

Iowa CONSERVATIONIST

MAGAZINE

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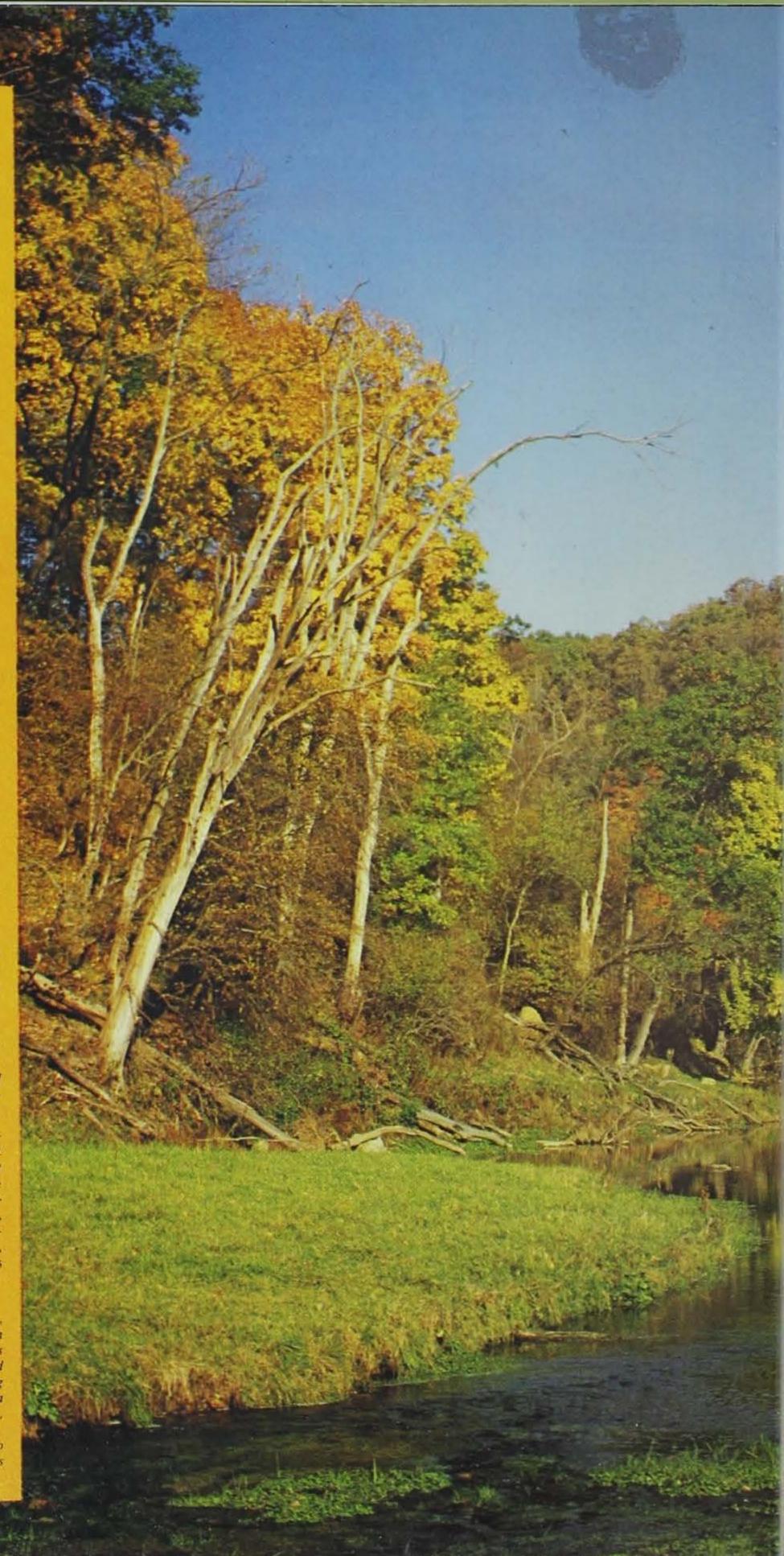
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Autumn in Iowa

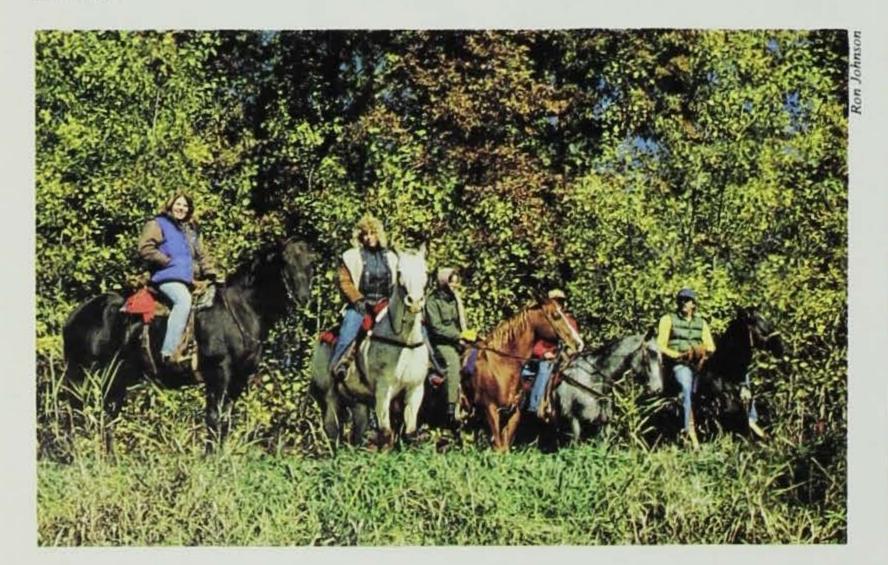
When people see Iowa for the first time, they marvel at the scenery. The state is not all flat, they discover; indeed, the vista of rolling hills, lush crops and well kept farmsteads is pleasant and picturesque. Those who visit eastern, southern and parts of western Iowa are just plain surprised to find that crop and pasture lands are mixed with an appreciable amount of hardwood timber. If they happen to be there in the fall, they're in for a real treat.

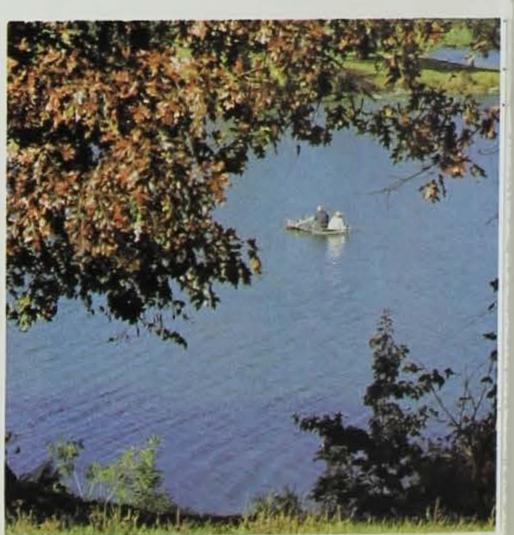
Iowa Conservation Commission photographer Ron Johnson and others offer us this sneak preview of October in Iowa. The real feature is now showing along county roads, small town streets and wooded streams. Don't miss it.





Ron Johnson







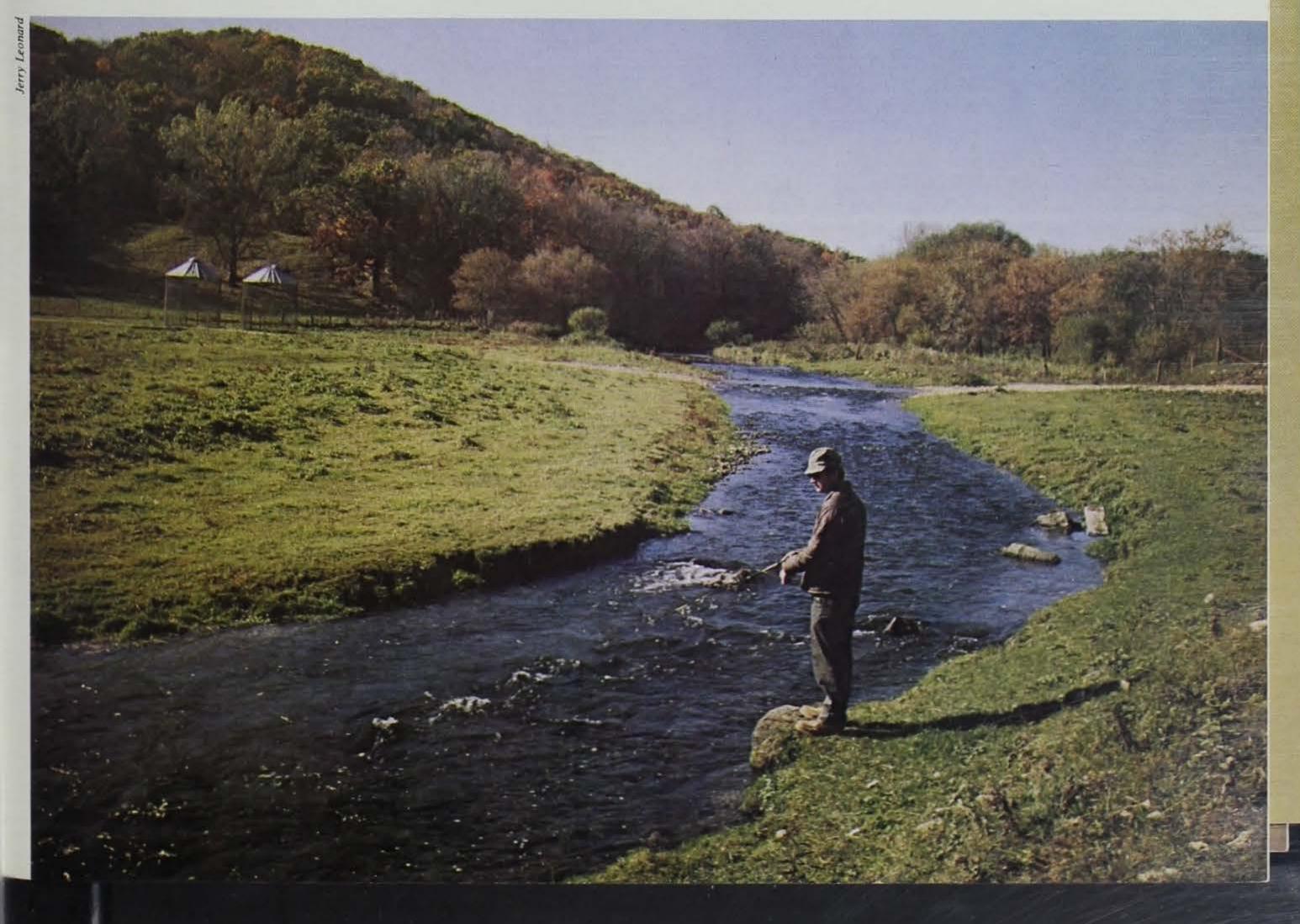
Clockwise from upper Left: Scene along Volga River, Fayette County.

Rustic barns blend into northeast Iowa landscape.

Trout angler tries his luck at Waterloo Creek, Allamakee County.

An autumn look at Red Haw State Park near Chariton.

Riders enjoy trail at Yellow River State Forest in Allamakee County.





Artwork by John Bald of Davenport

1982 HUNTING PROSPECTS

By Richard Bishop

As fall weather proceeds, many of us are beginning to wonder what awaits us in our favorite coverts and timetested mallard hot spots. Regardless of our mental preparation, the anxiety of upcoming hunting seasons continues to build. Season openings on squirrel, rabbit, rails, snipe, woodcock, and the pleasant September duck season have served as a pressure valve to release some of the mounting excitement.

Looking ahead at the seasons on geese, ruffed grouse, ducks, turkey, pheasant, quail, gray partridge and

deer, Ye Old Forecaster will offer his summation of what lies ahead.

Geese

Cold and unsettled weather in the arctic this past spring caused nesting snow geese to be less productive than in 1981. Due to these conditions, some geese simply did not nest and others that did showed a lower clutch size and fewer number of goslings raised. A reduced fall flight of snow geese is predicted for the Mississippi Flyway.

Since the snow goose population is quite healthy we will still see many of them, but the number of young birds

will be lower. Generally, it will be far more difficult to bag a goose than in years when many vulnerable, young birds are present. Large concentrations of snows will again be present in western Iowa but the length of time they are here and the peak concentrations will depend on the weather.

Canada geese of the eastern prairie population that nest in the lowlands along the western shores of Hudson Bay faired better. Weather conditions were less inhibiting and production of these birds was higher than in 1981. These geese usually leave Hudson Bay in mid-September and move south



Richard Bishop is supervisor of wildlife research and is stationed at the Commission's central office in Des Moines. He has been employed with the Commission 17 years. He holds a B.S. degree from Iowa State University and a M.S. degree from the University of Arizona.

through Manitoba, Minnesota and Iowa to winter in north-central Missouri at Swan Lake. As in the past, we will witness a good flight of geese through Iowa in early October with a continued light flow of birds until mid-November, when concentrations of Canadas in Manitoba and west-central Minnesota are forced south by the weather. Again, our opportunity for harvesting birds from this flock depends a lot on weather and habitat conditions.

Local giant Canada geese, especially in northwest Iowa were again quite successful and many birds will be present. Much of Iowa's Canada goose harvest in the past five years can be attributed to giant Canadas raised in Iowa. Populations continue to expand and indeed, the picture looks bright for local Canadas.

Ruffed Grouse

The snowy winter that stressed many wildlife species was actually beneficial for ruffed grouse. They often burrow into the snow to roost which protects them from aerial predators and conserves their energy by providing insulation during cold periods. Winter survival appears good and many ruffs could be heard drumming in the hills of northeast Iowa this past spring. I anticipate a very good grouse season in the prime range of northeast Iowa.

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Turkeys

Our second fall gun season for turkeys will get underway on October 19 with 1,000 permits for each of two zones in southern Iowa. While excellent turkey populations are found elsewhere it is important to monitor the success of our first two fall seasons before we expand this type of hunting.

The past winter had few ill effects on turkeys, but heavy summer rains in southern Iowa for the second year in a row has caused poor nesting success and poult survival. While somewhat improved over a year ago, it still looks like a poor nesting year for southern Iowa turkeys. Other areas of the state (east-central and northeast Iowa) had much better success. Despite poor production we have a very healthy turkey population in both hunting zones which should provide some exciting hunting for those people receiving permits. The Iowa turkey program is still expanding into new areas and the future looks good.

Ducks

They say all clouds have a silver lining and it may be true for duck hunters. With all the wet weather this past spring and summer, breeding habitat increased for ducks in much of southern Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and especially in the Dakotas. Breeding conditions in southern Canada were up 121 percent compared to May of 1981, still 14 percent below the 1961-81 average.

The 1982 duck breeding population returning to this improved habitat was down about 5 percent from one year ago. Mallards were down only 1 percent from 1981, some 22 percent below the 1955-81 average. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's forecast for the fall flight of ducks down the Mississippi Flyway is only slightly improved over 1981. However, from my experience, I cannot imagine that production in the areas that supply ducks to Iowa is not significantly better than a year ago when a drought gripped both North

and South Dakota and prairie Canada. Even if there is only slight improvement in the total number of ducks coming south, the proportion of young birds will be higher this year making hunting more productive. At any rate, the success of the regular duck season will depend more on migration conditions and the quality of habitat in Iowa than on total duck numbers. Food and sanctuary must be present if we expect ducks to stay in Iowa for any period of time.

Pheasants

Final results from the August roadside census indicate significant decreases in statewide pheasant numbers. This is attributed to an extremely rough winter in northern Iowa and a wet cool spring which was detrimental to production statewide. Pheasant numbers are approximately the same as in 1975 when we harvested 1,100,000 pheasants, or about 40 percent below the 10-year mean population.

There may be one bright spot. Considerable evidence suggests the cold wet season caused hens to delay nesting. This has set back the chronology of production and many broods were likely too young to be out on the roads during our survey period. We received numerous reports of newly hatched pheasants in late August which means pheasant numbers could very well be higher than predicted.

Iowans will still have good pheasant hunting but in most areas limits will be harder to come by than before. The distribution of birds has not changed from 1981. The better areas are in the same geographical location as in past years, so my advice is to go to the same places you have traditionally hunted.

While statewide pheasant numbers are down, remember that in local areas hunters may see about as many birds as they did a year ago. Our 1982 harvest will likely exceed the one million mark again.

Quail

Quail populations experienced similar declines as pheasants. The harsh winter resulted in above normal winter mortality which would no doubt have been much worse had it not been for a February thaw. When spring came, quail were calling in all good habitats and ample breeding populations existed. The hard rains which occurred over much of the prime quail range set back breeding and caused the loss of newly hatched quail. Quail, like pheasants, were 40 percent below the 10-year mean, but counts are twice as high as they were in 1979.

After the very harsh winter of 1978-79 quail numbers on August counts were at the lowest point since 1962. With relatively good nesting conditions during 1980 and 1981, counts in the traditional quail range reached an all time high in 1981, demonstrating the great reproductive potential of upland game birds. Quail will again come back to high numbers where good habitat exists. A word of encouragement lies in the late nesting effort observed in quail as well as pheasants. Young birds were sighted in late August and early September

which indicates hens are stubbornly trying to hatch a brood. This may well boost quail numbers into a "good prospect" category.

I am optimistic about quail but I do not expect to flush as many coveys as I did a year ago when populations were high. Hunters who work at it will find enough coveys to enjoy some quality hunting.

Gray Partridge

This sounds like a broken record but, not surprisingly, partridge are down also. Their numbers are at the 10-year average and approximately the same as in 1977 and 1978. There are plenty of Huns to keep you going all season long if you are hardy enough to chase them that long. Due to their behavior Huns will have you scratching your head and wondering what you are really doing; however, they offer some exciting hunting. Huns are greatly underharvested and my advice is to go out after them; you might get addicted.

Despite the lower populations of upland birds, I believe Iowans will be afforded greater hunting opportunity than they have time to take advantage of. Hunting seasons are designed to take only the surplus rooster pheasants and other species and they in no way influence next season's population levels. Safe nesting cover, good winter shelter, food and favorable weather for hatching and brood rearing are the key factors to good bird populations.

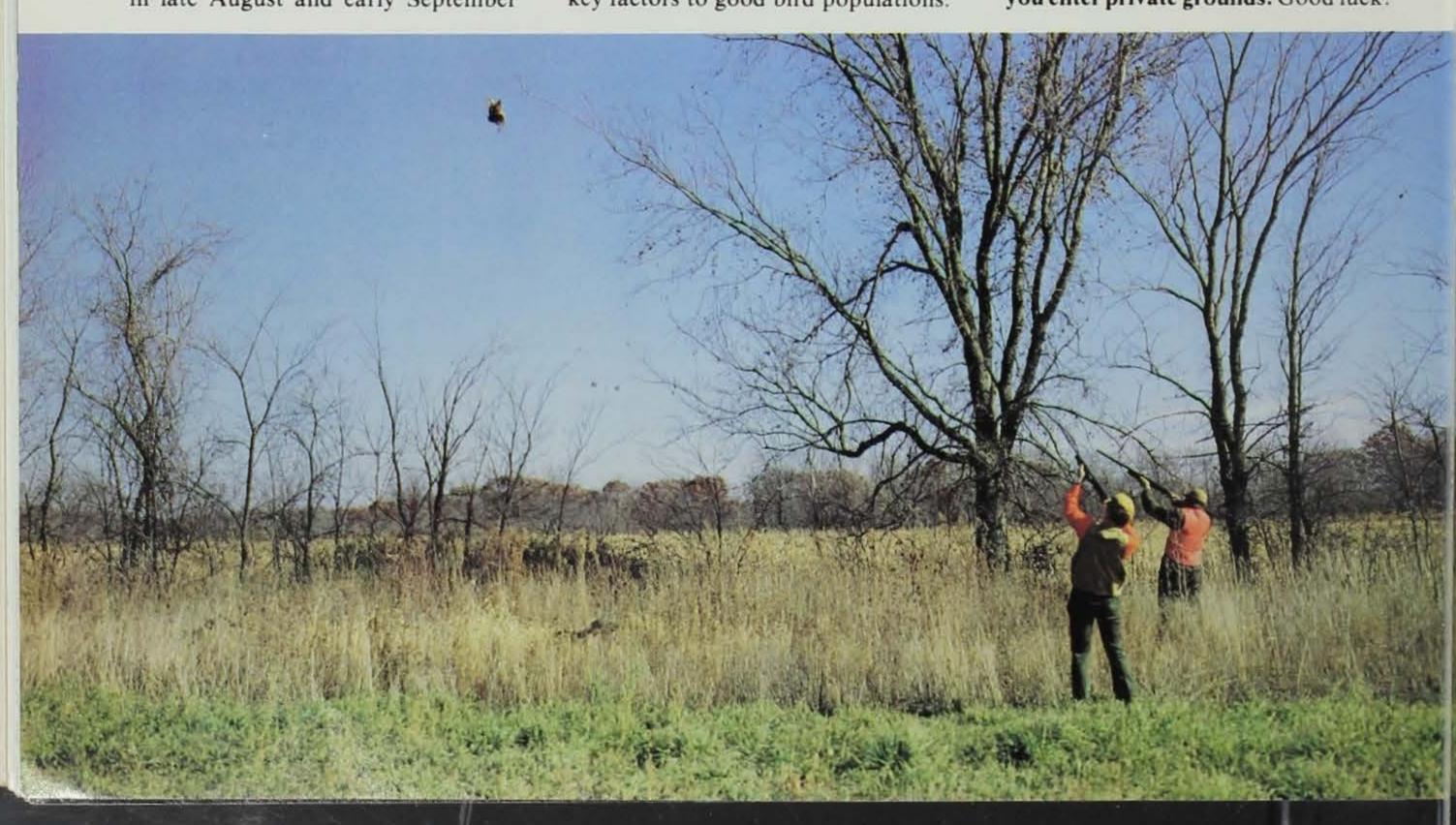
Rabbits

Let's end this upland game forecast on a positive note. Rabbit populations are equal or greater than in 1981 in most areas of the state. Rabbits are lightly harvested by hunters with most bunnies being taken by winged creatures like great horned owls or four-legged critters (mostly fox and coyote). Lots of rabbits should be available when the first snow gets you excited about hunting, even though you have passed up some excellent early hunting and allowed predators to cream the crop before you take to the field.

Deer

The 1981 deer harvest set a record with 26,000 animals harvested. This exceeded the previous record setting year of 1980 by about 3,500 deer. Late winter counts indicated a healthy deer herd and an excellent hunting season is forecast again this year. These high harvests reflect an increasing deer herd and if weather is favorable a harvest of equal or greater magnitude is expected in 1982.

I have provided you with the best information available and given projections as I see them. Hopefully, things will turn out as good or better than I have outlined. The Commission encourages you to go out and enjoy your outdoor experiences, but use caution and good gun safety. And by all means, obtain permission before you enter private grounds. Good luck!



CONSERVATION UPDATE



SNOWMOBILE SAFETY COURSE REQUIRED

Adams & Taylor

Benton & Tama

Boone & Story

Black Hawk

Appanoose & Monroe

Audubon & Guthrie

Bremer & Chickasaw

Butler & Franklin

Carroll & Green

Clarke & Decatur

Crawford & Monona

Dickinson & Osceola

Emmet & N 1/2 Kossuth

Dallas & Madison

Davis & Wapello

Floyd & Mitchell

Fremont & Page

Grundy & Marshall

Hamilton & Hardin

Hancock & Wright

Harrison & Shelby

Jasper & Marion

Ida & Sac

Jackson

Johnson

Jones

Henry & Washington

Howard & Winneshiek

Jefferson & Van Buren

Humboldt & Pocahontas

Des Moines

Dubuque

Fayette

Clay & O'Brien

Cerro Gordo

Cedar

Clayton

Clinton

Calhoun & Webster

Buchanan & Delaware

Buena Vista & E % Cherokee

W 1/4 Cherokee & Plymouth

Allamakee

Anyone born after July 1, 1965 must take and pass the Iowa Conservation Commission's Snowmobile Certification Course before they can legally operate a snowmobile on public land or ice.

The minimum age for the course is 12 years. Courses will be conducted at various locations around the state beginning in mid-October. The course consists of five two-hour sessions. For information on a snowmobile course located near you, contact your local conservation officer (see accompanying list) or call the Conservation Commission's main office in

Des Moines, Iowa (515) 281-6824.

The instruction covers proper snowmobile maintenance, safety tips, legal responsibilities, operation ethics, and actual outdoor snowmobile performance and evaluation. Slides and films are used to illustrate the importance of snowmobile safety.

Graduates will receive a snowmobile safety certificate, which must be carried when operating a snowmobile on public land or ice. The graduate also receives a shoulder patch and helmet decal. The course will be conducted by a Commission certified instructor.

COUNTY Adair & Cass

CONSERVATION OFFICER Eric Sansgaard, (712) 781-2274 David Moore, (712) 523-3556 Jerry Hoilien, (319) 586-2134 or Larry Moore, (319) 586-2521 Mike Runyan, (515) 932-2934 or Ed Nelson, (515) 856-8489 George Hemmen, (515) 747-3643 Bob Mullen, (515) 484-3808 Steve Pierce, (319) 291-6359 Warren Wilson, (515) 432-8311 Glen Angell, (515) 394-2037 Jim Becker, (319) 334-2197 Paul Magnussen, (712) 283-2725 Galen Heinkel, (515) 456-2659 Jim Judas, (712) 297-8790 Larry Ford, (515) 386-3712 Tim Dorr, (319) 643-2624 Jack Meggers, (515) 423-4873 or Steve Schutte, (515) 357-3394 Vacant - contact neighboring officer Craig Roberg, (515) 445-5419 Gary Biederman, (712) 834-2554 Ed Lawrence, (319) 964-2233 or Stan Blair, (319) 252-1759 Maurice Anderson, (319) 659-9438 Jens Bruun, (712) 423-1591 Dennis Nelson, (515) 996-2455 David Arp, (515) 682-2584 Don Simonson, (319) 754-5282 or Les Neiland, (319) 392-8339 Jerry Roskammer, (712)337-3581 or Gary Owen, (712)337-3241 Mike Ouverson, (319) 582-4035 Bob Moats, (712) 859-3674 Keith Rowley, (319) 425-4293 Alan Roemig, (515) 732-3307 Don Priebe, (712) 246-2796 Darrell Batterson, (515) 792-8398 Duane Wilson, (515) 832-5020 Jack Edwards, (515) 532-3353 Richard Johnson, (712) 642-3578 Steve Messinger, (319) 694-3650 Berl Downing, (319) 382-5102 Mark Edwards, (515) 332-5428 Jim Wallace, (712) 657-8739 or Chris Lloyd (712) 273-5252 Wes Beecher, (319) 872-3391 or Gary Purtilo, (319)872-5810 John Mertz, (515) 842-6472 or Ron Sharr, (515) 943-2224 Lowell Joslin, (515) 693-4751 Wendell Simonson, (319) 628-4443

Special Friends of Iowa Parks



By Dale Brumm State Park Ranger

Paul and Billie Demarest moved to Omaha from the east coast some 25 years ago. They are retired and Paul is currently vice president of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International (Airstream trailers) for which they travel extensively.

One hobby they have is hiking all the trails in parks, picking up litter as they go. They literally vacuum an area finding litter even parks personnel miss. An incident at Stone State Park taxed their patience when they discovered the contents of several garbage bags stacked at Dakota Point had been strewn over an entire hillside. After assisting in the clean up, they mentioned that they were curious as to where park rangers find the patience to cope with this type of problem.

Mr. and Mrs. Demarest also note that since the Iowa container deposit law has been in effect, the amount of litter found near picnic areas and along trails has decreased significantly. They have relayed this information to their political representatives in Nebraska.

Some of their experiences include hiking to the 4,500 foot level of Mount Ranier, and being at Ledges State Park when the temperature reached 27 degrees below zero. They were at Springbrook State Park during a New Year's Day blizzard and Viking State Park when it took two vehicles to pull each camper out of the snow.

A special thanks go to Paul and Billie Demarest, 10812 Park Meadow Plaza, Omaha, Nebraska 68142

Keokuk & lowa Lec Linn Louisa Lucas & Wayne Lyon & Sioux Mills & Montgomery Muscatine Palo Alto & S 1/2 Kossuth Polk Pottawattamie Poweshiek & Mahaska Ringgold & Union Scott Warren Winnebago & Worth

Woodbury

INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

Tim Dorr, (319) 643-2624

Ralph Leigh, (319) 642-5666

Doug Franta, (319) 835-5426

Ron Draves, (319) 377-6817

Scott Kinseth, (319) 653-5873

Rich Schlutz, (515) 535-2483

Dan Cain, (712) 829-2338

Jim Shipley, (515) 672-2710

Marc Roberg, (515) 782-6087

Myron Speer, (319) 391-4060

Randy McPherren, (515) 466-3644

Richard Bowman, (515) 592-2395

George Tellier, (712) 439-1823

Charles Humeston, (712) 852-4051

Ermin Jennings, (319) 264-1012 or Curt Noble, (319) 263-2791

Lon Lindenberg, (515)967-6407 or Rod Pickens, (515)967-4704

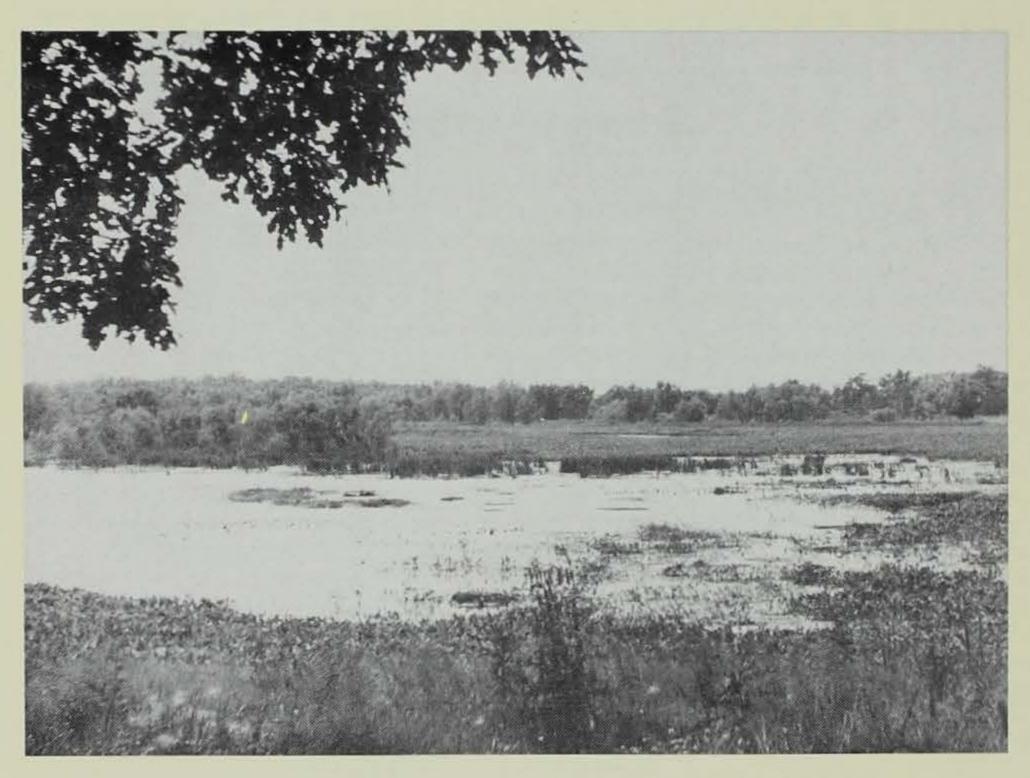
Duane King, (712) 328-2786 or Doug Clayton, (712) 323-9123

John Hoth, (712) 946-5908 or Steve Jauron, (712) 943-4189

The Iowa Conservation Commission needs additional volunteer instructors to teach a snowmobile course that is required by law for anyone born after July 1, 1965 who operates a snowmobile on public land or ice.

Anyone interested in becoming a snowmobile instructor or interested in learning more about the snowmobile course, contact the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319 — telephone 515/281-6824.

The five, two-hour sessions cover the history of snowmobiling, maintenance, potential operating hazards, winter survival, regulations, ethics and actual outdoor snowmobile performance evaluation.



A RIGHT MOVE FOR ALL IOWANS

By Richard Bishop

Newscasts, newspapers, and discussions at the corner barber shop vividly describe the current conditions of Iowa's economy. Iowa's major industry - agriculture - heads the list. Too much corn, low prices, high production costs and excessive erosion are all problems facing today's farmers and indirectly most Iowans. The major complaint, low crop prices, is a direct result of the supply exceeding demand. Too much corn is the result of excessive conversion of non-agricultural land into row crops. Timbers are cleared, marshes are drained, pastures are plowed, and corn is planted. Costs for changing the character of the land are high but additional costs emerge in the form of lower crop prices, loss of valuable topsoil and a priceless erosion of our natural heritage.

Prior to the mid-sixties, a diverse use of land allowed for a stable agricultural program as well as good wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities close to home. As times changed, a new philosophy crept over the nation, that was to feed the world from our country's bread basket. The real price of this philosophy was glossed over and pushed aside for short-term profits. Now reality has set in and many people are seeing and feeling the total cost. Obviously, farmers are paying the price of over-production and lack of government concern, but they are not the only ones being impacted. Businesses are hurting from the boom and bust agricultural system rather than a program of

sustained growth; thus agribusiness lay-offs have affected many households. Conservationists and sportsmen including many farmers, are crying over the loss of wildlife and a desirable, diverse landscape. People who once were satisfied to vacation in Iowa now go elsewhere for their outdoor experience.

Pheasant hunting in northern Iowa once attracted thousands of hunters in early November. Now only remnant pheasant populations exist in that area. The reduction in pheasant numbers was not the result of hunting, but from a change in agricultural practices as a well-balanced program of livestock, grain and alfalfa changed to total row-crop farming. Drainage of wetlands has seriously decreased the vast numbers of waterfowl visiting northern Iowa and left few places for people to enjoy the legacy of waterfowling and trapping.

Many other wildlife species have been threatened because of drainage or clearing. No longer can most farm families in northern and central Iowa see the numbers or the variety of birds on their farms. This loss represents a very real decline in the quality of life

for many Iowans.

In 1978, Iowa legislators headed by Representative Lowell Norland of Kensett, realized the problem and drafted legislation to provide some incentives for landowners to preserve wetlands, forests, and grasslands. The bill exempted wild lands from taxation as long as they met certain requirements and were not used for economic gain. The bill passed in the 1982 session and will serve to encourage landowners to protect a remnant of Iowa's heritage for present and future generations. This indeed is a right move for all Iowans.

Terms of the Law.

The act relates to property tax by providing exemptions for wetlands, recreational lakes, forest cover, forest reservations, rivers and streams, river and stream banks, wildlife habitats, native prairies and open prairies, increasing the amount of acres to be exempted for certain organizations and increasing the assessed value of fruit tree and forest reservations.

The bill allows the board of supervisors for each county to designate for tax exemption up to one percent of the acres assessed as agricultural land or 3,000 acres in each county in the form of wetlands, recreational lakes, forest covers, forest reservations, rivers and streams, river and stream banks, and open



prairies. In subsequent fiscal years, this acreage can be increased 10 percent per year up to 300 acres the second year. This law also provides, upon application, automatic tax exemption for the following:

1) Forest land that meets the conditions of Sections 161.1 to 161.13 of the Iowa Code for a forest reservation. This, in short, requires that the land be in tracts of 2 acres or greater with 200 standing trees per acre and not be used for other economic gain such as livestock grazing or buildings.

2) Native prairie which is defined as those lands which have never been cultivated, are unimproved, and are natural or restored grasslands where at least 50 percent of the plant canopy is a mixture of grass and forb species which were found originally on Iowa's prairie lands.

3) Wildlife habitat, which is defined as those parcels of land 2 acres or less which are devoted exclusively for use as habitat for wildlife.

Lands classified as native prairies or wildlife habitat must not be used for economic gain of any type including the storage of equipment, machinery, or crops, nor can there be any buildings used or unused on this property.

The law further states as follows:

To be eligible for the acreage confined under the 3,000 acre per county limit, the landowner must file an application with the commissioners of the soil conservation district where the property is located. These forms must be received no later than April 15 of the assessment year. For all the categories except wetland, the landowner must apply every year. Wetland applications will be

good for three years. There are several other criteria that a landowner should be aware of and they are as follows:

1) The application must describe and locate the property including an aerial photo outlining the boundaries of the property to be exempted.

2) If the land is classed as open prairie and it includes a gully area susceptible to erosion, an approved erosion control plan must accompany the application.

3) Applications must be accompanied by a signed affidavit by the applicant that if the exemption is granted, the land, if other than a forest reservation, will not be used for economic gain during the assessment year. In the case of a forest reservation, timber can be harvested under an approved forestry plan for the area.

4)Only property in parcels of two acres or more will be eligible for the exemption under this portion of the law. This does not apply to wildlife habitat or native prairie.

5) An exemption for rivers and streams or river and stream banks will not be granted unless it includes land located back at least 33 feet from the ordinary high water mark.

6) The existence of an abandoned building or structure which is not used for economic gain will not disqualify the property.

After receipt of the application, the district soil commissioners will determine if the property is eligible to receive the exemption. The certified application will then be forwarded to the board of supervisors by May 1 of the assessment year.

Before the board of supervisors can designate any acreage for this exemption, they must establish a priority list for the types of property and the amount of acreage to be granted exemptions. These priorities can be different from previous years. Prior to granting exemptions for land located within corporate limits of any city, the board of supervisors must have the approval of the governing body of that city. A public hearing with proper notice must be held to review the proposed priority list. Following the public hearing, a priority list shall be adopted by resolution.

This law does not require the board of supervisors to grant any tax exemption or to grant tax exemptions for the total acreage for which the applicant requests. Consequently, it behooves all those interested to encourage the supervisors to exempt the full 3,000 allowable acres if qualified applications are received.

A Growing Concern by Iowans

The support that this bill received; 98 yes votes and 0 no votes in the House, and 45 yes votes and 5 no votes in the Senate, shows the concern by Iowans for preserving what we have left. While this bill has certain limitations, it is a very good beginning. As we gain experience with this law, rough spots can be corrected by legislative action. We are starting on the proper road by providing incentives to those landowners holding valuable wild lands. In short, WE ARE PAYING THEM INTEREST FOR BANK-ING OUR HERITAGE. We cannot expect them to do this entirely on their own. For this investment yields returns to everyone. To make this work, public support is needed.

Supervisors should be strongly encouraged to grant exemptions to the full 3,000 acres per county. Iowans interested in this program should contact their wildlife biologist or county conservation board.

Costs to the Public

Under this law, only the few acres of remnant prairie, wildlife habitat, and the 3,000 acres per county would be new deductions from the existing taxes. Forest land already has a taxable value of only \$14.82 under the former forest reserve act. Tax losses resulting from the change of \$14.82 to 0 for taxable value of forest land will be minor.

Most land that would qualify is not good farm land and consequently is taxed at a very low rate. Most timberlands, river corridors, and wetlands are taxed below \$3.00 per acre which would place revenue losses at less than \$9,000 per county. This loss could easily be made up by county revenue from money spent by those using the land for recreation.

Everyone benefits from this law. Landowners get a slight tax break, soil is protected from erosion, less land is converted to row crops or pasture which would contribute to better prices for farm products, a more scenic landscape, better water quality, sightseeing, bird watching, mushroom hunting, improved hunting and fishing, hiking, and maybe even cheaper prices for those housewives purchasing new wood furniture.

Our future and the economy depends on how well we manage our soil resources. Our children and grandchildren are depending on us to provide good stewardship of the land while it is in our hands. The Iowa they inherit must be fairly representative of the resource-rich state that we were given. A quality lifestyle is needed if we expect them to stay and raise their families here.



George Wyth Bike Trail... Iowa's Best!

On one pleasant Saturday this summer, more than 500 two-wheelers were counted on the George Wyth State Park bike trail. Numerous joggers, birdwatchers and hikers also use the route, making it the most popular in Iowa.

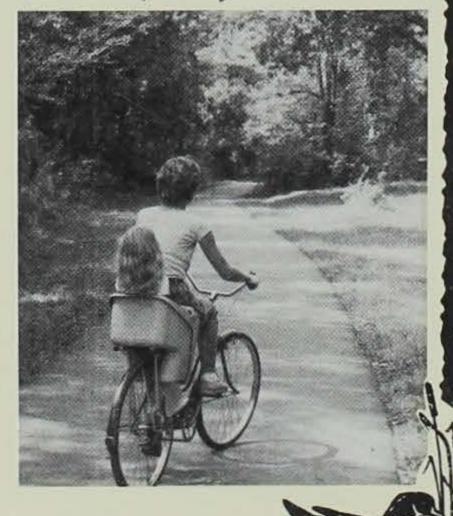
The multi-use trail is the result of a cooperative plan involving the Iowa Conservation Commission and the City of Cedar Falls. Beginning at a parking lot in George Wyth State Park and ending at the campus of the University of Northern Iowa, trail users can walk, jog or ride some five miles non-stop.

At one point, bikers would have been at cross-purposes with traffic on busy highway 20, so the Cedar Falls Rotary Club donated some \$18,000 to construct a spiral ramp that runs under the highway 20 bridge. The entire trail is safe and well-maintained.

The Iowa Conservation Commission spent \$82 thousand for the two-mile portion of the trail within the park.

The George Wyth section features a refreshing absence of hills — it is perfectly flat throughout the park. The 8-foot wide, asphalt trail begins at the

second shelter picnic area where those interested can pick up an interpretive brochure. Numbers on posts along the way correspond to numbered descriptions of plants and trees listed in the pamphlet. The trail meanders through beautiful hardwood timber and stops at the various posts are not only educational, but afford the observer the opportunity to enjoy the scenery, spot a few birds, or maybe rest a little.



ODE TO A

By Daniel LeClair

With the absorption of the waters officers into the enforcement section of the fish and wildlife division, there are now 83 conservation officers in the state of Iowa. Over half have been on the job for more than ten years, and about half of the wardens in Iowa hold college degrees (from A.A.S. to Masters degrees), many of which specialize in different fields of conservation. Regardless of the amount of time spent on the job, most officers have experienced long hours, boredom, danger, excitement, physical discomforts, and even the mental anguish that are associated with this profession.

Besides dealing with the criminal element, officers do have the pleasure of meeting honest, cooperative sportsmen and other outdoor enthusiasts. Nonetheless a portion of society considers us adversaries and cannot or will not try to understand the need for our work. I do feel at times that we as game wardens are the least respected law enforcement organization, even though our enforcement powers are exactly the same as any state police officer in Iowa. Iowa's fish and game laws are laws for management of our resources. Some are arbitrary; all are laws that nobody is supposed to die or get hurt over. Unfortunately, wardens do find themselves in situations which could lead to injury or death.

An old fellow told me once we were like caster oil; it might be good for you but you sure don't have to like it. We're definitely classed by poachers as enemies. Some hunters feel we harass them and are just looking to spoil their hunt. Still others tell us they ought to have the right to shoot anything at any time. After all, they do feed the deer and pay taxes supporting the government and finally, some even feel it's a God-given right to hunt and shoot game as they wish.

WARDEN Striby Larry Pool

Game wardens are definitely caught in the middle and for the position we're put in we're paid a salary which barely rates lower middle class. On top of this we are expected to work 80-100+ hours a week during hunting seasons, working mostly alone, usually tired and hungry, and sometimes afraid. It's not an easy job, nor one our families really like, as it takes us away from them a great deal of the time. A good portion of the time we are at home is spent answering the telephone giving out information to the public.

For the many hours that are put into investigations and patrol, there are occasionally dividends. When you know you've caught a deer poacher or end up in the middle of an illegal fishing operation and get the violators successfully prosecuted through the judicial system, there is a definite inner satisfaction in what you've done. There are times though when things just don't pan out. I can remember one afternoon in March being called by a local farmer who had found a freshlygutted deer on the edge of a field he was discing. It was evident that the deer, a doe, had recently been shot and propped up to allow for drainage from the body cavity. I felt that whoever shot the deer would probably be back around dusk or before first light. So I contacted another officer and decided to stake out the carcass and hope that the violator(s) would arrive soon. I hid myself in a patch of hawthorns about 30 yards away and had the other officer positioned about a quarter mile away in his vehicle. Time goes very slowly when you're working a stakeout, especially when it's cold. We were lucky enough to have communication via two-way radios.

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After about three hours I figured I had found every thorn in that small patch and felt like a pin cushion.

Nevertheless, I was still able to see the deer and maintain my concealment. About 7:30 p.m., a pickup made several passes up and down the gravel road. I had a feeling that the program was about to begin and I indicated this to the other officer. I noticed on one of the passes that the truck stopped for a moment before coming back down the road. I didn't think too much of this at the time, but later found out two men had been let out. I expected the pickup to make a few more passes and almost stood up looking for it when all of a sudden I caught a flash of light out of the corner of my eye. About 50 yards away, two people, one with a flashlight, were fast approaching the carcass. I remember falling to the ground and finding what I know was the last thorn in my comfortable spot.

The two men walked up to the deer, looked it over quickly, and then each grabbed a leg and started dragging it towards the middle of the section. I was taken by surprise to begin with, and to have them drag the deer towards the middle of the section rather than to the road confounded me even more. I never did claim to be a mind-reader, just a game warden. I jumped up and tried to work my way as close as I could before they spotted me. At this point, I identified myself and got a real surprise. They dropped the deer like it was a hot potato, and started running. I don't think I've ever seen two people move that fast. I was sure they were two track stars who were part-time poachers. Even with the other officer close at hand and another on the way after a chase over two miles through the woods and fields, the violators made good their escape. It goes to show you we don't always come out on top.

In Iowa in 1981, the state fish and game officers issued more than 6,000

summons, most of which were for hunting, fishing and trapping violations. All of the hunters, trappers, and some of the fishermen were armed, many were tired, angry, and even afraid of the confrontation with the officer(s). To add to the problem is the fact that most of the encounters take place back in the woods or on rivers away from houses, roads, and witnesses. It is plain fact that being a game warden is one of the most dangerous jobs in law enforcement.

Many surveys have indicated that game wardens are more likely to be assaulted than any other law enforcement officer. In the fall of 1980, two Idaho fish and game officers, one from North Carolina, and one officer from Louisiana were killed in the line of duty while attempting to apprehend game violators. Fish and game convictions nevertheless rate about 92 percent in Iowa. When a game warden acts, he almost always has a solid case and most of the violators plead guilty without going to trial. At present, all of the fish and game laws are classed in the simple misdemeanor category, and are punishable by a fine up to \$100 or 30 days in jail with the additional possibility of hunting and/or trapping privileges suspended for an indefinite time period by the court. Despite the punishments, violations for the most part are on the rise.

So why do we continue to do the job? Dedication is probably a word that has been beaten into the ground, but for the lack of a better word I'll stick with it. Every time I hear an officer complain about the long hours and conditions we face, I smile because I know that no matter what he says he will be the first person to go out on a call at 2:00 a.m. to investigate a spotlighting complaint or a poaching. He is also the man who will be out in the middle of a blizzard to assist stranded motorists; or on the water during a storm searching for a missing boater. He also has the unenviable task of locating drowning victims.

For anyone who hasn't realized yet, it's more than a serious business and it takes a special type of individual to handle the responsibilities. It's a profession with which I'm proud to be associated.

Daniel LeClair has been a Conservation Officer since 1976. In 1981 he became a district supervisor and is currently supervisor for the south-central district.



THEY SOLD 'EM BY THE BARREL

By R. Runge

Today's hunters often react in disbelief or mild wonder when they hear or read about the number of birds taken by the old-time market hunters.

Most sportsmen openly abhor the conduct of their ancient brethren and the toll they took on our country's game. But when the night is late and the fire's low you'll sometimes notice one with a twinkle in his eyes. Suddenly he'll blurt out, "I'd like to shoot 195 ducks in one day and have guys keep handing me loaded shotguns". Surprising? Not really, that's what we have laws for. Luckily most people abide by them.

But let's look back a few years. American hunters operated under "sky's the limit" rules for all but the last sixty years or so. Today's hunter knows that he must abide by rules and share the game with others if he is to keep his sport alive. There is no longer room for greed in hunting and true sportsmen will not associate with greedy hunters, whose only measure of success is a huge pile of birds. The pile of birds, however, was a different matter back around the turn of the century. Why, little boys and big ones alike would stop to admire that boat full of ducks the Cooper boys brought in. Not many people gave it much thought. The sky was full of ducks every spring and fall; there seemed to be an endless supply.

Endless supply. Those words were probably true if you go further back and look at our native Americans. Imagine yourself in 1500, standing on the edge of a vast marsh. There are thousands of ducks migrating through and you'd like to kill one to eat. How many do you think you can kill with a few rocks and your crude knife? Oh, the Indians managed to kill a few, especially with the arrow and snare, but they were not capable of really affecting the populations.

A little over three hundred years later (see why sixty years doesn't seem too long), the prairies were being settled by northern Europeans. These people, although they came from several different countries, were really descendants of a few scattered tribes who centuries before were concentrated along the Elbe River in what is now Germany. They brought with them quite a hunting tradition, but more importantly they brought their newly-acquired knowledge of guns. America's game birds were about to have the rules changed on them.

Change isn't the word for it. It was a revolution. The shotguns got bigger and better than they had been in Europe. The punt and swivel guns were a carryover from the old country, but they reached their heyday in the new country. For once, man was capable of shooting large numbers of birds and shoot them he did. Although many types of birds were taken, the main burden fell upon waterfowl.

The only thought was to obtain as many birds as possible. There were no laws and no methods which couldn't be used. In the north, the birds were barreled and shipped via railroad to city markets. In the south, the birds were often supplied to plantation owners to feed their slaves. Old records can be found of slaves being fed canvasback ducks until the very sight of the birds was distasteful to them and something else had to be found.

As time went on the game began to change. The punt guns and swivel guns became unpopular. It wasn't that they wouldn't work, it was that there was little opportunity to use them. There was more and more competition for fewer birds. A true market hunter, and in reality there weren't very many, approached hunting as a full-time profession. He brought the birds into the small towns where they were sold at small cost in great numbers. The middle men were the field buyers and shippers who supplied the restaurant wholesalers in the big cities. Often large shipments were spoiled before reaching the distant market.

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It became necessary to shoot smaller numbers of birds over longer periods of time. It was no accident that today's twelve-gauge came into being. First the hunters went to four gauges; then sixes; then eights. The trend toward smaller gauges continued as it finally became necessary to shoot individual birds on the wing. The large gauges were useful only on groups of birds on



Ducks and geese were the main targets of market hunters. These pictures depict a typical kill toward the end of the market hunting era in the early 1900's. Photos courtesy of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

the water; their excessive recoil and expense did not justify their use on flying birds.

Since the hunters were being reduced to shooting flying birds, which was of course a terrible burden, something had to be done. Muzzleloaders were replaced by breechloaders. The choke was introduced and then the repeating shotgun. Now the balance was swung once again towards the market hunters. It was too much to bear, and soon the numbers of ducks and geese began to decline.

But on the incline was the price. Canvasback went from \$.25 to \$1.00 a bird. Soon the hunters couldn't find any so they began to substitute redheads and ruddy ducks. Ruddies were actually called dollar ducks for many years.

By now the market hunters were down to using ten gauges and decoys were becoming popular. It was getting hard enough that many men went on to other work. Still, enormous numbers of birds were killed. Actual information is hard to come by, but such bags as 450 ducks on one day are

recorded. One man's shooting was 369 ducks in one day, all canvasbacks and redheads. Another shot 218 geese in a single hour before running out of ammunition. He returned later and finished the day at 450 birds. Spring was the favorite season.

The repeating shotgun and factory ammunition was the last hurrah for the market hunter. Public sentiment was finally aroused and game laws came into being. An era had ended—it was 1918. Canvasbacks were nearly extinct. Redheads and ruddies, the best substitutes, were reduced to a scattered remnant. Wood ducks, whose skins were sold for plumage, were greatly diminished. It was a time for rebuilding.

The days of market hunting are hopefully gone forever. Had it persisted into the era of marsh draining and other destruction of nesting and feeding areas there would be few birds left. Fewer still would be those of us who know the thrill of hunting wild ducks. Perhaps then it would be us who would listen in disbelief and wonder to the tales of the way it used to be.



WARDEN'S DIARY

By Jerry Hoilien

Fall is upon us — what happened to summer anyway? The hunting season is almost in full swing, especially the illegal season. It has always been a mystery to me why some people can't wait for the season to open. The mature hunter (remember I told you about the maturing of a hunter last December) anticipates the opening with great preparation; painting the decoys, building the blind, and exercising the dog (along with himself). Exercising is a part of the hunt; in a lot of cases perhaps the most enjoyable.

Sometimes the juvenile hunter (regardless of age), lets greed get in the way of common sense -"better get 'em before the other guys". I think of the "before open season shooter" as a thief, stealing from the true sportsmen who wait for the legal season to begin. Too many citizens think that catching the game violator is strictly the "Game Warden's" job. The warden has but one set of eyes and needs your help; let him know about violations. Don't wait a year and then give him that old -"wish you would have been here last year". Give him a call right away, with as much information as possible, so he can do something. If you were an eye witness, tell him whether or not you wish to testify, or to remain anonymous. He will honor your wishes and, depending upon the circumstances, he may be able to put enough information together to go to court. It's everybody's job, if we're to maintain our sportsmanship and quality hunting.

There's nothing that jars a violator more than a knock on the door and a Conservation Officer saying, "I came after that deer you shot the other night!" As one startled young man answered me, "I didn't shoot it, my brother did!"

Hunting with an artificial light (it's called spotlighting or jacklighting) is too common a violation. Deer and raccoon are primarily night feeders and are vulnerable to this practice. I have flown shotgun (observer) with our aircraft too many nights, and spent too many hours on night patrol to have much sympathy for the individuals who want to blind an animal with a highpowered spotlight and then shoot it down. Besides being unsportsmanlike, it's downright dangerous. What's beyond the spotlight's range is still within range of the rifle.

After court one time I asked the fella to show me where he shot the deer. We went out to a hilltop and he pointed out a ridge it was running on. "I didn't get him until the fifth shot", he told me. We walked to the top and looked down on seven homes he had under his gun, including his own. He was a little sick knowing how close it had been.

Another time after stopping a fella shining in a field, he told me he was not after deer, just raccoon, but went on to tell me about a mistake he had made shooting at a shiny part of his own fence post. I asked him what else would shine about four-foot off the ground, but a deer's eye! I recommended he not tell the judge about that little mistake.

You know, there's a danger in telling these stories because the anti-hunting factions like to say, "See, that's all there is — violators!" But then you have to remember there are thousands of good sportsmen who don't break the rules and they're the ones who ask for good enforcement, with better laws and stiffer penalties. I remember wading through a cold marsh, coming up to check a duckblind and a voice saying, "Hi warden, glad to see you out here — sit a minute and have a cup of coffee."

Speaking of coffee, I remember the time the complaints came in of too early duck shooting by the old man on the river. The warden decided to check it out. Rising in the black-of-the-night (seems everything happens either real late at night or darned early in the morning), he arrived an hour and onehalf before sunrise and hid his car behind some trees. He put on his hip boots, "long eyes" (binoculars), and rain coat as it was misting now and waded out into the marsh near the ol' man's cabin. After stepping into a couple of muskrat runs, he settled down behind a rat house. A short time later the cabin door came open and light poured out onto the porch and down the steps. The old man walked out and in a loud clear voice said, "Warden, you just as well come in and have a cup of coffee!"

The warden stepped up to the cabin and went in. About the second cup of coffee he couldn't contain himself any longer, "Tell me, ol' man, how in the sam heck did you know I was out there this morning!" The old man smiled, with a twinkle in his eye and said, "I didn't! I've been doin' that for twenty years — this is the first time I got an answer!"

Do you have an old cast-iron dutch oven?

On top of the stove, after rolling your cut-up pheasant in flour, brown well in a half cup of oil. Remove meat and pour off excess oil. Add a little water and let simmer just long enough to get those good cracklings off the bottom. Replace the meat adding sliced onions on top. Cover and put in 350° oven until done.

For variety, add a can of cream of mushroom, or cream of chicken soup with the onions.



East Hottes Lake-one of the shallow glacial lakes common in Dickinson County.

THE BIG SIOUX

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT

by Douglas C. Harr

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More than a century ago the first settlers pioneered the northwest corner of the new State of Iowa. What they found was a veritable Garden of Eden. Here were large lakes and countless marshes teeming with fish and game and land considered among the richest on earth in its potential for agriculture. Today, this same country would hardly be recognized by those early pioneers. The land is as rich as it was then, but greatly changed in appearance. Modern farming methods have eliminated all but tiny pockets of the vast prairie wilderness that once existed. Still, the lakes, marshes and glacial knobs could not all be conquered by drainage and the plow. Numerous tracts of good wildlife habitat, recreational lakes and scenic areas remain relatively untouched.

To insure that proper conservation might be better afforded the wildlife and habitat resources remaining, the Iowa Conservation Commission established the Big Sioux Wildlife Management Unit. The task of this unit is to serve the needs of wildlife in five counties—Dickinson, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola and Sioux.

The Big Sioux Unit has a great variety of topographic features and wildlife habitat types. Dickinson County and the eastern portion of Osceola offer the best reminders of recent glaciation imaginable; kames, eskers, kettles, lateral and end moraines and other physical evidences abound. The sculptured landscape left by the retreating ice sheets forms the heart of Iowa's lake and prairie pothole region. Here are found four of the state's eight largest natural lakes-Big Spirit, East Okoboji, West Okoboji and Silver Lake at Lake Park. Major marshes include Christopherson Slough, Jemmerson Slough, West Hottes Lake, Rush Lake (Osceola County) and the string of potholes known as Spring Run. This entire region still hosts good populations of waterfowl, and many other types of wildlife flourish around the small woodlands and uplands that border the larger lakes and marshes.

Dickinson County possesses one of the largest tracts of native prairie left



Retriever and drake mallard — a common sight at one of many prairie marshes located in the Big Sioux Unit.

in the state. Cayler Prairie, a State Preserves Board designated botanical monument, retains the last remmants of an ecosystem that once dominated the entire state.

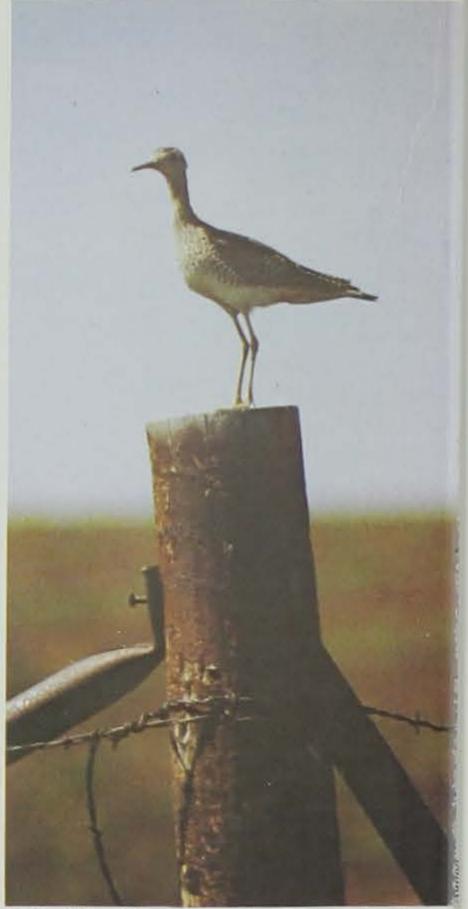
O'Brien and western Osceola Counties, occupying the central portion of the Big Sioux Unit, are almost exclusively farmlands. The heavy, rich soils here make the land among the most intensively farmed in Iowa. Virtually none of the original prairie remains, and the result is little variety in the types of wildlife inhabiting the area. Even so, this part of the unit is home to what may be the largest gray partridge population in the state. No one is entirely sure of the attraction of these birds to such black-land farms; perhaps further research will provide us some clues.

The western counties of the unit, Sioux and Lyon, rise into the rolling nigh plains characteristic of most of western Iowa. Although not as rugged as the famous loess hills of the southwest, they are still the dominant land form here. Formed by millenia of soil-depositing winds, these hills are well drained and little fall plowing is seen.

This, in combination with occasional grass waterways and brushy draws, provides some respite for the pheasant population which has declined throughout so much of the Big Sioux Unit since the 1960's.

Wildlife also has a major benefactor in the Big Sioux River, which cuts through the hills and forms the state boundary with South Dakota. With the exception of some grazing lands, much of the land adjacent to the river is quite wild. Bottomland hardwoods and hillside bur oak-red cedar forests provide seclusion for an expanding white-tailed deer population here; likewise, fox squirrels and cottontails thrive in the woods. A small number of wild turkeys roam the woodlands. Not hunted, these birds are escapees from a release in nearby South Dakota some time ago. The river is also of interest to birdwatchers because it seems to be one of the major pathways for the spring warbler migrations into the northern prairies.

At the very northwest tip of the state is the Gitche Manitou Geological Preserve, also a wildlife management area. The prominent Sioux quartzite rock



Upland Sandpiper—an endangered species in Iowa, but perhaps more frequently seen in the Big Sioux Unit than in many parts of the state.

outcroppings, among the oldest known rocks on earth, are of interest not only because of their age and geologic history, but also for the unusual plants and animals associated with the area. Prairie plants, large amounts of prickly pear cactus, and bird life found nowhere else in Iowa add to the area's uniqueness.

Besides the Big Sioux, two other major rivers drain the unit. The Little Sioux, though not much more than a stream here in its upper reaches, provides some rough bottomland suitable to small numbers of quail in southeastern O'Brien County. The Rock River is also a major drainage, but of limited value to wildlife due to the close encroachment of farms on its banks.

The tradition of hunting established early in the settlement of northwest Iowa continues today on private farms of the area. Many farmers are avid hunters themselves. Others are happy to let visiting hunters on their lands, providing permission is obtained in advance. The major species hunted here is, of course, the ringneck pheasant, but a local specialty bird, the gray

partridge, provides extra action. Nearly one-third of the "Huns" taken in Iowa in many years come from the Big Sioux Unit. In certain localities the bird has even been known to be the primary target of hunters, rather than just a bonus bird taken while pheasant hunting. But whatever game you're after here, it is advisable to take along a good dog; in this country of relatively sparse cover the birds are reluctant to be flushed from whatever habitat they may find.

Deer hunting is popular with local residents, but hunters from other parts of Iowa will find the best hunting in rather limited areas, primarily along major river drainages. Several state hunting areas are maintained on the Big Sioux, while in other parts of the unit, farmers will often allow deer hunting in their bottomland woods if arrangements are made in advance.

The marshes and lakes of Dickinson and Osceola Counties are probably of greatest importance to the sportsman in the Big Sioux Unit, because of their excellent duck and goose habitat and hunting opportunities. Potholes still exist on private lands and the Conservation Commission maintains many public hunting areas on its marshes and lakes. Duck hunting is limited west of this region, and what little is done results from walking streams and ditches for jump-shooting.

Besides ducks and geese there are opportunities for hunting other little known gamebirds, such as snipe and rail. Sora hunting is probably best on the dikes and heavily vegetated fringe of Rush Lake in Osceola County. Most unit marshes are excellent in terms of their muskrat and other furbearer populations, making these sloughs good for trapping, as well as gamebird hunting. Over 19,000 acres of upland, marsh, and sovereign lakes are managed for public use, providing the outdoorsman with a large choice of areas from which to choose. The accompanying table lists areas of major importance, their approximate locations and sizes, and the principal game to be found on each.

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All state-owned lands assigned the unit are managed to maintain optimum habitat for game production, and nongame wildlife also benefits from the improvements made for game. In this day of conscientious wildlife ecology, efforts are even being made to specifically enhance habitat for nongame species. In the future, state-owned lands just could become

the last refuge for what might otherwise become an endangered species. Perhaps, with scientific wildlife management, we can prevent the unnecessary loss of creatures that occurred in the Big Sioux Unit before the advent of conservation measures.

Conservation education is receiving increased attention in the Big Sioux Unit. A new wildlife information center has been constructed at the Unit's Kettleson Hogsback Wildlife Area, a 1,100 acre complex of lands and waters that serves as the unit work headquarters near Spirit Lake. Conservation and recreation information will be displayed here for the increased enjoyment of the area by hunters, birdwatchers, hikers and other visitors. Classroom or group conservation study on the area and its 3½ mi. trail system is likewise welcomed.

The unit's adminsitrative office in Rock Rapids serves as a planning and coordination center for all wildlife management activities. The wildlife management biologist stationed there can provide many services to individuals or groups interested in northwest Iowa's wildlife and its needs.

In short, the Big Sioux Wildlife Management Unit is maintained for the benefit of everyone, from hunters, to those whose only interest might lie in viewing the unit's famous giant Canada goose flock. Like most wildlife activities in Iowa, the unit works not on tax money but rather on funds provided by hunters and fishermen. Yet its lands and waters are open to all who have an interest in the outdoors. The next time you're seeking somewhere new to visit in Iowa, try the Big Sioux Wildlife Unit. Outstanding opportunities for many kinds of recreation abound in this northwestern agricultural heartland.

Douglas Harr has been employed as a wildlife management biologist for the Commission for ten years. He is responsible for managing the Big Sioux Wildlife Unit in northwest Iowa. His office is at Rock Rapids.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF THE BIG SIOUX WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT

County	Name & Acreage		Nearest town	Description	Principal game			
Dickinson	Cayler Prairie	160	4mi. E, 3 S., Lake Park	Native prairie	P,R,G			
	Center Lake	344	1mi. W, 1 S., Spirit Lk.	Shallow lake bordered by timber	WF,			
	Christopherson Slough							
		535	3mi. N, Superior	marsh, open timber	WF,P,R,S,D,			
	Cory Marsh	38	2mi. E, 1 N., Lake Park	Marsh	WF,P			
	Diamond Lake	563	3mi. W. 3mi N., Spirit Lk.	lake, timber, upland	P,D,R,WF,G			
	Garlock Slough	222	Imi. N, 1 W., Milford	marsh, upland	WF,P,R			
	Hales Slough	84	2mi. N.E. Orleans	marsh	WF			
	Henderson Area Hottes Lake	18 378	Imi. S.E., Arnolds Pk. Imi. N, I W, Orleans	timber shallow lake	S,R WF			
	TANKS LAKE	3,0	3 No. 2 No. 3					
	Jemmerson Slough Kettleson	343	Imi. W, Spirit Lake	marsh, timber-upland	WF,P,R,S			
	Hogsback	262	Imi. N, I W, Spirit Lk.	timber, upland	P,S,R,D			
	Little Spirit Lake	214	4mi, NW, Orleans	shallow lake	WF			
	Lower Gar Access	19	Imi. N, I E, Milford	upland	P			
	Marble Lake	183	2mi, NW, Orleans	Lake and marsh	WF			
	Minnewashta Lake	121	Edge, Arnolds Park	lake	WF			
	Pleasant Lake	84	3mi. S, 1 E, Spirit Lake	lake-marsh, upland	WF			
	Prairie Lake	109	2mi. E, 1 N, Arnolds Pk.	lake marsh, open timber-prairie	WF,S,R			
	Silver Lake	1,141	SE edge, Lake Park	lake, bordered by timber	WF,S,R			
	Spirit Lake	5,684	N edge, Orleans	lake	WF			
	Spring Run	753	4mi. E, I N., Arnolds Pk.	shallow lake, upland-				
				pothole marshes	WF,P,R,G,D			
	Sunken Lake	62	2mi. NW, Orleans	lake, bordered by timber	WF,S,R			
	Swan Lake	381	2mi. N, Superior	shallow lake,	WEGDD			
	Water take	7.5	and wast on the Laboratory	upland & timber	WF,S,R,D			
	Welch lake	75	3mi. W.2N, Spirit Lake	shallow lake marsh	WF WF			
	Yager Slough	56	3mi. SE, Lake Park	marsn	WI			
Lyon	Big Sioux River	454	4mi. W, Inwood	timber, upland	D,S,R,P			
	Gitche Manitou	153	9mi. NW, Larchwood	prairie, timber	R,D,P			
	Nelson Area	247	4mi. W, 2 N, Inwood	timber, upland	D,S,R,P			
	Olson Area	80	4mi. W, 4 N, Inwood	timber	D,S,R			
Osceola	lowa Lake	114	3mi. N, 1 W, Harris	lake-marsh	WF			
	Rush Lake	336	2mi. E, Ocheyedan	shallow lake-marsh	WF			
Sioux	Groth Area	97	8mi. W. Rock Valley	timber, upland	D,S,R,P			
Principal gan	ne key: P = pheasant,	D = deer,	S = squirrel, R = rabbit,	WF = waterfowl, G = gra	y partridge			

IOWA — The Tall Tree

by Rich Patterson

Photos by Author

Rich Patterson is Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids.

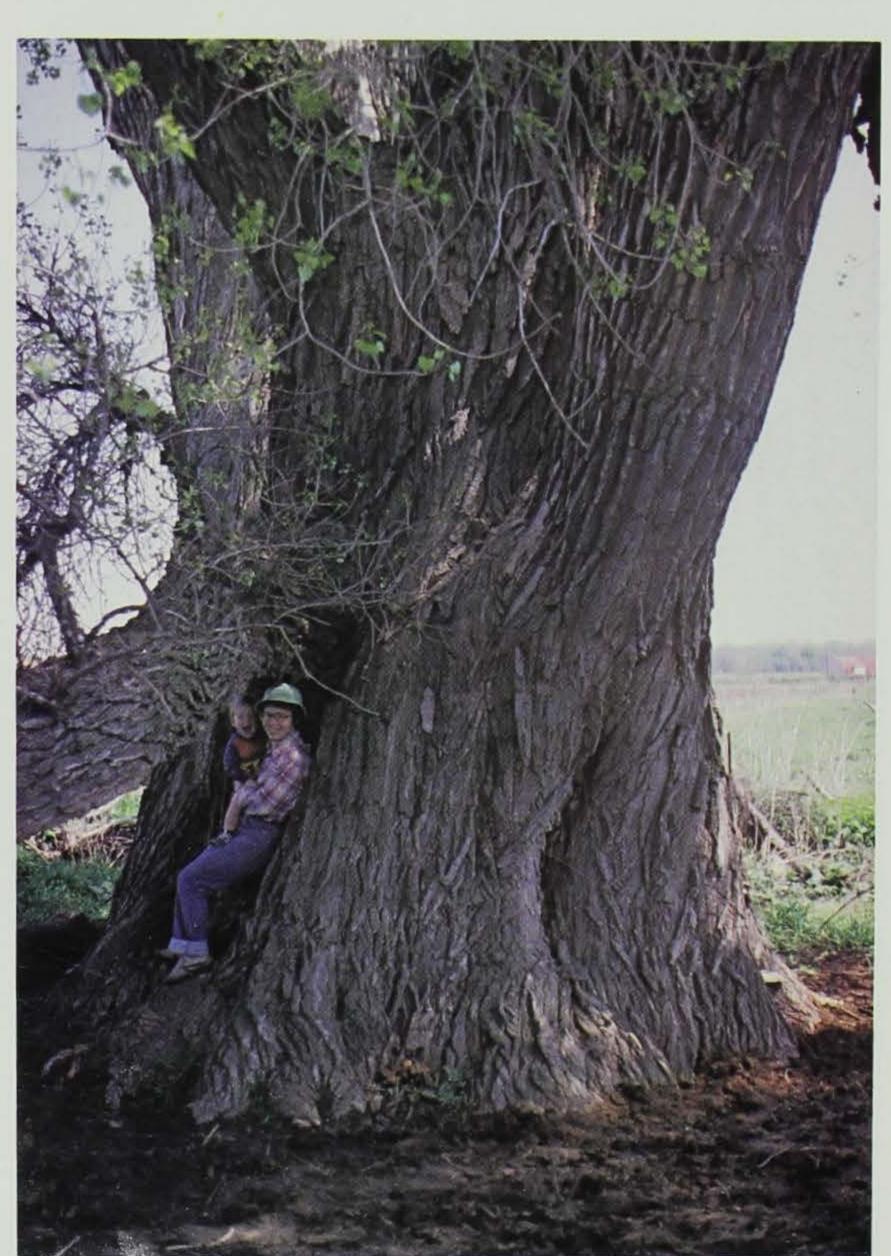
Ask any American what pops into his mind when you mention Iowa, and nine times out of ten the person will say, "tall corn". Although few people realize it, Iowa is also the tall tree state.

Despite our prairie heritage, trees grow well here. Although they are often tucked away in back yards or woodlots, our giant trees loom upward and outward, thriving on the same soil and climate that makes corn grow so well.

Big trees are fascinating and awesome. To get an idea of the location
and size of the largest individuals of
each species of tree growing in the
United States, the American Forestry
Association established the Grand
Champion Tree Program in 1940. Both
professional and amateur foresters
have searched the country seeking
exceptionally large specimens, and 651
species are listed on the 1982 Grand
Champion Register. Florida leads the
state with 102 champs, and Michigan
comes in second with 77.

In addition to the national list, the Iowa Conservation Commission keeps a list of state champs. Forty-five species are on the 1980 list.

In mid-May my wife and I took a trip to visit Iowa's two grand champions and several state champs. Our first stop was at the Frank Behourek farm near Tama. Probably no tree is more characteristic of the Midwest than the cottonwood, and the biggest one in the world is growing near a gravel road. On the day we visited, an entire herd of cows was resting in the shade of its 126 foot spread. Although



Grand Champion Eastern Cottonwood

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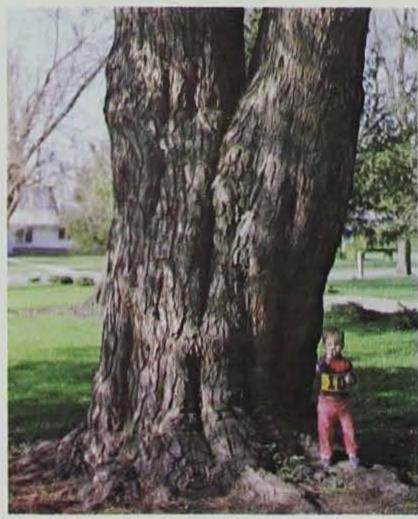
they seemed unimpressed by the giant, we were! It is over 34 feet in circumference — as big around as a good sized redwood.

Our next stop contrasted greatly with the cow pasture cottonwood. Growing in a beautifully landscaped yard in Nevada is America's largest Scotch pine. Unlike the cottonwood, the tree is not native to the United States and was probably planted by an early settler. The owner, Mrs. Orson Dutton, is proud of her tree and takes meticulous care of it. She should be! Her pine is 73 feet high and nearly 16 feet around.

Somewhat surprisingly, most of Iowa's big trees are like Mrs. Dutton's. Instead of living in the woods, they grow in city parks, cemeteries, and backyards. many of them are urban and were planted over a century ago by pioneers who dreamed of trees growing on what must have seemed an endless prairie.

A few of our state champions do live in the woods and several of them are protected by the Conservation Commission or other public agencies. Iowa's largest sycamore is safely growing in Walnut Woods State Park and Margo Frankel Woods is the home of the biggest bitternut and shagbark hickories.

One of the most interesting aspects of the big tree program is the thought that an unmeasured giant may be living in an Iowa woodlot, cemetery, backyard, or urban park. Careful measurement by a forester is needed to determine if a big tree can unseat the current champion. A system of points is used by the American Forestry Association to compare trees. One point is granted for each inch of circum-



Grand Champion Scotch Pine.

ference measured 4½ feet above the ground. Another point is given for each foot of height, and one point for each foot of one-quarter of the average branch spread.

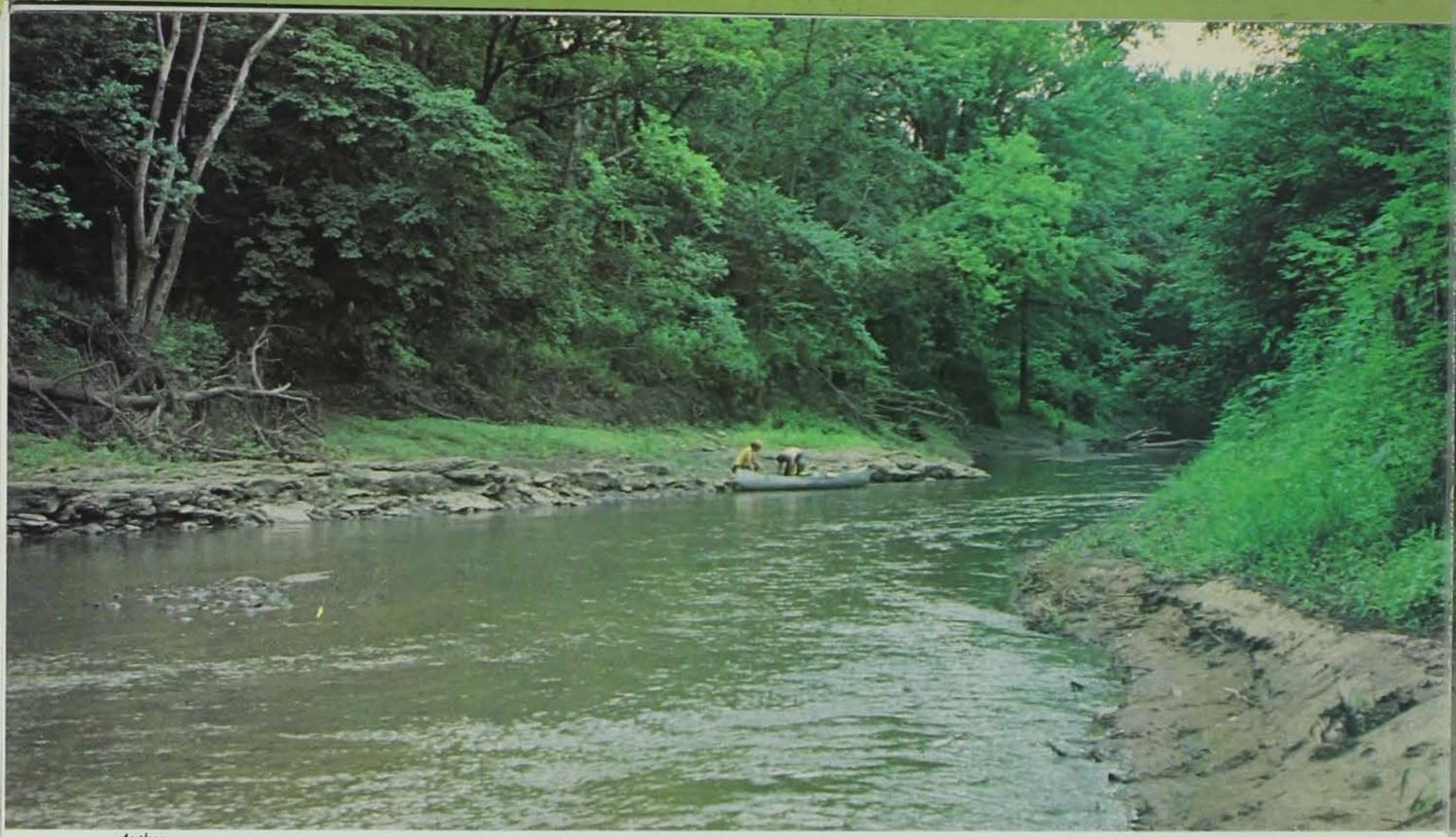


Iowa champion mulberry

An unrecognized grand champion might be growing near your home. If you spot an especially big tree, be sure to call a Conservation Commission forester.

IOWA RECORD TREES

ecies	Circumference	Height	Spread	Owner
cen Ash	14' 4"	80"	577	Eva Stephen New Sharon
merican Basswood	17 10	65	72"	Erschel Koon Attica
xelder	14' 8"	77	88"	Henry Buthman Steamboat Rock
stern Red Cedar	7 17	70"	42"	City of Indianola Indianola
ack Cherry	9° 3"	68"	40"	Mesquakie Tribe Tama
merican Chestnut	11. 6.	79"	63"	Carl Richman Adair
stern Cottonwood	34" 1"	78"	126	Mrs. Frank Behourek Tama
nerican Elm	18' 5"	91*	104	Casper Pohlman Castana
ouglas Fir	6	84"	35	Mark Anderson Keilogg
ckberry	15' 2"	86	90"	Frank Hedges Oakville
ternut Hickory	7.5	126'	75	State of Iowa Margo Frankel Woods Des Moines
agbark Hickory	7.5	105	75	State of Iowa Margo Frankel Woods Des Moines
nwood	5' 10"	34	39"	Ester Kelly Waukon
ntucky Coffeetree	10" 1"	78"	46"	Mrs. Everett Dillon Hedrick
er Maple	21' 8"	120*	85	R. Randolph Des Moines
par Maple	17 5	70"	75	Melvin Miller Jefferson
lberry	14" 10"	93*	79"	Jack King Des Moines
rr Ouk	19" 0"	72	95	Ronald Hongus Tipton
d Oak	13' 4"	102	74	James Studkerjuergen Donneilson
hite Oak	15'5"	72	93"	Robert Briggs Lockridge
age Orange	13" 1"	65.5	63°	Ray McBroom Davis City
otch Pine	15.7	73"	57	Mrs. Orson Dutton Nevada
nite Pine	10' 10"	84"	66'	City of Indianola Indianola
lorado Blue Spruce	5 10"	75	27.5	Nick Biggs Dallas Center
orway Spruce	9' 11"	78'	66°	Paul Finocchio Waukee
camore	15'2"	122	90"	State of Iowa Wainut Woods Park
ack Walnut	13' 2"	112	100	City of Burlington Burlington
eeping Willow	15	60"	61"	Jerry Miller Charles City



Author

Floating and Fishing

THE GRAND RIVER

By Mike McGee

The Grand River, located in southcentral Iowa, is a small river that winds its way across five counties. The stream is also called the Thompson River and is actually the Thompson Fork of the Grand River. The Grand has its beginnings in Adair and Madison Counties, but it is not until Union County that it becomes of sufficient size to float easily. It is seldom wider than 100 feet, but quality can come in small packages.

The float trips outlined here will start at Highway 34 in Union County and meander southeast through the corner of Ringgold County into Decatur County, ending west of Nine Eagles State Park, 134 miles from the state line.

The Grand has been fortunate in that only small portions of the river have been channelized. A canopy of trees covers 90% of the stream and signs of man's presence are minimal.

Access to the river is limited, with areas under bridges providing the best entrance or exit sites. A float trip on the Grand requires carrying the canoe up and down mud banks and occasionally wading sandchoked areas of the stream (dependent on river stage). Log jams, especially in the upper segments may require short portages. However, it is these log jams that provide some of the best fishing. Drifting baits so that they pass near or under the logs will trigger a response from channel catfish, bullhead and carp residing nearby. An added bonus is the occasional flathead catfish that is caught by the angler. Other excellent fishing spots are pools below riffles and chutes. Anglers fishing the Grand also catch sauger, which are a smaller version of walleye and just as good to eat.

While enjoying the scenic beauty of the area observations of wildlife and wildlife sign can be fun. During the summer, broods of wood ducks, teal and mallards can be seen. Fleeting glimpses of beaver, muskrat and mink

occur and if direct observation isn't available, numerous tracks indicate their presence. Deer, turkey and other wildlife use the river corridor and may be observed by the canoeist.

Float times are dependent on river flow, but an average of two miles of stream per hour of float time is normal. Obtaining a county road map from the Department of Transportation for the area to be traveled will be of great help.

Following is a description of approximately seventy stream miles of the Grand River, access numbers correspond to a location and like number on the stream map.

Please respect local landowner's property and fences. Ask permission before entering private land. Do not litter.

Access 1 to 5 (10 stream miles)

This float begins near Talmadge Hill Park maintained by the Union County Conservation Board. The timbered park area is an excellent

picnic site. This stretch has some log jams with small pools up to six feet deep. No portages are necessary and rock ledges form the stream bank in the lower segment.

Access 5 to 9 (11 stream miles)

The river is starting to get deeper with some holes over eight feet deep. Several small creeks feed the stream and more log jams are present to fish. A few short portages are necessary, but combinations of pools and riffles provide some excellent fishing waters.

Access 9 to 11 (10 stream miles)

This segment crosses three counties and some interesting historical events have taken place in this area. Less than one hour into this float segment a second bridge is reached. Just past the bridge the Dragoon Trace crosses the river. The trace was a historical route used by migrating buffalo, as an Indian trail and finally as a military route between Fort Des Moines and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. Also, at the four county intersection point was the 1855 site of the Four Corner's Execution of Silas Rude. Accused of killing his neighbor over a cattle and land dispute, he fled and a posse was formed to hunt him down. He was caught and shot by a firing squad made up of one man from each of the four counties.

During periods of low flow, beavers build dams that stretch across the stream creating pools and good fishing below the dams.

Access 11 to 13 (8 stream miles)

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This stretch of river starts just above the town of Westerville (only a few houses still remain). A mill was built near the town site in the 1850's, but only some abutments and rock rubble remain. A rock shelf at the town also served as a ford and some people used to wash their cars here. Sand Creek enters about 1/2 mile downstream and canoeists with some effort can paddle upstream to the Sand Creek Wildlife Area.

Rock outcroppings form the bank area in this section and several areas where "whitewater" rides can be enjoyed. Large log jams require several portages and excellent fishing is available as a result.

Access 13 to 15 (5 stream miles)

Native bedrock forms the river bed in some of this section. This is a good area of the river for fishing as rocks, logs and riffles provide excellent habitat. At the first bend of the river south of county road J-20, is Shewmaker Park. The park has picnic and limited camping facilities. Access to the river

TALMAGE THAYER AFTON is difficult. About one mile downstream from the park was the location of a mill of which only rubble remains. Access 15 to 19 (11 stream miles) Decatur Co. Ringgold Co. The river is gradually growing in size, but an occa-DECATUR WILDLIFE AREA sional log jam can still provide problems and require short portages. However, these log jams are worth stopping to fish. About an hour before access 19, the river passes under high- way 2 and beyond this are some nice rock riffles. Access 19 to 20 (6 stream miles) The river winds along with much of the river having rock bottom and high rock ledges forming the banks. The old town of Terra Haute was located near the end of this segment and rubble from the old mill can still be found. The Sac and Fox Indians wintered in 1838-1839 in this general area and even LAMONI after being moved out of the area they

> Mike McGhee is a fish management biologist stationed at Mr. Ayr. He is a graduate of Kansas State University and has been with the Commission since 1976.

IOWA

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returned yearly through the 1880's to gather and process maple syrup.

Access 20 to 21 (5 stream miles)

This part of the river provids excellent fishing. There are many deep pools and excellent riffles. Interstate 35 parallels the river for part of this segment and portions of the river bank have been stabilized with pilings. Logs have collected in this area and excellent fishing water has been created. As the river passes under I-35 an extensive riffle develops: This was the sight of the old Butcher Ford, once used as a crossing by the local people. Towards the lower end of the segment some timber clearing has occurred with the river becoming shallower and wider. The take-out point is the Davis City Park.

Access 21 to 22 (3 stream miles)

At Davis City the river runs on bedrock creating an extensive riffle area. This is also the location of an old mill which has disappeared except for part of the foundation. The river south of Davis City has undergone channelization for the last 11/2 miles, however, a few good fishing sites remain. Takeout point is 134 miles before the Missouri state line and one mile west of Nine Eagles State Park.



Hibiscus militaris

Photo by Ken Formanek



By Dean M. Roosa and Mary Jean Huston

This month's featured wildflower is a member of the plant family Malvaceae, which contains such familiar species as hollyhocks, okra, cotton, and several species of Hibiscus. Although the rose mallow is not a commercial plant like some of its relatives, it is perhaps one of the most beautiful autumn flowers found in lowa woodlands.

In lowa, the rose mallow blooms from July to October, and is found in alluvial bottomlands and along lakeshores. It grows to seven feet in height and has a soft, pithy stalk. The striking blossoms occur individually, opening briefly at mid-morning and are composed of five oval petals, each up to three inches in length. The petals are pinkish in color, with a dark reddish-purple color at the base of each. From the

by the stamens fused around the style, or female part, of the flower. This column, plus the five-petaled flowers, are characteristic of this plant family.

The leaves are arranged alternately on the stem and are up to six inches in length. Their margins have coarse, somewhat rounded teeth.

After autumn passes, the mature seed capsule usually remains on the plant well into winter. Within the capsules are seeds covered with fine hairs, a reminder of the rose mallow's relation to cotton.

Hibiscus militaris is most likely to be found in the eastern half of the state; especially the southeast quarter. Take a morning walk — perhaps the rose mallow will grace your path.