



# conservationist

FREE JXST++OST+ITRVL+  
ST TRAVELING LIB COMP  
ST HISTORICAL BLDG  
DES MOINES IA 50319

MAY 1978



KEN FORMANEK



# conservationist MAGAZINE

## STAFF

Roger Sparks, Editor  
Robert Runge, Managing Editor  
Kenneth Formanek, A-V Coordinator  
Ron Johnson, Photographer  
Julius Satre, Contributing Editor  
Lois Carty, Circulation Manager

Volume 37, Number 5

CONTENTS FOR MAY 1978

2	STREAM SMALLMOUTHS
4	TROUT ANGLER SURVEY— WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
6	THE FACTS OF LIFE AT LAKE GEODE
8	SUNSETS
10	TALE OF TWO RIVERS
11	ORPHAN WILDLIFE?
12	DO YOU KNOW?
13	TURKEY VULTURE
14	LOOKIN' BACK
14	WARDEN'S DIARY
15	CLASSROOM CORNER

*All persons are entitled to full and equal enjoyment of the recreational opportunities, privileges and advantages available in Iowa's great outdoors.*

### COMMISSIONERS

John C. Thompson, Forest City, Chairman; John Link, Burlington; Carolyn T. Lumbard, Des Moines; Herbert T. Reed, Winterset; John Brophy, Lansing; Marian Pike, Whiting; Thomas Bates, Bellevue

### DIRECTOR

Fred A. Prievert  
William C. Brabham, Deputy Director

### DIVISION CHIEFS

Harry M. Harrison, Fish and Game; Stanley C. Kuhn, Division of Administration; Gerry F. Schnepf, Resource and Program Planning; John M. Stokes, Lands and Waters

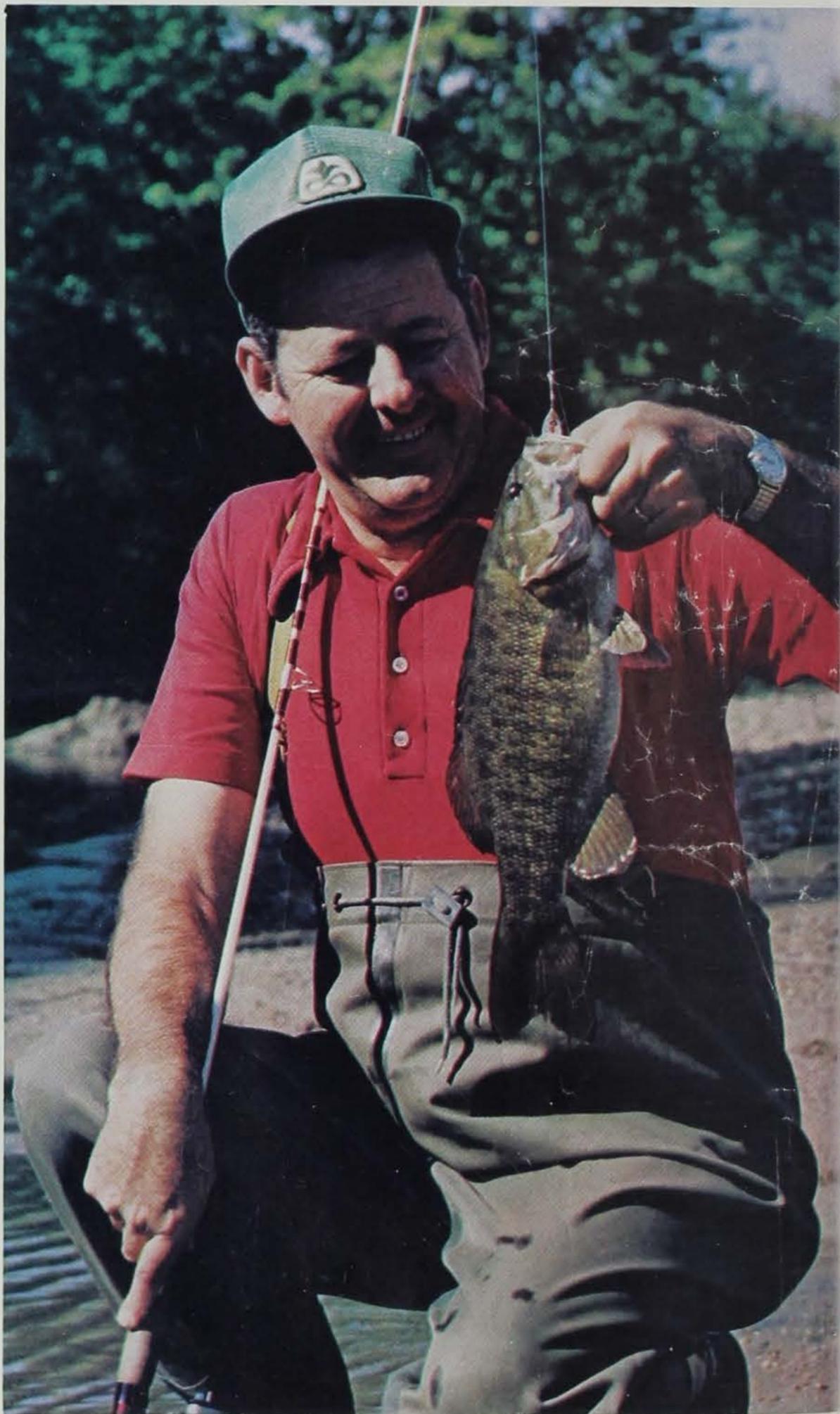
### SECTION SUPERINTENDENTS

Tom Albright, Engineering; Joe W. Brill, Parks; Robert Barratt, Wildlife; James Mayhew, Fisheries; Roy Downing, Waters; Robert Fagerland, Land Acquisition; Lester Fleming, Grants-In-Aid; Gene Hertel, State Forester; Kenneth Kakac, Law Enforcement; Caryl Carstens, License; Larry Davis, Information & Education; Gene Geissinger, Accounting; Doyle Adams, County Conservation Boards

\*\*\*

Published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, State Office Building, 300 4th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579, manuscripts, mail items) to the above address. Subscription price: one year at \$2.00; two years at \$3.00; four years at \$5.00. Second class postage paid at Des Moines, Iowa and other points.

# STREAMS



# AND SMALLMOUTHS

**M**IGRATORY WARBLERS, regaled in brilliant spring attire, flitted through the newly leaved hardwoods on the breath of a soft May breeze. Several varieties of swallows were mirrored in the dark green river above which they swooped on insect patrol. A great horned owl and a pileated woodpecker had been audible, but unseen, somewhere amidst the depths of the rocky, but wooded bluff. Nearby, the woods and meadow areas glowed with spring wildflowers, including the crimson of Indian paint brush and the delicacy of shooting star. At the edge of a streamside path, a lone morel mushroom had poked through the sandy soil within inches of a deer's imprinted hoofmark.

Amid this nature spectacular, a lone fisherman, thigh deep in the cool river, aimed a cast up and across stream. The thin surface plug splashed down just upstream from a projecting limestone chunk which parted the stream's current. As the plug drifted to the upstream V of the rock, the angler lightly jiggled the pole tip, and the agitated plug was quickly enclosed in a shower of spray. The striking fish was not hooked, however, until after it had made its fourth attack on the lure. Its superb battling abilities were demonstrated as it alternately jumped and bored into the current.

Was the fish some exotic species, and its habitat a difficult access wilderness? No, the fish, a smallmouth bass, was hooked in one of the beautiful streams in scenic northeast Iowa.

Like its cousin, old linesides largemouth, the smallmouth is aggressive and hard hitting. In fact, most fishermen who have engaged both species, seem to favor the smallmouth for its general fighting ability, a judgement which I can't dispute.

Also like the largemouth, he will strike at a properly presented surface plug. This characteristic creates the thrill for those of us who consider happiness to be a bass assaulting a surface lure. However, "working" a floater on a placid lake surface at dusk is something different from "working" it in a constantly moving river current during mid afternoon. For those of you to whom this brand of linewetting sounds appealing a few of the where, when, why, what, and hows follow.

## WHEN

In an average year weatherwise, smallmouth in northeast counties will begin to strike surface plugs about the second week in May, and continue through approximately the third week in September. This time period is related to water temperatures in the low to mid fifties or higher. Many fishermen claim that the best fishing occurs during the summer dog days of July and August, when the streams are normally the warmest, as well as low and relatively clear. Although I have caught stream smallmouth at all times of day, and under all kinds of weather conditions, I prefer a hot late summer afternoon.

Smallmouth will hit surface lures in somewhat murky water, but muddy water or recent heavy rains normally rule out this type of fishing for a few days. When the water is clear enough, getting skunked is extremely rare, and when conditions are optimal it isn't unusual to hook three or four dozen bass, including undersize specimens, in an afternoon's venture.

## WHERE

Rocks and smallmouth bass habitat are synonymous. Rarely will they be located in worthwhile numbers in portions of

streams where the bottom is sandy or silted. So concentrate your efforts on the rocky stretches, especially the deeper pools. In the spring, the bass may be found in relatively small feeder streams.

Some of the better known smallmouth streams include the upper reaches and tributaries of such major waterways as the Iowa, Cedar, and Wapsipinicon Rivers. Other rivers include the Turkey, Volga, Boone, Maquoketa, and perhaps the most popular, the Upper Iowa. There are numerous other smaller creeks which provide interesting fishing, and can usually be located by questioning the natives in an area.

Little water does not necessarily signify little or no fishing. I once caught 19 bass, including a four pounder, in a two hour span from a creek in Cedar County which one could almost spit across at any point. A canoe is valuable on some of the larger rivers, but in order to thoroughly fish a stretch of water, wading is almost mandatory. Remember to ask permission when you plan to traverse private property.

## WHAT

Tackle is really the preference of the individual angler. I personally prefer a spin-cast outfit with a fairly stiff rod of about 7 feet and a good spin cast reel with ten pound test line. Although I have caught bass on various sized and shaped surface plugs, my favorite lure is long and thin (somewhat cigar shaped) with spinners fore and aft. Most floaters which are effective for stream smallmouths sport some type of spinners or propellers. The plug should be tied directly to the monofilament, since a swivel or connector affects the lure's floating and working properties.

## HOW

In general, the fisherman who wades upstream and casts across or upstream will induce more strikes than one who wades and casts downstream. Each cast should involve a definite objective, such as a protruding rock or one just visible under the surface, an undercut bank, an eddy, or a riffle. Normally more strikes will occur at the upstream end of structure as compared to the downstream side. Since the current in a stream will keep the lure continually floating downstream over fresh territory, it is necessary to regularly twitch the rod to impart intermittent action to it.

Smallmouth will often strike a surface plug several times in succession on the same cast and retrieve, so if an original hit is missed, continue to work the lure all the way back. When one or more strikes are missed on a cast, place the ensuing cast at a point just upstream from the location of the last strike, since smallmouth tend to remain for some time in that area before returning to their original cover.

## WHY

Each individual must answer the question of why go smallmouth fishing to their own satisfaction. For some it will entail mainly the angling thrills. For others, wildlife, nature, and scenery provide the bonus. For still others, the release of tension is a substantial attraction. For me it is a gentle blend of all these elements. But whatever your personal motivation, make a date to get acquainted with one of Iowa's most enjoyable and little used resources, the smallmouth bass and its environs.

BY DAVE MOELLER, FISHERIES DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

# Trout Angler Survey

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Several of you trout anglers will remember a couple of years ago receiving a telephone call from a Fisheries employee asking you all kinds of questions concerning your trout fishing during 1975. Your name and 527 other trout fishermen were randomly selected from the 22,354 trout anglers licensed during 1975 to be interviewed as part of a trout angler survey. The survey was designed to determine information regarding trout fishing practices and preferences of Iowa's trout anglers. This information allows us to better match the program with your desires.

Let's take a look at what the survey found. The majority of Iowa's trout fishermen are residents of Iowa and male. Five percent of our trout fishermen are non-residents with the majority of these anglers coming from our bordering states of Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. It is interesting to note that on a statewide basis female anglers number one in four, however, female trout anglers number only one in ten. Come on, men, get your wives and daughters in on the fun also!

Although all ages are well represented in the trout fishing group, those under 16 and between 30 and 64 tend to be more active. Over one-third of Iowa's trout anglers are less than 16 years old, thus, it can be assumed that trout fishing recreation will probably continue to increase in future years.

A total of 301,000 days were spent by licensed trout anglers in pursuing their sport during 1975. This is an average of 13½ days per angler. Probably close to another 150,000 days were recreated by our young trout anglers under 16 years old. The majority of trout angling occurs during the trout stocking months of April through October, however, 14 percent of the anglers said they fish in November and between six and seven percent fish the months of December, January, and February. Winter trout fishing is a really unique experience you are sure to enjoy if you haven't tried it before.

Trout managers have long desired to know how much fishing pressure is exerted on each of the catchable trout streams because stocking quotas are determined, in part, upon how much angling takes place on each stream. The amount of angling effort on the individual streams varies widely. Little Paint Creek in Allamakee County received 23,215 fishing trips during 1975. Little Turkey River in Delaware County received the least with 1,165 trips. The average number of trips to a stream was 7,263. Other streams with high fishing pressure are Richmond Springs, French Creek, Coldwater Creek, North Bear, Turkey River, and Bloody Run.

The number of trout caught by individual anglers varies greatly also. One angler from Maquoketa reported catching 450 trout during 1975 and spent 125 days in accomplishing the feat. The average licensed angler, however, reported catching 28 trout for the year. Young anglers who are not required to purchase a trout stamp (less than 16 years old for residents) make up about one third of the trout anglers, however, they are fairly unsuccessful in catching trout — accounting for only 6 percent of the fish reportedly caught. It looks like our elders need to pass on some of their fishing tips and techniques to the youngsters.



Thirty-two percent of the anglers interviewed stated they preferred to catch brown trout, another 32 percent preferred rainbow trout and the remaining had no particular preference. Interviewees were also asked what type of vehicle access they preferred: "close" access where a vehicle could be parked within 100 yards of the stream, "moderate" access where vehicle parking was between 100 yards and ¼ mile from the stream, or "walk-in" areas where the stream was over ¼ mile from the vehicle parking area. Thirty-seven percent preferred "moderate" access, 33 percent preferred "walk-in" areas and 23 percent "close" vehicle access. Anglers who prefer to catch brown trout also show a strong preference for "moderate" access and "walk-in" areas while anglers who prefer to catch rainbow trout indicated a stronger preference for "close" and "moderate" vehicle access.



KEN FORMANEK

Interviewees were also asked what they would do to improve the Iowa trout program. Of course many said to stock more and bigger trout. We stock approximately 300,000 trout annually that average between  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound. This represents an average of 14 fish per licensed angler. Raising the catchable trout to a larger size is not feasible or economical. Many other anglers recommended improving stream habitat, developing more "walk-in" areas, developing some artificial-lure only streams and stocking more of the remote stream sections.

Now let's take a look at how the Fisheries Section has used this information to improve the trout program and match it with your trout fishing habits and preferences.

Many of the anglers interviewed stated that improving stream habitat was direly needed. Fisheries managers have realized this also, however, habitat improvement work in

the past has been done intermittently whenever man-power and materials were available. The past two years the Decorah and Manchester Management Stations have placed a high priority on habitat improvement and two crews have been working full-time on stream improvement projects on State-owned trout stream properties. Active projects have been conducted on French Creek, Coldwater Creek, Trout Run, Trout River, Big Mill Creek and Spring Branch. This program will continue to receive a high priority in future years. The Commission and some fishing clubs have also been working with private trout stream landowners to protect their trout streams from degradation and some active improvement projects have been accomplished and are expected to expand to involve additional clubs and landowners.

The survey also showed that a sizeable number of anglers fish for trout during the winter months, particularly in November. Experimental November stockings in Big and Little Mill Creeks the past two years have showed fishing pressure in November similar to the amount of fishing done in October. The trout hatcheries will be stocking seven streams during November this year to provide additional opportunity for our trout anglers. The streams which will be stocked in November are North Bear, South Bear, Coldwater, Sny Magill, Big Mill, Swiss Valley and Fountain Springs (Elk).

One-third of the anglers interviewed prefer to fish for brown trout. A high percent of these anglers also prefer "walk-in only" areas. Two brown trout fisheries have been established on walk-in only areas. A special quality fishery has been set up on a portion of Bloody Run. The stream segment has been stocked with three age classes of brown trout with the oldest age class of browns averaging four pounds. This stream segment lies immediately above the Clayton County Conservation Board's Bloody Run Park two miles west of Marquette and extends upstream approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  stream miles. This special segment is posted at the boundaries to identify the segment and inform anglers of the special regulations. Anglers must use artificial lures and release all fish less than 14 inches total length. The second brown trout stream is Little Turkey east of Colesburg. This stream will be stocked with brown trout only, however, no special regulations are placed on this fishery.

Two other stream fisheries have been initiated on walk-in streams. Brook trout have been stocked in North Cedar Creek in Clayton County and South Fork Big Mill in Jackson County. It is hoped that natural reproducing populations of brook trout will develop on these streams. To give these fish a chance to grow and reproduce anglers must release all brook trout caught and are allowed to fish with artificial lures only. If the program is successful after two years, our plan is to set a size limit on the brookies to allow anglers to harvest a few of the larger adult brook trout annually.

We feel these programs are consistent with the results of the survey and add considerable variety to the trout program and allows the trout angler to choose the type of fishing preferred. Tight lines to all of you this year!

# THE FACTS OF LIFE AT LAKE GEODE

*"I really enjoyed fishing at Lake Geode this year. The fish were nice sized and they sure were eager to bite."*

*"You must not be talking about the Lake Geode I know — the lake south of Danville? I quit fishing there several years ago because the fishing went to pot."*

It seems unlikely that these two anglers could be talking about the same lake. But let's take a close look at some of the factors which contribute to the fishing potential of a lake and then look at Lake Geode to see if both angler's views of the lake can be correct.

Such things as rainy days, cold fronts and wind make fishing miserable or impossible for a short time. These factors take on catastrophic magnitude if they persist during the peak spawning time of any species of fish. Large-mouth bass have been extensively studied in conjunction with these factors, and found to be quite susceptible to them.

Bluegill, on the other hand, are less affected because they have an extended spawning period and can take advantage of milder conditions later in the season.

The ups and downs in fishing success which we note in a lake may be connected to environmental conditions which prevailed during the spawning period three or four years previously. Most angling is supported by fish which are in their third or fourth year of life. The ultimate number of fish in each year class is established at spawning time during their first year. If fish successfully spawn there are still several factors which will limit the eventual number of keeper sized fish and again environmental conditions play a big role.

Predation is a biological factor which plays a significant role in your angling success as well as limiting the number of fish which survive their first few years of life. Almost all of our fishing techniques employ a bait which is or simulates a natural

**Seining is a valuable method for determining reproductive success and establishing year class strengths for all fish species.**



by **DON KLINE**

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST

Photos by the Author

food of the fish we are after. We recognize the basic need for food in our target species, but do not seem to associate this need with the inner workings of the lake in which we fish.

Besides the stringer of fish we catch, there are thousands of hungry fish which have to rely on food provided by the ecosystem. It is a simple fact that the larger ones eat the smaller ones and this is the phenomenon known as predation.

The biological impact of predation with which we are concerned is the reduction of the number of small fish. This knowledge allows us to utilize predation as a fisheries management tool through the adoption of size limits on largemouth bass where angling pressure is heavy. However, fish populations have to be watched very closely so that the scales are not tipped too far in favor of the predator or the young fish will not have a chance to get big.

The factors which determine your angling success can be divided into environmental and biological. We have discussed weather and predation as two examples. But how does the theory work out for the two anglers with contradictory observations?

Lake Geode was built in 1950 and as a new lake produced outstanding fishing. The shoreline is steep and timbered, while the major watershed is agricultural land. The lake has now aged 27 years and several acres of the upper end have filled in with silt, therefore reducing the amount of available habitat. The paradox of increasing angler demands and the limiting factors we discussed really came to a head in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

We noted several years of unusually heavy silt turbidity coupled with inclement weather conditions. The combined result of these environmental factors was a significant loss in the reproductive capacity of the lake and poor survival conditions for young fish. By 1972 we could see the effect of these factors as fishing declined. The fish stock had just not been replenished, but yet we had eager anglers. The turbidity had also reduced the amount of aquatic vegetation to very low levels, so the remaining fish were not concentrated. Many anglers discovered they were

now unfamiliar with a lake they had fished for many years. Their old fishing hot spots had disappeared.

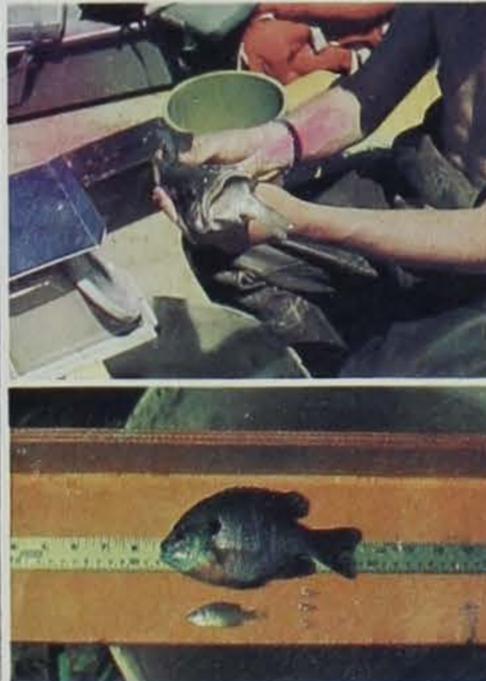
The problem was further magnified by predation. To survive, the bigger fish took a relatively larger portion of the available prey. This contributed to even smaller year classes of all fishes and slowed the development of the fishery. Mother Nature's usual surplus had now been pared down to a subsistence level and if environmental conditions did not improve the whole fishery would collapse.

By 1974 many anglers had abandoned the lake or fished only occasionally. But as those people who used the lake noted, environmental conditions have improved since that time and our fishery surveys documented the change in the fishery. New year classes of all species appeared in 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1977. There was room and food available to insure good reproduction, so they grew rapidly. However the anglers were disappointed because they were catching small fish. What they did not realize was that these fish were growing as fast as they could, but needed three to four years to reach keeper size.

That brings us to 1977 and the conversation we overheard between two Geode anglers. The first angler did have good fishing but he was there as the lake was recovering from some poorer years. Keeper sized bluegill, crappie, redear, bullhead, channel catfish and largemouth bass were available to him, but in reduced numbers. He was asked to return all largemouth bass less than the twelve inches to help improve the bass population structure and benefit future fishing. We are studying this technique to assess its value for bass management.

The second angler was correct in his judgment of the fishery at the time he made his assessment, but he should return to the lake with a renewed interest and insight into the limiting factors which affect fishing.

Neither angler should expect fishing to remain stable at a high level forever because of natural cycles in physical and biological factors. Conservation Commission personnel will try to lessen the impact of these factors through management practices in Lake Geode.



**Far left: Nests are more successful during spring seasons with moderate weather conditions and clear water.**

**Upper left: Predation is an important factor which limits fish population size.**

**Lower left: A balanced fish population contains all age groups. Each group is vitally important in providing good angling.**

# SUNSETS

by Bob Mullen  
CONSERVATION OFFICER

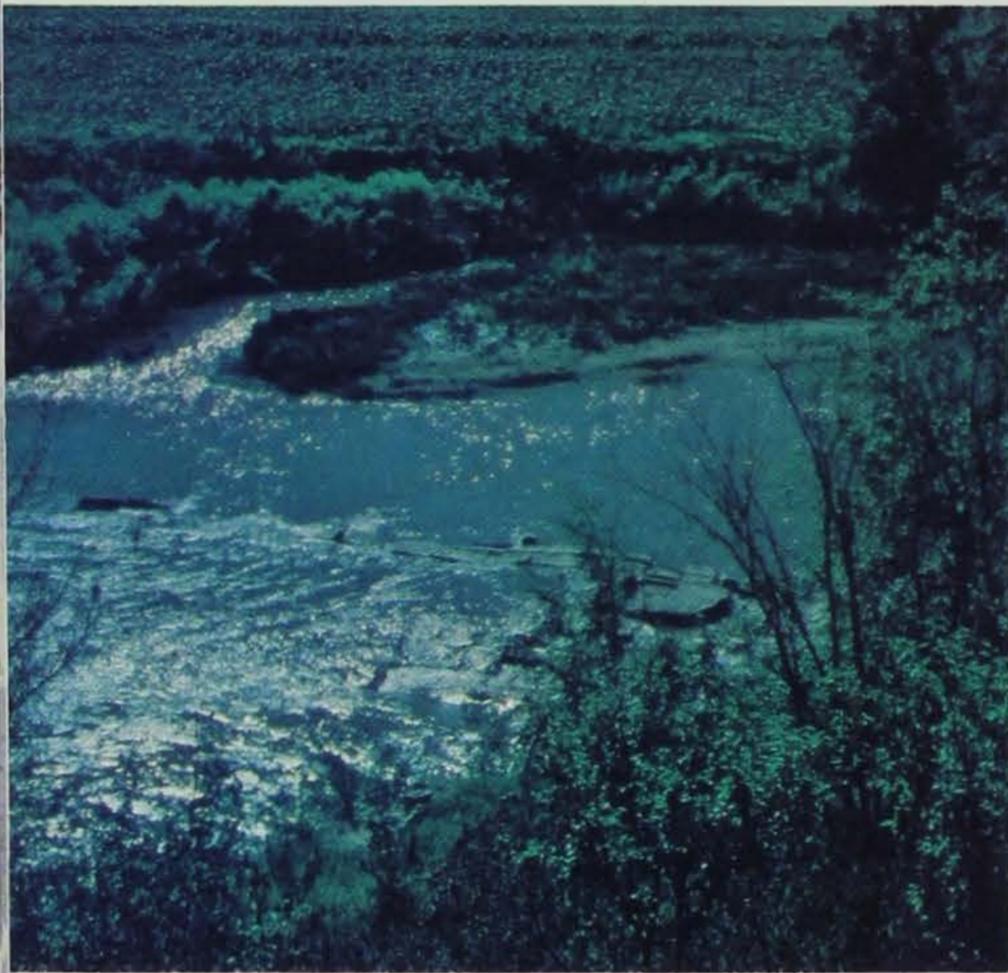


*Most every evening a drama is staged in the western sky that too few people take time to view. What could be so fantastic, but so few people enjoy? Sunsets! We take them for granted while artists wish they could catch them on canvas. They change so rapidly that the photographer can merely hint at their beauty.*

*Man gets so caught up in his work and pleasures that he misses this daily entertainment. People driving hurriedly home from work miss the sunset's charm. Fishermen and hunters are so wrapped up in their activities they fail to view the spectacle. The farmer working in the field may not notice. Sometimes even the conservation officer forgets to enjoy the natural beauty of a sunset.*

*Tomorrow evening take a few minutes from your activities to soak in the glow of a sunset. Watch closely as it rapidly changes. Witness a premier showing—a spectacle different from one on any other night. Surely the Lord did not create such beauty for us to ignore.*





by **Bruce Adair**  
FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

## Tale of Two Rivers

**T**WO LONG FORKS of the Nishnabotna River snake through southwest Iowa cutting through portions of 10 counties enroute to its confluence with the Missouri River a few miles below the Iowa-Missouri border. These two branches, the East and West Nishnabotna Rivers, form the chief drainage basin in southwest Iowa, draining a total of 2,925 square miles. With the exception of the Little Sioux River in northwest Iowa, this is the largest system on the Missouri slope in Iowa.

Augmented by an East and West Fork, plus Silver Creek and Walnut Creek, the West Nishnabotna is the larger of the two branches. Although very similar in appearance, the East Nishnabotna is somewhat smaller, located in a narrow valley fed by a number of minor tributaries. The junction of the two streams is near Riverton, Iowa in Fremont County, only 9 miles above the northern boundary of Missouri.

The name "Nishnabotna" is of Indian origin and has been translated in various ways. The most common of these being "crossed in a canoe," presumably from the theory that parties of Indians found the stream too deep to be crossed without the aid of canoes.

The term Nishnabotna, like the Wapsipinicon and the Maquoketa rivers in northeast Iowa, is said to have baffled the spelling abilities of many early explorers and settlers in this region. The log of the Lewis and Clark expedition alone shows the name spelled five different ways; Neeshnahbotono, Neashna Battona, Nishnahbotona, Neeshba, and Nishnay Baton. To further complicate matters, John C. Luttig in 1812 designated the stream as the Ichinipokine River — translation unknown.

No matter how confusing the name, southwest Iowa fishermen have recognized the stream for generations as an excellent water for channel catfish. Although much of the Botna's character and fish habitat were stripped away during the 1920's when the river was channelized under the guise of flood control, areas of good fishing can still be found.

Both the East and West Nishnabotna originate in Carroll County, but it is another two tiers of counties south before these streams really begin to provide "fishable" water (roughly south of I-80).

Only below bridges or near public access points does the Nishnabotna receive heavy fishing pressure. Stringers full of catfish are also caught by fishermen who are willing to walk stretches of stream in search of the holes where "old whiskers" is found.

Public access to either the East or West Nishnabotna is not good. Fish and game personnel for the Iowa Conservation are continuing to search for additional stream access areas from willing sellers along the river. Elaborate boat ramps are not needed on these streams; only a place to park a vehicle and room to slide a canoe into the water.

The Nishnabotna has shrunk to but a fraction of its normal size over the past several years as the result of near-drought conditions throughout much of southwest Iowa. Boating on the river at these times is virtually impossible except for the lightest of canoes. The best technique for fishing the streams under these conditions is by wading and drifting bait through any deeper holes or troughs.

Many other species of fish inhabit the waters of the Nishnabotna — carp, gar, suckers, carpsuckers, bullheads, goldeye, and a variety of smaller minnow species. Even an occasional black bass or northern pike will surprise an unsuspecting angler. However it is the channel catfish which entices most of the area fishermen to this river. Although somewhat finicky at times, when the cats are biting, easy limits are common for Botna fishermen with the right tackle and technique, in combination with a little bit of luck.

### River Access

	AREA	LOCATION	COUNTY
<b>West Nishnabotna:</b>	Botna Bend Park	Hancock	Pottawattamie
	Chataouque City Park	Oakland	Pottawattamie
	Carson City Park	Carson	Pottawattamie
	Old Town Park	Macedonia	Pottawattamie
<b>East Nishnabotna:</b>	Turkey Creek Access	Hwy 6, NE of Lewis	Cass
	Nishnabotna Rock Cut	SW of Lewis	Cass
	Red Oak	Red Oak	
	Access	Treatment Plant	Montgomery

# Orphan Wildlife?

by Bob Mullen

STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER

Photo by the Author

**E**ACH SPRING and early summer, state fish and game conservation officers get many calls from people who have picked up young orphan wildlife. Unfortunately, these young animals are not orphans. Most people assume if the mother is not with the young animal, it is orphaned, and they take it home with them. Other people purposely rob a nest or den to get a young animal or bird thinking what a wonderful pet a wild animal or bird would make for their children.

Without a doubt, 99% of the young animals picked up are definitely not orphans. The mother may be out feeding or gathering food to bring back to the young. Common sense should dictate that the young are going to be alone at times. Young animals are just like our own children, when left alone they may wander out of curiosity. Young animals do not get lost. Their parents can easily find them by smell. Wildlife have an acute sense of smell and have no problem locating an offspring that might have wandered from a den or nest.

If you find a young animal, please don't even touch it, as tempting as it may be. Some species of animals will reject their own young, or kill them after they have picked up the odor of man from being handled.

Wildlife has a great fear of man and will try to hide or retreat when approached. Many times when someone picks up a supposedly orphaned animal, the parents are close by but not seen. Every spring many fawn deer are picked up as orphans. A doe will not spend a lot of time with a young fawn except for feeding. The doe will stay away so she will not attract predators to her young fawn. A fawn has almost no odor and is very hard for predators to detect. Therefore, it is very safe when the doe is away, except for man.

People who think wildlife would make wonderful pets find out quite differently. Wild animals require much more attention than cats or dogs, and most people won't spend the time that is needed. Too often



the young animals die from improper diet or from the unsanitary conditions they are kept in.

If a young animal does survive, it may be cute and cuddly while small but watch out!

As a wild animal gets older, its disposition may change. A raccoon can change from a cute docile pet to a snarling, biting, dangerous animal, overnight. Many such pets become very mean when the mating season



approaches. Young children have been severely bitten and injured. Men have gotten their hands badly chewed when handling the once docile "pet" wild animal. Fish and game conservation officers receive calls from people that have had their pets turn on them viciously and then want the officer to take their pet away.

What happens to these wild animals that are turned over to the fish and game conservation officers? This often depends on the age and species of the wildlife. Very young animals can not be released immediately. They are taken to the commission's game farm which has facilities for feeding and caring for such young wildlife. After the animal or bird is old enough to take care of itself, it is released in a safe place. The officer will take it to a state game area for release. Unfortunately, all the wildlife we pick up is not so lucky. Some of the animals are in such bad condition from improper care or feeding, that they must be put to sleep. An animal that has been mistreated or has attacked its owner cannot be released as easily. These animals often do not know how to feed or hunt for themselves, and may have to be held for a longer period of time before release. Some people have had the claws and teeth of their wild animal removed. These animals have no way of defending themselves and must then remain in captivity at the game farm.

It is, in fact, a violation of state law to have animals taken from the wild in captivity. This law is for the wildlife's protection. Wildlife belongs in only one place; where it feels free to roam in the fields and forests or to soar through the skies.

Wild animals are not happy in cages or in captivity. It's just as cruel to take a young animal from the wild as it would be to take our children from us put them in a cage for the rest of their lives.

If you find a young animal, please don't touch it or take it home. If you must do something, call your state fish and game conservation officer. He will determine the proper action to take for the animal's best interests. ■

# DO YOU KNOW?

## It is unlawful to:

1. Operate an **unregistered vessel** on waters under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Conservation Commission.
2. Let anyone **under twelve years** of age operate a motorboat which is propelled by a motor more than 6 H.P. unless he or she is accompanied by a responsible person at least eighteen years of age who is experienced in motorboat operation.
3. Operate any vessel without proper U.S. **Coast Guard approved PFDs** aboard (See Equipment.)
4. Operate any motorboat displaying or reflecting a blue light or flashing blue light unless such vessel is an authorized emergency vessel.
5. Operate a motorboat while intoxicated or under the influence of any narcotic drug, barbituate, or marijuana. The **penalty for operating a vessel in violation of the above shall be upon conviction, not less than \$300 nor more than \$1,000** or by imprisonment for a period not to exceed one year or both.
6. Operate a motorboat or manipulate any water skis, surfboard, or similar device in a careless, reckless, or negligent manner so as to endanger the life, limb, or property of any person.
7. Operate a vessel and enter into areas in which search and rescue operations are being conducted unless authorized by the officer in charge.
8. Operate a motorboat while towing a person or persons on water skis, surfboard, or similar device unless there is in such craft a responsible person (**observer**) in addition to the operator, in a position to observe the progress of the person or persons being towed.

9. Operate a motorboat propelled by an outboard motor larger than 10 H.P., or any inboard motor without a proper **Coast Guard approved fire extinguisher** on board. (See Equipment).

10. Operate any vessel between sunset and sunrise without proper navigation lights.

11. Place, cause to be placed, throw, or deposit onto or in any of the public waters, ice, or land of the state any cans, bottles, garbage, rubbish, or other types of litter.

12. Allow more passengers and crew in a vessel you own or operate than the **registration capacity** permits.

13. Maintain a private buoy in waters of this state under the jurisdiction of the Commission except as specified by the rules and regulations of the Commission.

14. Place a mooring buoy, dock, or raft in waters of this state under the jurisdiction of the Commission without first having obtained a permit from the Commission.

15. Maintain any other obstruction of any kind without first receiving permission from the Commission.

16. Tamper with, move, or attempt to move any state-owned buoy.

17. Anchor a boat away from shore and leave unguarded unless it is attached to a legal buoy.

## INFORMATION

For questions concerning specific regulations in certain areas check with the Waters Officer closest to that area. A list of their addresses and telephone numbers is provided for your convenience in this pamphlet. For any further information contact the Iowa Conservation Commission, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, telephone (515) 281-3448.

Water Stations	Address	Area	Telephone	
			Office	Residence
Bellevue	R.R. 3 Box 2 Bellevue 52031	319	872-4976	872-4031
Black Hawk	P.O. Box 605 Lake View 51450	712	657-2639	657-8759
Clear Lake	Bayside Lake Patrol Clear Lake 50428	515	357-5000	357-5889
Coralville	Route 1 Box 340A North Liberty 52317	319	626-6300	626-6300
Fairport	R.R. 3 Box 116 Muscatine 52761	319	263-2791	263-2791
Guttenberg	P.O. Box 429 Guttenberg 52052	319	252-3663	252-3663
Harpers Ferry	Box 15A Harpers Ferry 52146	319	586-2464	586-2464
Montrose	Water Patrol Station Montrose 52639	319	463-7122	463-7122
Okoboji	Milford 51351	712	337-3377	332-2848
Rathbun	R.R. 2 Moravia 52571	515	724-3304	724-3304
Red Rock	R.R. 3 Knoxville 50138	515	842-3805	842-3805
Saylorville	Route 1, Box 37 Polk City 50226	515	984-6621	984-6621
Spirit Lake	Gull Point Lake Patrol Milford 51351	712	337-3377	332-2080
Weedland	R.R. 1 Sergeant Bluff 51054	712	943-4189	943-4189
Wilson Island	R.R. 2, Box 202 Missouri Valley 51555	712	642-2015	642-2015

For courses in basic boating techniques and navigation contact:

1. Waters Officer in your area
2. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Office of the District Rear Commodore  
3032 S.W. 40th  
Des Moines, Iowa 50321  
(515) 243-3588
3. U.S. Power Squadron Commander  
4285 2nd Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50313  
(515) 243-5251
4. Red Cross  
2116 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50312  
(515) 243-2781

# Turkey Vulture

by Wendy J. Meyer

ASSISTANT, CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

WHILE TREKKING THROUGH the woods in Adair County last fall, I'd catch a glimpse of a large graceful bird floating above the treetops. They were turkey vultures, sometimes referred to as buzzards, and had eluded my camera for some days now. Many of these vultures had already left on their annual migration south.

The turkey vulture is not seen again until sometime in early spring. By late March, they can again be observed soaring through the sky. Some towns in the United States celebrate the return of this important bird. Hinckley, Ohio has proclaimed itself the "Buzzard Capital of the World." They celebrate their return by having a "Buzzard Homecoming Day Breakfast" with sausage and pancakes.

Turkey vultures play an important role in the food chain. They feed almost exclusively on carrion or dead animals. At one time these vultures were accused of spreading hog cholera, anthrax, and other diseases of livestock. Due to this misunderstanding, many were killed by farmers and ranchers. By cleaning up dead and decaying carcasses, turkey vultures prevent rather than spread diseases.

This species is highly resistant to such diseases as botulism. Biologists are fascinated by this fact and are attempting to do research in this area. I had the opportunity to live trap these magnificent birds for this purpose one summer in Ledges State Park. I learned very quickly man should never take a turkey vulture by surprise! They'll greet you by vomiting. If this method of discouragement is unsuccessful, they will feign death by going into shock. After the danger passes, they recover and fly away.

The adults have few enemies except man. Unfortunately the young are subject to attack from predatory animals.

Eggs are laid in caves, on rock ledges, tree stumps, or on the ground if the nest is inaccessible to predators. Nesting for this baldheaded bird may begin sometime in April here in Iowa. Two eggs or rarely three are laid. The young are cared for by both the male and female. Both parents feed regurgitated food to the young.

These birds rely upon their sense of smell and eyesight in selecting their food. They are one of the few birds that have a sense of smell. Their main food source is carrion, but they have been known to feed on grasshoppers, small birds, and even pumpkins. After eating, they clean their feathers by preening and sloshing around in small ponds of water.

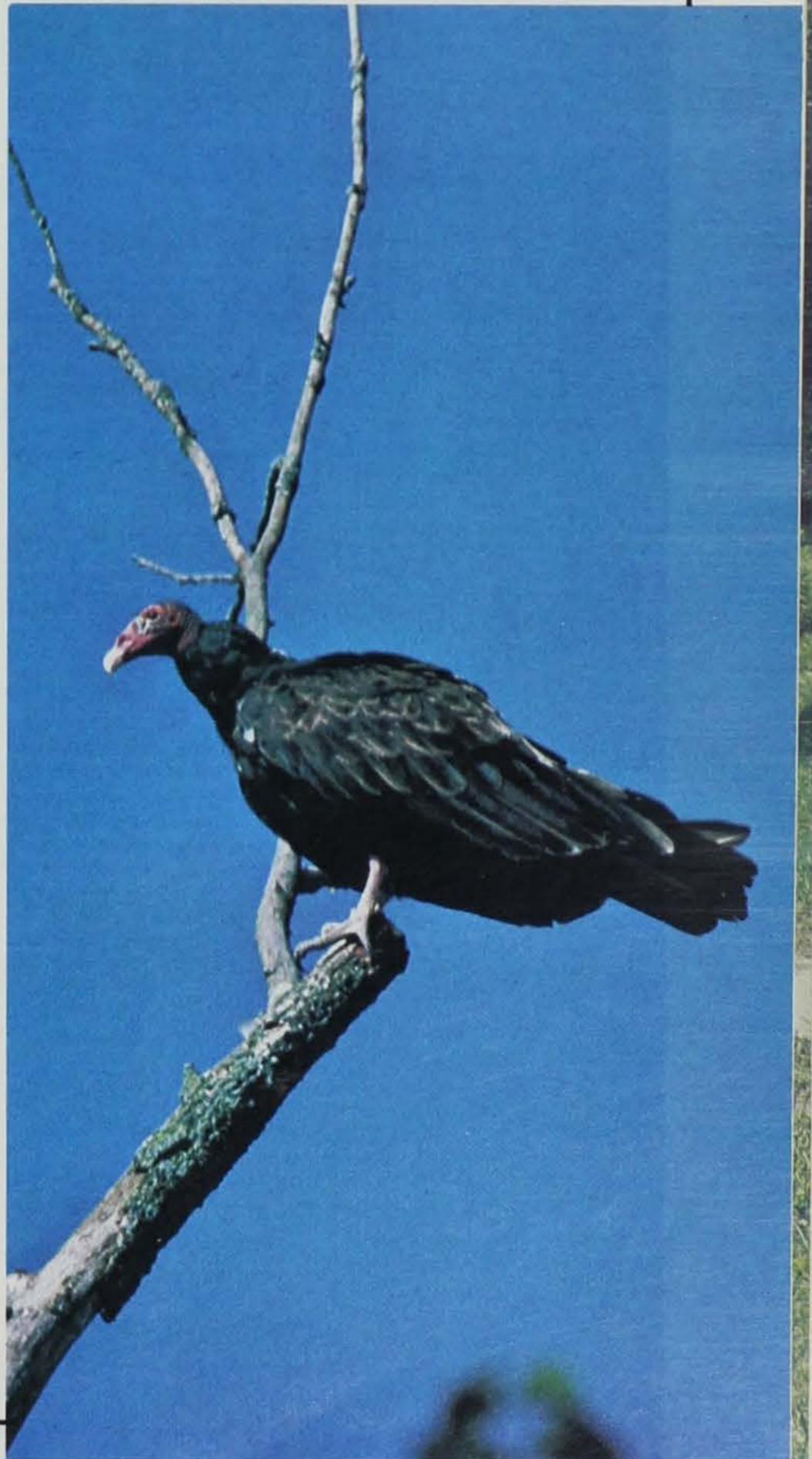
The night is spent roosting with many other vultures in the same tree. As morning lengthens and the sun warms the air, the vultures spread their wings as if hanging them out to dry. This posture is used for balance, wing drying, and to regulate body temperatures. Turkey vultures must conserve their energy because they may not feed daily. Little energy is spent in this spread-wing posture, but the body temperature increases rapidly with more body surface area exposed. This species is unable to fly unless its temperature and metabolic rate is increased sufficiently.

The turkey vulture has been classified as an ugly, disgusting bird. To me, beauty abounds as one watches its graceful maneuvers while it catches the air currents here at the Conservation Education Center near Springbrook State Park. It may glide and float for hours with its wings held aloft in the shape of a V.

The turkey vulture is still surrounded by many mysteries. It is highly beneficial to man and may one day be used as an environmental indicator for the health and welfare of our entire ecosystem.

Take a few minutes this spring and summer to study these turkey vultures as they glide and soar on the rising air currents in many of our state parks and recreation areas. It's a sight to be enjoyed and remembered by many.

PHOTO BY G. CRIM



# LOOKIN' BACK

in the files of  
the CONSERVATIONIST

## Thirty years ago



the *Conservationist* featured a story on smallmouth bass. This scrappy member of the sun-fish family can be found in many Iowa streams and several larger lakes. The magazine also mentioned the passing of Aldo Leopold, father of game management, who died while fighting a grass fire at age 62.

## Twenty years ago



we were encouraging people to vacation in Iowa and save money, time, and energy. Does that sound familiar? The story points out how staggering the growth of camping had been in the mid-fifties. They hadn't seen anything yet. The magazine staff was expecting a large hatch of litterbugs that spring. Let's put the critter on the endangered list this spring.

## Ten years ago



the *Conservationist* tried to teach its readers how to catch walleyes. The big ones shown on the cover were taken from the Mississippi River near Guttenburg. Fred A. Prievert was named the new director of the Conservation Commission. He succeeded E. B. Speaker who resigned to become special projects manager for the Commission.

# Warden's diary

By Rex Emerson  
LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPERVISOR

WHEN game wardens get together they usually talk shop. They tell each other about their most interesting case or something humorous that happened in their line of work.

One officer told about a fellow in his area who liked to go "jacklighting" at night. (He would go out at night and try to shoot deer with the aid of a spotlight.) People in the area were fed up with his bragging about his illegal hunting activities and reported it to the local game warden. This particular officer spent many sleepless nights trying to catch the "jacklighter" without success. Finally it was learned how he was doing it. He would let about half the air out of his tires and get the wheels of his car on the railroad tracks, then "drive the tracks" in remote areas away from any road. This information became common knowledge in the area and I think the game warden had some help in putting a stop to such fun.

One dark night as this fellow drove the tracks (fat, dumb and happy) using his spotlight, he rounded a curve and saw ahead of him a bright light

sweeping back and forth in a sort of figure eight motion. He instantly drove his car off into a big, deep ditch at the side of the tracks. When a train didn't go past he realized someone had tricked him! It took him three days to get his car out of the ditch and back on the road where it belonged. We never did hear who was making like a train with the big spotlight!

Officer Jim Judas told about the call he received about a strange looking bird that was harassing a lady's chickens. When he went to investigate he found the strange bird to be a chukar partridge. They are not a native Iowa bird, but are raised on many game farms in the state. It seems this chukar partridge was lonely and thought he was a rooster. In the mornings he would sit up on top of the chicken house or hide in the bushes. When the people living there would turn out the chickens, this Romeo of the bird world would attack the hens. He was making a nervous wreck of the old biddies. They would come to the chicken house door and look all around before they would venture out, and when they did, there he would be.

Jim shot the intruding bird and had him mounted. It's a conversation piece now.

Then there was the story about two game wardens in northeastern Iowa who got a tip about some illegal deer being processed in the back of a store building. They didn't have enough information to get a search warrant, but that didn't mean they would give up; not this pair. It was about midnight and there was a light in the back of the old store building. If they could just get a look through the back window and see some deer meat in there, then they could get a search warrant or they could kick the door in and seize the illegal meat without a warrant. It all depended on what the situation looked like. So they started slipping down the alley on foot to get a closer look.

When they were about halfway toward their destination they heard a car coming and the headlights started to swing into the alley. One officer dived into a pile of ashes and garbage on one side and the other slipped through the open window of a little shed on the other side of the alley. After the car had driven past, the one officer came up out of the garbage pile and found himself all alone. About that time he could hear a muffled voice coming from the little shed. It seems that the officer who dived through the open window had landed in an old cistern and needed help to get out.

Naturally before he received any assistance he had to put up with some remarks such as, "What are you doing down there?" "We came to work on a deer case. How come you take time out for a bath?" "Don't drink your bath water." "I wonder how long you can tread water."

Now you would think that there would be a lot of swearing coming from the cistern about that time. But not from this particular officer, because he never swears. However, as he was pulled out he was heard to say, "Cheese and crackers!"

I never did hear if they made the deer case, but knowing this pair I'll bet they did or are still working on it.

# Classroom Corner

by Robert Rye

ADMINISTRATOR,  
CONSERVATION  
EDUCATION  
CENTER

THE CHIPMUNK, more properly called the eastern chipmunk, is best known for being a storer. Eastern denotes its general range of habitation in eastern North America. "Chipmunk" comes from its chipping call.

In late fall or early winter these animals retire underground for the winter. Being

true hibernators, their body temperatures lower and they have reduced body activities.

Most animals that remain dormant in winter put on a good layer of fat from which they can draw energy during their sleep. There is one exception to this rule. Have you ever seen a fat chipmunk? Instead of putting on fat, chipmunks

store food in their den, so that when hunger awakens them all they have to do is roll over in bed and reach for a tasty tidbit.

All summer long they carry food in their cheek pouches to be stored in their den. They also store seeds underground and in various holes to use during slack times of the summer.

Chipmunks are small — 8-12 — ground dwelling members of the squirrel family with showy length-wise stripes on their back, sides, and cheeks. Their ears are short, rounded, and erect. They possess paired, large, internal cheek pouches that are used to transport food — mainly nuts, seeds, and berries.

When working with groups at the Center, chipmunks always attract the attention of the participants. Chipmunks are usually located near timber borders as they scurry, with tail erect, along logs, rock piles, and even up trees. The humans are often scolded for disturbing the harvesting activities.

Some Center group participant always points out to the rest that these animals are different from the thirteen striped ground squirrel observed earlier on the hike. The ground squirrel is found in its habitat of open grassland, especially whenever the cover (habitat) is short. This is the time to conclude that habitat most always determines the types of animals in a particular area.

The little chipmunk is alert, curious, and nervous. Although normally quite shy, they become accustomed to

people around the Center and park. Two to five years is their normal life span in the wild. They generally occupy the same home for several years, so the same observation site can be used again and again. This can also be a disadvantage, as I found out. I once stored an outboard motor in a garage and the chipmunks picked this site (the motor) in which to store a snack. The following year we both had a repeat of our storing activities. On the third year the chipmunk and I parted ways as I stored the motor elsewhere.

These mammals have favorite sites such as a stump or log where they like to feed. These places are marked by accumulations of shelled seeds, fruit pits, or nut-shell fragments. Hours of enjoyment are there for the taking, as you watch chipmunks hunch up on their hind feet and hold food in their front feet. They also drink water from streams and ponds which gives one a chance to observe their footprints.

Chipmunks provide prey for domestic cats, weasels, foxes, coyotes, hawks, owls, and snakes. They are also beautiful and exquisite little mammals and have a high aesthetic value to us because they can be easily observed in daylight. Their life activities are very interesting to groups and contribute much to a successful walk through the woods. They seldom constitute an economic problem except where their populations are very large.

Photo by LeRay Moore



## Are you confused about fathers?

That is . . . about your gift for him for Father's Day? Why not give him a subscription to the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST?

It's a gift that he'll remember all year long because, once a month, he'll receive an issue filled with current information about hunting, fishing, camping, and all types of outdoor recreation.

You say he has a subscription already? That's no problem . . . just add to his current subscription so he can continue to receive his magazine. But be sure to send along the address label.

\$2.00 for one year, \$3.00 for two years, or \$5.00 for four years. This is the lowest price available for this magazine.

Just send your name and your Dad's name and address (don't forget zip codes, please)! We'll see that he receives a gift card telling him YOU were thoughtful enough to remember him.

Dad's name \_\_\_\_\_

Street/RFD \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

1 Year (\$2.00)     2 Years (\$3.00)     4 Years (\$5.00)

MAIL TO IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WALLACE STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

