as black as coal except for a white bill and a patch under the tail. They have large clumsy feet which have scallops or lobes for swimming. Called by many names such as coot, blackies, mud hen, mud henrys, mud henriettas, this migrant visitor comes through Iowa each spring and fall. There are several expressions that use the coot as an example (i.e. — silly as a coot — dumb as a coot — crazy as a coot.) These probably come from the bird's appearance and clumsiness. Don't be fooled into thinking this midnite shadow is an easy target. The first one is a snap to shoot. From that point on it becomes a game of rowing the boat fast enough to catch up. Just when the range seems right the mud hen will lumber into the air and fly a safe distance and pop back on the water. This is followed by more rowing and the same pattern is repeated. By the time the hunt is over you have rowed the boat at least 927 miles and you can scratch your ankles without bending over. You may even need help lifting a cup of coffee.

Why would anyone want to shoot a coot? The reason is very simple, to eat. If you enjoy duck or goose you will enjoy mud hen or coot.

Sometimes names are tricky—for example when fiberglass boats first hit the market there were people who would not buy them for fear they would break like a water tumbler if they hit something. That same type of

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## preparation of pelts

By Tom Berkley

District Wildlife Supervisor

thinking is something applied to mud hens. Some think the name mud hen means a hen that eats mud — not so — a mud hen is fine to eat but like most game, fowl or fish needs to be prepared in the proper way. If you are lucky enough to shoot enough coots for a meal, try this recipe.

Skin the bird and soak in salt water. Rinse in fresh water. Bone the meat and roll in flour. Brown well in a large skillet and when the pieces are well brown and crusty, place a lid on the pan and cook until the meat is done to the fork. Slice a couple of large red onions over the meat and cook under cover until the onions are tender. Toss a salad, fix a pan of hash browns, make a pot of coffee. If your arms have regained their strength after all the rowing, you can sit down and eat.

Or try this on your game eating friends. Skin the mud hen, soak out in salt water, freshen and cut into pan size pieces for frying. You can bone the meat before you start cooking if you like. Roll in flour and brown in a large skillet, turning the meat until it is well browned and crusty. Add two cups of milk, salt and pepper, cover and place in the oven at 300°. Cook until the meat is done by the fork. As the meat cooks you may have to add water. Serve with potato salad, cottage cheese, bread and butter pickles, bread, butter and coffee.

If you think the name mud hen might dull the appetite just call them poodle doo. Not many people will know what it is. After they try them they will probably call them some more. ☆

After spending much effort and time in catching predators and furbearers, Iowa trappers lose from ten to twenty percent of the real cash values of their pelts through careless skinning and preparation. The most common mistakes in handling are in skinning, poor stretching, or improper fleshing, with resulting grease burns.

In considering the skinning and preparation of the pelts that are taken in Iowa, we need only to consider two methods of skinning and stretching. These two methods are cased and open handled. In consulting the Wildlife Section of the Conservation Commission, which has close contact with fur buyers of the state, we are informed that all Iowa furs should be cased, only the beaver should be open-handled.

The first to be discussed will be the animals that are cased with the tail skinned out and left on the pelt. These are the mink, raccoon, fox, coyote, weasel and skunk. These animals should all be cased and it will be found that the work will be easier and the pelts nicer if the skinning and stretching is done as soon as possible after the furbearer is taken.

To case a pelt, remove it from the animal in the following manner: For the species on which the

feet are to be left on the pelt (coyote, fox and mink) the cut is started in the middle of the foot pad of the hind foot and continued all the way along the back of the leg to the vent. The same is done with the other back leg. Skin each hind foot out by peeling the fur of the leg loose with the fingers and pulling the skin off the foot until the second toe joint is exposed. It is quite often wise to use a knife to remove the fur from the foot and toes. After reaching the second toe joint, cut through the joint with a knife. The feet will then be skinned out with the skin retaining only the first toe joint and the toenails. It is necessary to remove the feet, as any meat left would cause the fur to rot. The next step is to cut around the vent, and up the bottom side of the tail for an inch or more until the base of the tail can be worked free. Then grasp the exposed part of the tail at the base and pull the hide from the tail bone.

The tail of fox and mink may be left as skinned, the tail of skunk and raccoon should be split from the base to the tip. An old umbrella rib may be used to insure a straight cut.

Next pull the skin off the carcass toward the head, using the knife when necessary. When the

front legs are reached, start to free them from the hide at the body, working the skin off from there down. The skin of the front legs should be split from the elbow to the foot pads to permit the removal of the leg and foot bones of fox and coyotes.

It is difficult to pull the skin of the front leg over the foot (unless this is done the front feet are then skinned out as were the back feet, with the toes cut at the second joint).

The hide is then worked down to the head. Using the fingers expose the base of the ears which are cut off with the knife close to the head. Using the knife, carefully cut the hide free of the head, using care to cut under the eyelids so that the openings are not enlarged. The lips should be cut from the jawbones close to the teeth and should remain attached to the pelt. The pelt is completely removed when the cartilage is cut through at the base of the nose.

Surplus meat and fat should then be removed from the hide using a rounded knife or an ordinary tablespoon, using care to avoid puncturing the hide. The pelt is then ready for the stretching process.

The other furs that are to be cased, such as the muskrat and opossum are handled in the same manner, the only difference being that the tails and feet should be left on the carcass, the skin is cut at the hair-line at both tail and feet.

The beaver is open-handled and stretched round. A single slip is made from the vent to the top of the lower jaw. The feet and tail are cut from the carcass at the hair-line. The hide is removed, using the knife to loosen it. It is impossible to pull the hide from the body, as it is secured very firmly by muscle and gristle. When skinning out the legs, it will be unnecessary to do any further cutting there, merely work the pelt over the stumps of the legs. It is often recommended meat and fat be left on the hide, as it must be fleshed after skinning, and it is sometimes easier to do a neat fleshing job when

there is more meat on the hide to hold on to while fleshing.

All possible meat and flesh should be removed from the hide before stretching, and all possible grease should be removed, using a dull scraper or spoon.

The round effect is given the pelt by stretching, not skinning. The pelt is stretched on a board large enough to handle it, or it may be done on an inside wall, where temperatures will not be excessive. The fur should be dry before placing upon a wall or board. Dampness might cause the fur to mold. Drive four nails through the edge of the head or upper part of the pelt about one-inch apart. Stretch the pelt lengthwise as tight as possible, and drive several tacks along the bottom edge. Then stretch one side of the pelt and tack, then stretch the other side tightly. The balance of the edge is stretched, attempting to keep the hide well stretched, yet maintaining as nearly a perfect circle as possible. The hide should be tacked at one-inch intervals all the way around. It helps to some extent to draw a circle on the board a little larger than the pelt to serve as a guide for stretching. Some of the grease remaining may be removed by scraping after the stretching has been completed.

In stretching the other hides, stretchers of wire may be purchased from the trapping supply houses, or very satisfactory ones may be made from boards, cut to the shape desired. These stretches should be of various sizes, to fit various sized pelts. The pelts should only be stretched to natural size as overstretched pelts will be thin and of lower quality. The furs are pulled over the stretching board fur side in to permit the skin to dry properly. The edges are secured with tacks, as are the back legs and the lower jaw. After drying, the pelts of skunk, muskrat and raccoon are left skin side out, but after partially drying, being almost dry but still flexible, the skins of the raccoon, fox, coyote should be turned fur side out and replaced upon the stretcher until completely dry. ☆

## Commission Minutes

(Continued from Page 2)

development and maintenance. The land is located approximately six miles southwest of Swisher.

Granted authority to prepare a management agreement by which approximately 35 acres of land, exclusive of agricultural ground, be turned over to Pocahontas County for operation, development and maintenance.

Approved an agreement for a perpetual flowage easement exchange and cooperative agreement with the town of Dexter, Dallas County, to construct a 35-acre municipal water supply reservoir, including water withdrawal rights, on State Conservation Commission fish and game lands.

Approved an option on a 61-acre tract, Emmet County. The land is contiguous with East Slough of Ingham Lake. About 45% is marsh, 30%, tillable and 25%, grassland. The marsh contributes to waterfowl production and provides winter cover for pheasants.

Accepted a \$25 gift from Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Hinn of Laurens. It was given in appreciation for courtesy and assistance from the Lake Patrol when the Hinn boat became inoperable on Lake Okobojo August 17, 1971.

Approved recommendations for development at Kearny State Park in Emmetsburg with the stipulation that the project start immediately with completion in five years.

Denied a construction permit to Commonwealth - Edison and Iowa - Illinois Gas and Electric Company for building a diffuser across the bottom of the Mississippi River from the plant at Cordova.

Approved a letter of intent to participate in the Davids Creek Reservoir project in Audubon County with the U.S. Corps of Engineers. ☆

## Sport Shooting

(Continued from Page 7)

loused, this intent on killing wild creatures?

Of course not. And the facts will bear this out.

Sport hunters were fighting for and paying for sound conservation programs long before the words "ecology" and "environment" came into everyday use. They have asked for and even insisted upon special charges, in addition to their license fees, to foster the well-being of the creatures they hunt. The duck stamp, the wetlands stamp, the 11 percent Pittman-Robertson tax on sporting arms and ammunition, are multi-million dollar examples.

Through their monies species

such as the pheasant have been successfully introduced. Thousands of acres of wildlife sanctuaries, breeding areas and recreational areas have been acquired and permanently set aside for all of our citizens. Game species and non-game species alike benefit from this habitat. Game laws are enforced to insure perpetuation of the species. Research has built a foundation of facts to bring game management from the trial and error methods of the past into the technical world of today.

Where were those who cried for protection when the hunting seasons were closed and the flow of hunters' dollars stopped?

Game species, like domestic animals or field crops for that matter, are a renewable resource. They produce an annual crop of young, some of which is surplus and some of which is needed for replacement of the parent stock. The surplus must perish, either by disease, starvation, predation, accidents or by hunting. One way or another, death is assured. So which of the choices is the most practical and humane?

Hunting regulations typically are designed to take no more, and usually less, than the annual surplus. And when there is cause for doubt, the hunter is the first to protest.

Not all men who carry guns are sportsmen. But neither are all motorists courteous, nor all athletes the epitome of fair play. The sport hunter is truly a conservationist. Virtually every environmental organization includes hunters among its leaders. To the sportsman, the killing of his quarry is almost anticlimatic. Hunting is a game of intense concentration, and a dedicated hunter is more carefully attuned to his environment — and holds far more esteem for nature — than do most other men.

He sees the wild creatures when they are at their best, when they are the strongest, freest and sharpest. He has a deep respect for the creatures he pursues — a respect that can best be earned by long hours afield as a hunter.



## deer hunters "BE ALERT"

There is a small group of deer in this year's herd which are "a cut above" the others. Several deer have recently been trapped and equipped with various colored ear streamers and tags plus a radio transmitter collar around the neck. Most of these deer are "taking part" in a cooperative study centering around Pilot Knob State Park, between the Iowa Conservation Commission and the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at Iowa State University. A smaller number are involved in a similar project along the Des Moines River valley near Ledges State Park that is being carried out by the Conservation Commission's biologists. The radio transmitter collar emits a radio signal which "betrays" the animals location to the researcher. These radio signals provide data on deer behavior, home range, and seasonal

movements. This information is very important in determining proper management techniques for our Iowa deer herd.

Everyone sighting or harvesting these marked deer is urged to contact by phone or letter either Lee Gladfelter (Wildlife Research Station, Boone, Iowa 50036), or Michael Zagata (Wildlife Research Unit, 57 Science Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010). Citizens should record the time and place of sighting, color of ear streamer and collar, and if the deer is harvested please recover the ear tags and radio transmitter collar. These items should be saved until picked up by a representative of the Conservation Commission.

Your help and cooperation is needed and will be most valuable in determining the future of our only big game animals — the white-tailed deer.



# measure that trophy rack

Iowa deer hunters who successfully bagged a deer in 1971 with trophy sized antlers are encouraged to enter the rack in Iowa's Big Game Record registry.

All trophy racks taken during the 1971 Iowa archery and shotgun seasons are eligible for entry. Certificates will be awarded to entries which meet minimum standards.

In order to qualify for an award, however, a rack must be measured by a certified official scorer for the Boone and Crockett or Pope Young Clubs.

The Pope and Young Club maintains scores for archery killed deer while the Boone and Crockett Club keep records for big game legally taken with firearms.

Award certificates will be presented in four classes. The classes, with minimum scores for each, are:

## Shotgun—Muzzleloader

Typical White-tail ----140 points  
Nontypical White-tail...160 points

## Archery

Typical White-tail ----115 points  
Nontypical White-tail...120 points

Shrinkage in varying degrees takes place when antlers dry out. For that reason hunters must wait 60 days or more before having a rack officially measured.

Deer hunters possessing trophy racks taken in Iowa that have not been officially measured should contact the Iowa Conservation Commission Information and Education Section, 300 Fourth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, and we will forward official scorers who may be contacted.



## RECORD RACKS MEASURED IN '71

BOW AND ARROW TYPICAL (Minimum qualifying score — 115 points)				
Name	Address	Year	County	Total Score
*Lloyd Goad	Knoxville	1962	Monroe	197 6/8
Clem Efta	Auburn	1970	Sac	161 2/8
Herbert Ruble	Indianola	1970	Warren	153 6/8
Einar Leistad	Elkhorn	1970	Shelby	150
Jim Bohnenkamp	Ft. Madison	1970	Lee	146 4/8
Herman Merten	Charles City	1960	Floyd	146 1/8
Kenneth Gossman	Elkader	1970	Clayton	144 7/8
Dean Monson	Clear Lake	1970	Hancock	143 2/8
George Van Dyke	Archer	1965	Cherokee	137 1/8
Bob Visek	Marion	1970	Delaware	136 7/8
R. J. "Bob" O'Connell	Waterloo	1969	Fayette	134
Roy Veach	Des Moines	1970	Polk	132 1/8
Don C. Clark	Knoxville	1970	Marion	127 1/8
Leonard Smith	Des Moines	1970	Warren	125 6/8
Nick Andersen	Fayette	1970	Fayette	123 7/8
V. L. "Pat" Patrilla	Vinton	1970	Benton	122 6/8
Gary Sobigski	Cushing	1970	Woodbury	118 4/8
Don Usher	Marion	1969	Cedar	118 1/8
BOW AND ARROW NONTYPICAL (Minimum qualifying score — 120 points)				
*Blaine Salzkorn	Sutherland	1970	Clay	216 3/8
Robert Baxter	Villisca	1970	Montgomery	142 5/8
SHOTGUN NONTYPICAL (Minimum qualifying score — 160 points)				
*Carrol Johnson	Moorhead	1968	Monona	250 4/8
Leroy G. Everhart	Sumner	1969	Van Buren	224 4/8
John Meyers	Council Bluffs	1969	Pottawattamie	218 3/8
Chester Hilton	Little Sioux	1958	Harrison	195 1/8
Robert Greteman	Carroll	1966	Shelby	187 2/8
Donovan Hunt	Essex	1969	Montgomery	186
Wm. A. Montgomery	Brooklyn	1970	Monroe	170 7/8
SHOTGUN TYPICAL (Minimum qualifying score — 140 points)				
*Craig Field	Burlington	1967	Des Moines	175
Jim Lines	Marble Rock	1968	Floyd	174 2/8
Dannie R. Lautenbach	Pella	1969	Marion	174
W. R. Huff	Greenfield	1970	Adair	169 3/8
W. C. Sander	New Hampton	1967	Shelby	169 1/8
Keith Johanningmeier	Decorah	1970	Allamakee	166 4/8
Charles Brooks	Knoxville	1965	Marion	164 4/8
V. J. Hall	Columbus Jct.	1962	Louisa	160 3/8
Maurice Erickson	Decorah	1969	Winneshiiek	158 4/8
Clifford D. Hoover	Storm Lake	1965	Crawford	157 4/8
Mitchell Turner	Iowa City	1970	Jones	156 5/8
Walter Michaelis	Indianola	1970	Warren	156 5/8
Hans J. Madsen	Stuart	1970	Guthrie	156 4/8
Alan V. Mohr	Maquoketa	1970	Jackson	152 2/8
Hubert Colyn	Runnells	1969	Marion	151 2/8
Larry K. Harrington	Glenwood	1970	Mills	151
Therald Arterburn	Fontanelle	1970	Adair	150 7/8
W. V. "Pat" Bennett	Carlisle	1960	Ringgold	150 3/8
Dale Spiegler	Waukon	1964	Allamakee	149 5/8
Charles Tipton	Rippey	1970	Greene	147 2/8
Ben Box	Pershing	1970	Marion	147
Richard E. Goebel	Dubuque	1970	Des Moines	146 7/8
Ronald Kraus	Breda	1970	Crawford	146 3/8
Thomas A. Selke	Laurens	1970	Clay	144 1/8
Donald Goeman	Belmond	1965	Dallas	143 3/8
Dannie Lautenbach	Pella	1970	Marion	140 4/8

\*All Time Iowa Record

# ORGANIZED SNOWMOBILING

*By Roger Sparks*

Photos by Jerry Leonard

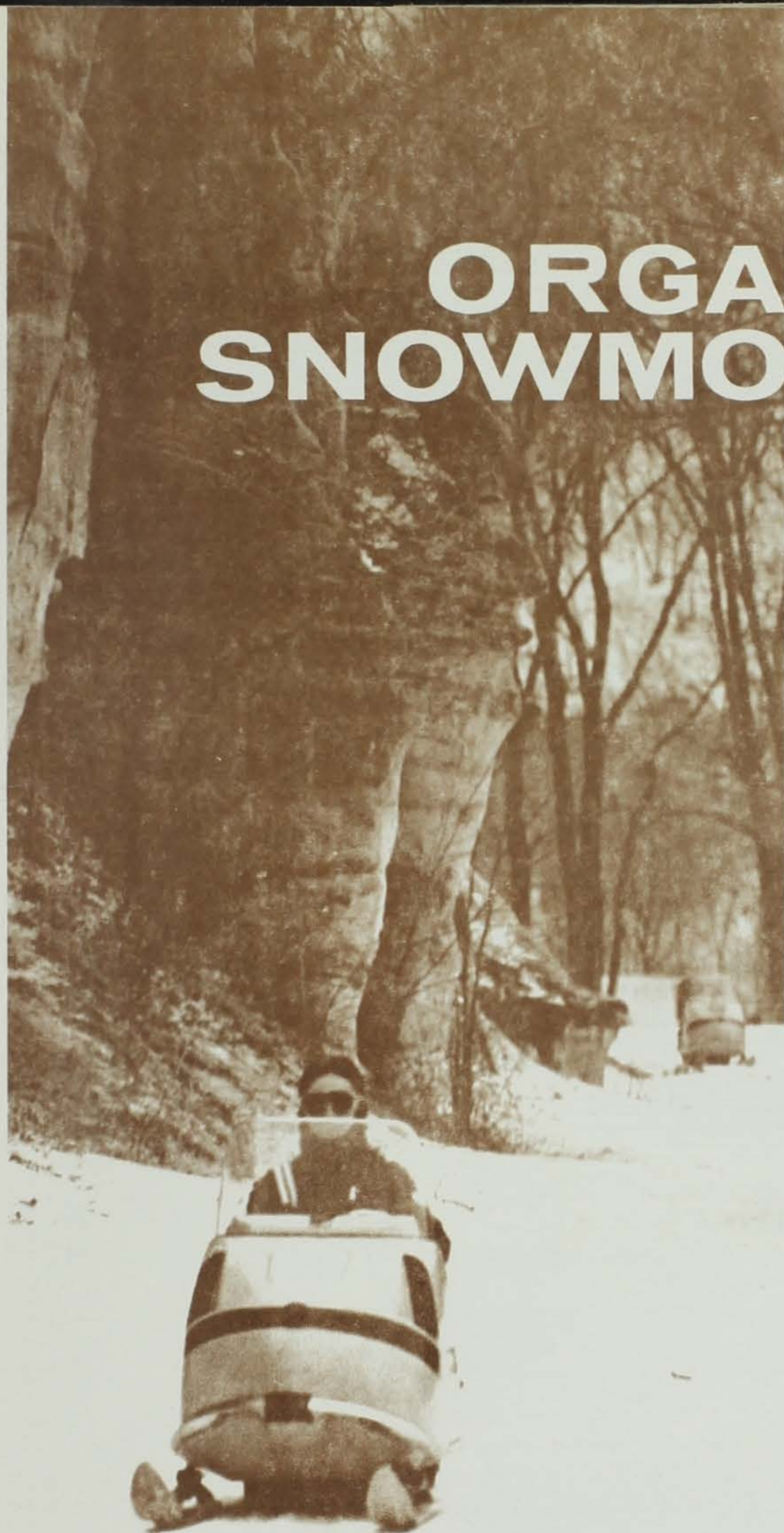
The popularity of snowmobiling is surging in Iowa . . . and little wonder. "Fun-mobiles" offer exciting family sport during the season considered by many as inhospitable toward recreation. Over 11,000 snowmobiles are presently registered in the state and the sport is still in its childhood.

There are many facets to this rapidly growing infant, most are good, a few troublesome. Desiring to avoid these problems, and pursue his enjoyment to the ultimate, the snowmobiler soon discovers the best thing that has happened to his sport — the organized snowmobile club.

Most clubs are responsible organizations with positive standards. Critics of snowmobiling claim the machines can ruin scenic areas. Unquestionably the snowmobile expands the opportunity to visit the outdoors and consequently presents new opportunities for littering, disturbing wildlife, and destroying plant life. But as with other activities, good manners and common sense prevent these acts and clubs stress that their members follow strict codes of ethics and abide by snowmobile regulations.

These organizations will have a strong voice in establishing fair regulations. This combined voice will be heard and new areas will be opened.

Enforcement people find it easy to cooperate with responsible snowmobile organizations. Conservation commission personnel speak before groups explaining and defining laws, encourag-



ing good safety practices, noting new areas, and listening to suggestions. This is certainly not to suggest that joining a club is the only way to be a conscientious, law-abiding snowmobiler. But there are benefits and advantages.

The well-organized club plans trips and rallies. Veteran members know good snowmobiling

areas and this information is pooled. Good clubs take advantage of the scenic state and county areas open to snowmobilers. They cooperate with respective personnel. Private landowners are often more receptive to responsible groups than to individuals.

Clubs stress safety and serve as a clearing house for new tech-

nology, and equipment, good and bad. Clubs also provide an abundance of information on prices, where to buy equipment, insurance, etc.

For all the benefits, most agree that they simply enjoy getting together, sharing common interests, tips and stories; and above all, looking forward to the next snowy weekend. ☆

