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COVER: The 1979 Iowa Wildlife Habitat Stamp Design by Patrick Costello of Bettendorf.

BACK COVER: Yellow-Shafted Flickers by Charlie Fritz, of Boone. Limited edition prints are available from the artist at 316 Boone St., Boone, IA 50036.

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THERE ARE SEVEN areas in Iowa named Goose Lake. They range from shallow marshes to small lakes. Clinton County has a Goose Lake that is most unique in origin. It is located one-half mile west of the town of Goose Lake.

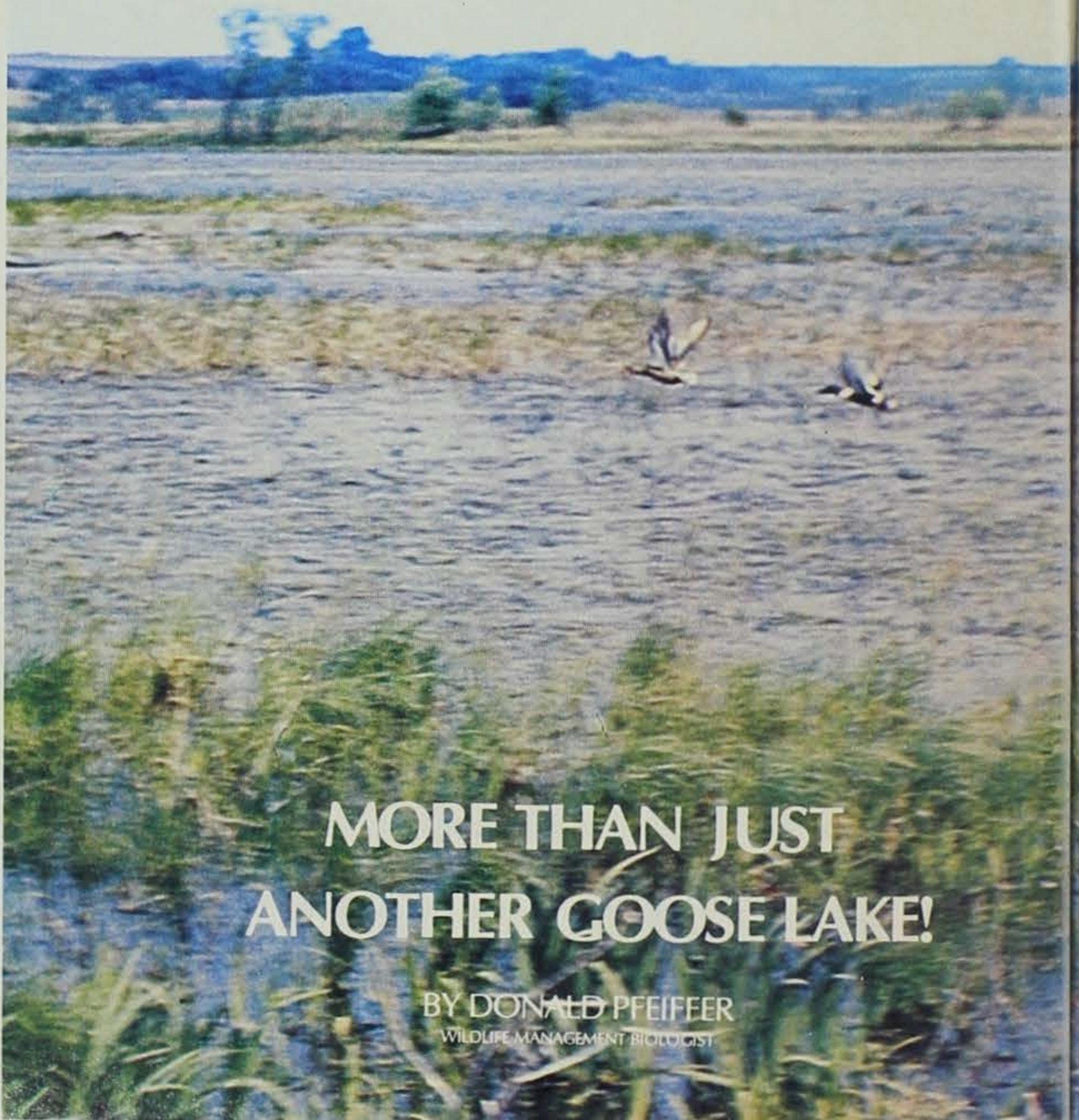
Geologists have determined that some 150,000 years ago a huge glacier pushed southward from Greenland into Illinois. As the ice accumulated in thickness, it spread across the Mississippi valley into Iowa. The Mississippi River was forced westward around this lobe of ice and formed one of the most interesting features of the topography in Iowa, the Goose Lake Channel.

The Goose Lake Channel consists of a large stream valley beginning from the Maquoketa River in Jackson County. It enters Clinton County southwest of Preston, Iowa, and continues southward to the Wapsipinicon River lowlands. After leaving Clinton County,

the rerouted river continued southwest through five counties before returning to the present Mississippi valley below Ft. Madison.

The feature is termed a channel because it has a flat bottom lying about one hundred feet below the nearest level of the uplands. The channel averages one and one-half miles in width and is limited on either side by well marked line of bluffs. The highest point on the floor of the valley is to the south of Goose Lake, where its elevation is 690 feet. From this point the surface descends north as well as south. To the south the descent is about six feet to the mile.

The original Goose Lake area contained more than a square mile of permanent water surrounded by a vast grassy sea. Numerous springs fed the lake but only until man came along. The lake's demise was the construction of county ditches. The drainage first



MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER GOOSE LAKE!

BY DONALD PFEIFFER
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST

added hundreds of acres of pasture land, additional tiling efforts have converted pasture to tillable land.

Early writers reveal the most color of the bygone lake. Imagine those days ... "the lake took its name from the myriads of waterfowl that, from ages before the time the country was settled to the present day, find in its sedgy shallows congenial haunts and breeding grounds. (1903)." Thomas Watts, an early settler, remembers ... "overlooking the lake, and seeing swans alight upon the lake in such numbers that acres and acres of water appeared as white as a snowdrift. As they flew to and fro, the glitter of long lines of snowy white pinions was a spectacle of dazzling beauty. Besides swans, the lake was frequented by pelicans, brant, wild geese and clouds of ducks. The clatter of their wings and the loud honking and quacking as they assembled at night, fairly dark-

ening the horizon with their long columns, was absolutely deafening. For many years there was no apparent thinning of their numbers, though the lake was a source of valuable food supply to the settlers. Not only were vast numbers of fowl shot and snared, but wagonloads of eggs were taken during the breeding season. Many eggs of wild geese were hatched by domestic fowls, and for many years wild geese were no rarity in farmyards."

"The Indians gave up possession of the country in 1837, but for several years thereafter friendly bands of Sac and Fox would return to Goose Lake, attracted by the hunting and trapping. Otter, mink and muskrats were very abundant, and deer were so numerous until 1855 that one could not take a short walk without seeing several. An Indian named 'Jim' killed the last elk in the township in 1858."

The Goose Lake of 1850 will never return as the land is too valuable for agriculture, but we can preserve a piece of it through the Goose Lake Wildlife Area. The Iowa Conservation Commission owns 886 acres within the original lake bed. 300 acres can remain wet depending upon rainfall. Springs still supplement the basin's water supply, however many have been diverted by drainage into the county ditches.

Management efforts are directed toward waterfowl. Breeding mallards, blue-winged teal, and wood ducks still return each spring. Water level manipulation is not possible at this time. A cost/benefit study is underway to find an alternative water source to solve this problem. Additional acquisition is desirable should willing sellers be found.

Recent improvements to the area include a dike to provide some open water on a permanent basis, native grass seedings, and shrub plantings. Shrub plantings have increased cover available to upland game species by breaking the larger fields into small habitats. Large brushpiles placed close to the nesting areas will insure safety for rabbits and bobwhite quail during severe winter storms. Thirty acres of native grass were seeded in 1974. With the dense nesting cover provided, improved nesting success is assured.

Waterfowl, marsh loving birds and animals will continue to visit this unique area. Adjoining uplands will be inhabited by numbers of cottontail rabbits, ringnecked pheasant, bobwhite quail, and songbirds that cannot be obtained on intensively farmed land. The public user, whether a hunter, birdwatcher, or individual seeking to enjoy a natural area, will be intrigued with a visit to the Goose Lake of Clinton County. □

Two views of Goose Lake: left, looking north; below, as seen from the window of an airplane, looking south from the north end.



PHOTO BY RON GEORGE

A SPECIMEN TO ADMIRE

by R. Runge



ONE DAY in early autumn many years ago, a light breeze finally broke the thin bond between a white oak acorn and its twig. The acorn, now fully mature after a season's growth, was nearly an inch long and the little stem which held it to the twig had gradually dried and weakened. Finally, the weight of the acorn was too much and the little seed was on its own.

If the falling acorn had attracted the attention of any living creature, it is safe to say that the incident was quite forgotten only moments after it occurred. As it happened, this acorn fell directly onto a flat rock which, only some years before, had worked its way to the surface. The acorn took a resounding bounce and rolled some fifty feet from the base of its tree. There it fell into a slight depression partially covered with the litter of the forest floor.



Although many birds, squirrels, and other mammals enjoyed eating the sweet flavored acorns, this particular nut, favored by where it fell, went unnoticed and thrived. By spring of the following season, it had begun to send its taproot down with its hairlike branches seeking the sustenance of the soil and its water. Now clinging firmly to life, the tiny plant had many years to survive before it would reach a size of relative safety. It would not be of any major significance in the scheme of forest life for some time to come.

The U.S. weather reporting station near Bethel, Alaska was not the most exciting place to live and work, but a team of seven Navy weathermen did indeed live and work in Bethel. Their only job was to monitor, record, and report changing weather patterns and developments in their quadrant. This was accomplished through the aid of nearly automatic equipment with the exception of the routine reporting of conditions done four times daily. These reports and other information, when received in Anchorage, were fed into Navy computers and used in weather forecasting for all of North America.

It was at Bethel station that the first look of mild concern was centered upon an advancing low-pressure center coming up from the sea of Japan. A freighter and one fishing boat had noted the low-pressure area on their barometers but, until it developed into a line squall, it hardly merited their attention. The warm air of the south was pushing over the cool air from the north and the center was moving easterly.

Long before the name George Washington meant anything at all to anyone; before a single English word had been spoken on this continent; indeed, before the pilgrims had even thought of leaving their homeland; the oak acorn had grown into a fairly respectable tree. It grew in a few square feet of soil in what would one day, for some odd reason, be called Iowa. It grew not a quarter of a mile from a river one day to be known as the Des Moines River. In its first one hundred years, the young tree had not been seriously threatened. Then a fire, swept in from the endless prairie, had invaded the stand of timber. The ground fire, feeding upon the debris of the forest floor, had crept into the woods in fingers. As temperatures rose, some trees gave way to the killing flames. The narrow-crowned oaks of the forest joined the elms and hickories in a dance to the tune of the blaze.

Fortunately for the young oak, a summer rain rolled in from the west and stopped the fire before the tree had been touched. Still, the evidence of the fire could be seen some forty yards away. As the burned trees fell away and rotted, the oak tree was allowed much more sunlight and, as a result, grew stronger.

Nearing the Alaskan coast, the low-pressure center began to push a line squall and developed into a major storm. Although it soon became evident that the storm would hit the coast, little damage was expected in Alaska. What it did accomplish, however, was quite more far-reaching than that.

The people of the Midwest United States were enjoying a pleasant January as the warm and moist air from the Gulf of Mexico had been pulled up by stationary fronts to the north. The major storm near Alaska would change all of that, however, as it influenced arctic air masses and they, in turn, moved the fronts onward over the Great Lakes and out to the east. Now, with nothing to hold it back, the cold polar front

rushed down the continent and into the warm, moist air from the Gulf. There would be hell to pay for this one.

As the voice of Abraham Lincoln echoed in the halls of our young nation's capitol, the oak tree in Iowa was indeed a specimen to admire. Over one hundred feet high, the tree had ruled its few square yards of the forest for centuries. In fact, if it mattered to anyone, which it didn't, the tree was over five hundred years old. Although the casual observer would notice nothing amiss, the tree was not leafing out as it once had. But this was of little concern.

Out of the north came the wrath of the blizzard. Television and radio stations had issued severe weather bulletins and motorists were urged to stay off the highways. Before it was over, the storm would leave a toll of eighty-seven dead in its wake. Across the State of Iowa, the people prepared for the storm as best they could. When the snow arrived, it appeared to be nothing more than a normal winter storm. The howling winds, however, were not far behind.

As Hitler cowered in his bunker, the oak tree in Iowa was in its declining years. It had survived pinworm and insect attack but was simply growing old. A variety of fungi had invaded the tree and now a serious case of heart rot was evolving.

About the time of the moon walk, danger came again from the west. It was not a prairie fire, for the prairie was gone, but the man who farmed where the prairie had been had diverted drainage from the uplands into a small creek which ran by the oak tree. At certain times the creek was rapidly flushed with water and slowly eroded its banks. Soon the roots of the mighty oak were undermined and, as time went by, it was plain to see the tree was in trouble. For all these years the tree had stood its ground. Not once, in all that time, had it been touched by the hand of man. Now it felt his hand as surely as if it wielded an axe.

By 5:00 p.m. on January 3, the storm struck Iowa in a fury unmatched for 30 years. Those unfortunate enough to be on the roads were lucky to get home. Traffic was hopelessly snarled in the big cities and, as one street after another drifted over, the heart pulse of Des Moines was weakened. For many, life would never again be the same. For all, the next few days would be an episode to remember the rest of their lives.

Weakened by rot, its grasp on the mother earth slipping from its roots, the oak tree could not stand to the fierce north wind. Where hundreds of years before the weather had come to save the tree from fire, now it came to wreck its end. The snapping and groaning of the towering tree was heard by no one. The thundering rush of the giant to the forest floor was seen by no one.

*Oh Father of the Forest
How long you've been in coming!
Oh seer of stars
How long it is we'll miss you!*

In early spring a chipmunk carefully looked around the forest before leaping up onto the fallen oak log and scurrying down its length across the creek.

THE END

HABITAT - The Key To Fish Management

WE LIVE in the age of specialization. Advanced technology in many fields of endeavor has enabled us to enjoy a good quality of life. But with this modern life style comes greater demands on our natural resources. Urban and industrial expansion, with their need to discharge wastes; and farming operations with the emphasis on grain production where high productivity is dependent on the use of fertilizers and chemical control of insects and weeds, contribute to the deterioration of lakes and streams. Soil loss through the gradual depletion of the vegetative cover occurs as more land is cleared and placed in grain production.

During times of heavy rainfall the soil loss, with its chemical and fertilizer elements, adds to the problems of fish management and shortens the life of many water impoundments.

Much of the fish habitat loss in water impoundments is a result of the acts of nature. Siltation from the watershed and wave action by cutting into the shoreline are two examples. Shoreline erosion creates a shallow shelf which is inhabited by small fish and is oftentimes choked by vegetation contributing to the problem of over-populations of panfish.

Shoreline deepening and riprapping prevents vegetation problems and provides favorable fishing conditions. When lakes become silt-laden from watershed erosion, a complete lake rehabilitation program must be initiated to restore the lake to support a balanced sustained fishery. Fish renovation and restocking oftentimes is only a temporary solution to poor fishing. Unless drastic improvements are made to provide favorable habitat for desirable fish species, the environment will favor those species most tolerant to poor habitat and an imbalance in fish populations will reoccur.

Lakes must be partially or completely drained and fish populations renovated. The lake bottom must have sufficient time to dry to support earth moving equipment. The silted and shallow shoreline areas can be improved by utilizing bottom soils to construct fishing jetties. Jetties, if properly placed, constructed and riprapped will extend the shoreline area, eliminate shallow water vegetation which serves as escape cover

for small panfish thereby improving the balance of fish populations. They also provide sheltered fish nesting areas, serve as wave breakers for unprotected shoreline, and benefit the shore angler by providing better access to fishable waters.

Manmade fish habitat structure can take many forms and serve as shelters or fish attractors that will benefit the fish and the fisherman. Attractors placed in 10 to 12 feet of water will attract the larger fish as resting and loafing areas, and concentrate the fish, enabling the

depth to effectively stratify during the summer in most of the lake area, have a watershed-to-lake ratio compatible to minimum soil deposition in the lake and a watershed that is under good conservation management. A deep lake that stratifies severely during the summer concentrates the fish to the upper portion of the lake, effecting a reduction in small panfish necessary to maintain a balanced sustained fishery.

On the other hand a shallow lake, by design, is a potential problem lake. It tends to produce more fish than the

Shallow shelf is choked with vegetation.



angler to have a more successful fishing trip.

With the angler ever increasing his knowledge of when, where and how to fish and the sophisticated equipment which increases the fish harvest, restoration of the fish habitat in older lakes is of immediate concern to meet the demands placed on these fishing waters.

So far we have been dealing with the rehabilitation of older water areas. We must also be concerned with the planning and construction of new lakes. Consideration must be given to potential lake sites that will have sufficient water

habitat will support. The inherent problem of abundant vegetation serving as escape cover for small panfish leads to overpopulations of fish and undesirable fishing conditions. As we have seen these problems require intensive management, by chemical or mechanical methods, to provide acceptable fishing. We must build the lakes properly to begin with.

The key to good fish management is "habitat" if lakes are to provide a long term balanced fish population and provide the public with good recreation. □

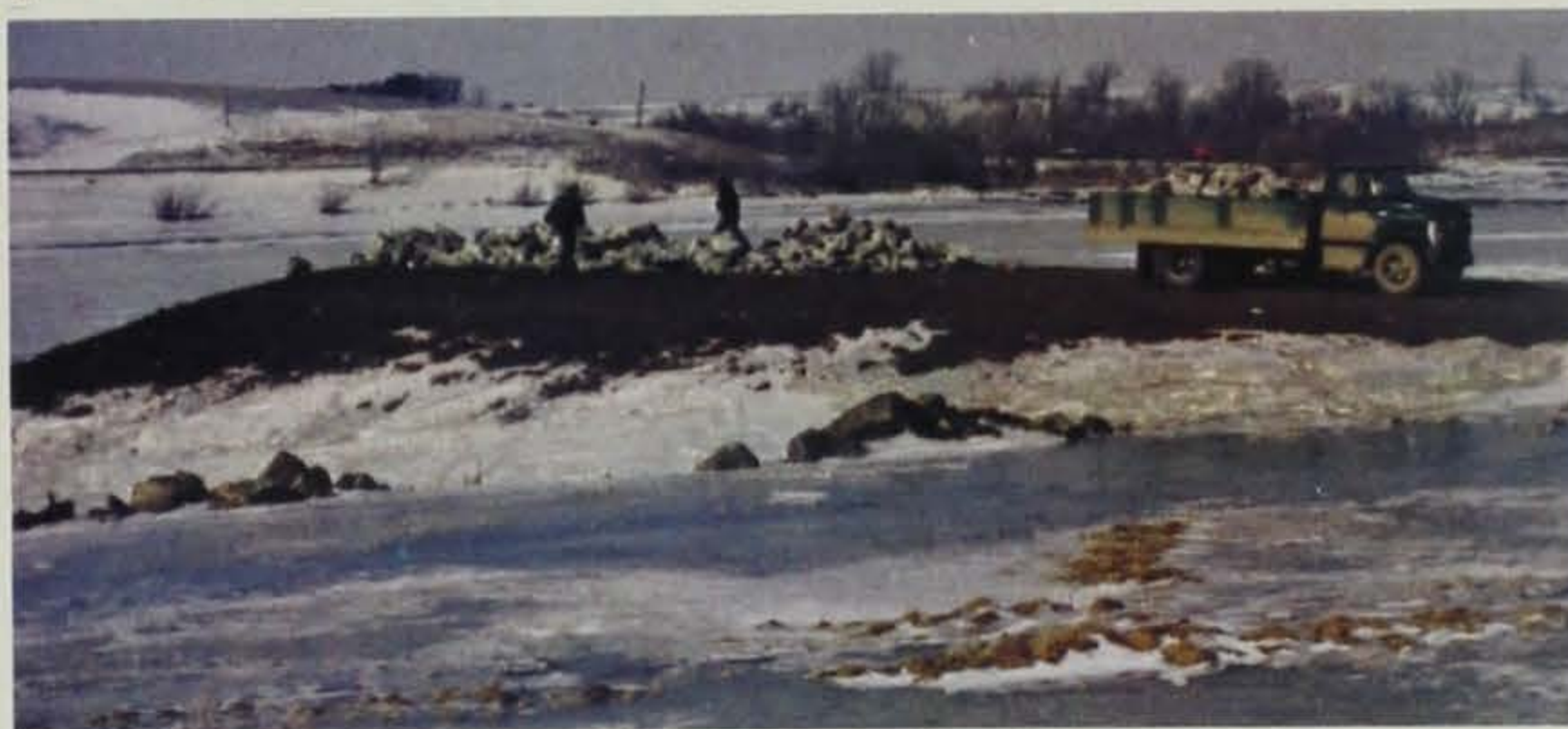
BY DALE STUFFLEBEAM

FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

PHOTOS BY BOB MIDDENDORF



Left: Preparing a stake bed; below: constructing a jetty; bottom: a tire reef goes through the ice.



The ELDON GAME AREA past and present

BY CHUCK STEFFEN

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST

LOCATED in the northeast corner of Davis county, the Eldon Game Area is one of the oldest state-owned wildlife management areas in Iowa. The original purchase in 1943 of 622 acres was part of the Conservation Commission's early program of land acquisition to provide better hunting and fishing for Iowa sportsmen. Since that time, the Eldon Area has been expanded to include a total of 925 acres.

Because it was located in some of the better quail range of the state, it was decided at an early date that the Eldon Area would also serve as a place where specific quail management techniques could be tested and the results applied to other state lands. Thus, much of the early research in Iowa on the ecology and management of this species took place here.

These research results provide a good record of conditions as they existed on the area in the early 1940's. By comparing present conditions with those that existed then, we can see that a tremendous amount of change has taken place. Through the process of natural succession a severely eroding, over-grazed, and generally abused area is slowly beginning to "heal" itself.

Historical accounts tell of the importance of this general area along the Des Moines River to the early Indians. At least two tribes, the Sac and Fox and the Ioway, used this area for hunting and fishing and sketchy accounts tell of a battle between these tribes that took place near here sometime in the 1820's. Reportedly, this battle nearly annihilated the Ioways and those that did survive fled into the "Soap Creek hills" which would be the vicinity of the present day Eldon Area.

During the late 1830's this part of the state belonged to the Sac and Fox by treaty and Federal soldiers were stationed in the area to keep white settlers out. It was during this time that the Federal government built a mill along Soap Creek where it borders the pres-

Removal of livestock has made the forests productive once again.



ent day Eldon Area. This mill was originally built to grind corn for the Indians but was later converted to a sawmill. Recent attempts to locate the old mill site have been unsuccessful.

In 1843, after a new treaty was signed with the Sac and Fox, white settlers were first allowed to enter this part of the state. As the Indians moved farther and farther west, white man began to make his mark on the land. That this effect also touched the Eldon Area is evidenced by the old family cemetery, still existing in the area, that dates to the early 1850's.

By looking at soil types and early records we know that nearly all of the Eldon Area was hardwood timber when whites first settled here. Animal species frequenting these forests included wild turkey, ruffed grouse, gray squirrel, gray fox, white-tailed deer, and probably timber wolf. Since that time there have been many changes in the plant and animal communities in the area. As settlers cleared the timber and began to farm the ridgetops, conditions became more favorable for species like the bobwhite quail and the fox squirrel. A combination of factors including logging, grazing, and overhunting caused the decline and eventual disappearance

of other species such as the timber wolf and the wild turkey.

By 1943 when the state acquired the Eldon Area, much of the land was badly eroding and generally unproductive. All of the timber had been logged off during the 1860's and 1870's and much of the second growth timber had been cut over again in the early 1900's for mine props and railroad ties. Over-grazing and years of row-cropping soils which were unsuited to agriculture had caused the loss of much of the topsoil and the formation of a series of raw gullies on the sideslopes. Other activities such as mining had also left their scars on the land. Even the remaining second and third growth timber was being grazed heavily, which greatly decreased its productivity.

Today the Eldon Area is slowly recovering from the abuses of the past. Removal of livestock has made much of the forested area productive once again and many of the depleted pastures are slowly reverting to brush and timber. Agriculture is restricted to the flat bottomlands and the wider ridgetops. Crop rotations are employed that not only conserve the topsoil but also provide nesting cover and food for game species.

Management of the area emphasizes upland game and forest game species. Bobwhite quail are common along the field borders while squirrels and the once scarce white-tailed deer thrive in the timbered areas and along the timber edges. Through the re-stocking efforts of the Iowa Conservation Commission, wild turkeys once again inhabit the forested land of the area. The diversity of habitat types present also benefit a large number of songbirds and other non-game species.

Hunting constitutes the primary use on the area, but a number of secondary uses are becoming increasingly important. Several fishing ponds provide recreation for anglers while the large acreage of timber provides excellent opportunity for mushroomers, photographers, and nature enthusiasts. The American Gothic Trail, a 16 mile hiking trail between the towns of Eldon and Selma, courses through the Eldon Area and is used by Boy Scouts and other hikers.

The Eldon Game Area is just another example of the many areas financed by the Iowa sportsman for all to enjoy. It remains a beautiful area to hunt, fish, hike, or just "get away from it all" and contemplate the workings of nature. □

Natural succession is slowly healing scars of the past — remains of an old coal mine.



Several farm ponds provide recreation to the angler.



TARGET SHOOTING instead of study hall? You bet. Many young Iowans will jump at the chance to take a mini-course such as gun safety and shooting sports. This type of program is now available in many schools across the state and is being met with much enthusiasm.

Let's take a look at the facts. More and more young people are becoming interested in the lifetime sports concept. In other words, an activity in which they can participate throughout their lives. The shooting sports are a good example. They are relatively inexpensive to get into and have the advantage of not requiring an athletic physique to enjoy.

Many instructors in Iowa schools are quick to see these advantages and make them available to their pupils. Some good examples are McCombs Junior High in Des Moines, Ballard Community School in Huxley and Grimes School located in Grimes. In the

McCombs program, students elected to spend some of their study hall time in a mini-course on shooting sports. Twenty boys and girls signed up for the first class and learned about the various types of firearms; the 10 Commandments of shooting safety; hunter ethics and archery.

The junior highs in Grimes and Ballard also offer these types of classes. Like the McCombs course, the students hold sessions at a gun range and actually participate in supervised shooting. They also hear lectures on reloading shells, first-aid and the laws governing the use of firearms.

Legal requirements and ethics are stressed in these sessions and this could be very important in the future. The Iowa Conservation Commission is advocating the passage of a law setting up a mandatory hunter safety program which would have to be passed before a young person could obtain a hunting

license. The schools which have shooting sports programs in operation will be able to provide this class easily if they desire, should the law be passed.

Even at the present time these programs are very important. Sport shooting is becoming one of the most popular forms of recreation in the United States. It is co-educational and satisfying in nature and prepares the students for responsibilities which they must accept in their adult lives. Best of all, it is enjoyable. Just ask the young people who have the opportunity to enroll in these classes.

If you as an instructor would like more information on these programs, the Iowa Conservation Commission can provide much help in getting your class started. Just contact *Butch Olofson, Hunting Safety Officer at the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319* or call him at 515-281-8665. □

Shooting Sports in the Schools

By Butch Olofson

PHOTO BY KEN FORMANEK



Grimes School

Ballard-Huxley School.

PHOTO BY RON JOHNSON



Profile of an Endangered Species

PRAIRIE BUSH CLOVER

(*Lespedeza leptostachya*)

BY DEAN M. ROOSA
STATE ECOLOGIST

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

TWO SPECIES OF IOWA plants of the same family and same genus occupy nearly the same ecological niche; one has become so plentiful that it occurs on nearly every Iowa prairie, sometimes in the thousands, the other is so restricted that it is one of North America's rarest plants. Why the difference: The answer is not yet known. The answer to why some species become plentiful and others disappear is complex and only recently has research been initiated that will give the answer.

Most of the world's population of this month's endangered species is found in Iowa, with a few scattered populations in southern Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois. This species is called Prairie Bush Clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*) and probably less than a thousand plants remain in the world. This rare member of the prairie flora was placed on the Smithsonian Institution's list of plants proposed for the federal endangered and threatened species list. In 1977, it was placed on the Iowa endangered species list.



The plant is cleistogamous and thus self-pollinated, which may explain why plants differing in morphology are found; the population does not have

gene flow to provide variability from which selection can be made.

The habitat of the plant is mesic native prairies and it seems unable to grow in

areas that have been plowed, but appears to need some form of slight disturbance like spring prairie fires or light grazing. How common and widespread in Iowa it was when 85 percent of Iowa was covered with prairie will never be known; perhaps it was always restricted to the small area it occupies today. Because Iowa has most of the world's plants of this species growing within its borders, any additional sites where it grows should be identified and, if possible, purchased and forever protected.

Economic value? Perhaps none — at least none that we know. But, perhaps the plant products that only this plant can manufacture will be valuable to us in the future. We cannot risk letting exceedingly rare plants and animals disappear because so little is known of their chemistry. Also, we must maintain a diverse environment for future Iowans, for with diversity comes a healthy and stable environment. I hope we never need to say 'Yes, that plant grew on a prairie patch in northern Iowa, but it disappeared back in the late 70's'. □

QUAIL, PRAIRIE CHICKENS, YOUNG PHEASANTS! Many of the residents of Iowa just refuse to recognize the commonly occurring gray partridge and call it by its legitimate nickname, the "Hun". The gray partridge was introduced in Iowa in 1910. The most successful stock was originally taken from Hungary. This resulted in the partridge being called Hungarian partridge or in typical American fashion it has been shortened to "Hun". The primary range of the partridge in Iowa is the north-central and northwest part of the state encompassing the area from Highway 65 on the east, Highway 20 on the south, the South Dakota border on the west and Minnesota border on the north.

Huns are firmly established here in Iowa and demonstrate a determination to survive and produce on "leftover" habitat. The Hun, more than any other farm game bird, has the greatest potential for coping with modern agriculture. Current intensive agriculture leaves only odd areas and narrow strips which provide adequate edge cover for the resilient Hun. The partridge's ability to covey-up in severe weather and even burrow out from under the snow, has allowed him to prosper in Iowa's open country side. The severe blizzard of March 1965 which reduced the pheasant population by 75 percent in northwest Iowa, showed no detectable effect on the Hun population. In fact, our department's population surveys have shown a steady increasing trend in Hun numbers.

It is not uncommon for a pair of Huns to incubate and hatch 12 to 15 young. First time observers are always amazed by a bird about the size of a cross between a pheasant and a quail, being able to incubate so many eggs. Huns nest almost exclusively in permanent grasslands and as a result, are limited to fence lines, abandoned farmsteads, highway and railroad right-of-ways. The covey size varies but by fall, after natural mortality, averages 8-10 birds. Average population levels in Iowa's prime partridge range is one covey per section.

You may be wondering why I am writing all this stuffy information when what you really want to know is how to get one of these wily devils on the table. Believe me, if you are going to hunt Huns, you will need all the background information you can gather to save you some frustration and sore feet.

I have talked with many partridge hunters and find their methods vary a great deal particularly with crop conditions, snow cover, and their own stamina. Combining some of the more successful techniques and my own experiences, I have put together some ideas to improve your hunting success.



HUNTIN' HUNS

by Rock Bridges

WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

PHOTOS BY RON GEORGE

The Hun has long been considered a bonus bird by pheasant hunters who find them in cornfields along with the ring-neck. Current research work including radio tagging of Huns, has revealed the fact that early in the fall birds spend most of their time in unharvested soybean and cornfields. After harvest, they remain in corn stalks until plowed or covered with snow. When snow gets heavy they prefer plowed fields or bean stubble since these areas will blow free of snow and allow the bird access to food.

Depending on when and where you hunt, keep these preferred conditions in mind. Along with knowledge of the birds habits, a Hun hunter must have strong legs, a full choke shotgun, perseverance, not to mention considerable luck.

Research has shown that 75 percent of all coveys have a home range of about 160 acres. A good idea is to locate coveys during late summer. This can be accomplished by traveling gravel roads early in the morning when there is a heavy dew. Huns avoiding wet vegetation will be visible along roadsides, providing you with a chance to mark down their location. Pre-season location of coveys, along with information gathered from landowners, will tip you off as to potential hunting areas.

In northern Iowa, considerable corn stalks are left through mid-November and a few fields all winter. Remember, prior to heavy snow accumulation, birds are in corn stalks or standing corn fields. This cover allows the best opportunity for getting close to Huns, and will give you the greatest success. Something I have neglected to tell you is that Huns like to flush at the fringe of your shotgun range. However, the birds feel some security in the old corn patch and will often let the hunter in range. Since Huns will not hold well, hunters can spread out and cover many acres in a short period of time. For this same reason, dogs are not a necessity but will be of most value in retrieving downed birds.

Huns, when flushed, will fly from one-quarter to one-half mile. Normally with no cover, they will land as a covey and regroup. At other times, they will fly together but land over a wide area similar to quail. I have had them split up and land in alfalfa and corn stalks. A split up covey is ideal and the alert hunter must capitalize on it. The best approach on singles in a picked corn field is across the rows rather than down the rows in open view. Don't expect the birds to hold for a dog to point. I have never heard of this, but rather it is possible to approach to about 15-20 yards prior to flushing.

Some hunters continue to flush birds time after time until the birds begin to tire and flush closer. This theory is possibly true but for 99 percent of us hunters, it works the opposite way in that we T.V. chair sportsmen tire before the hearty partridge. But for those in good shape, repeated flushes will increase success.

In north Iowa, we normally go through the winter with at least a foot of snow on the ground. By mid-December, birds become very obvious to hunters. On a sunny snow covered afternoon while fox hunting, I have counted as many as 8-10 coveys. With these condi-

tions the birds can be located by "glassing" unusual dark spots in the white landscape. Don't scoff and call this road hunting. The vehicle is only useful in locating the covey after which the stalk must be planned. If you decide the covey is one which can be hunted, locate the landowner and secure his permission and advice.

Sportsmen who are successful hunting on the snow are true hunters. They will have to employ stalking techniques we all learned jump shooting ducks on our favorite river or pond. To be successful the hunters must not be detected since the partridge are exposed and will not hold for a direct approach. Stalking will include using hay bales, trees, fence lines, weed patches, ditches etc., to get into position. The white clothing so effectively used by fox hunters, blends in with the snow landscape and is a

technique used by the late season Hun hunters.

Upon being flushed, Huns will normally fly 15-25 yards above the surrounding landscape. After hunting a few coveys you can begin to predict which escape route the birds will take. The trick is to position your partners in the flight path. Remember, Huns are powerful flyers and your friends better allow for a little "Kentucky windage".

Contrary to what you have heard, the gray partridge is not impossible to hunt. Last year our statewide survey showed that approximately 35,000 Huns were harvested by hunters in Iowa.

I hope I haven't made "Huntin' Huns" sound easy. On the other hand, don't be frustrated by wild flushing birds. Use your head instead of your feet and with a little experience, you will have some fine eating and great personal



satisfaction in outsmarting one of Iowa's keenest game birds. □



Classroom Corner

BY BOB RYE



PHOTO BY DANIEL D. McLEAN

HAVE YOU EVER HAD an experience in the out-of-doors which really means a great deal to you — One of those moments which you will remember forever — One which you brag about to friend and stranger alike?

Some people will tell about camping beside a stream; others water-skiing or hiking, sledding, ice fishing or even sitting in the woods watching for wildlife and observing plants and rocks. All of these have left an impression and developed an attitude.

We have a series of out-door physical-type activities which we use with groups. They develop leadership within the group,

increase mutual support within a group, provide fun, and leave memories of nature to develop an attitude about the environment.

All of us, at some point in our life, have had an opportunity to walk on a railroad beam or along a fallen log. There is a natural desire to do this, as well as a joy as you step off the end.

We use the lip around our parking lot at the Center. This can support large groups. We stress efficiency through movement of the group over a distance in as few trials as possible. As a follow up, logs on the ground or across a stream are used.

I know some people who will use any excuse to climb a tree. Have you ever read a book in a tree? Another cooperation activity is moving groups up into trees. Our exercise has been called "Monkeys in a Tree" at workshops our staff has attended. This, again, is a fun activity for those people who remember climbing trees. Care should be taken in selecting trees. The trees should have space for the dozen or so people with the first limb just **out** of arm's reach. This, then, requires team thinking and effort and can be done any time of the year.

Probably the most adaptable activity is what is

called "The Caterpillar Race." This, again, is a game of sorts which requires use of nature in a fun way. An obstacle course is determined and the group decides the best way to get through it. A rope is necessary, and all on the team are required to hold on with one hand.

I have used this activity for a first-grade birthday party and set the course through 3 foot snow banks and over 2½ foot logs. Appreciation for nature can even occur at a birthday party.

Through these activities and others like them, a person develops an attitude toward nature. We all have a bias feeling for our family, our favorite sport, our hobbies, and the unit for which we work. This inner feeling is perhaps the hardest thing to forget.

We can easily forget nonsense words. It is a little harder to forget facts and harder yet for physical activities. Our attitudes (prejudices) are almost impossible to dissipate. We at the Center try to develop in the participating groups a positive prejudice for nature. Knowledge and action toward wise use of natural resources will follow eagerly.

Plan now to move into nature for fun. While you are there, observe.

LOOKIN' BACK

in the files of
the CONSERVATIONIST

Thirty Years Ago



the Iowa Conservationist featured a story on Iowa fishing and the results of a poll conducted in cooperation with Iowa anglers. It was shown that the 1,800 persons who took part in the poll caught nearly a quarter million fish of which 56 percent were caught in lakes and 44 percent in streams. Catfish were the first choice of the angler although more bullheads were actually taken. The average catch for time spent was nearly three fish per hour.

It was reported that a game warden checking pheasant hunters had taken along a friend to assist him. The friend, however, stepped on a skunk and was given the full treatment. He said he wasn't going along anymore.

Twenty Years Ago



the magazine looked at game habitat and its importance. It was noted then that our use of land and water has shaped the pattern for wildlife abundance. Even today some people who call themselves "conservationists" have not been able to understand this simple fact. Even if you never shoot another prairie chicken they're not going to nest in the parking lot.

Ten Years Ago



the Conservationist examined late season pheasant hunting. It was mentioned that there is less cover late in the season and that the concentrated birds often segregate by sex, making it possible for the hunter to flush large numbers of roosters from one spot.

FROM THE

Warden's diary

By Rex Emerson
LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPERVISOR

SOME DOGS HAVE long memories. So says a fellow in Madison County. Two men and a hound dog were riding down a country road in a car when the dog's master, who was driving the car, began to brag about his dog's long memory. He said proof of this could be shown to his friend a ways down the road.

The canine's owner soon stopped the car and explained that three years ago the dog had treed a raccoon in a large tree which was about 200 yards from the road. After releasing the dog, they both watched as the hound raced straight for the tree. About halfway to the tree the dog jumped about five feet into the air and continued on to its destination. The proud owner beamed as the dog looked the tree over.

His friend said, "That's pretty good, but why did he jump so high on his way to the tree?"

The hound's owner replied, "Well, three years ago there was a fence there." Now, that's a memory.

December is the month for the shotgun hunting part of the deer season. We have a good, well managed herd of deer in Iowa. By permitting only a limited number of "any sex" licenses and the remaining licenses for "bucks only" all residents of the state who wish to hunt deer may do so. Managing the deer herd so we will have deer in future years comes first, then we try to set it up to please the people.

We can manage the deer, but it is impossible to please all the people. They didn't like the old system when a limited number of deer hunters could shoot either sex. So we changed it so everyone could hunt, but with a limited doe harvest. The hunters complained when too many hunters were in the field at the same time, so we split the

season and gave them a choice as to which one they could apply for. Now they complain because there are not enough hunters to drive the deer to them. They complain because their hunting party didn't get their fair share of doe (any sex) licenses. Or, "This is the third year I got a license to hunt deer, and every time I got a 'buck only' license. There must be some hanky-panky going on." They should go complain to the computer which kicks out just so many "any sex" licenses per zone, instead of telling me.

However, I realize the officer is the only representative of the Conservation Commission most hunters come in contact with, so we have become very patient in listening to such complaints. If it is a reasonable complaint or suggestion, we will pass it on.

We find a few people in the field during the deer season with high powered rifles, who are hunting coyotes. That is legal, if that is what they really are doing. If this person happens to be with some deer hunters, then he or she is taking part in the deer hunt, and is illegal. It sure is peculiar that it is the only time of the year some people are interested in hunting coyotes.

Landowners who reside on the farm, or the tenant family who resides on the farm may get one (and only one) free deer license to hunt on the farm unit. The land does not have to be all connected together. Some could be across the road, and some might be several miles down the road. If it is farmed as one unit this free license is good on all of it. They get the same ratio of "any sex" licenses in that zone as the paying license holders get.

We have some problems with this hunter, also. Any

other day of the year they know to the exact inch where their property line is. But the day they go deer hunting no one seems to know where the property line is.

Then, some landowners live in town and not on the farm. Some of them send in and get a free license. But if they use it they are in violation of the law. There were too many people buying a little five acre woodlot so they could get a free deer license, and they usually ended up hunting the entire countryside.

Then we also have the hired hand who is an actual tenant of only the house and yard where he lives. That person is not entitled to a free license to hunt the farm where he works. Sure, he works for the farmer, but so does the mechanic who comes out to work on the tractor.

We lose a lot of deer in November each year that are hit by cars on the highways, and a lot more by poachers. There would be more deer to hunt if we had the season the last part of October. But, the hunters prefer having the season later so there will be better chance of snow. Well, I have worked a few deer seasons when it did snow. A few of the hardy deer hunters were out, but for the most it was too cold. What they really would like would be 70° temperature, with two inches of fresh snow.

People are the main problem in deer management. Their attitudes have deteriorated over the years. Some hunters will hunt on private property without permission. Some will hunt illegal hours. Many of them seem to think that a \$15 license entitles them to \$50 worth of meat. Some farmers will complain all year about crop damage by the deer, and then won't let people hunt during the season, even when permission is asked.

Even the old man who lives down by the river has an attitude problem. His version of the Golden Rule is, "Do unto others, before they do it to you."

However, if it were not for problems with people, we wouldn't need game wardens, so please disregard all the above complaints.



by Bob Mullen

STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Are Hunters Conservationists?

IN THE LAST TEN YEARS there has been emerging a rather vocal group, which would like to ban hunting. These anti-hunting groups claim hunters are a group of individuals with guns that get their kicks by killing wildlife. These factions like to claim that our wildlife populations are rapidly declining because of hunters. Are these accusations against the hunter valid or is the hunter a conservationist? If we honestly look at the facts, it leaves no question of the importance of the hunter as a conservationist.

Just what does conservation mean? Conservation is realizing the greatest good, for the greatest number, over the longest period of time. We will begin to see that the hunter definitely fits into the definition of a conservationist.

It was the action of hunters in the mid to late 1800's that saved many of our game species from depletion. Hunters, such as Teddy Roosevelt, pushed stringently for organized conservation programs. Many hunters saw the need for restrictions concerning limits and seasons. It was the action of our early conservation minded sportsman that brought about many of today's conservation programs in America.

What is today's hunter doing for conservation of wildlife? It's the hunter, and the hunter alone, that totally supports the majority of conservation programs for wildlife. This includes non-game birds and animals as well as the game species. Did you

know hunters have contributed over 2.2 billion dollars for conservation in America in the last 50 years? Presently hunters spend over 145 million dollars for conservation a year.

Every time a hunter purchases a hunting license he contributes to ensuring an ongoing conservation program. License money is used to purchase and improve wildlife habitat, for game management, for wildlife law enforcement, and for conservation education. This money benefits not only game species, but non-game species of birds and animals as well. The sportsman hunter is interested in all wildlife, not just what he hunts. The hunter provides recreation for many non-hunters. Areas purchased with monies from hunting licenses are enjoyed by campers, hikers, nature photographers, and bird watchers. These non-hunters are able to enjoy the recreation at no cost, because the hunter has picked up the tab.

In 1937 the Pittman-Robertson act was passed with strong hunter support. This 11% excise tax on all sporting arms and ammunition was to be used for conservation. This money is prorated to the states for the purchase and improvement of land for wildlife. Since 1937 this tax has raised over 438 million dollars, because the hunter cared for wildlife.

Money received from the purchase of federal duck stamps by hunters is used to purchase and lease wetland areas for waterfowl refuges

and waterfowl production. Many non-game species benefit from this as well as waterfowl. Since the enactment of this program in 1934, federal duck stamp revenue has raised over 117 million dollars. The Iowa duck hunter, in addition to purchasing a federal duck stamp, also is required to purchase a state waterfowl stamp. This money is used for the purchase and improvement of waterfowl areas. One half of this money goes to Ducks Unlimited for acquisition of waterfowl nesting areas in Canada for waterfowl production, which directly benefits the Iowa waterfowl hunter.

The anti-hunting group might say the hunter has spent lots for wildlife, but it's because of his own self interest in game animals. This is not entirely correct. We've seen that all wildlife benefits from money spent by the hunter. If it wasn't for the hunter's strong self interest in perpetuating his sport there would be little wildlife of any kind.

The anti-hunter would like to see all hunting seasons closed, thinking this would bring about an increase in wildlife populations. Closing hunting seasons would have a detrimental effect on wildlife populations in a few short years. With all seasons closed, populations would soar in some species, and then a rapid decline would take place. With overpopulation, disease and starvation are always the end results. If a population goes unchecked it will soon completely deci-

mate its food supply and starvation becomes a reality. The hunter harvests animals which many times are weak or sick. The hunter also harvests the excess so fewer animals will have to compete for a limited food supply.

Anti-hunters argue that today our wildlife populations are decreasing because of hunting pressure. The reason some populations are decreasing is not hunting, but due to the shrinking of habitat, which wildlife requires. As man supposedly advances in this technological world, wildlife suffers. Most wildlife populations that have decreased in the last 50 years are non-hunted wildlife species.

Two species which have directly benefited from hunting are white-tail deer and the quail. Today there are more deer in Iowa than 50 years ago. Sound game management and a controlled harvest has allowed the deer to increase in numbers. Quail soon become weak from continual interbreeding and could eventually become so weak that they could not survive winter conditions. The hunter helps by breaking up coveys, therefore preventing this continual interbreeding, and by harvesting the weaker birds.

It's safe to say that the sportsman hunter is definitely a conservationist. The remaining question is what have the anti-hunting groups done for conservation? How much money have they contributed toward active conservation programs? The answer is little, if any. □

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