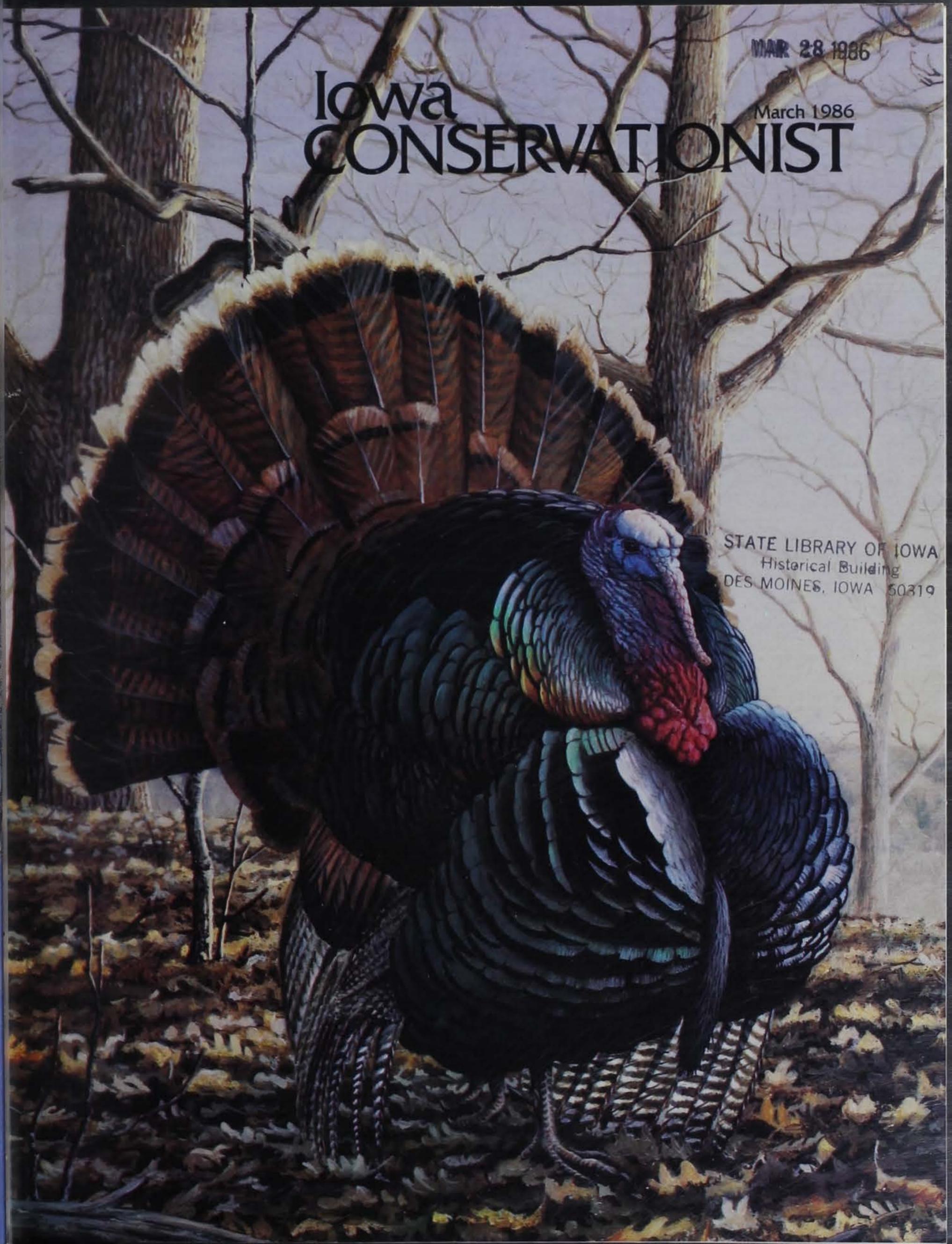


MAR 28 1986

# Iowa CONSERVATIONIST

March 1986

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# Iowa CONSERVATIONIST

Volume 45 No. 3 • March 1986

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Gull Point lodge at Spirit Lake.

## Brighter Future for Iowa's Parks

By Doyle D. Adams

Superintendent of State Parks

"Pay to get into a state park? Never! If I have to pay, I won't go." "I pay the taxes that take care of the parks. Why should I have to pay to get in?" "I've already paid \$54 for hunting and fishing licenses, so I shouldn't have to pay to use state parks, too!"

Statements similar to these have been heard around the state since the legislature passed the park user fee bill late in the 1985 session. On January 1, 1986, Iowa became one of 38 states and the National Park System to have some type of entrance or user fee. Before you become too radical in opposition, let's look at the history and facts that necessitated this action.

Iowa's parks system, which had its beginning in 1919 when Backbone State Park was dedicated, has historically been acquired, developed and maintained with money from the general fund appropriated by the Iowa legislature, plus income from concession contracts, camping fees, lodge and cabin rental, some farm crop income, occasional donations, and federal cost-share programs. None of the revenue from hunting and fishing license sales is used for

the operation or maintenance of Iowa's state parks or for capital improvements.

There have been many peaks and valleys in the past, depending on the economic condition of the state and public demand. Parks were developed near the end of the Great Depression when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of the mid-1930's were turned loose to create jobs and build state and national park systems. Another high came in the late 1960's and 1970's when times were good and money was available from the legislature for park and recreation area development. Everyone was talking about shorter work weeks and more leisure time for recreation. Camping and general park use peaked in 1978. In recent years, use has stabilized somewhat largely due to stress periods in Iowa's agriculture-based economy. Nevertheless, there continues to be a steady demand for state park facilities and programs. In 1985, for example, nearly 13 million guest days of activity were recorded in all areas. Camping activity was up substantially from 1984.

Iowa has, over the years, developed an excellent park system consisting of 65 parks and recreation areas totalling 53,000 acres. The system employs 117 full-time professionals and up to 300 seasonal workers. It is now a system that does not have enough money to maintain itself properly. As things get tight and revenues dwindle, cutbacks must occur. The easiest things to cut are the so-called "nonessentials" which, to many persons, include recreational facilities and programs, although studies show that these facilities are increasingly important in stress periods.

With monies cut severely and prospects in the near future looking even more bleak, it has been necessary to look at alternatives. Some parks could be closed, particularly those where facilities are in poor condition, and efforts concentrated on repairing and restoring the remainder. So-called "privatization" could play a bigger part, and entire parks could be leased to private groups or political subdivisions; or, alternate sources of revenue could be sought. Closing parks is impractical. Everyone has their special park, and no one wants to see their "pet" area closed. Federal programs are drying up. A number of agreements have been undertaken with cities and county conservation boards to take over management and maintenance of smaller, local-interest areas, and others are being discussed. Fees for concessions, camping, lodge rental and cabin rental could be increased, but that would not provide the necessary revenue. This left only a park user fee program as the solution. With this option, the user pays rather than everyone paying the same amount regardless of whether they use an area or not. This is the same premise used by most states and the National Parks Service, a proposal that the Iowa legislature had turned down each time it came up for the past twelve years. Due to a lack of other alternatives and the need to rehabilitate our park facilities now, the proposal was finally passed in 1985.

What will Iowans receive for their money? Where will the estimated \$800,000 per year go?

The intent of the law is to renovate and restore badly deteriorated facili-

ties within existing state parks, not to buy more land or to construct new facilities; nor, will the funds be used for salaries or maintenance. Many CCC lodges, shelterhouses, beach houses, cabins and trails have deteriorated to the point where they are unusable and some have been closed for safety reasons. All repair needs have been listed and prioritized, and it is a lengthy list. Items included to be done as soon as funds are available in 1986 are:

**Lake Macbride State Park** — beach and boathouse renovation. The beach facility is a CCC construction and has deteriorated badly, particularly the wooden roof support beams. The boathouse is in poor shape also. Both these facilities receive high public use.

**McIntosh Woods State Park** — campground shower and toilet building. This structure is over 25 years old and must be replaced since it cannot be repaired.

**Rock Creek State Park** — shower and toilet building. This structure is over 30 years old and needs to be removed and replaced.

**Springbrook State Park** — group camp. This is a CCC constructed facility that may be the oldest wooden structure in the state. Complete renovation is necessary.

**Lewis and Clark State Park** — rest room and changing building at the beach. This is a restoration of a building that was removed for health reasons.

**Backbone State Park** — renovation of three latrines. These CCC constructed latrines are completely unusable.

**Lake Wapello State Park** — beach house renovation. Another large CCC structure with badly deteriorated wooden infrastructure.

**Lake Ahquabi State Park** — lodge renovation. A CCC constructed facility in which support beams are rotting and need replacement. The exterior stonework also needs repair.

**Stone State Park** — replace and modernize vault latrine.

**Nine Eagles State Park** — replace and modernize vault latrine.

How fast restoration is completed depends on how revenues come in

and bids are received on repair needs. Most structures were constructed of large timbers and stone over 50 years ago; therefore, there may be additional problems as work progresses. Hopefully, the new user fee fund will provide a permanent source of money so that restoration can be achieved in an orderly manner. The anticipated \$800,000 per year is not a panacea that will magically restore Iowa's parks to their original grandeur, but it is a step toward a brighter future.

What about new construction and added facility needs? What about Pleasant Creek, Lake Manawa, Badger Creek, Brushy Creek and the Mines of Spain where little or no development has occurred? There is hope here, too. Iowa's new lottery is projected to provide up to \$700,000 per year for capital improvements in Iowa's parks, in addition to providing monies for a new state forest in western Iowa and other conservation-related activities. While this fund hasn't the projected permanency of the user fee fund, it is hoped it will generate enough monies for the planned development at Pleasant Creek, including a beach facility, expansion of beach parking lot, service building, two campground shower and toilet buildings, modern electrical system for half of the camping pads, two modern latrines, and six picnic shelters. Next on the list is Lake Manawa where the plan calls for moving the beach and beach facilities to the south side of the lake. Construction of two modern latrines on the south side and one on the north end of the lake, a new service and storage building, a shower and toilet building in the campground, electrical service for the campground, five picnic shelters on the south side and three on the north side as well as other minor improvements are also planned.

Iowa's park and recreational system, one of the oldest and best in the United States, is suffering through some tough times. With everyone's help and understanding, it will soon pass the critical stage and be back on its feet. Those who would like to help out should call their nearest state park office and offer services. With everyone's help, there is a brighter future ahead.



# WITHIN WING'S BEAT

*By Marlen Kemmet*

There are easier ways to capture the spirit of waterfowl on film than rising before the sun, driving miles to a murky marsh, and plopping into a blind that resembles a muskrat den torn from its roots. For Alex Thiermann, wildlife photographer, it's the routine solution for eye-level portraits of everything from mallards to the elusive least bittern.

As Alex explains, "While I can be standing up when photographing deer or elk, really good waterfowl portraits are shot at their eye level, not mine."

Alex's problem was how to take such pictures with his lens just inches above the waterline, without laying in the bug-infested outskirts of a marsh or risking hundreds of dollars of camera equipment and film on something the likes of an air mattress. Even with a waterside blind, the problem still existed of how to get the birds to come within shooting distance. His solution: two homemade pontoons held together by three crossmembers and outfitted with a camouflaged cover.

He positions himself and moves

the blind about much like a young child in a walker. By staying in shallow water, Alex is able to "walk" the blind into position.

Alex's prey ranges from the northern nesters who stop over in Iowa just long enough to catch their breath and straighten a few feathers to the native residents of teal, mallards, and wood ducks. Many of the photos are taken as close as 20 feet, a distance Alex likes best.

But getting within feather's reach is not always Alex's objective. "Although the birds may let you get closer, they start to exhibit behavioral changes showing that they are not comfortable at that distance. While I can get to within a few feet of a coot or blue-winged teal, I would rather use longer lenses and shoot a bit further away. This allows me to record their natural behavioral patterns such as preening and courtship" he says.

"Early mornings tend to have the best lighting and wildfowl activity, and early spring — just after the ice breaks is without a doubt the best time of the year" says Alex. "The

northern nesters stop over in Iowa anywhere from three to 10 days on their north-bound journey to cooler nesting areas."

Taking good wildfowl portraits involves more than just being at the right place at the right time. It is important to know the behavioral patterns and biology of the subject being shot. Knowing the feeding patterns and mating rituals helps Alex avoid making the wrong move at the wrong time. He must constantly watch the birds to insure that they are comfortable and that his blind's presence doesn't frighten them or worse, scare them away. While luck is definitely a part of taking good shots, knowledge of the subject is crucial.

Alex's favorite prey? "It's always the last subject that I have successfully photographed" he replies. "I really find waterfowl very exciting with all their behavior of feeding, chasing, and nest building." With joys as simple as that, and photographs as beautiful as the ones shown, Alex should enjoy a very successful future in the marshes of Iowa.



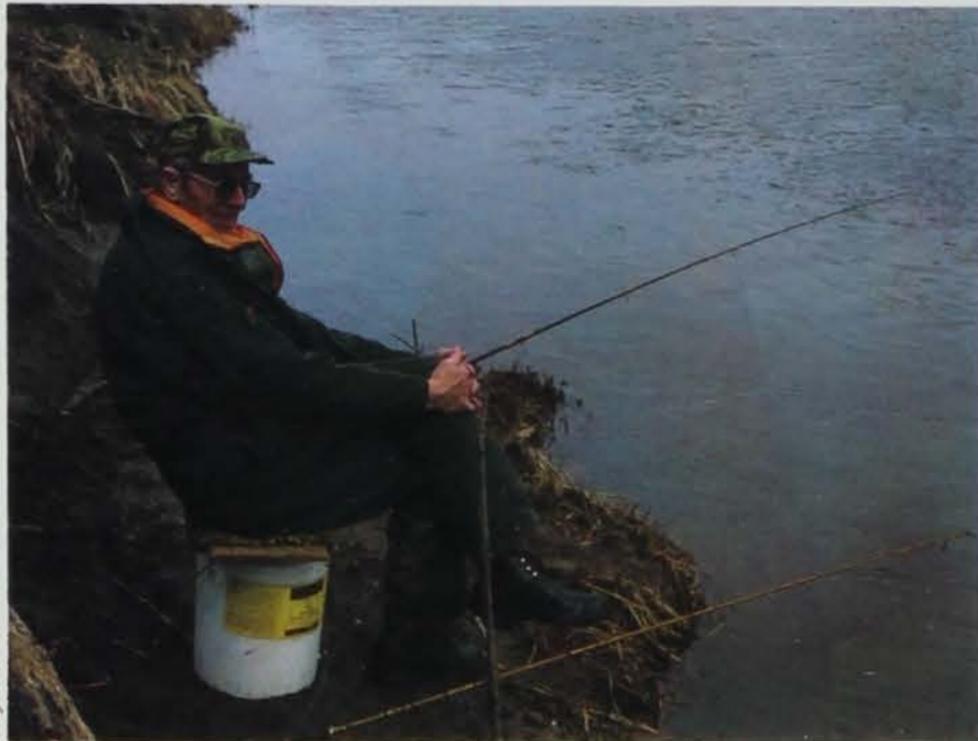
*Alex Thierman's beautiful photographs of marsh life are made possible by his knowledge of the subject and the use of his portable marsh blind (bottom). Shown here are an unsuspecting blue-winged teal, yellow-headed blackbird and drake mallard.*



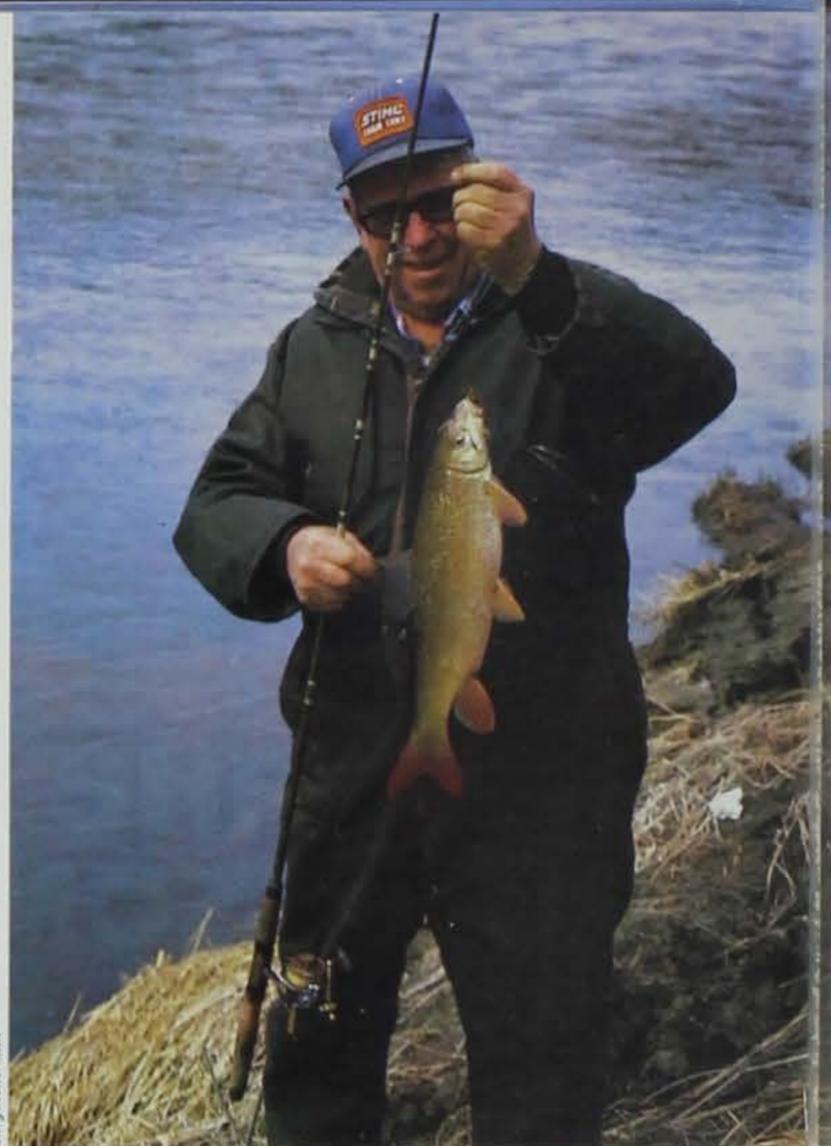
**About the photographer:** Alex was born and raised in Chile and immigrated to the United States in 1972 after obtaining his veterinary license in his homeland. He left Chile to become more involved in animal research and is now employed full-time as a veterinary researcher at the National Disease Laboratory in Ames. He became really serious about wildlife photography in 1973 and has done his best since to improve and expand his wildlife portfolio. In addition to photographing in Iowa, he has ventured as far away as Alaska and Panama in search of new subjects. Alex sells limited-edition prints at several high quality art fairs a year, as well as selling images to magazines and books. Alex also teaches a one day wildlife photography course each spring in Ames.

*Marlen Kemmet of West Des Moines has been on the staff of Wood magazine for two years. He holds an M.S. degree from the University of North Dakota.*





Gary Ackerman



Gary Ackerman

# Two Old Codgers and a Kid

By Gary L. Ackerman

Take the enthusiasm of youth, add the savvy of a couple of old ones and place amidst the sucker run in the Turkey River. That's sucker fishing and it's fun.

It all begins early in spring. Winter gives way grudgingly, slowly melting and dripping away. The ice and snow slowly melt, raising and coloring the water. Everything seems on hold, but this is what triggers the annual run of red horse suckers! They come by the thousands from the Mississippi River to spawn over the gravel and rubble shallows of its tributary streams. The Turkey River is one of many streams throughout Iowa having super sucker fishing.

LeRoy sometimes tells tall tales about just about everything. With a twinkle in his eye, he lets go a whopper. "Mike, look real close at the ripple down the holler. You can see the

red water — that's the tails of suckers spawning." Young Mike just smiles politely, rolling his eyes at Carl who quietly chuckles as the three compadres slosh through the clay-mud of a corn field to Big Bend, the hottest sucker hole in the Turkey.

Suckers are mainly bottom feeders. They are effective vacuum cleaners, taking insects, larvae, algae and tiny crustaceans and mollusks from bottom mud, gravel, rocks, plants and logs. They are able to seek food by touch and taste as well as sight, thus, many suckers adapt well to turbid waters. Sucker species surpass the total biomass of all other fish combined in most rivers in Iowa.

Passing the time, LeRoy entertains, "Yep, I got those worms at Arbies Worm Ranch. He feeds them cornmeal... that's what makes them so fat. You should have heard the noise

five million worms make chewin' up all that corn."

"Aw, come on, LeRoy," Mike impatiently quips.

Most suckers are seldom taken on hook and line. Spawning runs of redhorse and white suckers are notable exceptions. Other suckers, such as bigmouth buffalo, black buffalo, smallmouth buffalo, quillback, carp-sucker, highfin, silver redhorse, golden redhorse, spotted sucker, black sucker, blue sucker and hog sucker are seldom taken except by spearing or in nets by commercial fishermen.

The outside bank of Big Bend is already occupied. Several families are scattered along the edge; everyone's stringers are loaded with suckers. LeRoy greets everyone the same, "How is the fishing?" This is the usual beginning of a long conversa-

tion which almost always ends in friendship.

Suckers are very important to Iowa commercial fishermen, particularly the buffalo fishes. Over one million pounds are harvested annually with the principal and steady production coming from the Mississippi River. The catch is comprised of about equal portions of bigmouth and small-mouth buffalo, with black buffalo rarely taken. High populations of bigmouth buffalo in interior waters, especially the natural lakes and river impoundments, are also harvested by commercial fishermen. As many as 600 pounds per acre have been removed in a single year from some waters.

Small suckers are important sources for forage and as bait for game fish. White sucker fry are often cultured for forage in musky and northern pike hatcheries.

Carl instructs with the intelligence and patience of an old school teacher, "Mike, all you need to catch suckers is a sensitive rod, a 1/2 oz. slip sinker, a long-shanked #8 hook and a gob of worms.

"Look below the ripple," he said. "See the eddy along the cut-bank? That's where the redhorse will be piled up, feeding and waiting to spawn. Good cast. Now let out about a foot or so of line so the line will slide through the sinker. They really bite light. You need to feel the critters suck the worm off the bottom to hook them properly, or else they'll swallow the hook every time."

LeRoy yells, "Grab the dip net, Mike, I got one on. Hurry! Hurry! Here's another one."

The kid nimbly slides down the muddy bank to net both fish. Already Carl has one hooked, running swiftly downstream propelled by strong current, occasionally breaking water as deftly as any rainbow. Even before Mike has a chance to net Carl's fish, LeRoy yells for the dip netter again. Tossing the net hurriedly over the bank, Mike chal-

lenges, "Dip your own fish — I'm going fishing too."

With all the skill and finesse of a finished angler, Mike skillfully casts the sucker rig near the upper end of a slow-moving pool. It wasn't but a moment that Mike yells, "LeRoy, bring the net!" With that a two-pound redhorse is landed, along with a kid, for a lifetime of fishing redhorse.

"I'll bet you another fishin' trip you can't lift that stringer of fish," brags LeRoy. Mike tugs with his all to slide the suckers up the slippery bank. Examining the catch closely, Carl exclaims, "They're all shorthead except for one lonely golden redhorse!"

Carp sucker, redhorse and other suckers are collectively marketed as suckers. The flesh is white, flaky and succulent. The presence of numerous Y-shaped bones makes eating bothersome; but this problem can be overcome by grinding the fillets in a food chopper, then deep-frying thin patties until the bones are softened. They are delicious!

"Call me anytime," reminds Mike, "you guys want to go fishin'."

The four-wheeler strains going up the muddy hill road. While wheeling back again to civilization, LeRoy lets go of another one, "Yep, when I was a kid there were more of those big-headed redhorse. Some got as big as 20 pounds. One day my brother and I caught so many Dad had to bring the team and wagon to get them home. We pickled them and had enough to feed one-half of Clayton County."

Carl just smiles in agreement. Mike smiles too, knowing that accepting LeRoy's tales is a small price to pay for another spring sucker trip!

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*Gary Ackerman is a fisheries biologist located at Guttenberg. He holds a B.S. degree in zoology from the University of Wisconsin. He has been with the commission since 1964.*

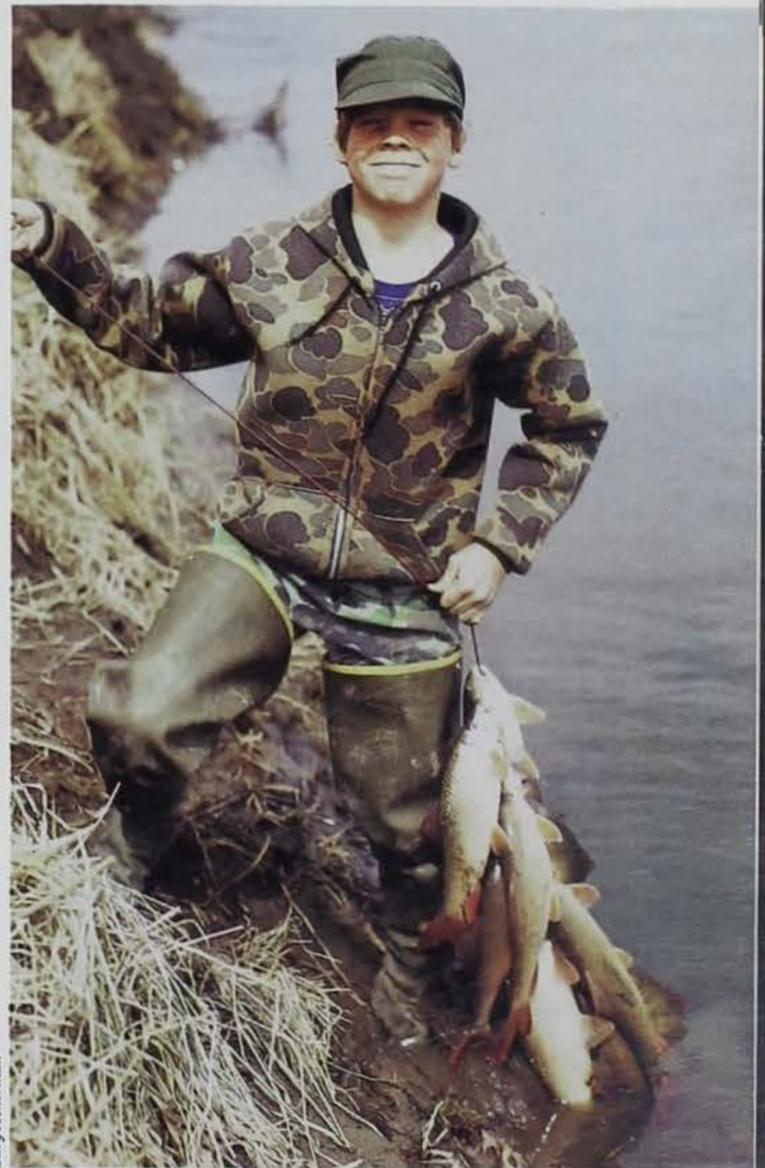
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*Filling a stringer during the spring sucker run is as easy as hooking a kid on fishing.*

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*Young Mike proudly displays a nice catch of Turkey River redhorse.*



Gary Ackerman

Part Four  
RESTORATION OF THE  
**WILD TURKEY**  
the first 20 years and a look ahead  
*By Gregory A. Hanson*



Richard Bishop

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Three earlier articles by Terry Little were published in the *Conservationist* (July 1976, August 1976, June 1981). The first two articles summarized the history of the wild turkey in this nation and how it related to Iowa's wild turkey restoration program. The third article covered some of the accomplishments of the then 15-year-old program. This article gives a further update and takes a look at the future of the wild turkeys in Iowa.

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The fall and winter of 1985-86 marks the 20th year since the original release of eastern wild turkeys in Iowa. To say that the program has been successful would be an understatement. It has greatly exceeded everyone's expectations, even those of our professional wildlife biologists.

Initially we hoped that stocked turkeys in Shimek and Stephens State Forests would somehow hang on in those "marginal habitats," so that a dedicated outdoorsman might catch an occasional glimpse or perhaps hear the gobble of one of these majestic game birds. That was in the fall and winter of 1965-66. We had just released eight hens and three gobblers from Missouri in Shimek State Forest in Lee County. Two years later we released 12 hens and seven gobblers (also from Missouri) in the Whitebreast unit of Stephens State Forest in Lucas County. Here are some facts about the program since then.

We have now released nearly 2,000 eastern wild turkeys at 138 sites in Iowa. Many of the released birds are direct descendants of those original 30 turkeys stocked in Shimek and Stephens Forests. Last winter was the best ever for our trap/transplant operation. Two hundred ninety-four birds were trapped and released at 22 sites in Iowa, an average of ten hens and three gobblers at each site. Additionally, 46 birds were trapped and sent to Ontario and Kentucky to complete trade obligations for ruffed grouse and river otters.

Today the wild turkey population in the state is estimated to be around 50,000. Expansion from current release sites should lead to the occupation of 90% of the forest land in Iowa within the next few years. Most of the sites now being stocked are

along extremely narrow river drainages extending into the north-central and northwest portions of the state. These are the least forested areas of the state, yet they are supporting viable turkey populations.

Turkey densities in Iowa rank among the highest in the nation. Densities may average 20 turkeys per square mile of timber over much of our wild turkey range, and up to 60 to 100 birds per square mile of timber in the best areas. Turkey densities of ten per square mile of timber are considered very good for the more traditional turkey range of the south-eastern United States.

Hunting opportunity has expanded right along with the turkey population. The first season in 1974 had 450 permits available, and 113 gobblers were harvested. The 1985 season had 11,800 permits available, and 3,127 gobblers harvested. These figures put Iowa among the top 15 states in spring turkey harvest while being in the bottom 15 in acreage of forested land. The 33% hunter success rate in 1985 is also among the highest in the nation.

Spring turkey hunting will be allowed in 80 of Iowa's 99 counties in 1985. Surprisingly, turkey populations large enough to sustain limited harvest exist in Humboldt, Kossuth, Worth, Winnebago, Cerro Gordo, Hancock and several other counties in a region of Iowa known primarily as an intensively farmed, "cash grain" region.

Besides spring hunting, Iowa also has limited fall any-sex turkey hunting. This was introduced in 1981 to take advantage of some of Iowa's very high turkey densities. Since then, fall seasons have been expanded to include most of Iowa's best turkey range. Fall harvest exceeded 1,000 birds in 1985 and success rates have been near 50% each year.

Looking over this impressive list of accomplishments leads one to believe that the future of the wild turkey in Iowa is rosy. The evidence from the first 20 years does indicate that nearly all of the remaining timber land in Iowa will eventually support turkeys. All but a handful of Iowa's 99 counties may eventually have at least limited spring hunting. Fall hunting will probably expand, but will remain

limited because of the vulnerability of the turkeys in the more sparsely timbered areas. The wild turkey restoration program has certainly provided a ray of light in what seems like a perpetually dark picture for Iowa's wildlife resources.

However, before too many of us get hurt trying to pat ourselves on the backs, one more set of facts needs to be considered. In 1856 there were seven million acres of forest in Iowa. In 1956 there were 2.5 million acres of forest left and by 1974 just 1.5 million acres of forest remained. It has been estimated that we have lost and continue to lose 2% of that total each year. Unlike some of the forest losses that occurred early in this century, which have now regrown to mature forest, the current losses are more permanent. If this trend continues or accelerates, the long range future of the wild turkey in Iowa is very bleak. The same dark cloud — permanent habitat loss — is slowly moving over our turkey population. Like other wildlife species, turkeys cannot survive the permanent loss of habitat.

The last 20 years have been very successful. The next 20 years will be much more difficult. More will be required than a stepped up land acquisition program by the Conservation Commission. The vast majority of Iowa land is in private ownership, and will probably remain so. What individuals do with their land will ultimately determine the future of the wild turkey in Iowa. If the past decline of our pheasant, quail, waterfowl and turkey habitat is any indication of what will happen in the future, then the outlook isn't good. A substantial effort will be needed by all concerned conservationists, both private and professional, to save this habitat. More importantly the state of mind of the majority of Iowans will need to undergo a change if we want to maintain this resource for future generations.

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*Gregory Hanson is a wildlife research biologist located at Chariton. He holds an M.S. degree in zoology from Southern Illinois University. He has been with the commission since 1982.*

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# WALNUT

## a good investment

By Jerry Kemperman

Trees have a reputation of growing slowly, but not when the *value* growth of walnut is calculated. How would you like an investment that earns over 50% annually? It can be done with Iowa walnut trees, if you know how.

Iowa is blessed with some of the best walnut in the world. In fact, Iowa leads the nation in the harvest of veneer walnut logs. These logs have no branches or other defects, and therefore can be sliced into thin sheets of veneer. This veneer is then glued on plywood and used to make products such as pianos, tables, and paneling.

Each fall and winter, buyers come to Iowa from other states and several foreign countries to buy our walnut. With this demand, veneer-quality walnut trees can be worth several

hundred to several thousand dollars. One tree in northeast Iowa recently sold for \$15,000!

Unfortunately, most landowners don't get the best value for their walnut. Trees are generally sold when they are too small. A vigorously growing walnut with a veneer-quality log eight feet long is increasing in value 60% annually between the 15- and 17-inch diameter classes (diameter at 4.5 feet above ground, including bark). Loggers may try to buy trees of this size, but the owner would be wise not to sell. Allowing such walnut to grow is like a bank account earning 60% annual interest.

As the trees grow larger however, this rate of return begins to fall. Trees that annually increase in value less than 10% per year could be considered commercially mature. This

maturity is reached at about a 21-inch diameter for walnut with an eight-foot veneer log, 23-inch diameter for 12-foot logs and 24 inches for those trees with 16-foot logs. Trees not of veneer quality are considered sawlog grade. These walnut trees are commercially mature at about 19 inches.

To generally determine the diameter of a tree, simply measure the circumference in inches and divide by three. In general, a vigorously growing walnut will increase its diameter about one inch each 3 years.

With good management, walnut trees can grow faster and produce higher value logs. Frequently, trees are too close together for their maximum growth rate. The poorer quality trees can be cut, perhaps used for firewood if not of commercial size. The remaining trees can significantly increase their growth rates with the additional space for their branches and leaves.

Pruning can also be very important for good walnut management. Veneer logs have no branches. The lower branches on small, pole-size walnut, therefore, can be pruned off to produce a future veneer quality log. Before pruning, be sure to check with your district forester or the Iowa State University extension service publications for proper pruning techniques.

It's easy to harvest commercially mature walnut, but what about replanting to keep Iowa's woodlands growing? Tree seedlings are surprisingly inexpensive (only 9¢ to 20¢ each) and can be readily purchased from private nurseries or the Iowa Conservation Commission's forest nursery. Again, it is best to get advise before planting to insure good survival and growth.

With all the interest in alternative crops for Iowa, trees should certainly be considered — especially walnut. Iowa is known internationally as a great walnut producer. With some understanding of walnut management and marketing, landowners can turn their walnut trees into a very profitable and renewable crop.

*Jerry Kemperman is a district forester located at Elkader. He holds an M.S. degree in forestry from the University of Michigan. He has been with the commission since 1977.*

### VALUE GROWTH OF A VENEER WALNUT TREE

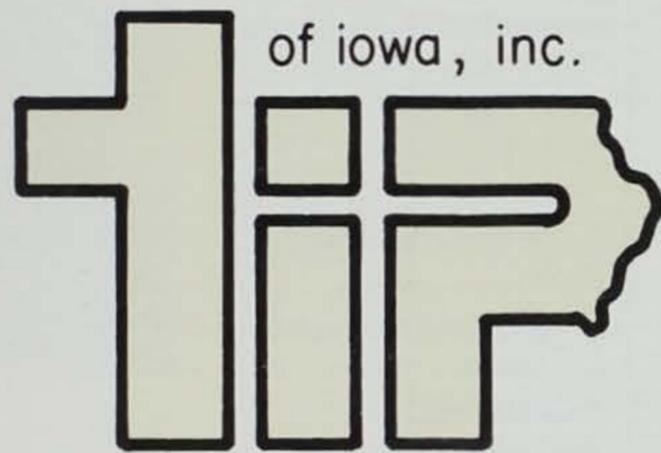
SIZE OF TREE		VOLUME Board Feet (8-ft. log)	\$/FT.	\$ VALUE	% INCREASE IN VALUE Annual
DBH (in.)	Circumference (in.)				
	41	25 (sawlog)	\$0.30	\$ 7.50	
	47	32	\$1.00	\$ 32.00	50%
	53	61	\$2.50	\$152.00	60%
	66	98	\$5.00	\$490.00	20%
	72	128	\$5.00	\$640.00	5%

This table is based only on the bottom 8-foot veneer log. The percent annual value increase assumes a growth rate of one inch in diameter per three years (one-inch in circumference per year).

DBH is diameter at 4½ feet above ground including bark.

Caution — due to large differences in veneer quality between trees, these values can not be directly applied to specific trees in your timber.

# It's Working



By Bob Oden

Undoubtedly every child at some point in his or her early formative years has rushed to one of the parents with an accusation of wrong doing on the part of a sister, brother or neighborhood bully, only to be admonished with the words, "don't be a tattletale!"

I imagine that in the eyes of some, Iowa's new Turn In Poachers (TIP) program is akin to tattling on another. Actually there is more to it than meets the eye.

## WHY TIP?

Poaching in all its varied forms, and believe me they are numerous and occasionally quite innovative, is a crime — a crime against all Iowans, not merely against an individual.

Concerned individuals from various walks of life, many of them active members of organizations throughout the state, joined forces with the Iowa Conservation Commission in its ongoing fight against poaching early in 1985. As a result of several previous meetings, Turn In Poachers of Iowa, Inc. was born.

The basic concept of the TIP program is to create a method for concerned citizens to provide needed information about poaching violations to authorities. The most attractive aspect of the program to most people is that they can remain totally anonymous if they choose. Additionally, if their information leads to a citation or arrest, they may be eligible for a sizeable reward.

TIP became operational August 1, 1985 and during the remaining five months of the year compiled a rather enviable record. More than 650 calls were received. One hundred citations were issued, resulting in 30 rewards totaling \$4,550.

TIP-related arrests involved deer, wild turkey, furbearing animals, migratory waterfowl and mourning doves. Additionally, charges were filed by Iowa wardens for everything from license violations to hunting by artificial light, commonly known as "jacklighting."

Poachers steal from *all* of us. Open seasons, bag limits and legal methods of taking fish and wildlife mean nothing to them. Poachers many times take all they can get, as often as they have the opportunity.

You, as concerned citizens, can help curb poaching by providing accurate and timely information about violations you personally know about. Keep your eyes open for persons who: 1) take an overlimit (too many) of fish or wildlife, 2) take fish or wildlife during the closed season, 3) use illegal methods of taking them, such as electricity, explosives, or illegal weapons, or 4) sell or offer to sell fish or wildlife.

If you witness a violation, contact the toll free TIP hotline, as soon as possible, which is available 24 hours a day, every day, by dialing 1-800-532-2020. Be prepared to give the operator accurate information about the crime you have personal knowledge of. You will be given a code number, which is all the identification the TIP

coordinator needs to discuss arrangements for a reward payment should your information result in a poacher being brought to justice.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As of this writing the TIP treasury amounts to \$11,000 with approved rewards amounting to slightly over \$7,000. No state funds are involved.

Conservation-minded persons who qualify for rewards may choose to keep the reward, or donate it back to ensure an ongoing TIP Program. The amounts are: \$100 for small game, birds, fish and furbearers, \$150 for wild turkey and raptors, \$250 for deer, elk, moose and black bear, and \$1,000 for violations involving threatened/endangered species and/or commercial poaching.

Since all reward money is derived from donations from the public, the TIP board of directors are searching for a more stable source of money.

Fund raising events have been successful, but only on a limited basis by member organizations. TIP t-shirt sales are anticipated to bring in funds, but the original goal of maintaining a \$25,000 reward fund is still lacking.

Getting the message to the public about the program appears to have been a success. Radio, T.V., posters, newspapers, bumper stickers and strategically placed billboards carry the distinctive logo and toll-free hotline telephone number to all points of the state. Many of the hunting, fishing and trapping regulation brochures carry the message, but if the program is to survive, dollars are needed! *All donations are tax deductible.* The TIP program will be an effective deterrent to poaching and other illegal activities, only if sportsmen clubs, businesses and individuals continue to support the concept by contributing to the TIP of Iowa, Inc. reward fund.

**Contributions can be made to: TIP of Iowa, Inc., Box 872, Waterloo, Iowa 50704.**

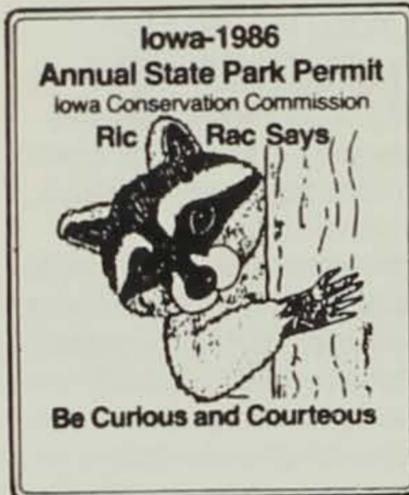
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*Bob Oden is the assistant superintendent of law enforcement located in Des Moines. He has been with the commission since 1964.*

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**PARK USER PERMIT**



As of January 1, 1986, people using state parks are required to have a park user permit. Anyone stopping a motorized vehicle of any kind must have a sticker on the vehicle if they use any facilities. User fees won't be required of visitors who drive through without stopping.

Permits cost \$10 for an annual permit or \$2 for a daily permit. They will be available at all state parks and other Iowa Conservation Commission offices, including the central office in Des Moines.

Annual permits are also available from county recorders offices and other locations.

Certain areas managed by the parks section of the commission are exempt. Signs designate areas where park user permits are not required.

Purchase and display of the permit doesn't exempt persons from fees for activities within the area such as camping, swimming, or facility rental.

**Exemptions**

1) All school vehicles are exempt from the user fee permit requirement

when transporting students and faculty on official school business.

2) Motor vehicles being towed by or carried in or on another motor vehicle bearing a permit are exempt from the permit requirement (such as a car towed by motor home, mopeds carried by pickup) so long as they remain attached and are not parked separately.

3) Vehicles with handicapped plates, wheelchair symbol decal or rearview mirror tag.

**Free Permits**

Free park user permits may be issued to qualifying Iowans in the county in which the applicant resides.

Persons requesting the free permit must present one of the following items to the county recorder:

1) A currently valid medical assistance identification card;

2) A written declaration stating that the person is receiving food stamps and a signed release authorizing the Department of Human Services to confirm his or her eligibility; or

3) Proof (valid driver's license or nonoperator's ID card) of age 65 or over.

The person must also provide a registration certificate for his or her motor vehicle, verification that a corporate-owned vehicle is assigned to the applicant for personal use; or certification that a vehicle owned by a relative provides the applicant's primary source of transportation.

Persons purchasing a permit who subsequently become eligible for a permit to be issued without fee shall not be entitled to a refund.

**The Backbone of TIP**

**Board of Directors**

Lavern Wook, President  
Shell Rock

Ron Offerman,  
Vice-President  
Cedar Falls

Jamie Beyer, Secretary  
Ames

Leight Murphy, Treasurer  
Dubuque

Robert Roach  
Dunkerton

Bob Moorman  
Ames

Leonard Grimes  
Pella

Robert Anderson  
Des Moines

William Tuttle  
Ankeny

Joe Beach  
Cedar Rapids

Daniel Dunham  
Sherill

James Murphy  
Dubuque

Dr. David Winter  
Marshalltown

**Voting Member Organizations**

The following organizations have donated \$250 or more, qualifying them as voting member organizations of TIP:

1. Cedar Rapids Wildlife Outdoor Club, Cedar Rapids
2. Davenport Izaak Walton League, Davenport
3. Dyersville Sportsmen's Club, Dyersville
4. Fur Takers of America, Laurel
5. Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, Marion
6. Hickory Ridge Bowhunters, Pella
7. Iowa Bowhunters Association, Waterloo

8. Iowa Great Lakes Fishing Club, Royal
9. Iowa Izaak Walton League, Sherill
10. Iowa Sportsmen's Federation, Des Moines
11. Iowa Trappers Association, Ames
12. Iowa Wild Turkey Federation, Grimes and Cedar Rapids
13. Iowa Wildlife Federation, Dubuque and Ames
14. Louisa County Chapter Izaak Walton League, Wapello
15. Marshall County Izaak Walton League, Marshalltown
16. Monticello Conservation League, Cedar Falls
17. Pine Lake Wildlife Club, Eldora
18. Red Rock Izaak Walton League, Pella
19. Sabula Chapter Izaak Walton League, Preston
20. The Iowa Bow Hunters, Shell Rock and Ankeny
21. Three Rivers Chapter Izaak Walton League, Waverly
22. Waltonian Archers of Linn County, Cedar Rapids



## BALD EAGLE DAYS A SUCCESS



Iowa Conservation Commission director, Larry Wilson, slid open the door of the raptor transport box. There was a moment's pause, then the rehabilitated bald eagle flew out. In three wingbeats it gained enough elevation to coast, another couple down-strokes sent it into the morning fog hanging over the Mississippi River. Cheers filled the air as cameramen filmed the vanishing eagle. The second Bald Eagle Appreciation Days, commemorated by the timely release of an eagle injured in November, was off to a positive start.

January 17 through 19, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Non-game Programs of the Iowa Conservation Commission and Illinois Department of Conservation sponsored a Bald Eagle Appreciation Days in Keokuk, Iowa. Because of the open water created by lock and dam 19, and the nearby forested areas for roosting, Keokuk is one of the major wintering areas for bald eagles in the midwest. Each winter 100 to 400 eagles gather in the vicinity.

In 1985, minus 50 below zero windchills kept attendance below 1,000. This year balmy 40 degree

weather brought 6,000 people to Keokuk during the three days to attend the Bald Eagle Appreciation events. Nearly 1,500 school children attended the special Friday school sessions. Plus over 2,000 people attended the main program, special lectures or rode the tour bus to the riverfront on both Saturday and Sunday. Although the warm weather and open water allowed the eagles to be dispersed throughout the area, nearly everybody got to see several wild bald eagles on the riverfront.

The event was a tremendous success. Not just in terms of numbers, but in those moments of inspiration, awe, and wonderment, that the eagles themselves caused. We hope that you'll come again next year to share this experience with us. Thank you.

Laura Jackson, Urban Biologist, Doug Reeves, Non-game Biologist.

## LOOKING FOR CCC MEMORIAL IDEAS

Two years ago the Conservation Commission sponsored a 50th anniversary celebration for the Civilian Conservation Corps which played such a large role in providing many of the beautiful facilities in Iowa's state parks. Today, the new state park user fee is aimed at generating funds to restore many of those lodges, trails and shelters so that future generations may still enjoy them.

During the anniversary celebration, held at Springbrook State Park, one of the very active CCC camps, one of the most frequently asked questions by the reunited CCC'ers was: "After this reunion, what can we do to keep up the interest in the C's?" Commission Director Larry Wilson has come up with part of the answer.

"The Conservation Commission wants to construct a memorial of some

sort that will call attention to the great work of the Civilian Conservation Corps," explained Wilson. "We have a number of good ideas as to the form and nature of such a memorial, but we want to hear more ideas directly from those persons who were in the CCC."

"There will be no prizes," he said, "only the satisfaction of knowing you have helped future generations remember one of the most important eras of conservation history in the U.S."

Wilson said he will give any person who wants the opportunity to submit ideas for the CCC memorial, and he will make a selection sometime shortly after the *May 15 deadline for submitting memorial plans*. Send your ideas to: CCC Memorial, Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

## BLUEBIRD DAY

Have any plans for the second day of spring? Then help us celebrate Bluebird Day, Saturday March 22. There won't be any fireworks or parades, but it is a day when you can make a significant contribution to wildlife.

So what do you do? As an individual or club, please clean, repair and set out your bluebird boxes. Bluebirds which migrated south, begin returning to Iowa in early March. Shortly afterwards, the male begins establishing a territory for nesting which includes several natural or artificial nest cavities. The female bluebird will inspect several potential

nest sites plus the food selection in the male's territory before deciding whether to stay with that particular male. If she's satisfied with the area, she may start several nests before settling down and completing one. In mid-April they begin laying their first clutch of eggs.

By cleaning older birdhouses or establishing new boxes in late March, the bluebirds will be able to include your boxes in their initial territory selection. They prefer boxes that are located in open grassy areas, with some nearby shrubs.

This year we would also appreciate it if you kept track of what species nested in your boxes, how many clutches any

bluebirds laid, how many eggs there were, and how many young fledged. These records can be gained by just checking your boxes every 7 to 10 days. We have forms available for recording nesting activity.

We hope you'll join us in celebrating Bluebird Day. If you need additional information on making bluebird boxes, setting up a bluebird trail of 5 to 50 boxes or nest record forms, please call non-game biologist, Doug Reeves 515-432-2823 or urban biologist, Laura Jackson 515-281-4815 or write to the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Bldg., Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

## CHANGES IN FISHING LAWS

The Iowa Conservation Commission has made several changes in the 1986 sport fishing regulations.

Paddlefish snagging on the Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers has been closed. The paddlefish population in the two rivers is declining due to overharvest and loss of spawning habitat.

A catch-and-release fishery has been established for black bass (smallmouth and largemouth) on a two-mile stretch of the Middle Raccoon River. All black bass caught from the Lennon Mills Dam at Panora to the county P28 bridge in Guthrie County must be released immediately. The rule is aimed at improving smallmouth bass fishing in the river.

Daily catch and possession limits of thirty on yellow perch, white bass and sunfish, and fifteen on crappies have been imposed on five Iowa-Minnesota boundary lakes to standardize rules of both states. The lakes are Little Spirit Lake in Dickinson County, Iowa and Tuttle (Okamanpedan) Lakes in Emmet County, Burt (Swag) Lake in Kossuth County, and Iowa Lake in Osceola County.



## Donations

Donahoe, Foster & Assoc. West Des Moines	\$500 for state park mascot costume
Anonymous	Rock valued at \$175 for field trial area at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area
McArdle Lumber Company Bellevue	Gutters, downspouts, and other materials valued at \$169.23 for South Bluff nature Center at Bellevue State Park
Anonymous	10 loads of wood chips and hauling of 7 loads valued at \$350 for butterfly garden development at Bellevue State Park
Troop 129, Boy Scouts of America Creston	40 hours labor valued at \$134 for tree planting at Green Valley State Park
Troop 412, Boy Scouts of America Creston	70 hours labor valued at \$234.50 for tree planting at Green Valley State Park
Parker and Gladys Davis Fayette	18 mallard ducks valued at \$54 for Volga River Recreation Area
Craig Smith Atlantic	8' x 8' storage building valued at \$175 for small equipment storage at Lake Anita State Park
Butler Apartments Yale	10 gallons paint and supplies valued at \$150 for area maintenance at Lake Anita State Park
Anonymous	Utility poles and labor valued at \$56.80 for interpretive facility development at Nine Eagles State Park
Anonymous	2 hours labor, drilling under road and trenching valued at \$175 for interpretive facility development at Nine Eagles State Park
Anonymous	13 wood duck nest valued at \$260 for interpretive facility development at Nine Eagles State Park
Troop 859, Girl Scouts of America Creston	60 hours labor valued at \$201 for tree planting at Green Valley State Park

## 1985 Top 25 Turkeys

Name/Address	Weight	Date	County Taken
*Eldon C. Sear Zwingle	30 lb. 4 oz.	4-15	Clayton
*Paul A. Lindahl Boone	29 lb.	5-1	Hamilton
Bill Seals Davenport	28 lb. 10 oz.	4-17	Clinton
Bob Hibbs Marshalltown	28 lb. 8 oz.	4-19	Benton
Greg A. Covington Monticello	28 lb. 4 oz.	4-17	Jones
Emery Beatty Edgewood	28 lb.	4-24	Delaware
Ronald L. Heitmann Victor	28 lb.	4-23	Keokuk
Donald L. Collen Dayton	27 lb. 12 oz.	4-18	Webster
Ray Cooper Goldfield	27 lb. 12 oz.	4-18	Webster
Melvin Berstler Marengo	27 lb. 9 oz.	4-20	Iowa
Tom Miner Allerton	27 lb. 8 oz.	4-15	Wayne
Jerry A. Roskammer Milford	27 lb. 8 oz.	5-8	O'Brien
Melvin R. Runde Dubuque	27 lb. 8 oz.	4-23	Winneshek
David G. Pospisil Cedar Rapids	27 lb. 6 oz.	4-20	Davis
John "Jake" Parkin Dubuque	27 lb. 5 oz.	4-21	Allamakee
Steven R. Stock Dorchester	27 lb. 4 oz.	4-15	Allamakee
Steve Winkey Cedar Falls	27 lb. 4 oz.	4-27	Clayton
Donald L. Scott Centerville	27 lb. 3 oz.	4-21	Appanoose
Jack C. Hahn Middle Amana	27 lb.	4-15	Iowa
Kevin Holzworth Des Moines	26 lb. 13 oz.	4-20	?
Edward E. Ulicki Lehigh	26 lb. 13 oz.	4-15	Webster
Terry L. Robinson Lovilia	26 lb. 12 oz.	4-18	Monroe
Bob Sheets Maquoketa	26 lb. 12 oz.	4-15	Jackson
David E. Williams Cedar Falls	26 lb. 12 oz.	4-22	Allamakee
Larry C. DeBow Davenport	26 lb. 11 oz.	5-9	VanBuren

## ALL-TIME TOP TEN TURKEYS

Name/Address	Weight	Date	County Taken
Dr. David J. Randall Lucas	30 lb. 8 oz.	4-21-82	Lucas
Dennis Moore Sherrill	30 lb. 4 oz.	4-17-81	Clayton
*Eldon C. Sear Zwingle	30 lb. 4 oz.	4-15-85	Clayton
Dwight D. Schumann Spencer	29 lb. 12 oz.	5-2-82	Monona
James Reihmann Amana	29 lb. 10 oz.	4-21-82	Iowa
Raymond Stotlar Wever	29 lb. 9 oz.	4-12-83	Des Moines
Reggie Williamson New London	29 lb. 7 oz.	4-17-84	Des Moines
Stanley M. Haston Fort Madison	29 lb. 1 oz.	4-18-84	Lee
Kerry A. Collen Dayton	29 lb.	4-26-83	Webster
Ed Hull Chariton	29 lb.	4-14-82	Lucas
*Paul A. Lindahl Boone	29 lb.	5-1-85	Hamilton
Bob Scott Albia	29 lb.	4-12-83	Wapello

\*new records



# NATURE TALE FOR KIDS

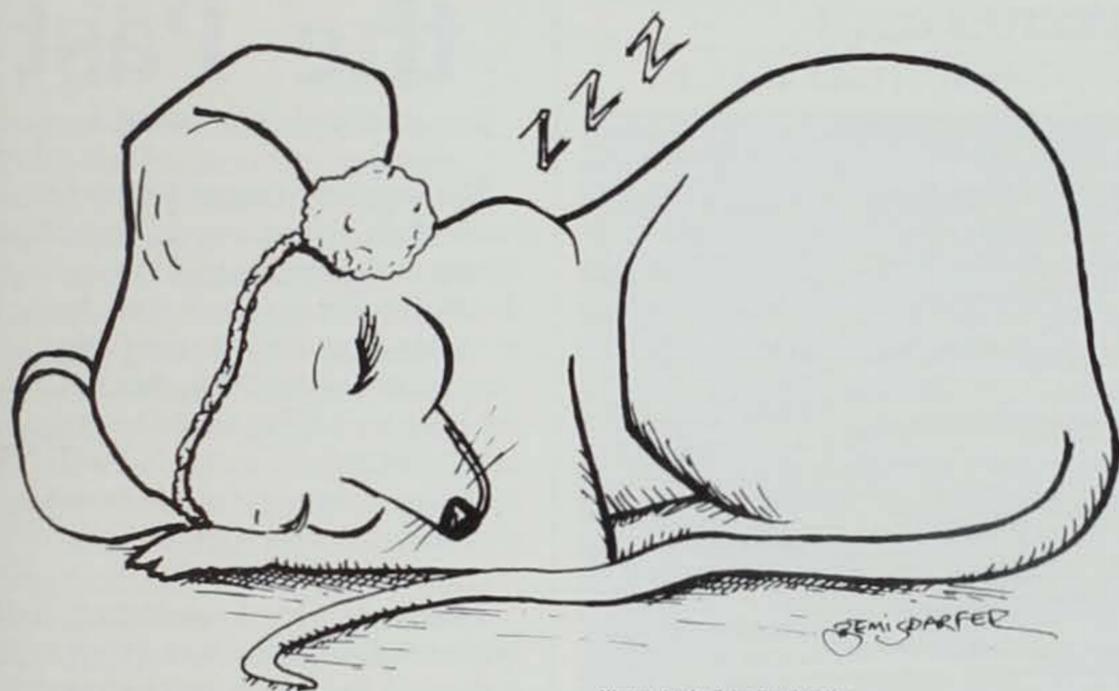


Illustration by Brian Bemisdarfer

## The Mouse that Snored

By Dean M. Roosa

The common, familiar house mouse is known in scientific circles as *Mus musculus*. A native of Europe, it probably was a stow-away on cargo ships early in our history and has spread to all domestic settings in America. Its presence has delighted children and cats for eons; its presence has sent upset housekeepers hurrying to the hardware store for a new supply of mousetraps. Big, old farmhouses provide wonderful refuges for families — families of humans and families of *Mus musculus*. Our story begins in such a big old house, inhabited by a kindly old country gentleman named Ben.

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Ben was an anomaly. A holdover from earlier, simpler times, he was an 18th century spirit trapped in 20th century Iowa. With three-fourths of a century of living behind him, he retired to a turn-of-the-century house in a woods near a university town. He studied ancient history, but also had a longing for the natural world — a feeling for untampered nature. He was often seen prowling the university library, providing amusement for young, hurried, harried students. A huge cat of uncertain ancestry lived at Ben's place; it was an indoor-

outdoor cat, usually sleeping in the barn, but sometimes, by scratching at the screen, was let in to sleep on the back of the sofa.

Ben was not the world's best housekeeper. If an occasional mouse scurried across the floor, Ben was amused; if the mice became a problem, the indoor-outdoor cat was summoned. Late one November a few years ago, a new mouse came to Ben's place. Ben awoke one morning to see the new mouse sitting on the dresser looking at him. The mouse had been living in the nearby woodland all summer and had no real fear of men, so became fairly tame and Ben would often see it perched on a piece of furniture. Although Ben would not admit it, he often put out bits of food for the friendly mouse.

After a month, the mouse disappeared and Ben thought his cat had caught a free dinner. What had actually happened, though, was the mouse had retreated to a warm, dark recess and gave birth to six young. Five of these were standard, run-of-the-mill mice, but one, Mussie, was different from the very start. Hyperactive and overambitious, Mussie was crawling when he should be sleeping, sneaking out of the nest during the day, and generally upsetting his mother. He liked to nibble on things — often he would nibble on the nearby toe of a nest-mate. This would result in a high-pitched

“SQUEEK!” and general unrest. One day he gave his mother's tail a sharp bite. This was the biggest mistake of his young life. Before peace returned to the nest, Mussie and all his brothers and sisters had received a stern cuffing. But Mussie's most distressing habit occurred when everyone was asleep. When all was quiet, Mussie would snore. Now, this was not the thunderous snore of your father, but more like a low-pitched whistle. Whenever it happened, all seven in the nest squirmed and wiggled. Mussie would receive a nudge or kick, but never understood the reason. Before long, Mussie was encouraged to take his little snore and leave the nest. And so, he went to a warm, abandoned nest in the basement, near the furnace, from where he would make forays into the house at night. Unknown to him, his former nest-mates had dispersed, two had run into the big cat, three had been seen by Otus the Screech Owl, leaving just him and his mother to inhabit the house. Mussie's nest was close to Ben's bedroom and Ben could hear an occasional little snore. At first he could not imagine what was making that sound. Then, with great amusement, he realized the source. Never before had he heard of such a thing and he delighted in relating it to his “cronies”.

In spring, the little snore was no longer heard, and Ben feared that Mussie had met an unfortunate end, but hoped the little mouse had merely left for his wild home.

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In November of that same year, Ben saw a grey form streaking across the floor. “Looks familiar” he thought. Two nights later, listening carefully, Ben heard the little snore coming from the old nest. He knew Mussie was home.

On Christmas eve, Ben listened for Mussie. He heard a tiny snore, followed by an even tinier snore. Ben laughed — Mussie and his new family were safe and welcome in the elegant old farm house.

# WARDEN'S DIARY

## AWFULLY BUSY

By Jerry Hoilien

We were all awfully busy this year! Seems like a lot more than normal, but then again, maybe not — maybe my age is catching up with me.

TIP has resulted in a lot of work. Not all calls result in prosecutions, but a good many of them have. I am told a high percentage of callers do not want any kind of reward. They just want something done about the violation and they mostly want to remain anonymous. But not all feel that way.

I remember getting a call from an older gentleman who lived on a real poaching road, way back in the woods. He gave me the names of two young local men who, he said, "poached a big buck last night." He gave me all the details.

I explained to him what I needed for a search warrant and what the rules were so I would not have to reveal his name.

"What do I care" he bellowed. "Tell them who turned them in. I'll do it again if they show up. They've got no respect for the game, so they've got none coming!" He used a few more choice words to describe their pedigree I'd best not use here. He finished with a profound statement. Since then, I've used it many times. "If you lay down — they'll step on you. If you stand up — they'll walk around you!" Sounds a little like something from one of the great men in our history, doesn't it?

I realize each instance is different and there are circumstances where it's best if they don't know who turned them in. It makes the professional poacher real nervous when he realizes that there are a lot of people out there that *don't like* what he is doing and want him stopped.

There are a lot of requirements placed on law enforcement officers in regard to search warrants, if they're needed, but the informant can remain anonymous under the TIP Program. Sometimes there is not enough information given for action by the officer, but often it's just what

we've needed for some time to be able to take action.

If you see a flagrant fish or game law violation, let us know. Contact TIP 1-800-532-2020 or your local officer.

I would like to share a poem, "The Ruffed Grouse," written by Gerald Burke, a long-time resident of Allamakee County who is presently in a rest home in Waukon. He and I used to visit about the hills and rivers of the region and he loved it all so. It would certainly make a grand old man smile to know someone else likes his "scribblings."

### THE RUFFED GROUSE

There is a feathered resident,  
We share the same environment;  
He springs to flight at my approach,  
His territory I encroach.

And though he treats me with  
disdain,  
I'd rather have him wild than tame.  
If I have my dog with me  
he often lands in nearby tree.

That whirring flight gives me a thrill;  
He lands on other side of hill.  
Many times I've been provoked  
Between gun and him's a might oak.

My tractor pulling heavy load,  
I've often stopped on woodland road  
And watched them cross in single  
file,  
Then felt that stop was well worth  
while.

I've heard his drumming in the  
spring  
On fallen log his beating wings,  
And in that sound some sonic factor,  
Like antiquated John Deere tractor.

I know that drumming sound relates  
To his searching for a mate;  
A nest is built in woodland glade  
And eighteen eggs are often laid.

We in northeast Iowa share  
Many things not found elsewhere.  
Life for the sportsman is very  
pleasant  
With deer and trout and "timber  
pheasant."

# Restoring the Past

By Melanie Hayner

The large, two-story sandstone home didn't seem any different from others in its time, but looks can be deceiving. While guests were being entertained upstairs in the parlor, slaves were being safely hidden in the basement. This home belonged to the Reverend George B. Hitchcock, the Congregational Church minister in Lewis, a small community south of Atlantic.

This page in the Iowa history book begins in 1853 when Rev. Hitchcock arrived in the Lewis area as a circuit rider, preaching for two years before organizing the Congregational Church. He preached to the citizens of Lewis, as well as to runaway slaves passing through the area. In fact, Hitchcock preached to and harbored so many slaves that soon his tiny log cabin became too small to accommodate both his family and the slaves escaping to freedom. So, he decided to build his "dream" home.

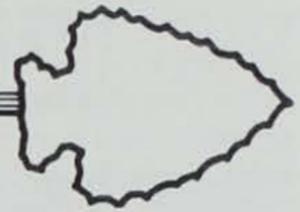
Construction of the Hitchcock House began in 1856 on a scenic hill overlooking the Nishnabotna River. The home was built from sandstone quarried east of the site, near what is now Cold Springs Park. The stone was moved by oxen to the river where it was ferried across a primitive raft. It was taken the rest of the way by another team.

The architecture of the home is quite unique, realizing that the structure was built without today's modern equipment. The 18-inch thick walls contain a four-inch, dead-air space between two layers of stone, providing excellent insulation during the home's 115 years of occupancy.

The interior of the house combines both strength and beauty, which compliment the exterior sandstone walls perfectly. Heavy oak beams held in place by wooden pins provide support, while decorative walnut woodworking creates a beautiful touch. Due to the unusually thick walls, the window sills have the appearance of window seats, adding

## County Conservation Board Feature

### Cass County



an expansive dimension to the house.

While the house was being constructed, Rev. Hitchcock never forgot about the safety of the slaves who would use his home to escape north. He built a full basement which contained a fireplace in one room to be used by the slaves for heat and for cooking. The other smaller room could be shut off from the main room by shelves containing canned goods and was used by the slaves as a hiding place when danger was near.

The Lewis area quickly became a focal point on the slaves' route to freedom, due not only to the extraordinary facilities at the Hitchcock House and the ingenious Reverend himself, but also to many people in the area who were sympathetic to the freedom movement. Since the business of slavery abolition had to remain very confidential, it was not unusual in this area to find secret signs along the trail or for residents to exchange secret words in greeting.

There are countless stories of slaves passing through the area en route to the next underground station. Most frequently, slaves traveled in loads of hay or were buried in transported grain. Sometimes they were transported on stormy nights, and sometimes they had to be disguised to safely board the Nishnabotna River ferry where officers could easily check traffic. There are even stories of the famous John Brown preaching to slaves in the basement of the Hitchcock House next to the glowing fireplace.

In 1859, a pair of black men were traced to the Lewis area. A large reward had been offered for their return. Passengers on the ferry were watched carefully. One Sunday morning, a farmer with his family and two finely veiled women were seen boarding the ferry on their way to church. The ferry was very busy that Sunday morning, and the two black faces under the veils went unnoticed and soon arrived at the next underground station.

After years of activity and danger,



Melanie Hayner

the Hitchcock House was abandoned in the 1970s and left to the mercy of the elements and vandals. In 1977, the house and 66 acres of land were purchased by the Iowa Conservation Commission with state funds. That same year, the house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1978, the house and surrounding area were placed under a maintenance and management agreement with the Cass County Conservation Board.

Meanwhile, the house was rapidly deteriorating. Whole sections of the once flawless sandstone walls buckled, many of the large windows were broken, the stairways became weak and unpredictable, and the roof was full of holes.

Restoration of the Hitchcock House began in April, 1984, when a group of concerned citizens in the Lewis area banded together to save the deteriorating house. Federal and state matching grants were received, resulting in \$100,000 to be spent on the restoration project. These funds made it possible to rebuild the collapsing walls and foundation, replace

the roof and windows, straighten the floors, and insulate the interior of the house. The house is now awaiting an internal "facelift." The next phase of the project includes installing heating and electrical systems.

A feeling of history pervades the Hitchcock House. The imagination begins to work overtime, and the entire house becomes alive with the people of the past. The basement becomes the center of activity, containing both slaves escaping north and people risking their reputations and lives on the belief that no person should be the slave of another.

This home played an important role in Iowa's history for those escaping to freedom and for those helping others to fulfill their dreams of living a free life. The Hitchcock House is being restored into a museum and sandstone testament to that purpose.

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*Melanie Hayner has been a naturalist with the Cass County Conservation Board since September 1984. She graduated from Simpson College with a degree in environmental studies in 1983.*

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You've probably heard about the Iowa Conservation Commission planting food plots for the white-tailed deer and nesting cover for the pheasant, but how about planting habitat specifically for butterflies? This year, Don Carrier, park ranger at Bellevue State Park, and Judy Pooler, conservation aide, initiated the construction of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre butterfly sanctuary. It will be the first such endeavor in an Iowa state park. It isn't merely a state project — ninety groups and area families have volunteered to "adopt a plot" and plant and maintain a 5' by 7' space.

One hundred and fifteen species of flowers, shrubs and trees were planted in a wheel-like arrangement radiating out from the center. Each plant for the garden was carefully researched and cataloged with its specific planting and nutritional needs. The volunteers then used this information to prepare the seed bed and eventually plant their plot.

The Bellevue FFA class also assisted in much of the initial work done on the area. They stacked out the area, woodchipped the paths, prepared the seed beds and even dug

nettles and violets for the site.

Judy Pooler believes the butterfly garden is situated in a perfect spot. It is nestled within an area already rich in natural food stuffs, such as wild asters, ragweed, goldenrod, lambs-quarters, and daisy fleabane. Surrounding this area are cottonwoods, wild cherry, and hackberry trees. "All of these plants serve as host plants for our butterflies."

The purpose of this garden is to attract butterflies by providing nectar plants for the adults and host plants for the caterpillars. It is also being used as a teaching tool for schools as well as a research project to gather data on Iowa's butterflies.

Most butterflies aren't considered harmful by man, yet many populations of these colorful insects are destroyed by the use of pesticides and herbicides. Some pesticides kill them outright while herbicides kill the food sources of others. In Japan, pesticides have nearly eradicated the pollinators. Today, people have to buy pollen and physically touch each flower on fruit trees to ensure their pollination. Who knows, this could happen right here in the United

States. Now is the time to consider this potential problem and make sure that these flying beauties are conserved for future generations.

Twenty seven species of butterflies have been documented within the park this past year, but it is hoped that the area may attract as many as forty different species. This garden is shaped like a shallow dish with the pond in the middle. Trees and shrubs are at the uppermost edge and will provide a windbreak. The tallest plants will be at the top and then graduate down in size to the six-inch alyssum at the pond's edge. By the end of three years, the area should be a bowl of color.

Why plant so many species? Various caterpillars and adult butterflies have different requirements for survival. A monarch caterpillar would relish the juicy leaves of the milkweed, but an Eastern black swallowtail would starve if only given milkweeds for food. Even our noxious weeds have a purpose here in the garden. The red admiral along with the commas and question mark consider the stinging nettle a very important food source. Pigweed and

# Iowa's Butterfly Sanctuary

By Wendy Zohrer



Jim Zohrer

*Volunteers plant specific flowers to attract butterfly species like the monarch.*



Wendy Zohrer

# WILDFLOWER

## OF THE MONTH

By Dean M. Roosa and Bill Pusateri

lambsquarters are other weedy species that serve as a host plant for the common sootywing. The Aphrodite adult as well as the caterpillar utilize the violet. The female smells the violet roots and lays her eggs near it. After the eggs hatch, the caterpillar feeds on the violet leaves.

According to Pooler, many of our large showy flowers are useless to our butterflies. "Due to a large amount of hybridizing, many of our flowers today look pretty but do not contain much nectar for pollinating insects," she said. "The old fashioned flowers, wildflowers, and annuals are the best nectar producing choices. Plant these flower types if you want to attract these showy insects."

The plant height, length of flower tube and the flower arrangement, shape and color also affect its utilization by these insects.

Butterflies sit at different angles while feeding, so shape and flower arrangement is significant. Monarchs prefer 75- to 90-degree angles while sipping nectar but the tiger swallowtail perches in many different angles including upside down.

Height may also be important to some. The Eastern-tailed blues fly close to the ground and feed on members of the clover family, while the swallowtails visit flowers that are three feet or more in height.

Careful study has shown that butterflies are unable to see color as humans do. Many seem to prefer the color of purple, but yellow and white also attract many butterfly species. The swallowtail can be seen flocking to the reddish-orange color of the butterfly milkweed.

Butterflies are already using this sanctuary. Many can be seen sitting on the bark pathways and moist soil areas. Pooler explained how she had seen a red admiral perched on a newly mudded-in plant and how a hackberry butterfly gingerly sat on her shoulder while she pulled wheat in one of the plots.

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Wendy Zohrer is an information specialist for the Iowa Conservation Commission. She has a B.S. degree from Iowa State University in fisheries and wildlife biology and has been employed in the conservation field for ten years.

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Can you tell the difference between these two plants? They represent two entirely different species; one is extremely rare in Iowa, the other relatively common.

Both belong to the Borage Family (Boraginaceae). Members of this family are characterized by their funnel-like (funnelform) flowers which consists of five petals that are united to form a tube. Other noteworthy family relatives in Iowa include the puccoons, gromwells, and let's not forget the begger's lice and the memorable forget-me-nots.

In some localities, Virginia bluebells are known as Virginia cowslips or tree lungworts. The term "lungwort" is thought to be derived from an old belief that early settlers ascribed to the new world species, for in Europe there occurred an additional species of lungwort with white spots on its leaves. This species was believed to be a treatment for diseases of the lungs. So it was only natural that they tried to use the "spotless" species of the new Virginia territory for a similar purpose — but there is no documentation that either plant has any curative properties.

The stem, leaves, flowers, and sepals of the northern lungwort are covered by tiny hairs (known as a pubescent condition). This is the tell-tale distinguishing feature which separates one species from the other. They also differ slightly in distribution and phenology (blooming time).

Bluebells usually begins its flowering season in April and continues through May. It can be found widely distributed from New York to Michigan, south to Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Alabama.

Similarly, the distribution and phenology of the northern lungwort may overlap with Virginia bluebells, but probably only in Iowa! Its distribution is mainly farther north from the Hudson Bay region of Canada to the northern parts of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, west to Washington and Alaska. It usually has a much later flowering date, not blooming until June or July.

In Iowa, Virginia bluebells may be found infrequently throughout the state, while northern lungwort is restricted to only a few populations in extreme northeastern Iowa, mainly Winneshiek County. It represents one of several plant species which are disjunct from the main body of their distribution — much farther north. This disjunction may have been either the result of post glacial survival or migration. In either case, we are witnessing a snapshot in time of distributional patterns which have taken thousands of years to develop.

We are continuing to update our records about rare plants of Iowa, and would be happy to know about additional sites where northern lungwort may grow. In this way, a few populations may be preserved for future study and enjoyment.

### Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)



Rodger Smith



Bill Pusateri

Northern Lungwort  
(*Mertensia paniculata*)



James Hansen

*Canada geese in Iowa vary in origin. They may have hatched from a Hudson Bay nest like the one above, or from a farm pond in southern Iowa.*

# CANADA GOOSE UPDATE

*By James L. Hansen*

The Canada geese in Iowa are of several subspecies which differ in size and origin. Many of the giant Canada geese, the big 10 to 14 pounders, nest right here in Iowa and winter primarily in Missouri. Iowa also gets giant Canadas that have migrated from elsewhere, especially Minnesota and Manitoba.

Most of the medium-sized (6 to 9 pounds) Canada geese that pass through central Iowa nest along the western shores of Hudson Bay in Canada and winter primarily at Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri. This flock is known as the Eastern Prairie Population. A different population of Canadas of a similar size, the Mississippi Valley Population, nests near Hudson Bay and James Bay, migrates through Wisconsin and eastern Iowa to wintering areas in southern Illinois.

A population of somewhat smaller Canadas, the tall Grass Prairie Population, nest in the Arctic, north of the other populations and migrate through Iowa on the way to win-

tering areas in Oklahoma and Texas. These small Canadas, called "hutchies" by many goose hunters, weigh only about 3½ to 4 pounds. They can often be identified from a distance by their high-pitched honking.

## Local Giant Canada Geese

The Iowa Conservation Commission's management program for Canada geese in the state includes managing for both migrating and nesting Canadas. Giant Canada geese originally nested in Iowa, but due to loss of habitat and unrestricted hunting, wild nesting Canadas no longer existed in the state by about 1907. The Commission began reestablishing giant Canada geese in 1964, when 16 adult pairs of pinioned geese were bought from private goose raisers in Minnesota and South Dakota. These geese were released at Ingham Lake in Emmet County in a large enclosure with artificial nesting structures and man-made islands for nesting. To increase



Roger Sparks

*Transporting 2,000 Canadas from Toronto Ontario to Lake Rathbun boosted the southern Iowa flock. Offspring now rest on farm ponds up to 20 miles away.*



James Hansen

the chances of success of the stocking, most young produced for a few years were pinioned or wing-clipped to increase the breeding flock, and an area of 120 square miles around Ingham Lake was closed to Canada goose hunting.

Using the same techniques as at Ingham, additional giant Canada goose flocks were started in the early 1970's in northern Iowa at Smith's Slough near Ruthven, Kattleson's Hogsback near Spirit Lake, and at Rice Lake near Lake Mills. Efforts were made from 1976 to 1981 to establish nesting giant Canada goose flocks in southern Iowa, at Rathbun Reservoir, Green Valley, Bays Branch, Lake Icaria and Red Rock Reservoir. The flock near Rathbun was substantially increased in 1980 and 1981 when interested citizens volunteered to transport nearly 2,000 surplus Canada geese from Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The four giant Canada goose flocks in northern Iowa have all done well, with nesting pairs spreading out from the nucleus flocks to wetlands as far as 50 miles away. An estimated 5,200 geese were produced from these four flocks in 1985. The rate of increase of some of these flocks has slowed the last couple of years, but they are expected to continue spreading to suitable nesting habitat.

Canada geese in the Rathbun area have continued to increase, with about 500 geese produced in 1985. They now nest on farm ponds as far as 20 miles from the original release areas. Goose flocks at Bays Branch, Lake Icaria, and Red Rock have raised from 80 to 150 young to flight stage in 1985. Most of the production at Red Rock occurs on private ponds in the vicinity.

Statewide, Conservation Commission personnel estimate that about 6,400 Canada geese were raised to flight stage in Iowa in 1985. With nesting and non-nesting adults included, Iowa's giant Canada goose population probably numbers around 12,000.

Since 1983, efforts have been made to establish nesting giant Canada geese in other parts of Iowa using the pen technique, and by transplanting flightless broods of goslings, with their parents, in late June or early July. The goslings become imprinted on the place where they learn to fly and return there to nest at two or three years of age, if they survive until they are old enough to breed. The adult geese that are moved generally return to where they were trapped.

The transplant technique was used in Iowa for the first time at Ventura Marsh in the north-central part of the

state. Each year from 1983 through 1985 about 75 geese were moved from Rice Lake to Ventura Marsh. The geese were neck-collared so we could find out where they went. Some of the transplants were shot locally during the goose season, but others escaped the hunting pressure by getting back to the safety of the Rice Lake refuge, apparently led there by the adults. In 1985, two of the 1983 transplants nested as two-year-olds on muskrat houses on Ventura Marsh. From the number of yearlings and two-year-old geese seen at Ventura Marsh, we expect the number of geese nesting there to continue to increase.

After the encouraging results of the Ventura transplant, some additional releases were made in 1985 to establish new flocks or to give a "shot in the arm" to some existing flocks. These transplanted geese went to Green Valley and Lake Icaria in southern Iowa and to Bays Branch, Lakin Slough, and Dunbar Slough in Guthrie County. An additional goose flock has been started at the Green Island Wildlife Area in Jackson County using the pen technique.

Additional giant Canada goose transplants are being planned for 1986. While specific sites and details are yet to be decided upon, the areas will be primarily in western and

southern Iowa. Canada geese may eventually nest in suitable habitat across the state, for both hunters and goose watchers to enjoy. Crop depredation problems for farmers must be minimized and build ups must be avoided in cities and parks where a large number of geese could become a nuisance. Even with these restrictions, there are still many areas into which Iowa's Canada geese can expand.

Iowa's giant Canada geese must remain as wild as possible so that they are better able to survive and

present, although some day mineral exploration may change that. The 1983 nesting season for EPP Canadas was a disastrous one due to a very late spring on the breeding grounds. However, conditions were more favorable in 1984 and 1985, and breeding grounds surveys indicated that production was average or slightly above.

The commission provides for the needs of migrating Canada geese as well as the nesting giant Canadas. All of the Canada goose refuges associated with flocks provide food and

read at Rathbun and other areas around the state, to find out which geese are stopping in Iowa that were collared elsewhere. It was expected that the majority of migrant Canadas at Rathbun would be Eastern Prairie Population birds bound for Swan Lake in Missouri. A few EPP birds have been found through trapping and observations, but thus far, it appears the Rathbun flock is a mixture of large, medium and small Canadas of several origins. The work at Rathbun is part of a flyway-wide project to try to identify and manage "subflocks" of Canada geese.

It is important that Iowans give some protection, food and water to migrant Canada geese, not just for the welfare of the goose flocks, but also to attract more geese during migration. Geese are very tradition-bound. They tend to use the same areas for nesting, wintering and migration stops. They travel south in the fall in family groups. If the adults survive, they will return with a new brood of young the next year. If the young survive for two or three years, until they are old enough to nest, they will likely use the same stopping points with their young, thus continuing the tradition.

Everyone welcomes the sight and sound of the first flock of geese in the spring, after a long winter. The spring Canada goose migration in Iowa may begin as early as late February and extend to early or mid April. The peak generally occurs in March, with the timing depending on when open water and bare corn stubble appear, as well as on weather fronts. A warm day with a south wind is most conducive to migration. For spots to see Canada geese during spring migration, the areas around the giant Canada goose flocks are often good, but any wetland may be used, including sheet water in fields and flooded areas along rivers. Those who take time to enjoy the geese this spring will be well rewarded.

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*James Hansen is a wildlife research biologist located at Clear Lake. He holds an M.S. degree in zoology from the University of Missouri. He has been with the commission since 1979.*

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Row Johnson

less likely to become a nuisance. Some geese in the state that have been associated with people, are already more tame than biologists would like to see them. Feeding geese to try to make pets of them is not really doing the geese a favor. If they lose their fear of man, they become more vulnerable to hunting. They may also congregate in parks, lawns and other areas where they are not appreciated.

### Migrant Canada Geese

Although a drought in the Prairie Pothole region has reduced most waterfowl populations, Canada goose populations are generally doing well. Most Canada geese nest far north of agricultural regions, where they are unaffected by drought or by drainage of wetlands. Their nesting area is quite secure at

water, as well as protection for migrants. At both Rathbun and Red Rock some of the corn is left unharvested for geese and other wildlife, and wheat is planted for green browse. At Red Rock some 2,000 acres of subimpoundments within the refuge provide excellent Canada goose habitat, especially in years when the water levels cooperate. Rathbun may become an important stopping place for migrating Canada geese. The fall population peaked at 12,000 geese in 1985, about half of which were the small Canadas.

Biologists are attempting to learn more about which geese are stopping at Rathbun and whether the present refuge is adequate. This work has involved banding and neck-collaring Canada geese, including both local giants in the summer and migrating Canadas in the fall. Neck collars are

# Care Facilities for Wildlife

By Jane Messenger

In a world where our wildlife competes with human development, wildlife continues to suffer. Two key centers in Iowa play an important role in preventing tragedies caused by this conflict. One is located at Ledges State Park near Boone, and the other is Calkins Campus near Iowa Falls.

These two centers vary in their techniques of protecting wildlife. At Boone, the Iowa Conservation Commission sponsors a Wildlife Research Station where an aggressive non-game wildlife program has been developed.

Calkins Campus is more of a sanctuary for injured and maimed animals that are unable to survive in the wild. Working in conjunction with Ellsworth College, Homer Calkins and his daughter, Marilyn Tjarks, care for and release all animals capable of fending for themselves. If the animals cannot be released, they will have a home at Calkins Campus.

Currently at Boone, wildlife biologists are working on various projects to reintroduce threatened and endangered species into suitable habitats. Their main projects consist of working with barn owls, kestrels and river otters.

The largest project involves barn owls. According to Bruce Ehresman, Wildlife Biologist, this is the third year for the project and they plan to release 100 raptors this year. The owls will be released either by putting out five to nine pairs in January and letting them nest, and then six months later release the parents and young, or by replacing pairs of owls with young.

Another project being worked on involves river otters. The project began in March when 16 otters were released at Lake Red Rock. To monitor their movement each otter was equipped with an implanted radio transmitter, he said.

Tracking the otters is difficult because the range of the transmitter is very poor. The range is only about one mile in the air, and one fourth to one-half mile on land, he said. Of the

original 16 transmitters, 13 are still functioning.

The final project involves setting up kestrel nest boxes along highways throughout the state. The project was started by Ron Andrews of Clear Lake. He began by setting up 20 boxes in Cerro Gordo County, Ehresman said.

Now, there are an additional 40 boxes along I-35 in Story and Hamilton counties, 20 boxes along I-35 in Decatur County and 20 boxes along I-29.

Another type of wildlife protection is rehabilitation. In 1978, Homer Calkins converted most of his farm into a wildlife rehabilitation center. Three years later, he turned the center over to Ellsworth College.

"We take anything from a sparrow on up," Calkins said. The majority of the animals at the center are birds, but occasionally other animals such as raccoons and squirrels are brought in.

"People need to be aware that rehabilitation isn't the answer, unless you're using it educationally," Calkins said. "There is no way anybody can familiarize themselves with wildlife problems without doing rehabilitation work," he added.

Not only do students from Ellsworth use the campus as a classroom, but visitors from all over come year round. They enjoy learning about the various species, including the reason that they were brought to Calkins. Many of the animals are brought in by conservation workers and local people.

"I wish that people interested in wildlife would have the experiences we've had," Calkins said. He has named many of the animals that are permanent exhibits, such as Halli the bald eagle and Emily the pelican. There are even five fawns that stay around the farm to come back and visit Homer. He calls them his "kids."

Whether it is reintroduction or rehabilitation, educating the public is important to protect wildlife. People cause most of the problems by destroying habitat. More care needs to be taken to protect this essential element.



Jane Messenger



Jane Messenger

*The barn owl above is the subject of a reintroduction project coordinated through the Boone Research Station. Emily the pelican is a permanent resident at "Calkins Campus" near Iowa Falls.*

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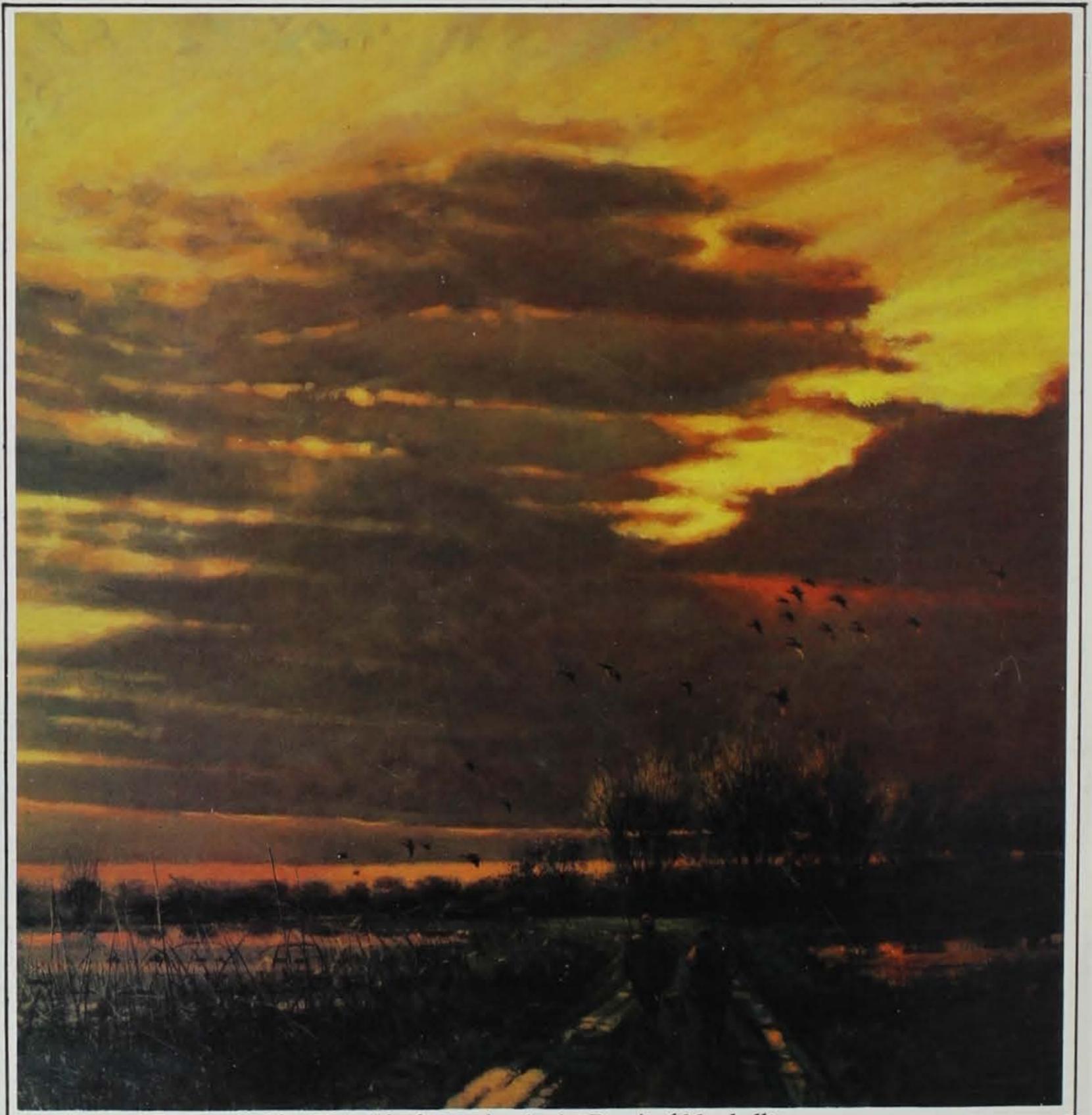
*Jane Messenger is a student at Iowa State University majoring in agricultural journalism and fish and wildlife biology.*

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