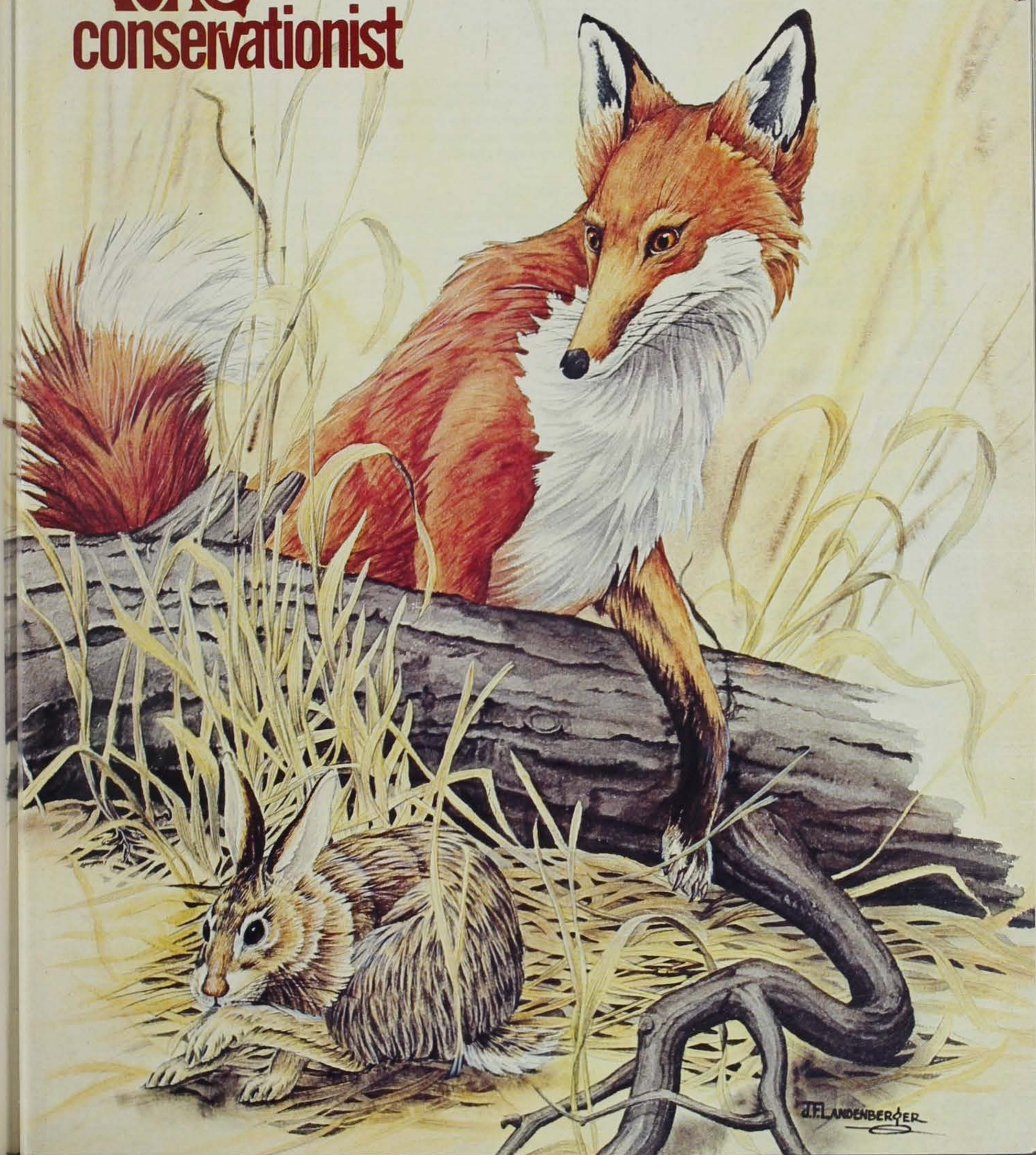




FEBRUARY 1976

OKO
conservationist



J.F. LANDENBERGER



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Kenneth Formanek, A-V Coordinator
Julius Satre, Contributing Editor
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COVER

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LETTERS

The following is a reprint of a letter to the Mason City Globe Gazette Editors after the paper had printed a picture of a deer hunter during the season. The letter was written by Peggy Oines of Clear Lake.

TO THE EDITOR:

I suffered silently through duck hunting season and tried to callously ignore the exploitative, sensational photographic exhibitions of various hunters "bounty." But the caption under the nauseating picture on Page 17 of the Nov. 24 Globe-Gazette was just *too* much.

This is a heavily value-laden topic and I can't begin to discuss anti-hunting arguments, but I don't feel that we who love and respect wildlife in its free-running and living form should be subjected to grisly, violence-lauding photographs which promote the perverted values of a certain segment of our society.

I often walk in the woods near Ventura and enjoy the little bits of natural sanctuary (that is, when they aren't overrun by hunters, Jeeps and snowmobiles!). Now there is one less exquisite creature to catch a glimpse of . . .

If "success" to you means willfully gunning down and destroying a beautiful white-tail deer . . . then please keep the evidence of your carnage to yourself!

Peggy Oines
Tanglefoot
Clear Lake

Ms. Oines then clipped out the letter as it appeared in the Mason City paper and sent it along with further comments to the Iowa Conservationist magazine.

She was prompted to do so after seeing a picture showing a dead pheasant which was used on the back cover of the November Conservationist.

Dear Editor:

Your back page of the November Conservationist magazine is just as disgusting (as dead deer picture in Mason City paper). When will you guys stop courting the hunters and start being wildlife advocates? I guess they pay your salaries. What can you expect?

Peggy Oines
Tanglefoot
Clear Lake

To some, the sight of a dead animal, wild or domestic, is distasteful. I believe most Iowans, however, living in a predom-

inantly agricultural area, have an understanding of man's preference for meat, the killing of animals, and hunting. If I am correct in my belief, perhaps your allegation of perversion is directed to the wrong segment of this society.

Actually, you and I have much in common. I have my favorite woods and I spend a lot of time there. From the very first one I saw as a child, I have thrilled to the sight of a deer—be it a buck in full fall antler, a doe grazing in a summer field, or a spring-born fawn. I like seeing their tracks in the snow. I appreciate very much just knowing deer use "my" timber. They are indeed exquisite creatures.

For three or four days each fall, our thoughts concerning deer may not be in complete agreement. I go to my favorite timber and try very hard to shoot a buck. I haven't yet been "successful" in killing one in that timber, but I have succeeded in enjoying immensely the long hours of the hunt. I pay \$10 for a deer permit each year, plus \$5 annually for a state hunting license, plus excise tax on all arms and ammunitions I purchase so that there may be deer in the woods. True, some of this money goes for salaries (mostly to biologists and very little to editors!), but most of it goes for acquisition of our diminishing timbered acres, research studies, and deer management.

Careful management of this valuable resource has led to a remarkable comeback of the white-tail during this century—a comeback that could not have been possible without the fees paid by hunters. Once slaughtered to near extinction for food and market, the adaptable white-tail has reached abundance in North America under strict hunting regulations.

Like other hunted species, the immediate future of the white-tailed deer seems bright.

The long-range picture for wildlife in general may be something else again. I wonder if you have suffered silently through the losses of habitat, the draining of marshes, bulldozing of ditches, and the destruction of timbered areas. These are the true threats to wildlife and hunters sponsor a genuine effort to reduce these dangers.

Although the act of hunting may not appeal to you, being "pro-hunting" may very well be your best contribution to wildlife today.

Roger Sparks
Editor

More \$ Needed to Support Fish and Wildlife Programs

by Fred A. Prierwert
Director, Iowa Conservation Commission

WHY DON'T YOU ADD more game wardens to catch deer poachers? Why don't you stock more fish in this lake? Why don't you purchase more public hunting areas in my county? The answer to these and other, similar questions is simply that more dollars are needed.

Fish and wildlife programs are financed through the purchase of licenses, stamps, and an excise tax paid on sporting goods and equipment. In 1974-75, \$5,374,000 from the sale of licenses and stamps, \$1,187,000 from excise taxes on sporting goods, and \$190,000 from miscellaneous sources was placed in the fish and wildlife trust fund. These monies, by law, must be used exclusively to support fish and wildlife programs.

These programs include conservation law enforcement; operation of fish hatcheries; fish stocking; maintenance of public fishing and hunting areas; fish and wildlife management and research efforts; related technical and administrative support; and construction of facilities and acquisition of additional fish and wildlife public areas. More than \$5,700,000 is budgeted for operational costs this year and an additional \$4,800,000 for facility construction including completion of the Rathbun Fish Hatchery and land acquisition.

License fee revenue is unique in several respects when compared to a general tax such as sales tax or income tax. First, it is a "voluntary" tax - there is no requirement that a person purchase a hunting or fishing license unless he or she wishes to hunt or fish. Secondly, license revenue does not automatically "grow" with inflation. The sales tax collected on the price of a color T.V. increases when the price of the T.V. increases. The income tax you pay increases when your salary increases, even though the rate may stay the same. But the only way license revenue can grow is through the sale of more licenses or through an increase in license fees approved by the Iowa legislature.

The last general license fee increase was granted in 1972. Everyone knows how much household expenses have increased since then. The same holds true for the prices paid for enforcement cars, fish distribution trucks, tractors, chemicals, fences, fish feed, etc. In addition to normal, cost of living increases for conservation employees, the implementation of the Fair Labor Standards Act relative to government employees means

that the department must now pay overtime just like any other employer. Forthcoming collective bargaining rights may also influence labor costs.

The Iowa Conservation Commission is requesting the second session of the 66th General Assembly to increase the license fees as follows: resident fishing license \$4 to \$5, resident combination license \$8 to \$9, non-resident hunting license \$25 to \$30 and deer hunting license \$10 to \$15. This would be effective in 1977 and would result in increased revenue.

This increase would be necessary just to maintain the current level of activities.

There are approximately 860,000 individual licenses and stamps sold each year. Assuming the expected annual inflationary rate, the average license or stamp will have to be increased 75¢ to \$1 each year just to compensate.

What happens if the increase is denied by the General Assembly? At first, the effect will probably not be too noticeable. As time goes by, however, a deer poacher may not be arrested because the department is unable to fill a vacancy left by a retiring conservation officer. A gravel access road to a hunting or fishing area will become, instead, a mud road. Equipment will not be replaced as often, resulting in breakdowns at critical times. Stream improvement structures will disintegrate and not be replaced.

Legislators are always reluctant to increase any kind of tax, even a voluntary tax. Legislators and the public, alike, enjoy a popular misconception that a government agency can always "get the job done" if they just cut out the "fat." Unfortunately, what is "fat" to one particular person is usually an essential activity to another member of the general public. The "fat" always seems to be in the other guy's backyard.

The choice is yours. Do you want the Iowa Conservation Commission to maintain the current level of fish and wildlife programs? If so, urge your legislator to support the requested increase. Do you feel that the state should initiate a major effort in improving fish and wildlife programs along with a general improvement in outdoor recreation? If so, along with urging your legislator to support a license increase, urge him or her to support an increased share of general revenue for conservation purposes. Keep in mind "there ain't no free lunch." □

THE MOUNT AYR WILDLIFE UNIT consists of Adams, Taylor, Clarke, Union, Decatur, and Ringgold Counties in Southwest Iowa. This area is typified by rolling hills drained by numerous streams and rivers. Drainage is well developed, and no natural lakes or marshes occur in this area. Nearly all of the land is devoted to agriculture. Broad ridgetops and flat bottomlands are usually used for rowcrops, while the steeper land that makes up much of the area is farmed on a rowcrop-oats-meadow rotation, or is left as permanent pasture. Most farming revolves around livestock production, and almost all of the land is grazed by stock sometime during the year.

The largest timber tracts in the unit are located in Clarke, Decatur, and Ringgold Counties. Several tracts are over 1000 acres and some are much larger. Smaller timbered areas are found throughout the unit, particularly along the major rivers. Many fencelines, roadsides, and ditches are grown up to brush and trees and provide excellent wildlife habitat.

Though natural lakes and marshes are nonexistent, several sizeable impoundments have been constructed for water supply, flood prevention, watershed protection, or recreational use. Some of the larger public lakes are Green Valley Lake near Creston, Lake of Three Fires near Bedford, Nine Eagles Lake near Leon,

and Lake Icaria (under construction, 1976) north of Corning. A 60 acre manmade marsh on the Mount Ayr Wildlife Area is the only marsh in the unit. Besides these larger areas, there are thousands of farm ponds built for livestock water supply or erosion control.

The most popular gamebirds on the unit are pheasant and quail. Both are found throughout the area, but pheasant numbers are generally highest in the northwestern half of the unit and quail reach their greatest densities in the southern portion, particularly south of Iowa highway 2. Rabbits, deer, and squirrel are found in good numbers across the unit wherever suitable habitat exists. Coyote and raccoon are also found in quantity wherever there is suitable habitat. Wildlife turkeys are found through the timbered areas of eastern Clarke County and attempts are being made to establish them in other portions of the unit.

For mixed bag hunting, the farmlands of this unit are hard to match. Some of the best hunting is found along brushy ditches or fencelines that border rowcrops. Here, hunters with a good dog are almost assured good shooting for quail, pheasants, or cottontails, with all three often found in the same patch of cover. Any good grass or weedy cover adjacent to cropfields is likely to contain pheasants, and cornfield hunting will also yield good results.

Photo by Ken Formanek





Photo by Jerry Leonard



Photo by Sonny Saire



Photo by Jerry Leonard

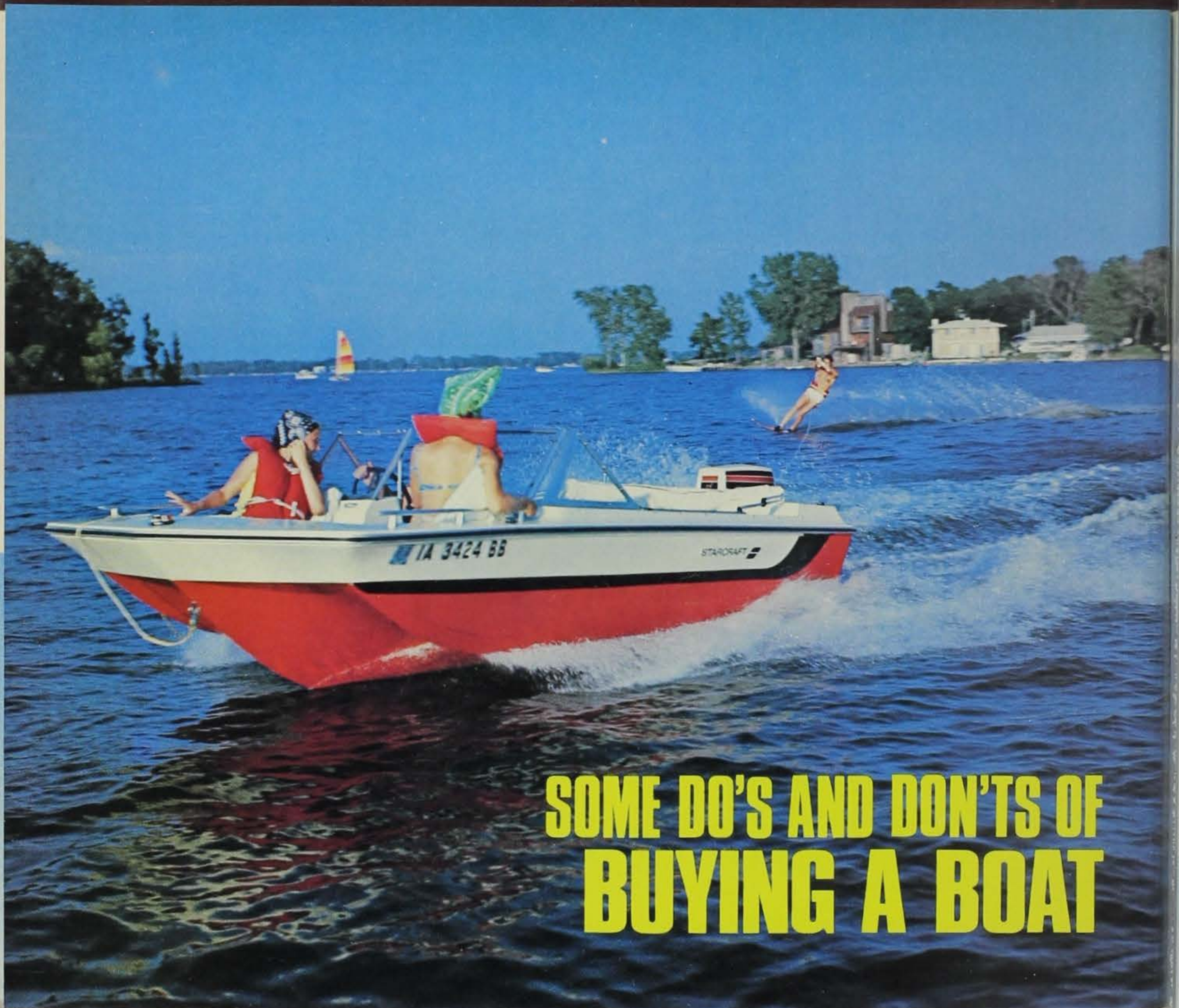
Almost any timbered area provides good squirrel hunting, with the best bet being timber that adjoins cornfields. The timberlands also provide the best deer hunting. Bowhunters have a high rate of success hunting from tree stands, while most shotgun hunters hunt in groups, often in organized drives. The newest addition to the scene in this part of Iowa is the wild turkey. Privately owned timberlands in eastern Clarke County provide lucky permit holders with a good opportunity to bag this trophy bird during the spring gobbler season.

Waterfowl hunting is limited on the unit, but good shooting is sometimes available on the ponds and lakes or in cropfields. The best waterfowl hunting is had by those who have the chance to make prehunt scouting trips to locate areas being frequented by ducks or geese.

Coyote hunting is one of the most popular winter sports in this area. Most coyotes are taken by organized groups using dogs, but individual hunters or small parties can also be successful using predator calls or tracking after a new snowfall. Raccoon hunting is also popular here, and a person with a good pack of coonhounds will be likely to have a successful hunt along any of the drainages in the unit.

Because of the good hunting found on this unit, hunting pressure often gets quite heavy, particularly early in the season. Since many farmers choose to limit the number of hunters they will

Continued on Page 15



SOME DO'S AND DON'TS OF BUYING A BOAT

Photo by Ken Formanek

by James Horan
Boating Safety Coordinator

THE DREAM BOAT WISH you had may not be the right boat for you. Today there are hundreds of different kinds, sizes, types, and styles of motorboats inviting your purchase.

Safety should be your primary consideration but safety means different things in different situations. A 12-foot car topper may be perfectly safe in one situation while a 20-foot cabin cruiser may be necessary to be safe in another. So, how does the new boat buyer know what is right for him?

The U. S. Coast Guard and boat manufacturers have worked out formulas for determining a boat's safe maximum weight capacity. A capacity plate appears on every boat so check it. In Iowa, a maximum number of passengers is also assigned to each boat. These laws are enforced to prevent overloading problems.

Also, the Coast Guard stipulates to manufacturers certain construction standards such as flotation types, amounts and placement, hull design, and materials standards.

Even with all of the above, nothing prevents the consumer from buying a boat which is **not designed** for his particular uses. There is no easy solution to this problem. No laws or formulas can take the place of common sense. These suggestions, however, may help:

The prospective boat owner should do some thinking about the types of water and boating to be pursued. There is no such thing as "the universal boat". Some boats may be more adaptable than others, but no one boat is desirable for all possible uses. For example, flat bottom boats are the most popular small craft in Iowa. They are shallow draft boats and are ideally suited for shallow rivers and bays, marshes, and backwaters where fishing or hunting is often at its best.

The two other most important hull designs are the V-hull (including semi "v") and the tri-hull, both of which are meant to take the hard ride and bumps out of boating. Because of their design, they slice through the water and are the most stable in rough water. Most are roomy, come in a variety of sizes, and are most popular as a family boat. They may have an inboard or outboard engine or a type called an inboard-outboard (IO).

The larger outboards cost much less than comparable IO's and their sizes run from approximately 150 horsepower down to 1½ horsepower electric models. IO's usually start at 135 horsepower and, of course, can go up from there. Although the IO's initial cost is higher in the long run, you may be ahead to consider one if your situation warrants it. They are easy to use and maintain and are

more efficient users of gas than outboards. You can also regain some of your initial cost since you can sell your IO at a higher price than a similar boat with an outboard.

Pontoon boats have a hull design pretty much unique to the name. They are simply platforms of various sizes attached to pontoons of various sizes. The pontoon provides the flotation, the platform provides the deck space. Like most other boats, they come in different styles and sizes and are well suited to fishing or, where permitted, bathing. They are of shallow draft but are difficult to maneuver in narrow channels. Advantages include stability and passenger capacity. Big disadvantages are poor handling qualities in wind and they are extremely difficult to trailer.

Two other specialized types of boats are the bass boat and the jet boat. The bass boat is essentially a modified (rounded) flat bottom designed to be successful in a market only recently developed; that is, bass fishing tournaments. The boat, unlike most other boats, is designed specifically for one activity—fishing. Everything in the boat, whether original equipment or options added later, is for the comfort and convenience of the fisherman. The boat and boating are strictly a means to an end which is fishing. It is great to be perched up level with the top of the gunwale for fishing convenience, but it also makes the boat unsafe in choppy water or at fast speeds because of the higher center of gravity.

Jet propulsion works well on 18 to 21-foot hulls, and is becoming more popular as newer designs produce more efficient steering at lower speeds. Advantages are fewer moving parts and they adapt well to shallow water.

As in all things, the final determination is cost. If you enjoy many different activities on the water, you may want more than one boat. Generally, you pay for what you get. Don't be fooled into buying a narrow boat with low gunwales because it seems you're getting more for your money. Compare **all** dimensions of boats including the height of the gunwales. They are very important for stability and safety. Be leery of bargain basement boats, unless weight, dimensions, etc are comparable to those of established brand names. There can be a world of difference in the stability (and consequently the types of water they can be used on) between one 14 foot boat and another.

Before buying any boat, check with people who boat regularly. They can tell you some of the problems of boating. Obtain a copy of "Iowa Boating Regulations" also. All specific questions cannot be answered here so find someone who can help you. Contact a Waters Officer, a Coast Guard Auxiliary member, or seek answers about boating from a boating club member. Ask a reputable dealer. One final reminder: boats, unlike cars, do not come equipped with all the necessary safety equipment. Nevertheless, you are responsible for its availability and condition while using the boat. □

Photo by Jerry Leonard



Photos by Ken Formanek



Winter Feeding is for the Birds

by Bob Barratt
Superintendent of Wildlife

YES, THE TITLE DOES HAVE a double meaning and it's intentional. Both are correct. Birds, both large and small, will come to feed put out for them. But artificial feeding is rarely essential to their survival. The greatest benefactor is the person or persons doing the feeding and subsequent observing.

When severe winters hit Iowa, well meaning persons besiege the State Conservation Commission with a deluge of letters urging the state agency to feed pheasants, quail and other game species. Experience, however, has shown that such feeding is not only unnecessary but is impossible as well. Under average winter conditions artificial food (such as corn) supplied at feeding stations is consumed at a weekly rate of two pounds per pheasant, one pound per Hungarian partridge or cottontail rabbit, or one-half pound per quail. Iowa's winter pheasant population of 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 birds would then consume some 2,500 to 3,000 tons of corn per week or about 1,300,000 bushels during a three month winter period. Add to this the amount that would be consumed by quail, rabbits, Huns, deer and other species, and the total quantity would be staggering.

The millions of bushels of feed necessary would be only a fraction of the total cost, however. Labor, transportation, and other costs would be unbelievable. A minimum of one feeding station per square mile would be necessary and even more would be desirable. The minimum, then, would require more than 50,000 stations to cover Iowa's approximately 56,000 square miles. Constructing these feeding stations, supplying them with feed several times weekly, and distributing the vast amounts of grain would require a labor force far exceeding the entire number of persons employed by the department.

The tens of millions of dollars necessary to conduct a program of this magnitude would have little effect on wildlife populations. The same amount expended to improve wildlife habitat would do a great deal more for all wild species—game and non-game alike. Birds do need food in the winter, but this is only one of their requirements. Good habitat is essential in order to provide protection from winter storms, while at the same time it usually provides an abundant supply of weed seeds and waste grains for

(Continued)

Photo by Jerry Leonard





winter food. A two year study conducted in northern Missouri showed abundant food available in these agricultural areas. Samples were collected on all types of vegetation and showed an average of 139 pounds of seeds available per acre. Machine-picked cornfields averaged 232 pounds of seeds per acre. This study was conducted during a drought period which seriously reduced the amounts of seeds produced. Investigators concluded that if food were the only limiting factor, northern Missouri could have sufficient food to support 12 quail per acre. Many other factors, of course, make it impossible to have populations anything near this high.

The infamous winter of 1935-36 was probably the most severe in Iowa history and it took a tremendous toll of pheasants and other wildlife. There were two blizzards and three drift storms on a northern Iowa study area when temperatures dipped to -35° . Investigators found 165 dead pheasants on their study area. Only one bird showed signs of starvation; the remainder dying from a variety of causes, the vast majority (137) from freezing and choking. Birds caught in drift storms and blizzards away from dense escape cover almost invariably turned their tails to the wind and crouched on the snow. The body feathers of such unfortunate pheasants were ruffled and the the driven snow was packed under the feathers. Body heat melted the snow and the severe cold

caused the water to freeze and thus encase the birds in ice. Many of the ice-encased birds probably froze to death, for their bills and nostrils appeared to be clear of bloody or excessive exudates (such mucus is a symptom of pneumonia), and of the heads not more than the eyes were covered with ice. Hence they probably did not choke to death. Perhaps, the eyes of some of the birds were covered with ice before their death, and they were unable to find cover. Numerous pheasants were found with the bills or nostrils, and in some cases both of these parts, covered with ice. Probably in such cases the birds died of choking, although some of them were also encased in ice.

Many more studies could be cited showing that starvation in wild populations seldom occurs in Iowa. Severe wildlife losses occurred in the 1940 Armistice Day blizzard, the St. Patrick's Day storm of 1965, and the blizzard in northwestern Iowa in January, 1975. In each case, however, losses were storm inflicted and closely resembled those in 1935-36 described above. In no case did starvation play any part at all.

Though winter feeding is not essential it certainly does no harm if done *properly*. Feeding often inspires a broad interest in wildlife problems and conservation in general. Taking an active part in a feeding project, or just enjoying the opportunity to observe



◀ *Downy woodpecker*



▼ *Nuthatch*

wildlife, often develops a desire for greater knowledge of the out-of-doors. These are long term benefits to general conservation programs not readily apparent. But the short term benefits are usually to the persons feeding or observing. Just remember that it must be done *properly*.

To be successful a feeding program should begin early in the winter, in December, so birds may learn where to expect food. Feeding should be light until a storm emergency occurs or until late winter when food may become scarce. Feeding stations should be in protective spots where winter storms will not cover them with snow. Place them in natural game coverts so that the species to be benefited need not be exposed to winds and drifting snow and will be protected from predators. The best feeding shelter for farm-game species is a lean-to structure built of poles covered with brush. The front of the shelter is open and faces the sun and away from prevailing winds. Open spaces, 18 to 24 inches high, are left around the bottom of the shelter to allow users of the shelter to escape in any direction upon the approach of predators. A variety of grains can be used, but corn is one of the best. A space under the shelter should be swept free of snow, or a platform may be constructed upon which to place the grain. Don't scatter loose grain on soft snows. Ear corn, if available, is better than the shelled grain since it is less likely to be covered by snow. Once feeding has begun and the wildlife has been attracted to your station, it is imperative that you feed several times a week until spring comes and the birds or other species disperse from the feeding site. Failure to feed throughout the winter after having attracted wildlife to your station can spell doom for them. They have become dependent on the grain you supply, and in severe weather would be hard pressed to find a substitute source.

While game birds are usually found in natural coverts and around large farm groves, non-game species can be readily attracted to backyard feeders. To attract these smaller feathered creatures, a broader variety of foods is desirable. Feeders should be again located in protected areas, out of the wind and facing the south or east. Many forms of commercial feeders are available or you may construct your own by building a shallow tray from scrap lumber. Feeders can be placed on a short pole, a window ledge, or hung from a tree branch. Follow the same feeding practices as those for game birds but use a wider variety of seeds. Mixed bird feed and sunflower seeds are available at most supermarkets. Seeds of the various varieties of millets and grain sorghums are excellent foods, and some of the larger songbirds enjoy sunflower seeds. Squirrels, too, are attracted to these feeders and can become a nuisance. Then it becomes necessary to use some device making it impossible for the squirrels to reach the feeder. They can often be discouraged from visiting your feeder by providing them an alternate food source. Ears of corn tied to a tree, or stuck on small branches or nails driven into a post, usually will divert the squirrels to this alternate source. Insect eaters like the nuthatches and woodpeckers can be attracted to your yard by providing chunks of suet (beef fat) in mesh bags hung from, or tied to, trees.

There are many foods used by birds and a multitude of tips to attract them to your yard. There are a great number of books on the subject, many available at your local library. Seed and nursery or garden centers where bird feeders and feeds are sold can often be helpful by supplying information.

Again, remember that once you start feeding it is necessary that you continue until spring. Birds you attract to your feeder may have stayed all winter because food was available, rather than migrating further south. Once severe weather is upon us it may be too late for them to search for another food source. Since feeding small birds is almost always in close proximity to the house, daily observations will determine the need for additions to the food supply.

So, as the title suggests, winter feeding is "for the birds", or is for the birds benefit. Both meanings may apply. But regardless of your viewpoint it is certain that you can have many hours of enjoyment from observing wildlife, whether it be a large scale game bird feeding project or a simple window sill tray filled with bird seed. Hopefully, it will generate a greater interest for you in our out-of-doors and in our wonderful wildlife resources. □

CLASSROOM CORNER by Robert Rye Administrator, Conservation Education Center

THE CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER is visited by about 10,000 people a year. They return home with a better understanding of why the State of Iowa provided them with such a facility and how it may be used. The dedicated reader of Classroom Corner over the years should have many ideas about the Center and its uses.

I believe it would be fair to say that the true American sportsman has probably the fullest appreciation and respect for nature. He is joined by a few select groups such as ornithologists and conservation clubs. Hunters and anglers were among the first to warn of the need to conserve America's fish and wildlife resources; and many of them have played an active, voluntary role in restoring and enriching America's splendid natural heritage.

Hunters and fishermen are indeed interested in their environment, and *many want to learn* more about their role in their environment. There are many aspects to understanding environment such as appreciation, maintenance, protection and improvement. Environmental education involves understanding these four aspects and compliments them by encouraging the decision-making process to the point of actually doing something about the environment.

Through environmental education we at the Conservation Education Center attempt to look at various aspects of a given problem, determine various alternatives and then decide which course to follow. Environmental education is interdisciplinary — which means it includes history, politics, economics, engineering, and of course, the sciences. Nature study, outdoor education and *CONSERVATION EDUCATION* are all part of it.

Conservation education involves learning how to be good stewards. The whole focus is this: the care of our inherited land, water, air, wildlife, trees and energy.

We at the Conservation Education Center stress a segment of this. We use the other parts to help explain conservation education. Many seemingly small "tricks" (such as a game) help us encourage the study of a small part.

One activity that occurs at the Education Center is the making of collections. Children (up to age 90) are great collectors. Many have favorite seashells, rocks, insects or memorabilia collections which they would enjoy sharing with their class. Let them develop their own methods of sorting these collections (by size or color are just 2 methods). What classifying method is used by each collection owner?

Have them take other objects from nature (say seeds) and have half of the group sort these and the rest try and guess how they were sorted or classified.

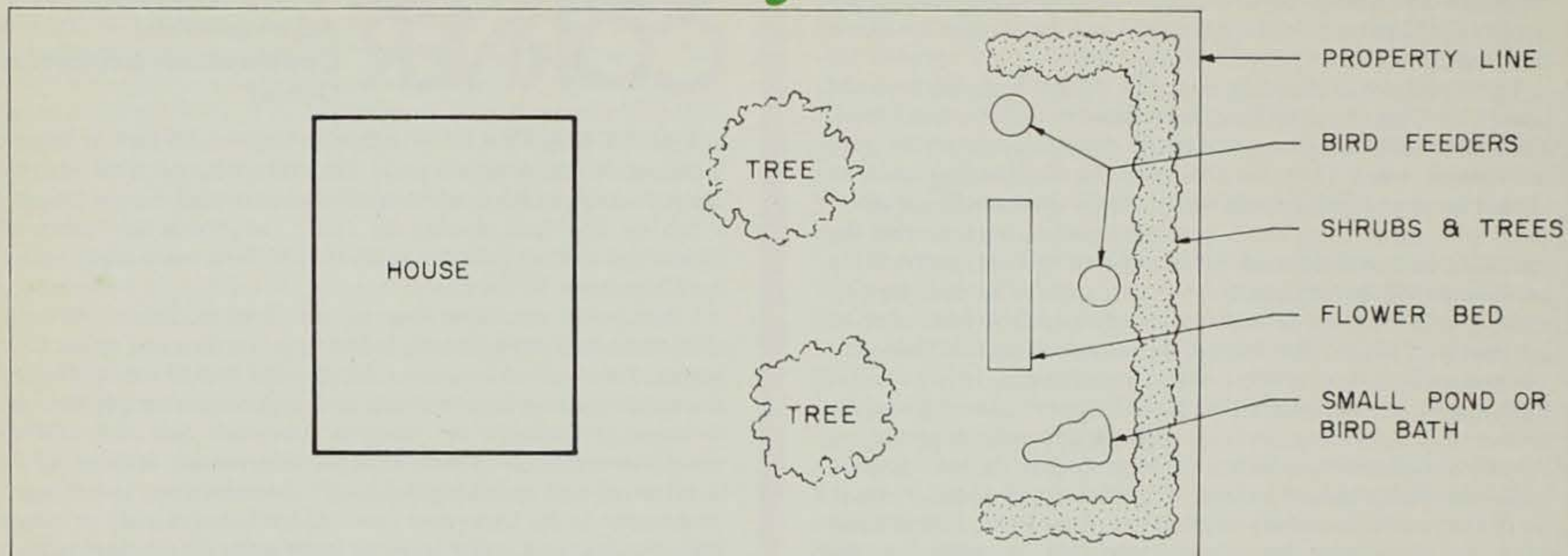
Make 3 X 5 cards with instructions on them, such as: Find 5 objects the same shape; find the largest and smallest of a particular thing (say a leaf); and find 10 different shapes of a particular thing. *But* be sure to keep all assignments secret. When all the mini-collections are completed, have your "detectives" guess the basis on which each collection was made.

A third activity used in looking at objects is to pass out a number of familiar objects such as 10 oranges, 10 leaves, or 10 twigs. Ask if they can identify their own *particular* one. Have them examine carefully how it looks, how it feels, how it smells. Mix them together — you'll be amazed at how many can identify their own object.

Obtaining an interest and an awareness of our environment is always a starting point at the Conservation Education Center. From there we can expand in many directions. Ask a friend about the Education Center or if you have been there tell a friend.

Get your group together for a day or two, or more, at the Conservation Education Center. Fall bookings are still available. Contact the Conservation Education Center, Route 1, Box 138C, Guthrie Center, Iowa 50115, (515) 747-8383, to reserve a date.

Your Own Backyard Habitat



by Curt Powell

MAN'S HOME is his castle! His backyard, his kingdom. But there's more to do in the backyard than just bar-b-que. The school yard is a playground, with jungle gyms and slides; but there's more there to do than just recess activities!

Every area or patch of ground can and should be a place of multiple use. One of the most important types of use one can have for these areas is to convert part of it into wildlife habitat.

These areas do not have to encompass acres and acres of land or be developed to the point of being ridiculous. They do not need to be miles away from your home so that getting there is an all-day chore. It is nice to be able to take a field trip to one of our state areas or get away from it all for a week or so on vacation, but what about the rest of the year? How can you appreciate and learn more about conservation and the environment right in your own backyard?

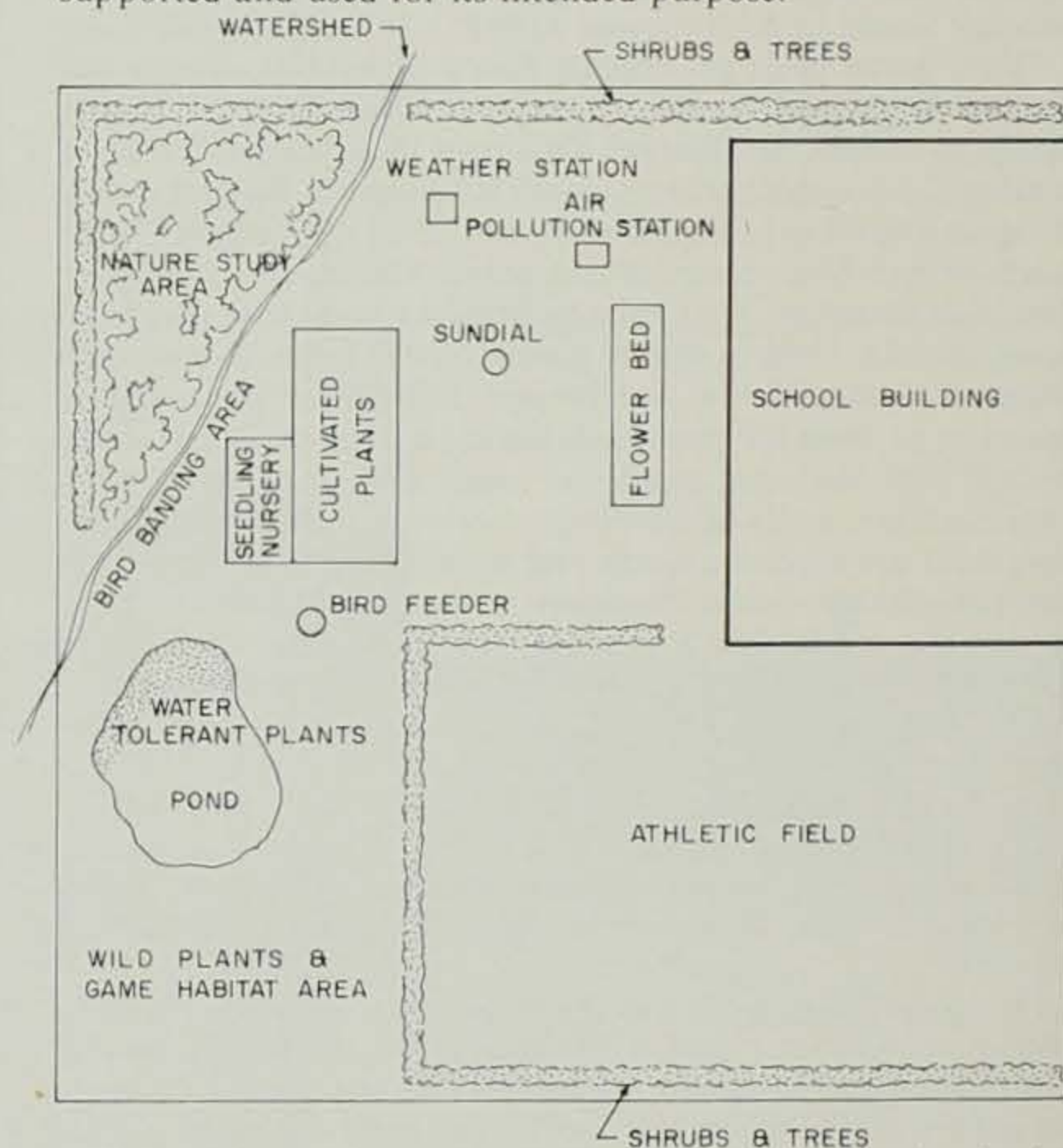
A close-up view of wildlife gives depth, meaning, and new demensions to generalizations about and understandings of man's relationship to his environment. By observing wildlife we can learn how their decisions and behavior affect other living things and how they themselves are affected by those other living things. Man and the rest of nature are inter-dependent; that is, all living things depend upon each other for survival.

How can these wildlife areas be developed? If you are a person who enjoys the outdoors and nature and own your own land, there is undoubtedly a small portion of the land that you do not use. An urban landowner generally has a space in the backyard which could be developed. A rural landowner may have a grove of trees, a rocky area, or a gully which could be transformed into a habitat area. These do not need to be highly developed, but yet planning is important so that you will receive the most benefit from it. Illustration A shows what can be done in the backyard of an urban home.

As you will notice, there are sites for birdfeeding stations, (natural and artificial), flower-planting areas (roadside wildflowers can be transplanted in these areas) and shelter areas for various forms of small wildlife to nest and live. If you wish, a small pond can be placed there for water for the birds and also for studying the microscopic creatures that live in it. A variety of small shrubs and trees can be planted to enhance the area.

Illustration B points out what can be done with a rural plot of ground: specifically a gully. The gully itself can be used in a variety of ways. The opportunity to learn about erosion can be handled by building a small silt dam, filling in part of it with brush (which also makes excellent wildlife cover). The outside of the gully or ditch can be planted with shrubs, trees, grasses and food plants to attract wildlife and hold them there. A path or walkway built around and through the area is shown so that better accessibility can be had. The entire area can be converted from an ugly ditch to a tremendously beautiful resource.

If students wish to develop an outdoor classroom near their school or community, it becomes more than just an individual effort. An outdoor classroom is a place for everyone, therefore, many people should be involved in the planning process. These people, chosen for their interest and expertise, add a great deal of knowledge and many ideas which will insure that the site is supported and used for its intended purpose.



The decision to develop an outdoor classroom at a school or in a city park usually comes long after the buildings and facilities are in place. However, this should not serve as a hinderance to your planning. Unusual parts of a site may be ideal for an outdoor classroom. A little imagination, hard work, and development will transform that unused portion into a highly successful learning area.

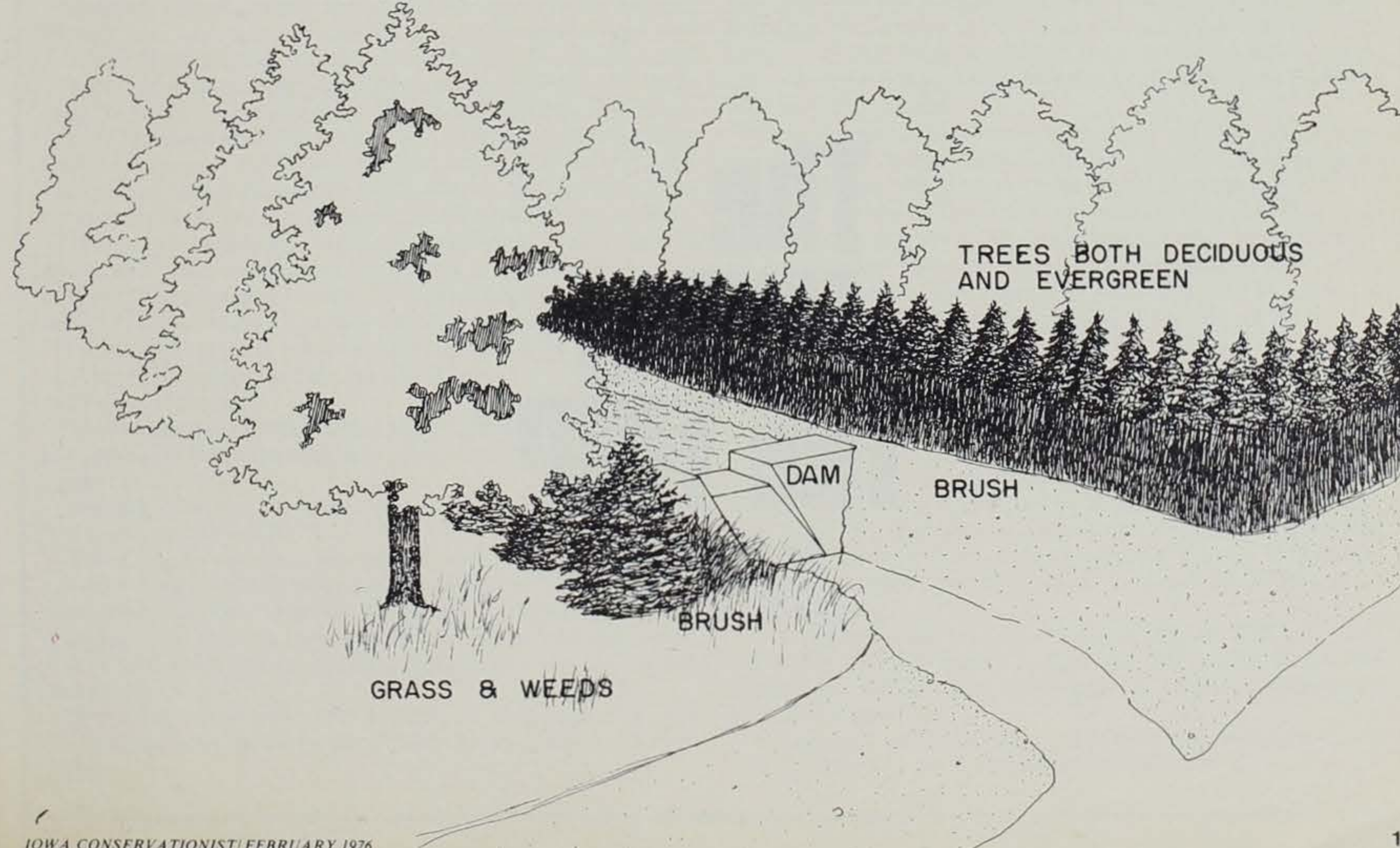
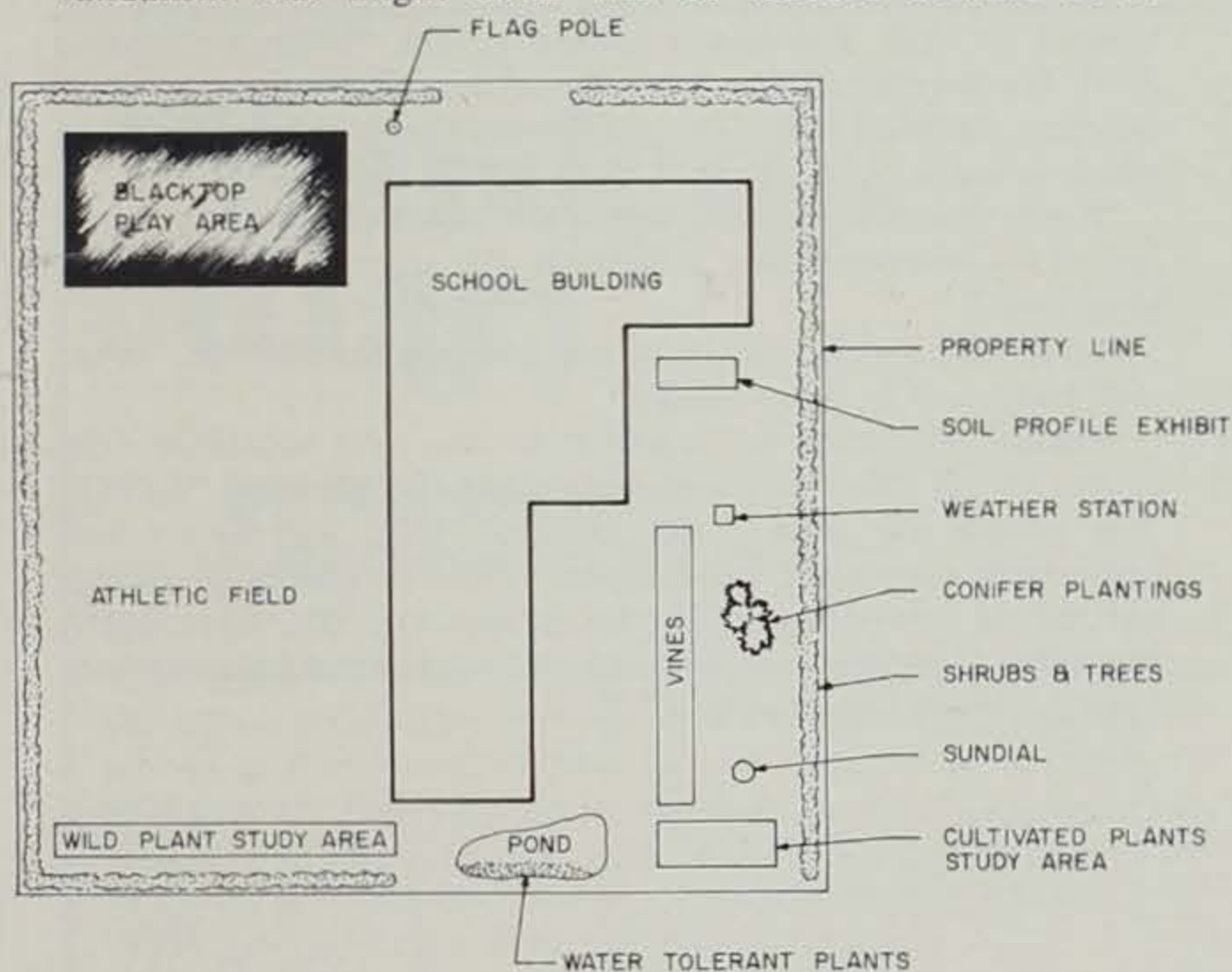
Prior to actual development of a site, there are a number of things which must be taken care of. If it is to be on school property, then school board and administrative approval and support must be secured. If it is to be on city property then city council and park board approval must also be secured. After this is done, an inventory of the site should be made. Keep in mind, as the site is inventoried, what your educational objectives are and who is going to be using the area. Functional outdoor classrooms should be developed by individuals from within the school

system, who in turn, are supported by citizens working in the community.

Outdoor classrooms should be planned for more than just science activities. Social studies, art, physical education, home economics, English, and all other subject disciplines of a school can be enhanced through the use of an outdoor site. Good planning takes a long look at the available resources and the possibilities for developing learning opportunities.

Illustrations C and D show some of the possibilities that can be used on a school site. You will notice such things as a weather station, boulder fields or geology study areas, habitat for animals, flower beds, ponds for aquatic study, plant succession areas, learning trails, and plantation areas for forestry study. There are many, many other educational displays that can be developed for your site.

The actual cost of site development can be held quite low by using volunteer adults and school students. When young people are involved in the actual construction and development of a school site, they become more appreciative and any problems of vandalism that might occur will be reduced because of it.



THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND is a federal program which provides financial assistance to the states and through them to their political subdivisions for the acquisition and development of land for outdoor recreation purposes. Sources of funding include entrance and user fees on federal recreation areas, federal marine fuel tax, sale of excess federal real property and receipts from offshore gas and oil leases. The present authorized level of funding is \$300 million annually and based on that amount, Iowa's annual apportionment is approximately \$2,450,000. Of that total over \$270,000 was approved for funding the following projects during the last quarter.

December Selections 1975

PROJECT TITLE	SPONSOR	GRANT AMOUNT
Midwestern College Timber	Crawford CCB	\$14,330.00
Clanton Creek Rec. area	Madison CCB	44,000.00
Sully Municipal Park	City of Sully	34,692.00
Des Moines River Area	Palo Alto CCB	10,000.00
Bonaparte Recreation Park	City of Bonaparte	5,000.00
Cedar Street Park	Atlantic Park & Rec. Comm.	3,364.00
Platt Park	City of Camanche	17,250.00
Manly Game Courts	City of Manly	8,150.00
Crow Creek Park - Phase II	Bettendorf Park Board	37,500.00
Cherokee Tennis Courts Amendment	City of Cherokee	1,280.56
Swimming Pool Park	City of Guttenberg	9,545.00
Carlson Recreation Area	Webster CCB	10,200.00
Westchester Park	City of Des Moines	19,087.50
Barnum Park	Town of Barnum	7,050.00
Garner Baseball Fields	City of Garner	5,000.00
Hall Park	City of Riverside	5,000.00
Knierim Park	City of Knierim	5,000.00
Greentree Park	Ankeny Park & Rec. Board	34,225.00
		\$270,674.06

Remember, visitors to an outdoor classroom come to see and learn about natural resources. If these resources are depleted or damaged, the value of the field experience is limited.

Wildlife areas close to home can and do provide a valuable learning experience for both young people and adults. There are many sites, now unused, which can be developed for such purposes. Start yours this spring.

THE HUNTER carefully worked up the draw against the slight wind. A light covering of powdery snow showed fresh pheasant tracks all moving up the weedy draw ahead of him. His gun ready to come up, the hunter tensed in anticipation. Approaching the end of the draw the silence was exploded with the sound of wingbeats and the cackle of a rooster pheasant. Although it happened in less than three seconds, somehow the action seemed to appear in the hunter's mind as slow motion. The picturesque rise, the sight coming over the bird, the shot, and the fall. He walked over and picked the bird up. It was beautiful. The hunter turned and looked back down the draw. Sunlight sparkled off the snow in a very special way. He took the empty shell out of his gun and rubbed it between his fingers. He stood there for several minutes looking at the snow-covered trees, the bright blue sky and his own footprints behind him.

The hunter was now a bird-watcher. He slowly rounded the bend of the river, keeping his canoe close to shore and being as quiet as possible. The roots of trees along the shore snaked their way out of the bank and down into the water. His canoe drifted into a large rock with a muffled thunk and then was pushed gently around it by the current. He saw the bird. It's bobbing flight was bringing it closer. Finally the bird swerved and came up for a landing in the tree above him. A pileated woodpecker! Another bird was checked off his list. The bird-watcher could smell the June sweetness of the trees above him. He dipped his paddle quietly into the water and moved on downstream.

The bird-watcher was now a fisherman. He edged his boat up to the weed bed and began casting his large spoon along the side of the lillies and back into the pockets he could safely reach. The fisherman brought the lure back slowly and on the eighth cast a huge northern pike took the lure in a flurry of foamy action. The fight was long and hard. Several times the fisherman thought the northern would snag his way to freedom, but in the end the man boated the fish. Twenty-one pounds. The northern lie in the bottom of the boat and for a moment their eyes met. The fisherman was mesmerized by the wildness of that eye. Suddenly,

the fish gave a snapping flip and released the man from his power. Looking across the lake, the man saw a flock of wild ducks swinging into a bay.

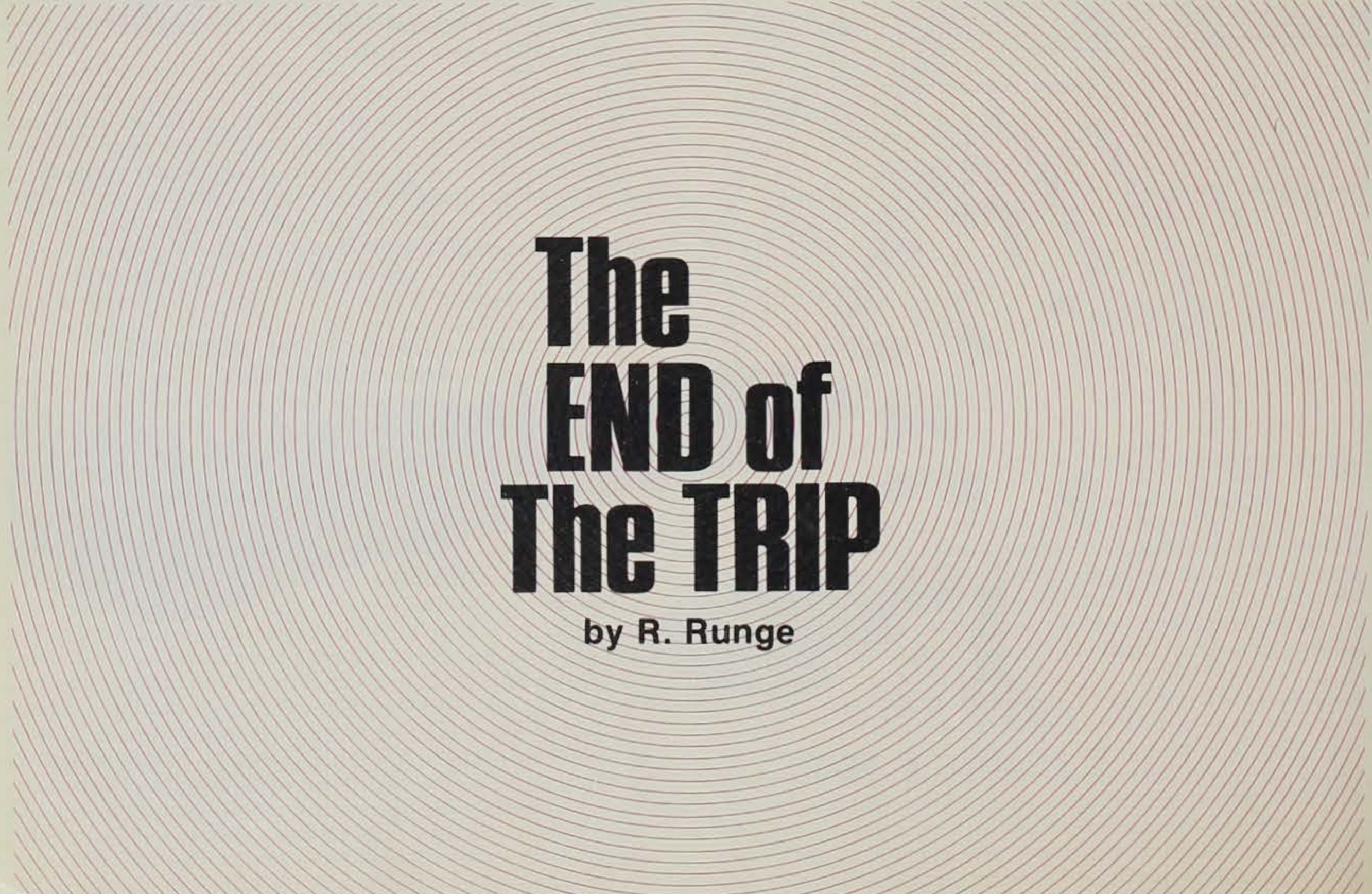
The fisherman was now a hiker. The forest morning was cool and fresh. Autumn leaves on the tallest trees reached to pick up the early sun and sparkled in their effort. He walked slowly now, enjoying every last second, as his trip was coming to an end. A little brook bubbled along caressing its rock and sand bottom. He knelt by the stream and held his hand in the water. It was so clean. The man felt tired and sat back on a rock now enjoying this ultimate experience with only his eyes. The peacefulness of his surroundings made him somehow sad. It took him back to when he was younger and to things he had never had a chance to enjoy. He thought back over the years of his life. It had been rich in some ways but now, after being here, he felt a little more complete. This experience was something that reminded him of all the good things that had been his. He rose and walked through the forest over to the edge of a high limestone cliff. The valley below lay unspoiled in natural beauty.

The man stirred uneasily in the mind experience machine and opened his eyes. The doctor looked at him. "Welcome back to 2180. The journey we have just recreated in your mind was for all practical purposes real. That was the way things used to be. I hope you enjoyed it."

"It was unbelievable," the man said. "Worth every penny. It was one of my best vacations. One that I'll remember for a long, long time."

As the man was leaving he turned and asked the doctor, "What ever happened to those things?"

Already preparing the machine for the next vacationer, the doctor smiled. "Back at the end of the twentieth century," he said, "the people just took it for granted. As it was slowly and irreversibly destroyed, man adapted to his eventual surroundings but almost everything up on the surface was lost. Apparently, prevailing thoughts were centered on progress and consumption. I guess nobody could stop it." □



The END of The TRIP

by R. Runge

MOUNT AYR WILDLIFE UNIT

Continued from Page 5

allow on their land at any one time, it is wise to line up a place to hunt well before the season. As hunting pressure slacks off after the first few weekends of the season, it is often easier to find farmers willing to let you hunt on their land. Always respect private land, and no matter what you hunt, be it quail or coyotes, always ask the farmer first.

In addition to the excellent hunting available on private lands, hunting opportunities also exist on public hunting areas in the unit. Lands managed as public hunting areas include two in Ringgold County. These are the 800 acre Ringgold Wildlife Area 6 miles east and 8 miles south of Mount Ayr, and the 1158 acre Mount Ayr Wildlife Area located 4 miles west and 1 mile south of Mount Ayr. In Adams County, over 1200 acres of upland surrounding 700 acre Lake Icaria is managed as a public hunting area. These areas are all managed to provide a maximum diversity of woodland, grassland, and cropland, and provide good hunting

for pheasants, quail, rabbits, squirrel, and deer. A 60 acre marsh on the Mount Ayr Wildlife Area sometimes provides fair waterfowl hunting.

A 880 acre tract of the Stephens State Forest 4 miles south of Woodburn is also open to public hunting. This is a timbered area with some cropfields, and offers hunting for deer, turkey, squirrel, rabbit, and quail.

Those desiring more information on hunting in the Mount Ayr Wildlife Unit should contact the unit wildlife biologist whose address is: Mt. Ayr Wildlife Unit, SCS Building, Mt. Ayr, Iowa 50854. Information can also be obtained at the unit headquarters located on the Mount Ayr Wildlife Area. Besides managing the public hunting areas, unit personnel are responsible for promoting sound wildlife management on private and public lands in the unit counties. This includes providing technical assistance to landowners wishing to improve their land for wildlife, providing the public with information on the sound management of wildlife, and coordinating efforts with other land use agencies for maximum benefits to wildlife. □

Warden's diary

by Rex Emerson
Law Enforcement Supervisor

THE DAY STARTED OUT bad and then got worse. The first call concerned a farmer having trouble with some hunters. When I arrived at the scene the farmer had the hunters' car blocked in a field gateway with his tractor. The three hunters from one of our largest cities were having a very heated argument with the farmer. They had left their car in the entrance to the field and had gone rabbit hunting in the field without permission.

Hunting without permission strains the relationship between farmers and sportsmen. There is really no reason to have this problem. If the hunters will stop in and ask permission they will find most farmers willing to permit hunting on their place. In most cases they find the landowner to be a friend they just hadn't met before. The Iowa law does protect the owner or tenant of a farm from trespassers. Usually on a trespass call such as this I can get both parties calmed down and with apologies from the hunters to the farmer, the problem can be ironed out without going to court.

The hunters in this case were a little different. You'll notice I didn't call them sportsmen. They had a poor attitude and evidently had been misinformed by some self-appointed barroom lawyer. They claimed when they bought a hunting license it gave them the right to hunt wherever they wanted to without asking anyone. While checking their hunting licenses I wrote down their names and addresses.

Then, getting the farmer to one side, I told him if he would sign the complaint for trespassing they could do their arguing with the judge.

He said, "Oh, no, I wouldn't do that. They might come back and burn my barn down."

There was no changing his mind. Under those circumstances the only thing I could do was read the trespass law to them and tell them how lucky they were that the farmer was not going to press charges. They went on their way. With their attitude sometime, somewhere, they are going to run across a farmer who will sign the complaint.

We really have very few hunters in the field like this. Unfortunately we do have a few and they are the ones people seem to remember.

The next call on the radio was from the sheriff's office about some nonresident hunters shooting pheasants. I informed the sheriff that my present location was 35 miles from there, but I would head that way. A deputy sheriff called on the radio that he was much closer and would get over there and hold them until I got there. The good cooperation we get from other law enforcement agencies is surely appreciated. With only 60 Conservation Officers in the whole state we need all the help we can get.

On the way I thought someone probably had seen the out of state plates on the car and got carried away a little bit. They are probably just hunting rabbits, and no doubt know the pheasant season is closed. Most out of state hunters are very careful about not violating the game laws. We actually have far more problems with our Iowa hunters.

When I arrived, the deputy sheriff was standing in the road talking to the two gentlemen. Just as I thought, they had been hunting rabbits. However, I could see an assembled gun on the back seat of their car which was parked on the road. They were informed that this was a violation. They said their rabbits were in the large canvas bag on the floor of the back seat. We have a daily limit of ten rabbits per hunter, so we would need to count the rabbits. When I dumped the contents of the bag on the road, it looked like they had really had good luck. That is, until three hen pheasants rolled out of the bottom of the bag.

I said, "That's the first rabbits I ever saw that had feathers."

One of the hunters said, "No, sir, those are pheasants."

We all went into town where the charges were filed. Like most of us, they didn't have \$325.00 in their pockets to pay the fine. Several phone calls were made by them to friends and relatives back home, but no money could be sent. One of them insisted that if he could get home he could get the money. So, one of them was held in jail and the other one took off in his car for Indiana to get the fine money.

They had paid \$25.00 for nonresident licenses, and had asked permission to hunt. If they had just put that gun in a case, and resisted the temptation of shooting those pheasants, they could have had a good time.

Next day: A call on the radio - "The man from Indiana got back with \$325.00 and got his friend out of jail." "10-4."



Photo by Jerry Leonard