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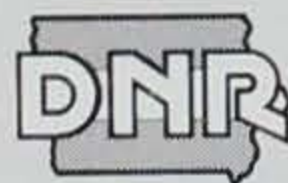
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Front — Great blue heron. Photo by Lowell Washburn. Back — Fishing on Big Creek. Photo by Lowell Washburn.



1989

# FISHING FORECAST

Within a few miles of every Iowa resident, there is fishing water of one kind or another. The following forecast provides the best information on predicted hotspots as well as proven techniques.

## NORTHEAST

by David Moeller

### CHANNEL CATFISH

One of the most abundant and desirable species of fish in northeast Iowa is the channel catfish. Catfish are particularly abundant and actually under-harvested in most of the larger streams. Some of the best catfishing rivers in northeast Iowa are the Cedar River (Black Hawk, Bremer, Chickasaw and Floyd Counties), Maquoketa River below Manchester (Delaware, Jones and Jackson Counties), the entire Mississippi River, Shell Rock River (Butler County), Turkey River (Clayton County), Upper Iowa River below the lower dam (Winneshiak and Allamakee Counties) and the Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan County). Catches of river catfish typically consist of 3/4- to 2 1/2-pound fish; however, there are lots of them. Larger fish up to, and more than, six pounds are frequently caught.

Catfish anglers should not overlook some of the fine catfishing available in our northeast Iowa lakes. Catfish rarely reproduce in lakes; thus, stockings of large fingerlings are made annually to maintain high populations. Some fine catfishing are available at Casey Lake (Tama County), George Wyth and Greenbelt Lakes (Black Hawk County), Lake Meyer (Win-

neshiek County), Lake Hendricks (Howard County), Meyers Lake (Black Hawk County) and Volga Lake (Fayette County).

Anglers are encouraged to get out and fish our abundant catfish populations. You probably will not have to travel far to get into the



RON JOHNSON

*Anglers are reminded the daily limit for catfish is eight from lakes and 15 from inland streams. The possession limit for both lakes and inland streams is 30. On the Mississippi River, however, there are no daily catch or possession limits for catfish.*

action. There is just nothing better than a skilletful of catfish, rolled in cornmeal and flour and fried to a golden brown.

### BLUEGILL

The majority of bluegill fishing in northeast Iowa occurs on the many productive acres of Mississippi River backwaters. The "Big River" produces not only large numbers, but also quality-sized "gills" as well. Some of the fastest action occurs during the spawning season in late May and June. A chunk of garden worm or night crawler on a hook below a small bobber is a guarantee. Fish for these spawners in the shallow backwater areas, especially near developing beds of vegetation. Action is frequently so fast that fishing with two rods is out of the question. Summer bluegills may be found in the backwaters, around submerged snags and fallen trees along slow-moving side channels and on the wing dams, particularly when the current is fairly slow.

Several northeast Iowa lakes will give up their share of bluegills also. Kounty Pond (Buchanan County) is a new borrow lake fishery that is producing bluegills up to eight inches. Meyers Lake (Black Hawk County), Sweet Marsh (Bremer County), Lake Meyer (Winneshiak County) and Lake Delhi (Delaware County) will also produce bluegills of more than six inches.

Bluegills are fun and easy to



catch, but both of these aspects are greatly diminished when heavy fishing equipment is used. Four-pound test line, ultra-light rods, minimal amounts of lead weight and small bobbers will increase the numbers you catch and the fun of catching them.

#### LARGEMOUTH BASS

Largemouth bass are not known as river fish; however, the Mississippi River offers some of the best largemouth fishing in the state. This abundance of largemouths in the "Ole Miss" is due to the presence of vast numbers of diverse backwater lakes and sloughs. Mississippi River bass provide a lot of rod-bending action from a majority of fish between 1 and 2½ pounds. Largemouths above the four-pound mark, however, are rare. Some favorite bass haunts you will want to fish include the New Albin and Lansing Bottoms in Pool 9; Harpers Slough, Sny Magill Bottoms and the Bagley Bottoms in Pool 10; and the Bertom and McCartney Lakes in Pool 11. Although there is no minimum bass size limit on the above Iowa-Wisconsin boundary waters, there is a 12-inch size limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass on the Iowa-Illinois boundary waters. Some of these better bass backwaters include Tippy's, Sunfish and Frentress Lakes in Pool 12; Densmore and Blake's Lake in the Green Island Area, Brown's Lake, Lainsville Slough and the Sabula Bottoms in Pool 13; and Joyce's Slough, Rock Creek area, and the LeClaire Canal in Pool 14.

Several inland lakes will also produce some fine largemouth catches. Lake Hendricks, Segment B of Sweet Marsh and Lake Meyer are the best bets for 1989. Both Meyers Lake and Lake Meyer are relatively new fisheries with bass exceeding the 15-inch length limit. Lake Hendricks has an excellent population of bass in the 16-inch range and a fair number of fish above the four-pound mark. George Wyth Lake (Black Hawk County) annually yields a few lunkers up to eight pounds.

The best bass fishing occurs in



LOWELL WASHBURN

*All public fishing lakes have a 15-inch minimum length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass unless otherwise posted. Casey Lake is the only exception in northeast Iowa with an 18-inch length limit. In addition, catch limits for black bass in all interior waters are three daily and six in possession. Daily catch and possession limits on the Mississippi River boundary waters, however, remain the same at 5 and 10, respectively.*

May and early June when the water temperature is between 55° and 62°F. In this pre-spawn period, bass are working the shallow areas and shorelines and are actively feeding. Another prime bass fishing period is in September and October when the water cools down below 68°F and the fish again are using shallow water habitats. Bass nearly always associate with structure, and this is where you should concentrate your efforts. Riprap banks, dead-fall trees, edges of vegetation, rocky points, bottom drop-offs, submerged brush and tree stumps are typical structures that bass frequently use. Cast your bait or lure as close to the structure as possible. You are not fishing close enough to the structure if you do not occasionally get snagged.

#### SMALLMOUTH BASS

Truly the king of northeast Iowa's larger streams and rivers is the smallmouth bass. The "smallie" is also king in the minds of many anglers because they truly love to

smash lures, and they put up a stronger fight than any other freshwater fish of comparable size. Locating smallmouths is relatively easy. Look for stream sections containing a good variety of gravel, rocks and boulders. They do not use silt-laden stream bottoms, so do not waste your time. A canoe is a real asset in fishing for smallmouths. It allows you to cover a lot of water in a day's time as well as get you away from the more heavily fished areas. Paddle right on through those stretches with poor habitat. When you get to a section with good bass habitat, either drop an anchor or, preferably, beach the canoe and wade that section to fish it more effectively. Smallmouths feed actively anytime the water temperature exceeds 50°F. However, late summer and early fall are particularly good as streams are normally stable and clear, and the bass are feeding heavily in preparation for winter and next spring's spawn.

Some of the best stream sections



include the Cedar River from Otranto to St. Ansgar and from Mitchell to Floyd; the Upper Iowa River from Lime Springs to Kendallville and from Decorah to Highway 76; the Yellow River below Volney; the Volga River below Fayette; and the Maquoketa River below Delhi. The Mississippi River wing dams and riprap areas will also produce some fine catches of smallmouths.

Many smallmouth bass enthusiasts will again want to fish the no-kill section on the Maquoketa River (Delaware County) that was first established in 1988. All bass, largemouth and smallmouth, caught in this 4½-mile segment of the Maquoketa River from the Lake Delhi dam downstream to the first county road bridge must be immediately released. It is anticipated this bass population will develop increasing numbers of "smallies" between 1½ and 3 pounds, and provides lots of fishing action to those anglers who enjoy the thrill of hooking, playing and releasing a real champion — the smallmouth bass.

#### TROUT

Iowa's trout anglers are anticipating another fine year in 1989. The action gets into full swing with the first stockings of rainbow and



brown trout in the 50 catchable trout streams beginning in early April. More than 328,000 1/2-pound trout will be distributed in these streams during 1989. To provide variety and give anglers a choice, some streams will be stocked solely with brown trout, others with rainbows and the remainder with a mixture of the two species. To provide additional rod-bending action and to test a few lucky anglers' skills, more than 300 lunker-sized browns and rainbows ranging from 3 to more than 15 pounds will also be scattered in these streams. All of the catchable streams are stocked through October. Late fall stockings have proved popular with anglers and 12 catchable streams will also be stocked during November. Some of the better catchable streams you will want to try this year include North and South Bear, Waterloo, Trout River, Coldwater, Trout Run, French, Sny Magill, North Cedar, Turkey River, Grannis, Bloody Run, Richmond Springs, Swiss Valley and Bailey's Ford.

For trout anglers who want to get away on a remote stream section and test their skills against a large brown trout, the put-and-grow or the special regulation streams may be just the answer. These streams' brown trout populations are maintained with annual plants of small fingerlings. Iowa's waters are very productive and the small trout grow rapidly, often to three and four pounds in just four or five years. There are no special regulations on the put-and-grow streams; however, most are on private property and landowner permission is required. The special regulation stream sections are mostly on public land, have a 14-inch minimum length limit on brown trout, and angling only with artificial lures is allowed.

Beginning trout anglers, as well as veterans, find the "Iowa Trout Fishing Guide" a valuable aide. This free brochure is available from DNR offices, county recorders and outlets where trout stamps are sold. It describes the various trout fishing opportunities, shows the location of the streams on maps, and

contains other valuable information.

#### WALLEYE/SAUGER

The fish species most highly prized and preferred by northeast Iowa anglers is the walleye. Walleye hold this prestigious status for good reasons — they grow to trophy sizes, are challenging to locate and catch, and are unexcelled on the dinner table. Undoubtedly, the largest population of walleye in Iowa is found in the Mississippi River in northeast Iowa. Mississippi River walleye are rarely found very far from flowing water and spend the vast majority of their time in the tailwaters immediately below the navigation dams, along the main channel borders and flowing side channels.

Mississippi River walleye grow to large sizes. A typical limit of walleye will contain fish from 1½ to 4½ pounds; however, a good number of fish in the 6- to 11-pound category are creel each year. Your best bet for catching a trophy-sized walleye comes in the early spring just after ice-out. Adult walleye congregate in large numbers in the tailwaters below the locks and dams just prior to spawning. These large fish seem eager to fill their bellies before getting into spawning activities, and limits containing some real lunkers are fairly common. Fishing your bait or lure right on the bottom is important as river walleye rarely suspend mid-water.

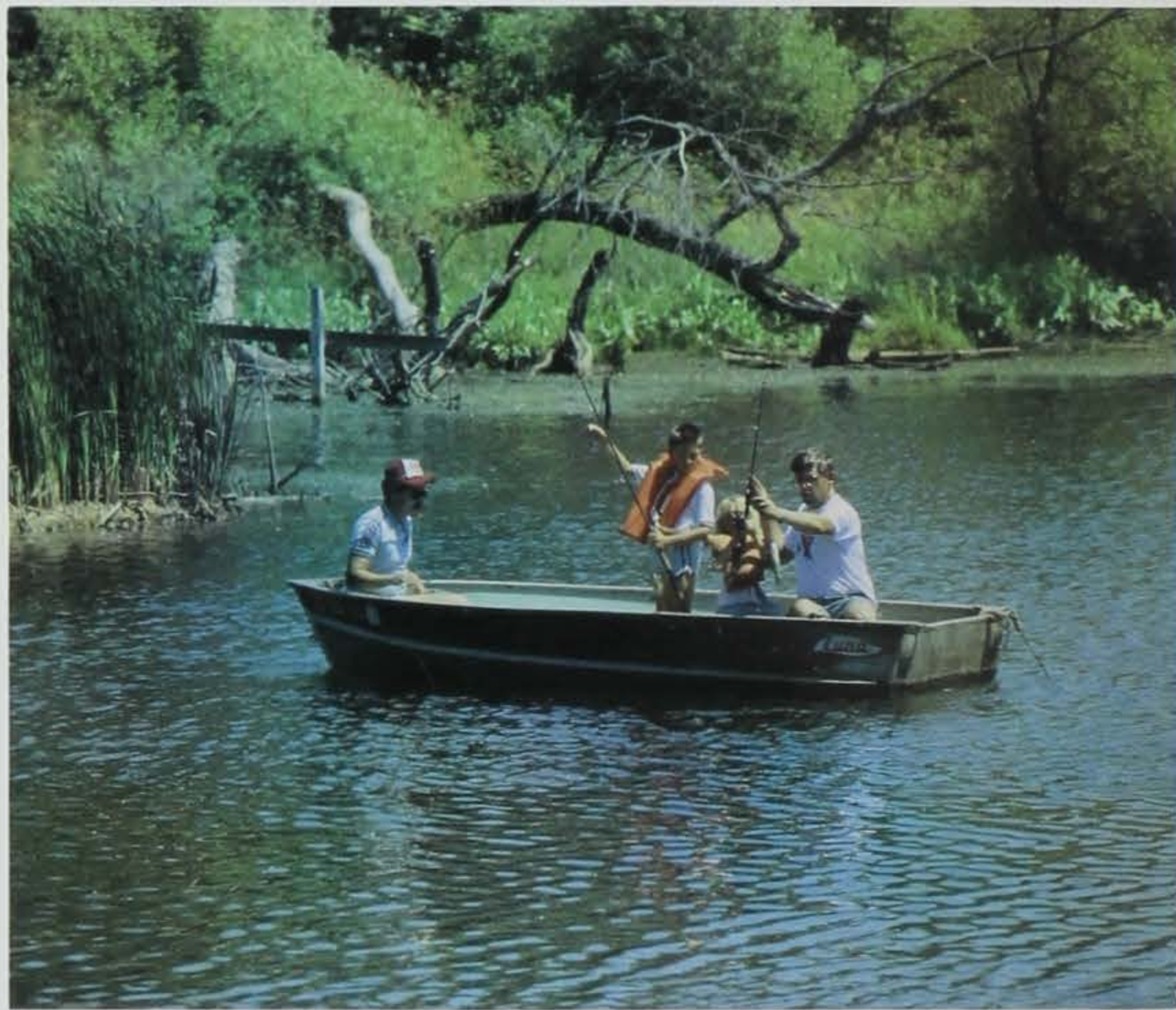
From early summer to fall, the walleye frequently hang out in flowing side channels, on the rock wing dams, and along riprap areas. When fishing wing dams and riprap areas, make sure to bounce your offering right on the rocks. The late fall and winter months frequently find the walleye again in the tailwater areas. These tailwaters rarely freeze in the winter due to the turbulence caused by the navigation dams, and hardy boat anglers who brave the cold are often rewarded with some fine walleye fishing.

Several of northeast Iowa's inland rivers also produce some fine walleye catches. Some of these





RON JOHNSON



RON JOHNSON

better rivers include the Cedar River (Black Hawk, Bremer, Chickasaw and Floyd Counties); the Shell Rock River (Butler, Bremer and Floyd Counties); the Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan County); and the West Fork Cedar River (Butler County). While these river walleye populations are much smaller in comparison to the Mississippi and limits of walleye are uncommon, each of these smaller rivers annually produce some real trophy walleye in excess of 10 pounds.

The Mississippi River also contains an excellent sauger population. Sauger are a close cousin of the walleye and resemble them except for the absence of the white area on the lower tail fin and the presence of dark blotches on the body. Mississippi River sauger normally range from  $3/4$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. Saugers of more than four pounds are fairly rare, but fish between  $1\frac{1}{2}$  and 4 pounds are occasionally caught. Sauger exhibit the same fine eating qualities as walleye. The major harvest of saugers occurs from late fall through early spring in the tailwater areas. The same baits, lures and methods used to

catch walleye work well for sauger also.

#### ■ NORTHERN PIKE

Greater numbers of northeast Iowans are now pursuing the exciting northern pike. Northerns for many years were scorned, particularly by many Mississippi River anglers, as a trash fish and one that should be eliminated. Many anglers now appreciate many of the northerns' fine qualities — voracious strike, excellent fighting abilities, willingness to take a variety of baits and lures and delicious taste. Anglers after these toothy predators head primarily for the Cedar, Wapsipinicon and Mississippi Rivers. The Cedar River (Black Hawk and Bremer Counties) contains a moderate population of northerns, but the size of fish harvested is frequently in the 6- to 12-pound range. This river annually produces a few fish up to 18 pounds. The Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan, Black Hawk and Bremer Counties) harbors a very large population of northerns; however, the average size is fairly small with few individuals topping the five-pound mark.

This is an excellent stream to introduce a youngster to the fun of fishing northerns as the catching is almost guaranteed. The Mississippi River Pools 9, 10 and 11 contain excellent populations of pike in the five- to eight-pound range. Fish up to 12 pounds are not uncommon.

Still fishing with large chubs in river backwaters during the heat of summer is particularly effective. Areas where coldwater streams enter the Mississippi are frequently northern hotspots during these hot months.

#### ■ CRAPPIE

Northeast Iowans head primarily to the Mississippi River for their crappie fishing. The big river abounds with black crappie in the 9- to 11-inch range. May marks the beginning of the first major open-water angling period for crappies. Fishing small minnows or working a small jig in fallen trees and brush piles provides crappie anglers the majority of action. Late fall is another prime-time to cash in on the bounty of schooled crappies by fishing the deeper, quiet-water snags, submerged trees and slack



water below the wing dams near shore. Do not spend too much time in one spot if you are not catching fish. Keep moving until you locate an actively feeding school. The last major crappie fishing period on the Mississippi occurs on the ice. Like its cousin the bluegill, the crappie provides a lot of ice fishing activity on the river's backwaters.

#### OTHER SPECIES

*Freshwater drum*, also known as sheepshead, provide a lot of angling enjoyment on the Mississippi River. Most drum run between 1 and 2½ pounds; however, you will be quite surprised by the tenacious fight these fish put up. An added bonus is their schooling activity, so once you start catching them, you are probably in for several hours of action. Look for drum along the main channel border, dam spillways, wing dams and the tailwater areas. Night crawlers, crayfish tails and small jigs work well. Drum fillets are boneless, firm and quite good eating.

Another sporty Mississippi River fish that you will want to try this year is the *white bass*. Stripers, as they are commonly called, are hard hitters and really scrappy fighters. Look for them in areas where current and good structure are available — on the wing dams, spillway areas and along riprap banks. If you are lucky enough to spot a school of stripers splashing on the surface as they feed on shad, you are in for some fast and furious action. When actively feeding, stripers will attack nearly any lure ranging from small jigs to large crank baits.

Northeast Iowa has a wide variety of quality fishing opportunities. The scenery in this beautiful corner of the state will surely captivate you. I hope all your 1989 fishing experiences will be memorable ones.

*David Moeller is the northeast district fisheries supervisor located at Manchester.*

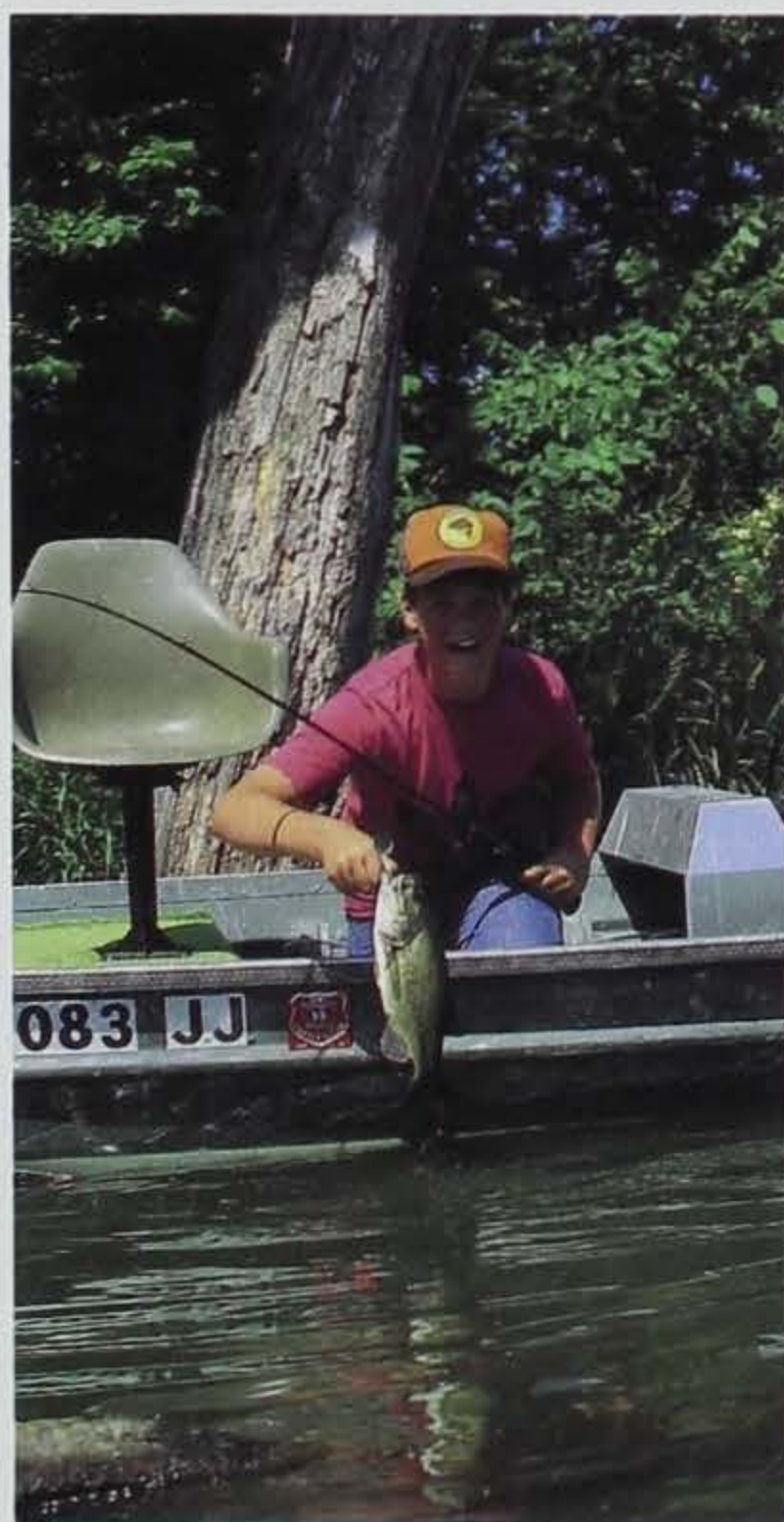
## SOUTHEAST

### by Steve Waters

#### LARGEMOUTH BASS

The Mississippi River's 12-inch minimum size limit on largemouth bass has meant a greater number and larger size of bass to interest the angler. Fall electrofishing surveys at the Big Timber Area showed excellent numbers of 12- to 14-inch fish. Other top-producing areas in Pool 17 include Cleveland Slough, Hidden Acres and Bogus Island. Huron Island and lower Burnt Pocket backwaters in Pool 18, and Burlington Island, riprap shorelines and stream mouths in Pool 19 are also favorite hotspots of bass anglers. Radio tagging studies have shown that backwater bass love structure. Therefore, fish right on top of brush, logs and stumps for great bass fishing action.

There are good bass waters inland as well. Lakes Miami (Monroe County), Odessa (Louisa County), Geode (Henry County), Iowa (Iowa County) and Coralville



RON JOHNSON

Reservoir (Johnson County) will produce fine catches of 11- to 18-inch fish. Bigger bass are often taken at Lake Rathbun (Appanoose County), Pleasant Creek Lake (Linn County), Lake Darling (Washington County) and Hawthorn Lake (Mahaska County).

Size limit regulations on black bass species will certainly benefit the angler by protecting more bass, producing higher catch rates and improving size quality. However, size limits can only help produce desirable predator populations if anglers comply with regulations and practice catch-and-release fishing with legal-sized fish as well.

#### CRAPPIE

Rathbun anglers found 1988 another good year for crappies. Creel surveys showed that about 230,000 crappies were harvested. The average size of crappies at the state's best crappie hole was 10 inches with fish up to 17 inches available to excite any crappie angler. This year should once again find Rathbun a top crappie lake.

Coralville Reservoir and Lakes Odessa, Darling, Hannen (Benton County), Macbride (Johnson County), Miami, Hawthorn and Geode will be good bets for crappie fishing this year. Trophy-sized fish are typically low in numbers, but available to make any trip memorable.

Crappie angling on the Mississippi River for 8- to 11-inch fish will be good in the same backwaters where good bass fishing can be found. Fish tight to stumps, logs and brush. In areas with deep holes, for example, crappies can be caught suspended in open water during the summer months.

#### BLUEGILL

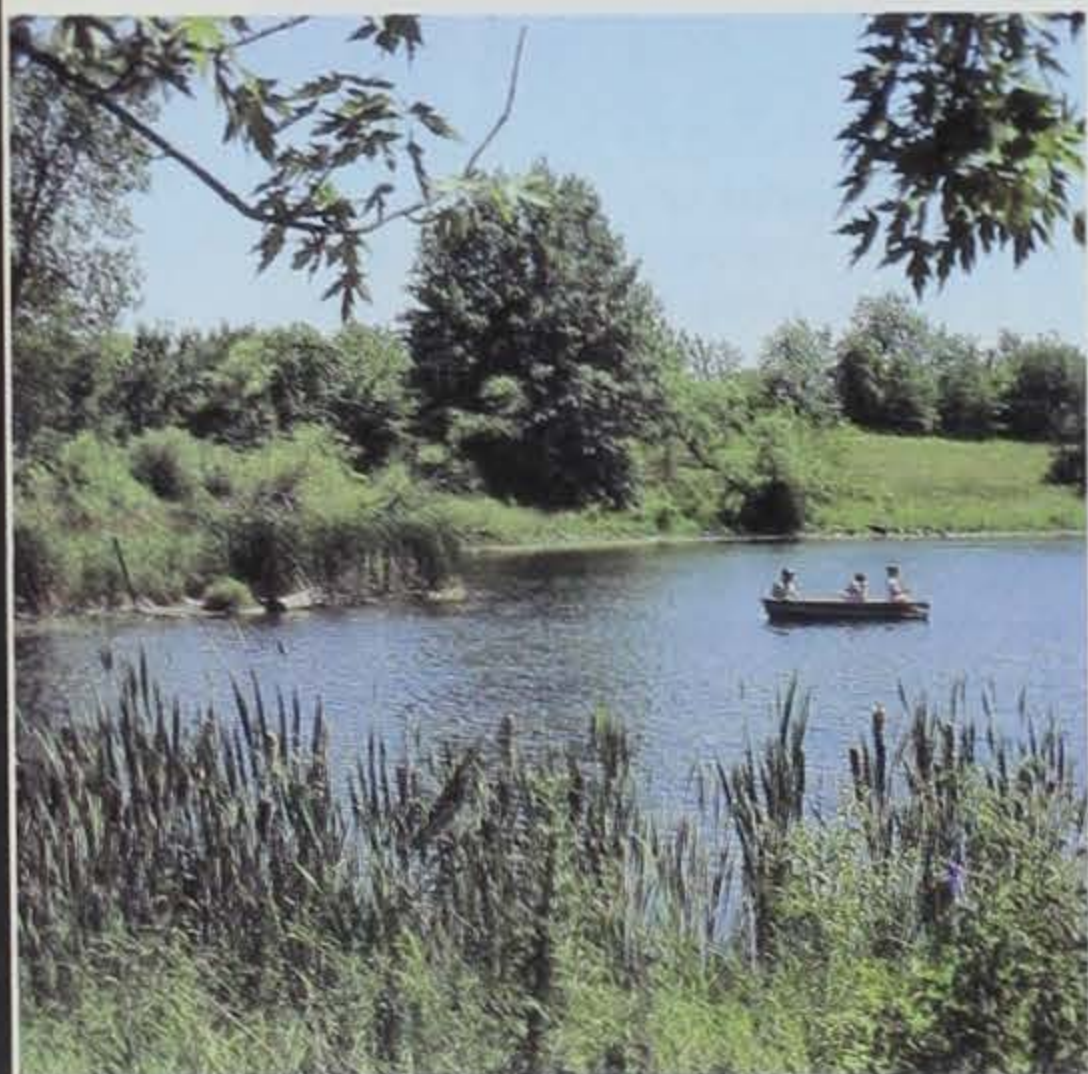
The bluegill is an Iowa favorite. More bluegills (24 percent of all fish harvested) are caught by Iowans than any other species. In the spring this delicious-tasting, hard-fighting sunfish can be caught in arm-tiring numbers in shallow water and shoreline areas. When bluegills move away from the shoreline, drift fishing in open



water becomes an effective summer angling technique. Red Haw Lake (Lucas County) has an excellent reputation of producing fine catches of 7- to 9-inch "gills." According to fisheries biologists' surveys, this year should be another good year for bluegill harvests.

Lake Odessa is another great bluegill lake. Fish near stump fields and fallen trees throughout Sand Run, Yankee Chute and the main lake for 7- to 8-inch fish.

Additional lakes in which six-inch-plus bluegills can be taken are Miami, West Lake Park areas (Scott County), Keomah (Mahaska County) and Pleasant Creek. Also, do not forget the Mississippi River. Great fishing fun for six- to eight-inch bluegills can be found at the same places where crappie and bass angling exists. Bluegills can



also be caught around wing and closing dams in the summer when river conditions are normal or low.

#### CHANNEL CATFISH

Channel catfish is the fish Iowans prefer to catch, and southeast Iowa is paradise for channel catfish anglers. The cage catfish and maintenance stocking programs have established excellent catfish populations in almost all public lakes.

Anglers are starting to discover Lake Rathbun's great channel catfishing. Harvest dramatically rose

to about 29,000 fish in 1988. Numerous 12- to 15-inch fish, plus some giant ones as well, should be found in 1989. Additional guaranteed catfish havens are: Lakes Darling, Geode, Pollmiller (Lee County), Belva Deere (Keokuk County), Hannen, Iowa (Iowa County), Macbride, Pleasant Creek, Otter Creek (Tama County), Miami and Wapello (Davis County). Coralville Reservoir, in particular, should have some exceptional angling in 1989.

Rivers in southeast Iowa are also great places to catch catfish. The Wapsi, Skunk, Cedar, Des Moines and Iowa Rivers all produce excellent numbers and a variety of sizes of catfish. Float fishing from one access to another, checking brush piles, lower ends of sandbars and rocky riffles will produce lots of fish and lots of fun.

Perhaps the Mississippi River is the best catfish hole of all. This is reflected in the generous catch limits — all you can carry. Mr. Whiskers can be caught in nearly all parts of the river, but best bets are above and below wing dams and riprapped heads of islands where there is a current.

#### WALLEYE/SAUGER

The Mississippi is an exciting resource which produces some fantastic walleye and sauger angling. Lock and dam areas produce great catches in late winter, early spring and late fall. Wing dam fishing during summer and early fall will also produce stimulating action. Try backtrolling crankbaits or three-way night crawler rigs on the upstream side of wing dams, or try slow trolling on the bottom in the tailwaters with bright-colored jigs tipped with minnows or three-way minnow rigs. Jigging sonars below the navigation dams is an effective technique late fall through early spring.

Lakes Macbride and Rathbun are also good areas to catch walleye. An effective walleye stocking program has significantly increased walleye numbers at Rathbun. Creel studies revealed that about 9,000 walleye averaging 15 inches were taken, and an equal number were

released for later harvests. If water conditions cooperate, Rathbun will be a hotspot in 1989.

#### OTHER SPECIES

*Bullhead* enthusiasts will want to include trips to Lakes Darling and Odessa and river backwater areas to catch this cooperative fish.

The Skunk (Keokuk, Washington, Jefferson, Henry and Des Moines Counties), Iowa (Louisa County), Cedar (Louisa County) and Wapsipinicon (Clinton and Scott Counties) Rivers are favorites for *flathead catfish* anglers. Large dead chubs or a gob of worms work well. Fish deep holes in summer and fall and around bridge pilings for trophy fish.

*White bass* angling should be great at Rathbun, Coralville, the Mississippi River and at the Ottumwa Hydro Dam on the Des Moines River. Most fish will range from 10 to 15 inches, and this spirited fish is often found traveling in large schools.

*Paddlefish* snagging is most productive on the Mississippi River tailwaters and below dams on the Skunk River at Oakland Mills and the Des Moines River at Ottumwa.

#### FARM PONDS

Farm pond fishing for largemouth bass, bluegills and channel catfish is so productive that it warrants special attention. These mini-lakes produce more trophy-sized fish than any other water area. Because of their small size, they are the first areas to warm up; thus, they are great places to begin the new fishing season. Over-harvest of bass is a frequent fault of anglers fishing farm ponds. Catch-and-release fishing will assure quality bass and panfish populations in these popular water bodies. Keep in mind, you will be fishing on private property, which requires the owner's permission, and the utmost respect is due the landowner and the property.

*Steve Waters is the southeast district fisheries supervisor located at Brighton.*





WAYNE LONNING

## SOUTHWEST

by Joe Schwartz

### CRAPPIE

Fishing for this popular panfish will be excellent in many of our lakes again this year. The biggest and best fish will come from the two central Iowa flood control reservoirs while our most consistent catches will be from small public fishing lakes.

Red Rock (Marion County) and Saylorville (Polk County) Reservoir both have excellent populations of large crappies, but fishing success will depend on springtime water quality. Best results depend on clear water. Fish up to 15 inches are available. Water levels at Red Rock will be raised six feet by the Corps of Engineers, so look for fish in different areas than in the past. New areas of flooded brush or rocks will be the best.

Most of the popular public fishing lakes where you have taken crappies in the past will be good again this year. Big Creek (Polk County) will be back on line again. Last year fish were on the small side and many had to be released to grow a little larger. Excellent

growth in 1988 increased the average size to 9-1/2 inches — a keeper in anyone's book. Lake Anita (Cass County) is my pick for best crappie fishing in southwest Iowa this year. This popular lake has an abundance of 9- to 10-inch fish, and it is always one of the lakes where crappies start biting early. It is not unusual for springtime anglers to be taking fish from a small open area on the east end of the lake when the rest of the lake is still ice-covered. Later in the year the rest of the lake will produce good fish on the usual baits.

Another choice for nice crappies in 1989 is Lake Icaria (Adams County). This lake was drawn down in 1987 for construction and never refilled during the drought of 1988. If the lake fills this spring, fish the spots where you fished in the past. Additionally, try fishing the rocks on newly built jetties, new areas of riprap or flooded cedar trees. When the lake finally fills, all concrete ramps will again be accessible. Until then, folks with large, heavy boats will have a difficult time launching. Smaller fishing boats should have little problem.

Most lakes provide crappies close to shore in spring and early

summer, especially around submerged sticks, rocks or tree stumps. As the season progresses and the water warms, move to deeper water. Try protected coves, the face of the dam or marked fishing reefs. Weather and runoff play an important role in spring crappie fishing. Fishing is best when water temperatures climb steadily and passing cold fronts do not send fish back to deeper water. Wet springs often cause muddy water and poor fishing. Best baits are small leadhead jigs and live minnows.

Other lakes with good crappie populations are Little River (Decatur County), Twelve Mile (Union County), Nine Eagles (Decatur County), Thayer (Union County), Greenfield (Adair County), Nodaway (Adair County), Green Valley (Union County) and Three Fires (Taylor County). For the most part, fish caught in these lakes will range from 8 to 10 inches. All have a few larger fish. Green Valley crappies are somewhat smaller, but very abundant and easy to catch. To fill your freezer with fillets, Green Valley is the place to go for fast action on fair-sized fish. Rocks along the face of the dam and the fishing jetties are especially productive during the spring spawning run. Last summer's surveys showed a surprising number of keeper crappies at Lake Manawa. This oxbow of the Missouri River has always provided early fishing for 5- to 6-inch crappies, but more 8- to 10-inch fish will be available in 1989. Lagoons attached to the lake warm first, and this is the place to try following ice-out. Later in the season try the submerged Christmas tree brush piles around the lake. Most are obvious with their limbs protruding above the surface.

### BLUEGILL

The outlook for bluegills looks bright again this year. We have several lakes with larger fish — 8 to 10 inches. Anita, Hickory Grove (Story County), Big Creek, Twelve Mile, Little River, Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold County) and DeSoto Bend (Harrison County) all have



fish which will make any bluegill angler happy. Fishing at Walnut Creek Marsh and DeSoto can be tough because of the abundant aquatic vegetation. To do well at these lakes, fish after the water has warmed, but before the weeds have grown enough to become a nuisance.

Lakes containing smaller fish include Viking (Montgomery County), Nodaway, Greenfield, Green Valley, Meadow (Adair County), Mormon Trail (Adair County), Don Williams (Boone County), Nine Eagles and Rock Creek (Jasper County). These lakes provide good fishing although the size will be less than "top quality." In addition to bluegills, Nine Eagles and Meadow contain good populations of redear sunfish which are usually caught by bluegill anglers.

Spring and early summer are by far the best periods to catch bluegills because they congregate in the shallows to spawn. Spawning activity peaks in southern Iowa around Memorial Day. Search water from two to six feet deep to locate spawning beds. Fish found on spawning beds can be taken with live bait, small jigs or flies.

As the season progresses, big bluegills abandon the shallows and move to deeper water where they spend the summer. They can be found along the edges of weeds or in deep coves. Many times they are on humps or areas that break to old creek channels or other deep-water areas. Summer bluegills are usually found in water 10 to 20 feet deep. They can often be taken by drifting a boat with the wind, allowing the bait or lure to be suspended at 10 to 15 feet.

#### ■ LARGEMOUTH BASS

All of the lakes and ponds in southwest Iowa have largemouth bass populations, and many of the older lakes have the potential to produce a trophy bass for the patient angler. Lakes Anita, Nine Eagles, Hickory Grove, Viking, Green Valley and Manawa (Pottawattamie County) all have good-sized bass up to eight pounds.

Green Valley's 18-inch length

limit on bass is unusual for Iowa — most public lakes have a 15-inch limit. If you want to fish the best catch-and-release, and probably one of the best bass lakes in the state, try Green Valley. Water quality has improved greatly and weedbeds are starting to come back. Fish weed edges and the numerous stake beds around the lake. Several lakes, including Twelve Mile, Little River, West Lake Osceola (Clarke County), Ahquabi (Warren County) Rock Creek, DeSoto Bend and Three Fires, have good populations of smaller bass up to 16 inches. Twelve Mile tends to be very clear, so it is worth trying during a wet spring when most lakes are muddy. Three Fires tends to be turbid, so it is worth trying if it stays dry. Both Saylorville and Red Rock Reservoirs have good bass populations, but because of variable water conditions, fish may be difficult to catch. Bass fishing is best at Red Rock when the water is fairly clear. Try fishing deep structures at Saylorville. The rock jetties and the dam get pounded hard by bass anglers while deeper areas are ignored.

#### ■ WALLEYE

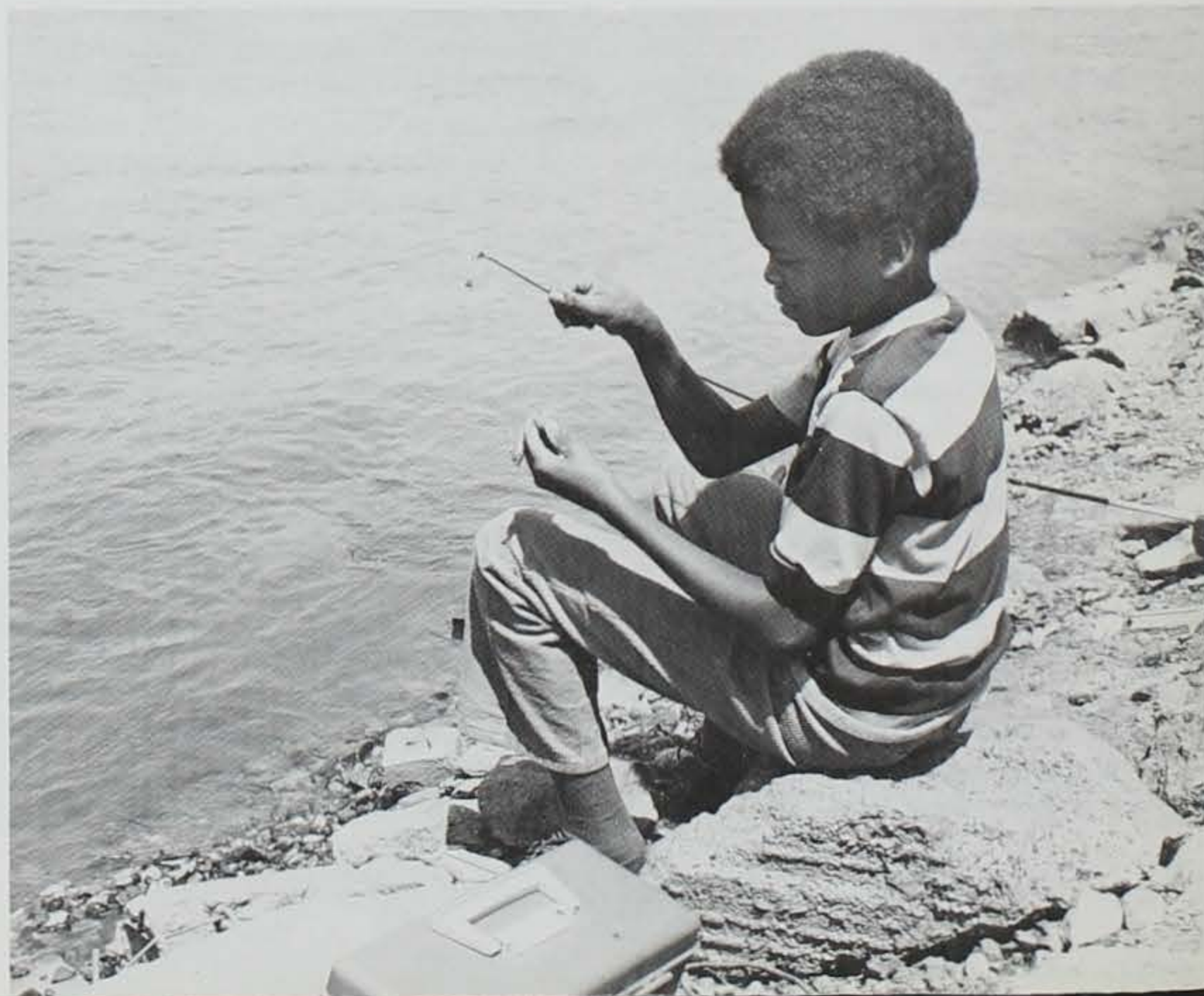
Big Creek, Icaria, Twelve Mile and Little River contain good populations of walleye, with the largest

fish in Big Creek and Icaria. These two lakes have fish up to 10 pounds, although the average keeper is from one to two pounds. Twelve Mile and Little River have an abundance of 11- to 14-inch fish with an occasional four-pounder seen at Little River. Fish along the points and dam face in the spring, or drop-offs and reefs in mid-summer. Both Saylorville and Red Rock have walleyes. Fish in these reservoirs grow faster and are generally larger than in the smaller lakes. Fishing for walleye is also good immediately below the dam on these flood control reservoirs.

River fishing for walleye in southwest Iowa can be excellent at times. Best places are below Saylorville and Red Rock dams and in the Des Moines River above Saylorville to the Boone County line. Several fishing riffles on the Raccoon River in county parks or about anywhere there is a rocky bottom is the best. It should be good again this year with twisters being preferred lures.

#### ■ SAUGEYE

Saugeyes were first stocked in 1987 and have grown large enough to become keepers in several lakes in southwest Iowa. Icaria, Rock Creek, Twelve Mile and Little River will have fish 13 to 15 inches. Saylorville has larger fish up to 2½ pounds. A



DNR PHOTO



saugeye is a hybrid between a walleye and sauger. These fish should tolerate and grow better in Iowa's frequently turbid water than walleyes. If you catch a fish in one of the lakes listed and are unsure if it is a saugeye or walleye, there are several characteristics to look for. Saugeyes have scales on their cheek patches while walleyes do not. Rub the cheek with your finger, and if it feels smooth, it is a walleye. If the cheek feels like sandpaper, it is a saugeye. A second characteristic to look for is the markings. Large blotchy markings on the side indicate a saugeye. Less distinct vertical bars occur on a walleye. The last characteristic to look for is a dark spot at the base of the pectoral fin. A spot indicates a saugeye.

#### ■ BULLHEADS

We have several lakes that have large populations of bullheads, but the fish tend to be on the small size. Most are six to nine inches and if you are interested in catching a bucketful, you might try Prairie Rose (Shelby County), Rock Creek, Green Valley or Three Fires. Bigger bullheads can be caught at Twelve Mile, Little River and DeSoto Bend. Most of these fish are in the 10- to 12-inch range.

#### ■ CHANNEL CATFISH

The southwest region of Iowa abounds with lakes and streams where channel catfish can be caught. The Des Moines River is one of the best, and summer fishing in any of the slack-water areas, pools and around snags will always produce a nice stringer of one to one-and-one-half pound "cats." One of the best places in southwest Iowa to fish for especially nice catfish is immediately below Saylorville dam in the fall. Other rivers are good producers of catfish, and you might try the Raccoons, Nishnabotnas or the Grand for a catfishing trip. Wading the smaller rivers from pool to pool is often productive, but floating in a small boat or canoe when water levels permit is highly effective, and you can expect to take a nice stringer of "cats."

Most of the lakes in southwest Iowa provide fair to good catfishing. Many of our lakes have not been stocked in the past two years and the quantity of fish being taken, especially in smaller lakes, is beginning to decline. However, average size of fish is increasing. Several of the lakes with bigger fish are Green Valley, Icaria, Big Creek and Meadow. Littlefield (Audubon County), Mormon Trail, Nodaway, Easter (Polk County), Don Williams, Twelve Mile and Little River will continue to provide good catches of smaller fish.

Favorite baits for catfish include sour shad, immediately after ice-out, and prepared stink baits, night crawlers, chicken livers, and cut fish later in the season. Best fishing is after dark.

#### ■ OTHER SPECIES

*Northern pike* fishing can be exceptional below Red Rock and Saylorville early in the spring. Use twisters with a steel leader for best results.

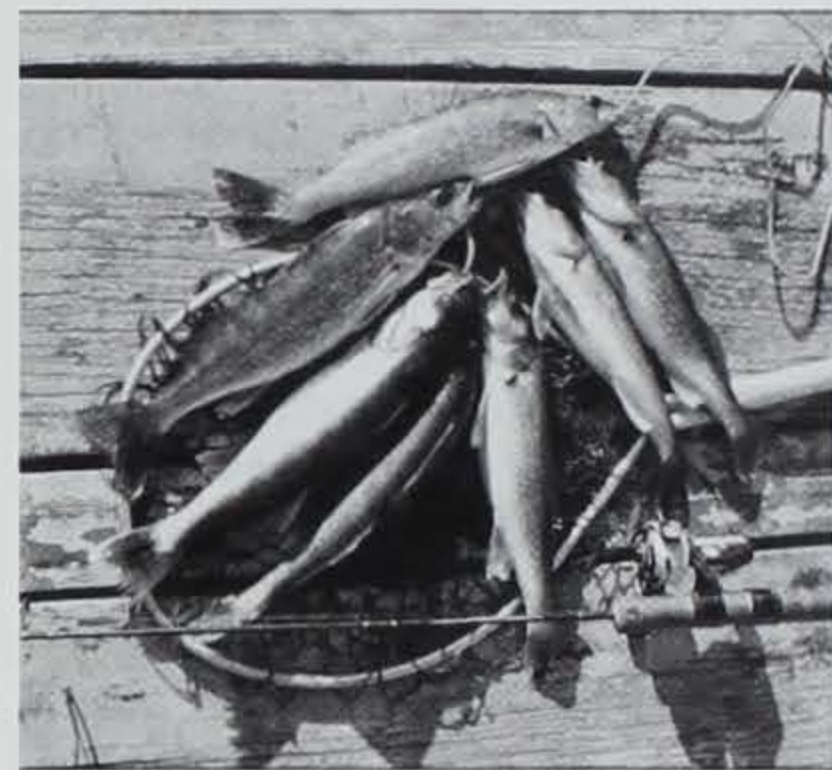
*Flathead catfishing* is good on all of our larger rivers. On the Des Moines try below Saylorville, above Saylorville to the Boone County line, and in Red Rock Lake. In the past several years, the Missouri River has produced lots of flatheads along its full length. Best fishing is immediately off the end of wing dikes using green sunfish for bait.

*Wipers*, a hybrid between white bass and ocean striped bass, continue to provide good fishing from Saylorville upstream to Fort Dodge, although the best fishing is below Saylorville dam. Best months for fishing are April and May if the water is low. June and September are also good. The last few years four- to five-pounders were common. The 1988 stocking survived extremely well, and fish that were six to eight inches last year will be 14 inches by the end of the 1989 fishing season. Leadhead jigs and twister tails work well for this fish.

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*Joe Schwartz is the southwest district fisheries supervisor located at Lewis.*

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RON JOHNSON

## NORTHWEST

by Tom Gengerke

#### ■ WALLEYE

The best fishing will be found on Big Spirit, East and West Okoboji (Dickinson County), Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo County) and on Storm Lake (Buena Vista County) where 12- to 16-inch fish are common, and the opportunity to catch larger fish, especially on Storm Lake and West Okoboji, is always present.

The key to spring fishing on Big Spirit is a late ice-out followed by steadily increasing water temperatures. With excellent survival of the 1983 year class, many fish will be from 13 to 15 inches or larger. This exceptional year class was readily apparent during 1988 and will contribute substantially to the 1989 creel.

Along with East Okoboji, West Okoboji has shown some improvement in the adult walleye population during the past three to four years. While many of the traditional areas such as Pillsbury, Fort Dodge, Gull and Pike's Points are good during the spring and fall activity periods, the mid-summer period after the weed lines have become well-established deserves special attention. Pay particular attention to these areas when they are adjacent to deeper, cooler water.

During the springs of 1987 and 1988, brood stock walleyes were collected, stripped of their eggs and returned to Storm Lake. Walleyes in the seven-pound range were quite commonly collected, while several



fish topped the scales at 10 pounds or more. Spinners tipped with crawlers, leeches or minnows are worth trying at this lake. Exceptionally large numbers of 15-inch or larger fish were creel'd at this lake from January through June this past year. I would also encourage some catch-and-release fishing for these magnificent fish.

Walleye fishing will also be good on Lost Island Lake (Clay and Palo Alto Counties). Most of these fish will range from 3/4 pound to 1 1/4 pounds.

River fishing for walleyes has been excellent during the past four to six years; however, 1989 will be a producer only if we experience a mild winter and receive sufficient spring rains to replenish our riverine aquatic resource. The Raccoon River below Sac City, the Little Sioux River (Buena Vista, Cherokee and Clay Counties), the Des Moines River (Emmet County) and West Fork of the Des Moines River from Rutland to the Cornbelt Dam will offer the best possibilities if the rains materialize. Walleyes exhibit definite upstream movement patterns during the spring, so concentrate your effort below lowhead dams or other barriers. More consistent fishing is found during the summer and fall months, after water levels have stabilized.

### LARGEMOUTH BASS

Swan Lake (Carroll County) was recently renovated. A special 16-inch minimum length limit is in effect for this lake. Approximately 10 percent of the bass population is larger than 16 inches, and anglers will have lots of excitement catching and releasing bass which are 14 inches long and weigh almost two pounds. Anglers caught 10,800 largemouths in 1988, 1,000 of which were more than 16 inches. Approximately 780 of these were released.

### SMALLMOUTH BASS

Plenty of "smallies" will be taken this year. Lake anglers are advised to start early, concentrate on rock piles or rocky points and use a minnow — preferably a shiner — and

fish it *s-l-o-w-l-y*. West Okoboji and Spirit Lake both produce quality fish, but more consistent fishing can be expected on West Okoboji. When water temperatures rise, switch to crankbaits.

River fishing, once the rivers begin to stabilize, usually produces more fish per trip, although they are seldom as large as those taken in lakes. The Iowa River from Alden to Steamboat Rock, the Boone River below Webster City, and the Winnebago River from Fertile to its confluence with the Shell Rock offer some of Iowa's finest river smallmouth bass fishing.

In northwest Iowa, a 12-inch minimum length limit applies on all interior streams, and a 15-inch length limit is in effect for Big Spirit, East and West Okoboji, Upper and Lower Gar and Minnewashta Lakes. These lake areas offer some of the best trophy smallmouth opportunities in the Midwest and catch-and-release fishing certainly is contributing to this reputation.

### MUSKELLUNGE

Muskie activity usually peaks in late June, early July and again in late summer — with some hardcore anglers experiencing good success again in late fall. From 1984 through 1986, Spirit Lake was considered to be the most consistent producer of trophy muskellunge in Iowa; however, this consistency was not sustained through 1987 and 1988. Likewise, East Okoboji anglers also experienced a declining catch rate as compared to what most anglers enjoyed the previous two years, while West Okoboji, which had been providing somewhat sporadic fishing during that same time period, started to provide more and better fish. It is worthwhile to remember that West Okoboji holds the oldest muskie population in Iowa.

Fish commonly range from 30 to 40 inches at Clear Lake, with some in excess of 40 inches. Muskies in Clear Lake are taken from major rock reefs or points, where fish can

## 1988 FISH AWARDS

Weight Where Caught Date Name and Address

### BASS, LARGEMOUTH (Minimum - 7 lbs. or 22")

9 lbs. 11 oz.	Farm Pond	4-30	Jeff Fatt
	Madison County		Winterset
9 lbs. 2 oz.	Farm Pond	4-7	Randy Carstens
	Monona County		Castana
8 lbs. 12 oz.	Pond	5-30	Clint Engle
	Adair County		Carroll
8 lbs. 6 oz.	Sun Valley Lake	6-30	Norman W. Davis, III
	Decatur County		Des Moines
8 lbs. 2 oz.	Farm Pond	1-14	Mike Schrader
	Marion County		Montroe
8 lbs. 2 oz.	Rock Quarry	7-3	Steven Roths
	Mitchell County		Osage
8 lbs. 0.23 oz.	Farm Pond	4-7	Bob Crosby
	Marion County		Melcher Dallas
7 lbs. 14 oz.	Rathbun Reservoir	7-16	Steve Hollingsworth
	Appanoose County		Prairie City
7 lbs. 14 oz.	Handy #0 Pond	4-19	Dale Derner
	Guthrie County		Dedham
7 lbs. 14 oz.	Crawford Creek	4-4	John W. Hagen
	Ida County		Ida Grove
Released	Farm Pond	5-4	James Buck
	Cherokee County		Cherokee

### BASS, OCEAN STRIPED (Minimum - 5 lbs.) — no entries

### BASS, ROCK (Minimum - 1 lb.)

1 lb.	Shellrock River	5-21	Ryan J. Corell
	Butler County		Nora Springs

### BASS, SMALLMOUTH (Minimum - 4 lbs. or 20")

5 lbs. 5 oz.	Big Spirit	4-23	Steve Yates
	Dickinson County		Ankeny
5 lbs. 4 oz.	Behrend's Sand Pit	3-31	Todd A. Chappell
	Jones County		Monticello
5 lbs. 2 oz.	Wapsipicon River	7-18	Timothy L. Yerkes
	Jones County		Cedar Rapids
5 lbs.	Wapsipicon River	8-14	Vince Haydon
	Bremner County		Tripp
5 lbs.	Cedar River	9-25	Dave Meeter
	Bremner County		Cedar Falls
4 lbs. 14 oz.	Big Spirit	4-24	Kim Brown
	Dickinson County		Ankeny
4 lbs. 12 oz.	Spirit Lake	7-23	Dean Holcomb
	Dickinson County		Spirit Lake

Weight Where Caught Date Name and Address

4 lbs. 11 oz.	Big Spirit	5-7	Travis Ferguson
	Dickinson County		Rathven
4 lbs. 10 oz.	Des Moines River	9-24	Jeff Robbins
	Marion County		Oskaloosa
4 lbs. 9 oz.	West Okoboji	7-29	Jerry A. Sehnman
	Dickinson County		Dallas Center
Released	West Okoboji	7-6	Maury Muhm
	Dickinson County		Spirit Lake
Released	West Okoboji	5-8	Maury Muhm
	Dickinson County		Spirit Lake
Released	Middle Raccoon River	5-15	Mark Smith
	Guthrie County		Des Moines

### BASS, WHITE (Minimum - 2 1/2 lbs.)

3 lbs. 8 oz.	Mississippi River	11-15	Thomas D. Watts
	Des Moines County		Burlington
3 lbs. 4 oz.	Mississippi River	10-28	James E. Oberhell
	Dubuque County		Sherrill
3 lbs. 2 oz.	West Okoboji	4-6	Elmira Johnson
	Dickinson County		Milford
2 lbs. 12 oz.	West Okoboji	4-30	Mike Lukowski
	Dickinson County		Spirit Lake
2 lbs. 10 oz.	Mississippi River	10-29	Dave Gross
	Dubuque County		Dubuque
2 lbs. 10 oz.	West Okoboji	8-26	Raleigh Adams
	Dickinson County		Rockwell City
2 lbs. 9 oz.	West Okoboji	8-26	Luella Adams
	Dickinson County		Rockwell City
2 lbs. 9 oz.	Mississippi River	9-3	David Gross
	Dubuque County		Dubuque
2 lbs. 9 oz.	Storm Lake	4-27	James F. Robinson
	Buena Vista County		Storm
2 lbs. 8 oz.	West Okoboji	6-10	J. Mike McKenny
	Dickinson County		Kansas City
2 lbs. 8 oz.	Storm Lake	4-30	Tim Dean
	Buena Vista County		Storm Lake
2 lbs. 8 oz.	Mississippi River	7-10	Jeffrey A. Mazzanti
	Clayton County		Dubuque
2 lbs. 8 oz.	West Okoboji	9-25	Ed Feldhacker
	Dickinson County		Cherokee

### BASS, WIPER (Minimum - 4 lbs.)

10 lbs. 10.5 oz.	Des Moines River	5-31	Dick Kyra
	Polk County		Perry
8 lbs.	Des Moines River	6-24	Gary L. Johnson
	Polk County		West Des Moines
7 lbs. 12 oz.	Des Moines River	9-1	Don Smothers, Jr.
	Polk County		Des Moines
7 lbs. 4 oz.	Des Moines River	9-1	Don Smothers, Jr.
	Polk County		Des Moines





RON JOHNSON

feed in relatively shallow water adjacent to deep water. Large fish are caught every year by both novice and seasoned anglers alike, using all types of gear and a variety of presentations.

**BLUEGILL**

Indian Lake (Hancock County) should provide excellent fishing for six- to eight-inch bluegills this year. Fishing the outside edge of the weedline, where bluegills feed is a sure bet. Anglers will also find these fish during late May and early June when they are spawning near the emergent vegetation. A small, 1/64-ounce black or brown leadhead will be virtually unbeatable for big "gills" at this time of year. Surveys conducted during 1986, 1987 and 1988 also indicated good bluegill populations exist in the Pine Lakes (Hardin County), Briggs Woods and Snyder Bend.

Two additional hotspots in northwest Iowa will be Yellow Smoke Lake near Denison (Craw-

ford County) and Swan Lake near Carroll. Both lakes contain large numbers of six- to eight-inch bluegills. I have been assured that the east side of Swan Lake will be a sure thing — let's put that prediction to the test. Anglers caught more than 12,000 bluegills at Swan Lake during 1988 alone.

Vacationers to the Iowa Great Lakes Region should keep in mind that the waters of West Okoboji take longer to warm; therefore, good bluegill fishing occurs a little later at this lake than it does in many Iowa lakes — providing a mid-summer bonus for anglers.

**CRAPPIE**

The best crappie fishing will occur at Yellow Smoke Lake, Beeds Lake (Franklin County) and Lake Pahoja. Yellow Smoke supports excellent numbers of 8- to 10-inch crappies and has been a real hotspot for these "papermouths" during the past year. Plenty of fish will be available this spring. Anglers

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
7 lbs. 1 oz.	Saylorville Spillway Polk County	5-1	Dick Kyras Perry
7 lbs.	Saylorville Spillway Polk County	4-28	Dick Kyras Perry
6 lbs.	Saylorville Spillway Polk County	4-28	Dick Kyras Perry
5 lbs. 14 oz.	Saylorville Spillway Polk County	3-13	Marty Wimmer Council Bluffs
4 lbs. 4 oz.	Saylorville Polk County	9-24	Bill Obermeier Polk City

**BASS, YELLOW (Minimum - 3/4 lb.) — no entries**

**BLUEGILL (Minimum - 1 lb.)**

2 lbs.	Farm Pond Union County	8-19	Sheryl R. Crone Sioux Rapids
1 lb. 10 oz.	Farm Pond	5-4	Dave Sitzmann Kingsley
1 lb. 9 oz.	Cherokee County Farm Pond	5-20	Jaymie Bral Schleswig
1 lb. 8 oz.	Ida County Farm Pond		Jerry Bedwell Osceola
1 lb. 8 oz.	Warren County Farm Pond	2-12	Alan C. Johnson Deloit
1 lb. 8 oz.	Crawford County Farm Pond	5-8	Joey Grubbs Adair
1 lb. 6 oz.	Twin Valley Lakes Johnson County	9-29	Don Chadima Solon
1 lb. 6 oz.	Farm Pond	12-26	Denise M. Yetts Omaha
1 lb. 4 oz.	Taylor County Mississippi River	1-16	Bob Franke New Hampton
1 lb. 4 oz.	Allamakee County French Town	12	Carmen Fleming Cedar Rapids
1 lb. 4 oz.	Allamakee County Farm Pond	4-3	Dan B. Steele Knoxville

**BOWFIN (DOGFISH) (Minimum - 5 lbs.)**

9 lbs.	Blakes Lake Jackson County	9	David C. Kelly Clinton
8 lbs. 5 oz.	Mississippi River Clayton County	7-9	Robert H. Schmiedel Cedar Rapids
8 lbs. 2 oz.	Bussey Lake Clayton County	3-19	Paul D. Christianson Guttenberg
6 lbs. 11 oz.	Mississippi River Clayton County	6-29	Dick Hall Elkader
6 lbs. 9 oz.	Mississippi River Allamakee County	6-25	Eric Crapp Waukon

**BUFFALO (Minimum - 20 lbs.)**

30 lbs. 1 oz.	Maquoketa River Delaware County	1-15	James L. Flanagan, Jr. Ryan
23 lbs. 3 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	9-9	Robert Leigh Milford

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
<b>BULLHEAD (Minimum - 2 1/2 lbs.)</b>			
2 lbs. 0.58 oz.	Farm Pond Warren County	7-10	Kenneth Champlin Norwalk

**CARP (Minimum - 25 lbs.)**

27 lbs. 0.2 oz.	Mississippi River Dubuque County	10-16	Tom R. Schmitt Holy Cross
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**CATFISH, BLUE (Minimum - 20 lbs.) — no entries**

**CATFISH, CHANNEL (Minimum - 15 lbs.)**

27 lbs. 12 oz.	Farm Pond	5-15	Gregory S. Dieleman New Sharon
22 lbs. 12 oz.	Mahaska County Lake Iowa	2-22	Charles H. Seaton Victor
21 lbs. 0.85 oz.	Iowa County Rathbun	8-21	Gerald E. Hibbs Chariton
18 lbs. 5 oz.	Appanoose County East Okoboji	8-23	Gloria Hunt Council Bluffs
16 lbs. 10 oz.	Dickinson County East Okoboji	6-25	David Hunt Council Bluffs
16 lbs. 3 oz.	Dickinson County West Okoboji	5-27	M. C. Strickland Okoboji
16 lbs. 1 oz.	Dickinson County East Okoboji	5-9	Gloria Hunt Council Bluffs
16 lbs. 1 oz.	Dickinson County Lake Icaria	7-24	John L. Nichols Council Bluffs

**CATFISH, FLATHEAD (Minimum - 20 lbs.)**

45 lbs.	Iowa River Iowa County	6-20	Joe Loftus Marengo
43 lbs.	Des Moines River Boone County	6-9	Scot Allen Landals Boone
41 lbs.	Des Moines River	8-13	Dale and Linda Hauge Ames
38 lbs. 0.4 oz.	Missouri River Pottawattamie County	8-3	Andre Duhan, Jr. Council Bluffs
38 lbs.	Raccoon River Greene County	7-24	Paul Costello Jefferson
38 lbs.	Missouri River Pottawattamie County	7-23	Bruce L. Petersen Council Bluffs
37 lbs. 8 oz.	Des Moines River Lee County	5-28	Ken Martin Farmington
37 lbs. 0.5 oz.	Missouri River	9-4	Ronald J. White Council Bluffs
37 lbs.	Wapsipicon River Clinton County	5-30	Norm and Alice Schnoor McCausland

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
36 lbs.	Des Moines River Polk County	7-30	Jack H. Rogoff Sr. Des Moines

**CRAPPIE (Minimum - 2 lbs.)**

3 lbs. 10 oz.	Nine Eagles Decatur County	5-5	David G. Forst Williamson
3 lbs. 9 oz.	Farm Pond Dallas County	5-30	Tracy A. Howe Dallas Center
3 lbs. 4 oz.	Rathbun Lake Appanoose County	4-30	Donald Janssen Grundy Center
3 lbs. 1 oz.	Indian Lake Van Buren County	5-4	Warren Wagner Farmington
3 lbs.	Farm Pond Jefferson County	4-24	Marlene Allred Mount Pleasant
2 lbs. 11 oz.	Pony Creek Mills County	6-4	Carrie Leber Council Bluffs
2 lbs. 11 oz.	Farm Pond Warren County	3-28	Leroy Hobbs, Jr. Indianola
2 lbs. 8 oz.	Saylorville Lake Polk County	5-11	Paul Holzworth Des Moines
2 lbs. 8 oz.	Lake Manawa Pottawattamie County	8-27	Richard Gilson Council Bluffs
2 lbs. 6 oz.	Farm Pond Lucas County	4-12	Jennifer Boothe Chariton

**DRUM, FRESHWATER (Minimum - 15 lbs.)**

23 lbs. 0.44 oz.	Skunk River Henry County	6-1	Robert R. Barnett Salem
22 lbs.	Mississippi River Allamakee County	5-11	Roger Downs Waterloo
16 lbs. 15 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	7-31	John Michel Bellevue
16 lbs. 9 oz.	Turkey River Clayton County	5-19	Irvin W. Lammers Osterdock
15 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	9-1	John M. Michel Bellevue

**GAR (Minimum - 10 lbs.) — no entries**

**MUSKELLUNGE (Minimum - 15 lbs. or 40")**

36 lbs. 5 oz.	West Lake Dickinson County	9-23	Richard D. Gray Spencer
32 lbs. 8 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	9-14	Kande Petersen Spencer
30 lbs. 8 oz.	Big Spirit Lake Dickinson County	6-9	Dorothy Rogers Fort Dodge
30 lbs.	Spirit Lake Dickinson County	5-21	Charles Brown Fostoria
27 lbs. 4 oz.	Spirit Lake Dickinson County	1-29	Dewey Olson Arnolds Park
25 lbs. 6 oz.	East Okoboji Dickinson County	6-5	John Dornon Sioux City



should concentrate their efforts near partially submerged or standing trees. Badger Lake near Fort Dodge is another lake which should not be overlooked during 1989.

Slab-sized crappies are also available at Storm Lake. Anglers should watch the marina on the southwest corner of the lake as soon as ice-out, as well as the inlet area in the fall.

**BULLHEAD**

Black Hawk Lake (Sac County), Silver Lake (Dickinson County), Spirit Lake and Clear Lake will provide excellent bullhead opportunities for northwest Iowa anglers during 1989. All of these lakes are loaded with fish and should produce both quality and quantity. Crawford Creek (Ida County) and Rice Lake (Winnebago County) are two additional lakes with super populations of eight- and nine-inch bullheads that are largely under-fished. Bullhead fishing on Spirit Lake has improved steadily since

1987, and this will continue throughout 1989. The new fishing pier off the north grade will provide a quality access point for Spirit Lake anglers.

**CHANNEL CATFISH**

The Little Sioux, Big Sioux, West Fork of the Des Moines (Emmet and Humboldt Counties) and the Iowa River (Hardin County) will be premier areas for Iowa "river rats and river cats." The best fishing occurs from June through September.

Most catfish are taken from deep holes or from around snags which provide cover and escape from the sun. The bulk of these fish range from 10 to 20 inches.

The riverine channel catfish is probably the most under-used fishery resource in Iowa. Many of our rivers hold nearly 400 pounds of channel catfish per acre.

Excellent channel catfishing is also available in many of our area lakes. Lake Pahoja (Lyon County),



DNR PHOTO

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
23 lbs. 8 oz.	Big Creek Lake Polk County	5-14	Ken Meehan West Des Moines
18 lbs. 14 oz.	Clear Lake	5-21	Marvin Lindaman
16 lbs. 14.7 oz.	Cerro Gordo County Clear Lake	10-7	Eldon Olson
16 lbs. 4 oz.	Cerro Gordo County West Okoboji	8-20	Manly Randy Pritts
Released	Dickinson County Spirit Lake	9-3	Cherokee Richard Crail
Released	Dickinson County West Okoboji	9-4	Algona Richard Crail
Released	Dickinson County West Okoboji	8-25	Algona Wade Mitchell
Released	Dickinson County West Okoboji	9-16	Estherville Maury Muhm
Released	Dickinson County West Okoboji	9-3	Spirit Lake Maury Muhm
	Dickinson County		Spirit Lake

**MUSKIE, TIGER (Minimum - 15 lbs. or 40")**

24 lbs. 10 oz.	Big Creek Polk County	6-26	Bill Obermeier Polk City
23 lbs. 9 oz.	Big Creek Lake Polk County	5-13	Ken Glaspey Boone
17 lbs. 12 oz.	Lake Anita Cass County	7-1	Robert G. Briant Des Moines
16 lbs. 4 oz.	Lake Anita Cass County	7-22	Robert L. Phillips Council Bluffs
15 lbs. 0.51 oz.	Lake Anita Cass County	6-2	Tom Samson Carson

**NORTHERN PIKE (Minimum - 10 lbs. or 34")**

19 lbs. 1 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	1-17	Daryl Krogman Worthington
17 lbs. 8 oz.	Stolleys Park Clay County	4-20	John L. Field Spencer
16 lbs. 10 oz.	Mississippi River Allamakee County	7-14	Evelyn Thomas Waterloo
16 lbs. 5 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	12-29	Marty Eby Spencer
15 lbs. 10 oz.	West Lake Dickinson County	6-20	Conroy Johnson Spirit Lake
15 lbs. 5 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	9-4	Dick Pautvein West Des Moines
15 lbs. 4 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	5-10	Dick Janssen Arnolds Park
14 lbs. 6 oz.	West Okoboji Dickinson County	1-3	Bernie Groote George
13 lbs. 8 oz.	Farm Pond Black Hawk County	2-29	David Fobian Cedar Falls
12 lbs. 8 oz.	Blue Lake Monona County	8-6	Dave Sitzmann Kingsley
Released	Blue Lake Monona County	5-7	Ronald Kolina Omaha

**PADDLEFISH (Minimum - 25 lbs.)**

52 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	12-22	Larry Glick Springville
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Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
47 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	1-30	Chad Lawless Garwin
47 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	1-3	Ron Clemann Keystone
46 lbs. 8 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	2-22	Al Bieber Center Point
44 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	1-30	Al Bieber Center Point
42 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	3-4	Mark Martvz Estherville
41 lbs. 8 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	3-18	Gary Siegwirth Peosta
41 lbs. 8 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	12-22	Larry Glick Springville
41 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	1-3	Bill Carlson Tama
40 lbs. 0.1 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	1-17	Dennis Weiss Bellevue

**PERCH (Minimum - 1 lb.)**

1 lb. 3 oz.	Farm Pond Sioux County	5-14	Chris Schaefer Rock Valley
1 lb. 1 oz.	East Okoboji Dickinson County	10-2	Theresa Robinson Arnolds Park
1 lb. 1 oz.	Lost Island Dickinson County	4-23	Dennis Sassman Orange City
1 lb. 0.5 oz.	Diamond Lake Dickinson County	10-15	Nancy Joy Wick Everly
1 lb. 0.12 oz.	Mississippi River Dubuque County	1-23	Dan C. Freiberger Dubuque
1 lb.	Spirit Lake Dickinson County	3-18	Larry Bare Pringhar
1 lb.	Pickeral Buena Vista County	5-15	Sarah Witzke Newell

**SAUGER (Minimum - 2 1/2 lbs. or 18")**

5 lbs. 13 oz.	Missouri River Harrison County	11-3	Donald Tank Blencoe
5 lbs. 2 oz.	Mississippi River Dubuque County	3-30	Darren R. DeMoss Dubuque
4 lbs. 9 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	3-6	Tim Voegtli Saint Charles
4 lbs. 3 oz.	Mississippi River Clayton County	10-16	Jonathan D. Colbeck Center Point
4 lbs. 3 oz.	Mississippi River Dubuque County	4-4	Kelly J. Noel Dubuque
4 lbs.	Mississippi River Clayton County	4-5	Dwight Minor Guttenberg
3 lbs. 14 oz.	Mississippi River Jackson County	2-26	John Dirks Anamosa
3 lbs. 14 oz.	Upper Mississippi Clayton County	10-19	Lloyd Feickert Marion
3 lbs. 13 oz.	Mississippi River Dubuque County	10-2	Amy L. Matz Dubuque
3 lbs. 13 oz.	Mississippi River Clayton County	3-27	Jon Whitman Delhi
Released	Mississippi River Jackson County	10-16	Robert A. Schrobligen Durango

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
Released	Mississippi River Jackson County	11-3	John Dirks Anamosa

**STURGEON, SHOVELNOSE (Minimum - 3 lbs.)**

4 lbs.	Mississippi River Jackson County	5-9	Bobbi DeMark Burbank
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**SUCKER (Minimum - 4 lbs.)**

4 lbs. 8 oz.	Yellow River Allamakee County	4	Timothy Tope West Union
4 lbs. 6 oz.	Yellow River Allamakee County	4-16	Jim Tope West Union
4 lbs. 6 oz.	Yellow River Allamakee County	4	Jeffrey Tope West Union
4 lbs. 4 oz.	Yellow River Allamakee County	4	Stanley Tope West Union

**SUNFISH, REDEAR (Minimum - 1 lb.)**

1 lb. 2 oz.	Farm Pond Plymouth County	4-30	Ludy A. Stolpe Sioux City
1 lb. 0.62 oz.	Farm Pond Adams County	5-25	Harold E. Walter Prescott

**TROUT, BROOK (Minimum - 1 lb. or 13")**

1 lb.	Fountain Spring Delaware County	4-2	Gerry Oberbueckling Luxemburg
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**TROUT, BROWN (Minimum - 3 lbs. or 18")**

11 lbs. 1 oz.	Fountain Springs Delaware County	4-27	Milton Arnold Marion
10 lbs. 9 oz.	Trout River Winneshiek County	4-26	Bradley Johansen Tripoli
10 lbs.	South Bear Winneshiek County	6-14	Dennis Sanford Davenport
9 lbs. 9.5 oz.	French Creek	5-12	Koert Miller Cedar Falls
9 lbs.	Elk	5-11	R. H. Zubowski No. Manchester
8 lbs. 6 oz.	Bear Creek Fayette County	4-15	Scott W. Hinde Independence
8 lbs. 1 oz.	Joy Springs Clayton County	5-6	Edward Vesely Toledo
8 lbs. 0.89 oz.	Waterloo Creek Winneshiek County	2-27	Troy Petsche Monona
8 lbs.	Little Point Allamakee County	5-27	Clark Derhammer Cedar Rapids
7 lbs. 6 oz.	Fountain Springs Delaware County	6-8	Michele Vileta Cedar Rapids

**TROUT, RAINBOW (Minimum - 3 lbs. or 18")**

15 lbs. 5 oz.	Otter Creek Fayette County	5-18	Clayton E. Schreiner West Union
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Lake Cornelia (Wright County), Little Wall Lake (Hamilton County), Clear Lake and Black Hawk Lake will offer some of the best fishing for these prairie trout.

**NORTHERN PIKE**

Good to excellent fishing can be expected at Big Spirit, Tuttle Lake (Emmet County) and West Okobojo. Recruitment has been excellent during the past three to six years, and many fish in the two- to six-pound class are available. Concentrate your efforts around the rushes in Anglers Bay and the weedline or isolated pockets of vegetation in the rest of Big Spirit. Center Lake (Dickinson County) has produced some nice northern pikes and should continue to in 1989. The west end of Clear Lake, near the Ventura Grade inlet, will also concentrate northern pikes during the early part of spring. The Winnebago River from the stateline to Mason City will provide river anglers with plenty of excitement. River anglers should

watch for tributary streams or adjacent marshy areas since both of these habitat types hold northern pike. Also, northern pikes become active soon after ice-out, so keep this in mind when those warm spring days dictate a trip to the river.

**YELLOW PERCH**

Netting surveys conducted during 1988 indicate that 1989 will be more of an "average" year for perch anglers.

The best fishing will be found on East and West Okobojo — particularly West Okobojo — and on Ingham (Emmet County) and Center Lakes (Dickinson County). Netting surveys on Ingham Lake indicate a five-fold increase over similar surveys conducted during 1987. Activity will start during June or July, around weedbeds, and will proceed into the fall. Surveys conducted on West Okobojo during the summers of 1987 and 1988 indicated a strong year class of eight- to nine-inch fish.

**OTHER SPECIES**

White bass enthusiasts should look to Storm Lake, East Okobojo and Clear Lake. Fish will range from 10 to 16 inches and will be most active during the spring and fall periods. East Okobojo was exceptional during the falls of 1987 and 1988, and there will be good action on this lake during 1989.

If it is a real trophy-sized flathead catfish you are looking for, try the Raccoon River (Sac, Carroll and Greene Counties). Fish in the 30-pound size class have been creel during the past few years. Flathead fishing is a game of patience. Most successful anglers use some type of live fish such as chubs, goldfish or small carp for bait, fish after dark and work large, deep quiet pools which hold structure, such as log jams or rock.

*Tom Gengerke is the northwest fisheries supervisor located at Spirit Lake.*

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
13 lbs. 13 oz.	French Creek Allamakee County	6-23	Mike Amundson Waterloo
13 lbs. 7 oz.	North Bear Winneshiek County	4-13	Dale Hickok Charles City
12 lbs. 13 oz.	Farm Pond Allamakee County	5-23	Ralph Schmoor Davenport
12 lbs. 12 oz.	Paint Allamakee County	5-29	Hugh Swan New Sharon
12 lbs. 12 oz.	Silver Creek Allamakee County	4-1	Todd Lensing Floyd
12 lbs. 8 oz.	French Creek Allamakee County	7-10	John S. Rammelsberg Cedar Rapids
12 lbs. 2 oz.	Wexford Allamakee County	4-21	Jack Libbey Lansing
12 lbs.	Hickory Creek Allamakee County	5-20	Mary Ann Blossfeld North Liberty
12 lbs.	Bear Creek Fayette County	4-11	Michael Lee Willic Strawberry Point
12 lbs.	Bear Creek Fayette County	6-12	Richard Crail Algona
12 lbs.	South Bear Winneshiek County	4-15	Kyle Bigler Mason City

**WALLEYE (Minimum - 8 lbs. or 28")**

11 lbs. 15 oz.	Chariton River Appanoose County	4-3	James M. Boylan Des Moines
11 lbs. 9.5 oz.	Shellrock River Butler County	3-28	Pat Nettleton Greene
11 lbs. 4.64 oz.	Big Cedar River Mitchell County	12-2	Vernon Dickey Osage
11 lbs. 2 oz.	Storm Lake Buena Vista County	10-22	Bruce Nieland Newell
10 lbs.	Storm Lake Buena Vista County	7-23	Terry Irwin Lake View
9 lbs. 11 oz.	West Okobojo Dickinson County	1-3	Clarence Bendlin Arnolds Park
9 lbs. 10 oz.	West Okobojo Dickinson County	11-23	Ted Wick Sheldon
9 lbs. 10 oz.	Big Creek Lake Polk County	10-9	Jim Pritchard Polk City
9 lbs. 8 oz.	Saylorville Lake Polk County	10-18	Dick Kyras Perry
9 lbs. 8 oz.	Rathbun Marina Appanoose County	6-11	Paul Fisher Waukeo

**WHITE AMUR (Minimum - 25 lbs.)**

51 lbs. 0.8 oz.	Viking Lake Montgomery County	9-27	Leon Allen Omaha
41 lbs.	Viking Lake Montgomery County	7-2	George Rakes Omaha
36 lbs. 8 oz.	Polk County	4-12	Greg Hansen Altoona
26 lbs.	Iowa River Tama County	11-5	Bill Carlson Tama
24 lbs. 14.4 oz.	Fort Des Moines Pond Polk County	4-10	Curt Jarvis Des Moines

\*New State Record

**IOWA ALL-TIME RECORD FISH**

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
<b>BASS (Largemouth)</b> 10 lbs. 12 oz.	Lake Fisher, Davis County	23-1/2"	5-84 Patricia Zaerr Davenport
<b>BASS (Ocean Striped)</b> 9 lbs. 4 oz.	Lake Rathbun, Appanoose County	29"	7-83 Richard Pauley Mystic
<b>BASS (Rock)</b> 1 lb. 8 oz.	Mississippi River, Dubuque County	10-1/2"	6-73 Jim Driscoll Dubuque
<b>BASS (Smallmouth)</b> 6 lbs. 8 oz.	Spirit Lake, Dickinson County	21-3/8"	5-79 Rick Pentland Estherville
<b>BASS (White)</b> 3 lbs. 14 oz.	West Okobojo, Dickinson County	20"	5-72 Bill Born Milford
<b>BASS (Wiper)</b> 10 lbs. 10.5 oz.	Des Moines River, Polk County	25"	5-88 Dick Kyras Perry
<b>BASS (Yellow)</b> 1 lb. 8 oz.	Cedar River, Black Hawk County	13-1/2"	9-86 Timothy Dolan Waterloo
<b>BLUEGILL</b> 3 lbs. 2 oz.	Farm Pond, Madison County	12-7/8"	7-86 Phil Algreen Earlham
<b>BOWFIN (Dogfish)</b> 10 lbs. 2 oz.	Mississippi River, Allamakee County	30-1/2"	5-87 Joel Morgan Dike
<b>BULLHEAD</b> 5 lbs. 8 oz.	Farm Pond, Hamilton County	22"	86 Michael Hurd Ellsworth
<b>BUFFALO</b> 51 lbs.	East Okobojo, Dickinson County	45"	4-86 Jeff Duis Sibley
<b>CARP</b> 51 lbs.	Glenwood Lake, Montgomery County	44"	5-69 Fred Houghland Glenwood
<b>CATFISH (Blue)</b> 30 lbs. 11 oz.	Des Moines River, Lee County	39-3/4"	7-86 Steve Proper Farmington
<b>CATFISH (Channel)</b> 31 lbs.	Gravel Pit, Cedar County	37"	6-86 Kyle Gettschalk Lowden

Weight	Where Caught	Date	Name and Address
<b>CATFISH (Flathead)</b> 62 lbs.	Iowa River, Johnson County	46"	7-65 Roger Fairchild Coralville
<b>CRAPPIE</b> 4 lbs. 9 oz.	Green Castle Lake, Marshall County	21-1/4"	5-81 Ted Trowbridge Marshalltown
<b>FRESHWATER DRUM</b> 46 lbs.	Spirit Lake, Dickinson County	38-1/2"	10-62 R. F. Farran Clarion
<b>MUSKELLUNGE</b> 38 lbs. 5 oz.	West Okobojo, Dickinson County	48"	12-86 Dan Dickinson Spirit Lake
<b>TIGER MUSKIE</b> 24 lbs. 4 oz.	Lake Rathbun, Appanoose County	45"	5-87 Mike Brock Albia
<b>NORTHERN PIKE</b> 25 lbs. 5 oz.	West Okobojo, Dickinson County	45"	2-77 Allen Forsberg Albert City
<b>PADDLEFISH</b> 107 lbs.	Missouri River, Monona County	69-1/2"	3-81 Robert Pranschke Onawa
<b>PERCH (Yellow)</b> 1 lb. 15 oz.	Spirit Lake, Dickinson County	14-3/4"	9-74 John Walz Estherville
<b>SAUGER</b> 6 lbs. 8 oz.	Missouri River, Woodbury County	25"	10-76 Mrs. William Buser Sloan
<b>STURGEON (Shovelnose)</b> 12 lbs.	Des Moines River, Van Buren County	33"	4-74 Randy Hemm Douds
<b>SUCKERS (Misc.)</b> 15 lbs. 1 oz.	Missouri River, Monroe County	32-1/4"	9-83 Glen E. Dittman Onawa
<b>SUNFISH (Misc.)</b> 1 lb. 13 oz.	Lake Geode, Henry County	10-1/4"	9-67 Dale Cornick Burlington
<b>TROUT (Brook)</b> 2 lbs. 14 oz.	Canoe Creek, Winneshiek County	17"	3-81 Lyle Brown, Jr. Decatur
<b>TROUT (Brown)</b> 15 lbs. 4 oz.	French Creek, Allamakee County	31"	7-84 Fred Daugs Minneapolis, MN
<b>TROUT (Rainbow)</b> 19 lbs. 8 oz.	French Creek, Allamakee County	35"	7-84 Jack Renner Waterloo
<b>WALLEYE</b> 14 lbs. 8 oz.	Des Moines River, Polk County	30-1/2"	9-86 Glona Eoriatti Ankeny
<b>WHITE AMUR</b> 51 lbs. 0.8 oz.	Viking Lake, Montgomery County	9-88	Leon Allen Omaha, NE



**B**eyond the simple fact that I relish their flavor, I really do not know very much about wild mushrooms. However, I do know quite a lot about the people who hunt them. And while I am admittedly uncomfortable about making brash generalizations concerning any group of people, I do feel that some broad, sweeping and open-minded observations about this particular breed of hobbyists are in order.

Those observations are as follows: Mushroom hunters are greedy, aggressive, inconsiderate, and for the most part, just plain crazy. They are also far and away the most secretive collection of people I have ever encountered. Even hard-core trout enthusiasts are less tight-lipped, if you can believe that. And I doubt that even a torture chamber would make an avid mushroomer divulge the location of their latest find.

Of course, there is always the exception. Take, for example, Bill Ohde of Mediapolis. In addition to being your general hunter, trapper, trader, sort-of-outdoorsman, Gentleman Bill is also an ardent mushroom fancier. But since Ohde possesses what some have termed as a "kinder, gentler" nature, he is not nearly so greedy, crazy and secretive as the rest. In fact, he even recently went so far as to allow me to tag along on a hunt to one of his own private hotspots.

By habit, Ohde is an early riser and on the appointed day I arrived at his home shortly after sunrise, as instructed. There I was informed that we would travel to "Mushroom Paradise," via Ohde's vehicle, and that Buck (a big, yellow labrador retriever and Bill's closest friend) would accompany us on the expedition.

Buck was already positioned in the back seat, and as we were introduced, he extended a massive paw in friendship. I have always been a Chesapeake man myself, and although I usually make it a matter of personal practice never to trust a Lab, I must admit Buck won my confidence. But as I reached to accept the paw, I heard a dull, sickening thud and at the same moment realized that I had been dealt a substantial blow to the back of the head. As I faded into unconsciousness, I heard the sound of fiendish laughter as I was being stuffed into the back seat of Ohde's ancient Chevrolet.



KEN FORMANEK



# *In the World of the Mushroom Hunter, Things Aren't Always What They Seem* by Lowell Washburn





GEORGE KNAPHUS

When I regained my senses a few moments later, I discovered that I was tightly blindfolded with some sort of towel. Cautiously raising the blindfold's corner, I caught a glimpse of a heavy-duty, zip-lock bag partially filled with what appeared to be #6 lead shot lying on the floor in front of me. I quickly deduced that the bag had a direct connection with the growing knot on the back of my head.

The amiable Buck was now secured to the opposite door post by means of a log chain. When the creature detected my eye peering from beneath the blindfold, he curled his upper lip in a fierce snarl, displaying an impressive set of long, slightly yellowed canines. He then began to lunge uncontrollably in my direction. Instantly I understood. Buck, it was clear, was a mushroom hunter, too.

Ohde, now behind the wheel, was of course drawn to the commotion. Glancing into the rearview mirror, he, too, saw my exposed eye. "I wouldn't be messing with that blindfold just yet Hotshot," he said in a low, menacing voice. Always quick to take a hint, I immediately dropped the cloth back over both eyes.

Satisfied that all was well, Ohde revved the engine and dumped the clutch. The car lurched ahead as the screaming tires gripped the pavement. We were off for a day in the woods. During the course of our route we careened down back roads, around corners, and on at least several occasions spun completely around in what I assumed was an attempt to destroy my sense of orientation.

As we neared our destination, Ohde outdid himself when he apparently misjudged the severity of a corner. Throwing the vehicle into a powerslide, we went over what must have been a fairly steep embankment. The Chevy rolled twice, but settled again to its wheels.

As the dust and debris settled, I could hear the sound of a warbler as well as Buck's anxious whine. A once-again cheerful Ohde exclaimed, "Come on Washtub. What are you waiting for? Let's hunt mushrooms!"

See? What did I tell you? This guy is not nearly as bad as your average mushroom hunter.

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Although Iowa's woodlands produce several edible varieties of mushrooms, most hunters seek one major type—the morel. The morel is found throughout the state and is most abundant during the month of May. Like all other mushrooms, the morel is a fungus, and unlike plants, does not derive its energy from sunlight. Instead, its growth is triggered by warmth and moisture, and may be accomplished in a single day.

Compared to other fungi, scientists actually know very little about the morel. And although rumors persist to the contrary, it appears as if no one has yet succeeded in culturing it. It is known that the morel feeds on humus and reproduces by means of microscopic spores. The lifespan of the morel is short, often only two or three days.

For those who fancy becoming mushroom hunters, the good news is that it is about as inexpensive a hobby as one can find. Only two pieces of equipment are needed, a bag and a stick. The stick is used to brush away leaf litter and once discovered, the mushrooms are plopped into the bag.

Morels may grow in just about any timber, but most enthusiasts have an affinity for searching in the vicinity of dead or dying trees, particularly elms. Usually, where one morel is found, there will be others hiding nearby. Sometimes, even a rank amateur can stumble into what the pros refer to as the "mother lode." In this case the morels blanket the ground by dozens or even hundreds and are picked by the garbage bag full.

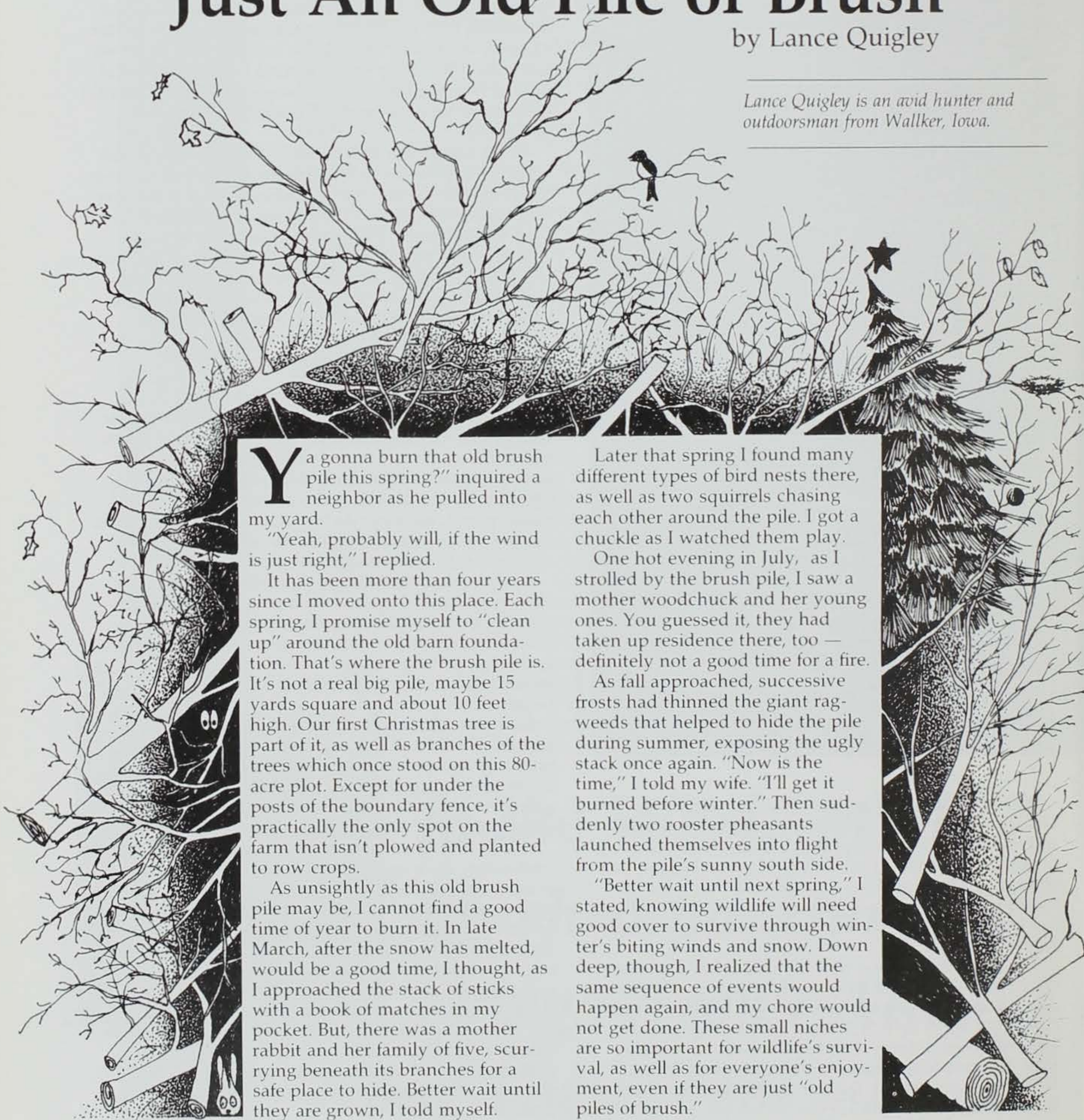
I must admit I have never experienced such a discovery. Myself, I feel like I have struck it rich if I leave the woods with half a bread sack full. Oh well, there is always tomorrow. And if I do manage to locate a genuine "mother lode," you will be the first to know . . . trust me.



# Just An Old Pile of Brush

by Lance Quigley

*Lance Quigley is an avid hunter and outdoorsman from Wallker, Iowa.*



**Y**a gonna burn that old brush pile this spring?" inquired a neighbor as he pulled into my yard.

"Yeah, probably will, if the wind is just right," I replied.

It has been more than four years since I moved onto this place. Each spring, I promise myself to "clean up" around the old barn foundation. That's where the brush pile is. It's not a real big pile, maybe 15 yards square and about 10 feet high. Our first Christmas tree is part of it, as well as branches of the trees which once stood on this 80-acre plot. Except for under the posts of the boundary fence, it's practically the only spot on the farm that isn't plowed and planted to row crops.

As unsightly as this old brush pile may be, I cannot find a good time of year to burn it. In late March, after the snow has melted, would be a good time, I thought, as I approached the stack of sticks with a book of matches in my pocket. But, there was a mother rabbit and her family of five, scurrying beneath its branches for a safe place to hide. Better wait until they are grown, I told myself.

Later that spring I found many different types of bird nests there, as well as two squirrels chasing each other around the pile. I got a chuckle as I watched them play.

One hot evening in July, as I strolled by the brush pile, I saw a mother woodchuck and her young ones. You guessed it, they had taken up residence there, too — definitely not a good time for a fire.

As fall approached, successive frosts had thinned the giant rag-weeds that helped to hide the pile during summer, exposing the ugly stack once again. "Now is the time," I told my wife. "I'll get it burned before winter." Then suddenly two rooster pheasants launched themselves into flight from the pile's sunny south side.

"Better wait until next spring," I stated, knowing wildlife will need good cover to survive through winter's biting winds and snow. Down deep, though, I realized that the same sequence of events would happen again, and my chore would not get done. These small niches are so important for wildlife's survival, as well as for everyone's enjoyment, even if they are just "old piles of brush."



## WARDEN'S DIARY

### Lending A Helping Hand? by Jerry Hoilien

It was a beautiful day in Keokuk. That's about as far south and east as you can go in Iowa, as you know. The sun was shining, the sky was filled with white billowy clouds, and the birds were singing. I felt good! Great day to take a walk down by the waterfront and see what the anglers were doing.

There were a lot of boats on the Mississippi River. Lock & Dam 9 is

only a mile from the mouth of the Des Moines River and the Missouri line. There is an old story about how that little tip (the "hangy-down" part) of Iowa got there. Seems there used to be a big rapids there before the dams were built, and when the original surveyors came up the Mississippi River they got confused and turned up the Des Moines for a short distance. By

the time they realized their error, they just shot a line going straight west and called everything north Iowa. They then back-tracked to the Mississippi and started north. Now you know how we got that little bump called lower Lee County.

Well, I checked a number of anglers along the rocks below the dam and found myself at the boat dock marina. Some boats were coming into there so I checked a few more as I worked my way down to the end of the dock. It was quite a distance, as it used to be a long floating dock. Anyway, there on the very end was a good friend, and I stopped to visit. He was gathering up all his gear and was trying to get it all together so he could make just one trip, but he had too much.

"Let me help," I said, picking up his poles and tackle box. "You get the rest. I'm headed up that way right past your car."

He kept up a constant chatter up the long dock and the flight of stairs and all the way to his car. I set his gear down and waved goodbye. Nice guy, I always enjoyed him. Maybe when I retire I can do like he does and fish everyday.

A couple of weeks later I saw him in a cafe and waved him over to my table.

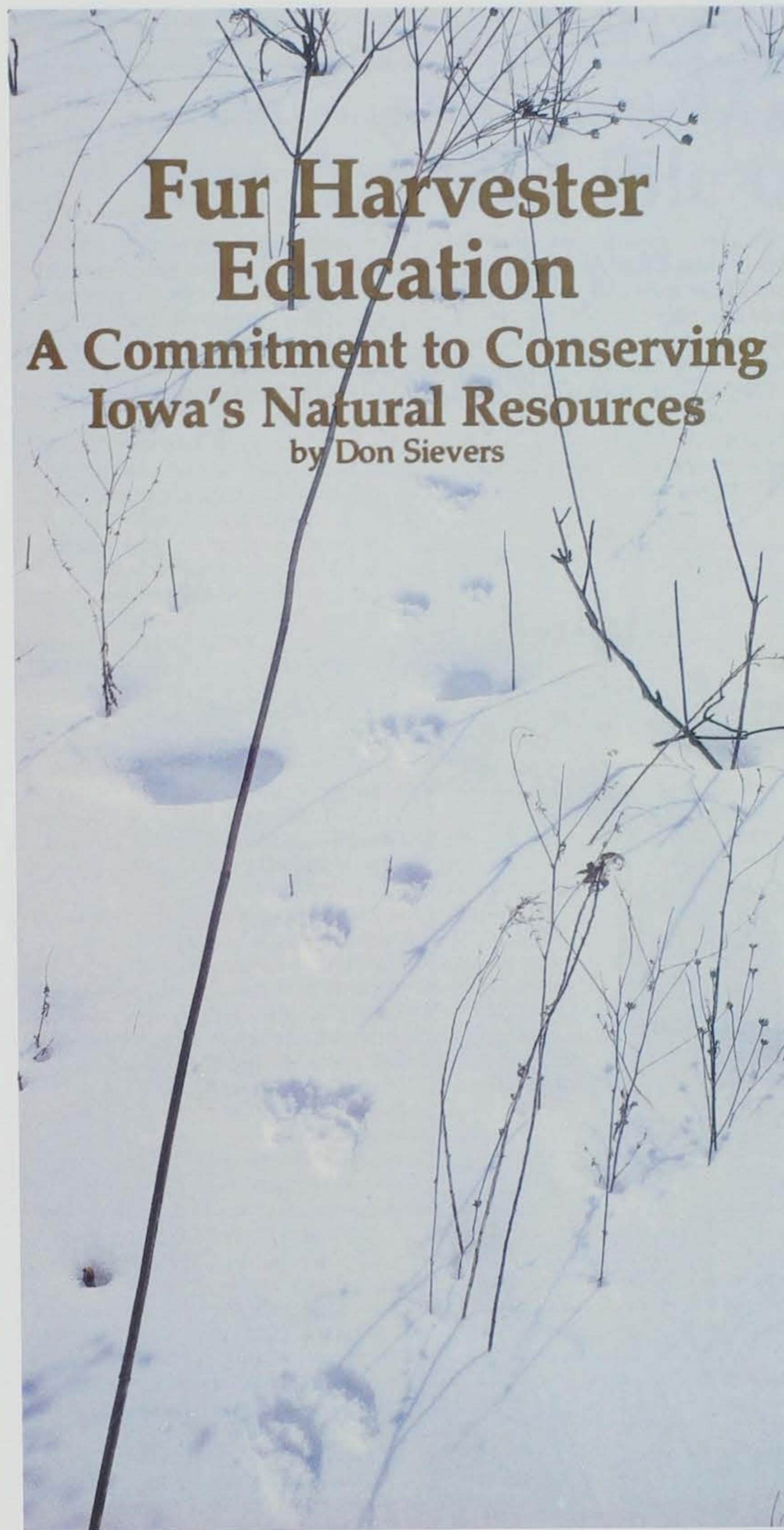
"Not on your life!" he said. "By the time I got home the last time I saw you, my wife had gotten three calls that I'd been picked up by the game warden and was on my way to jail." Seems he spent the next few days trying to explain it all, but all he got was, "Yeah, yeah, tell that to your wife, maybe she'll believe you. You can't fool us, we saw him take your poles and tackle box—Ha!"

He laughed and said he'd carry his own gear from now on. He sat down at the counter and grinned. But he bought my coffee.



ILLUSTRATION BY NEWTON BURCH





# Fur Harvester Education

## A Commitment to Conserving Iowa's Natural Resources

by Don Sievers

As it was for Henry David Thoreau during his time at Walden Pond, most of us possess an unending desire to learn. While some are satisfied with trivial facts, others are driven to find absolutes. It makes little difference if our educational course follows the theme of backyard barbecuing, computer programming, or tracking an animal in fresh snow; we will all follow paths that require continual education.

Many of us will strengthen our education through exploration. We will learn from our actions and reactions, while exploring new horizons. Hopefully, we will be fortunate to have teachers who will help to guide us onward, teachers that will help lead us through our exploration and stimulate us further by introducing new concepts. It will be their goal, that as we spend time learning, we will come to understand and apply our education to other concepts and principles throughout our lives.

And so it is with fur harvester education. Although hunting and trapping furbearers in Iowa dates back to the time of early exploration in the 1600s, formal education about fur harvesting is a recent development. Programs in the late 1940s were directed towards assisting farmers in controlling livestock losses caused by predators. During the 1970s a need was recognized to educate inexperienced hunters and trappers about basic fur harvesting. By 1984, 28 states, including Iowa, were offering trapper education courses.

Many individuals from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, county conservation boards, fur harvester organizations and concerned sportspersons participated in those earlier educational programs. As a result of those efforts, a need was recognized for educational materials concerning furbearers and fur harvesting that provided continuity to programs held throughout the state.

The voluntary fur harvester education program is designed to meet that need. Iowa's program is unique, offering educational opportunities for all fur harvesters, including trappers, hounds handlers and predator callers.

DON SIEVERS



Harvesting furbearers is not for everyone. If you are a fur harvester or are considering becoming one, you must be willing to accept the responsibilities that accompany it.

Many individuals do not fish, hunt or trap and feel they do not need to become better educated about natural resources.

There are, however, no excuses for avoidable misuses of natural resources resulting from a lack of education by experienced or inexperienced individuals, for there are

developed as a resource for fur harvesters and is intended for use in conjunction with the DNR's fur harvester education program. The manual can be used alone, as a reference or self-instruction tool, but will be of most value and be better understood if it is used in conjunction with the education program.

Students will be required to attend classes and participate in both classroom and field experience portions of the program. An examination will be given with 80 percent

contact the Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034. Take the time to learn more about Iowa's furbearers. Through education, you can become part of a commitment to conserving Iowa's natural resources.

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*Don Sievers is a training officer located at the Conservation Education Center at Springbrook State Park.*

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*"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discovered that I had not lived."*

— Thoreau

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no non-consumptive users of wildlife and natural resources. There are only direct and indirect consumers, and many times there is a fine line drawn between the two. If you lack understanding and respect for wildlife and other natural resources, you have little basis for becoming a fur harvester or an opponent of those that do.

The DNR recognizes the desire and need for Iowans to learn more about Iowa's furbearers. In cooperation with the Iowa Chapters of Furtakers of America, Inc., Iowa State Coonhunters Association, Inc., and the Iowa Trapper's association, the DNR is developing a voluntary fur harvester education program. The 12-hour program is intended to guide fur harvesters by improving their knowledge of furbearers and by providing them with basic information needed to harvest furbearers in a responsible manner. It is also an excellent opportunity for the indirect user to become more knowledgeable about wildlife. Topics covered in the course include ethics and responsibility, the furbearer resource, harvest methods, laws and other subjects leading participants towards constructive decisions about their environment.

An informational manual is being

comprehension required before participants will be certified as graduates of the program. The program is open to anyone interested in learning more about furbearers.

Because fur harvesters are both hunters and trappers and may use both boating and off-the-road vehicles, it is recommended that they take the DNR's boating and water safety, and snowmobile/ATV safety courses. A basic first-aid course is also suggested. Fur harvesters carrying a hunting license, a combination license or fur, fish and game license born after January 1, 1967, are required to successfully complete the DNR's hunter safety education class.

The DNR is now compiling a list of potential volunteer instructors for the course. Instructors for the program will be certified by the DNR after completion of the student fur harvester education course and after attending and completing an instructor's training program. Instructors must be at least 18 years of age and have a minimum of three years of experience in fur harvesting. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer instructor, contact your local conservation or recreational safety officer to obtain an instructor application form, or



KEN FORMANEK

*Whether trappers or not, the new fur harvester education program is designed to help Iowans better understand their furbearer resource.*



# CONSERVATION UPDATE

## The Iowa Morel / False Morel Survey — A Five-Year Report

For the past five years, the people of Iowa have been participating in an interesting and unusual research project involving morels and false morels. Its primary goal is to determine the distribution of morel and false morel species in Iowa.



*Researchers are in need of morel and false morel specimens from around the state, but especially from 20 Iowa counties where none have been available for study.*

The information from the survey has been limited somewhat because only two years (1984 and 1986) were good collecting years. The years 1985 and 1987 were quite dry and 1988 was very dry. Morels and false morels are typically more numerous in wet years unless other environmental factors become limiting. The total numbers of documentations for each of the years is as follows:

1984 - 241,  
1985 - 55,  
1986 - 360,  
1987 - 91,  
1988 - 20.

The fungi studied include five species of true morels, *Morchella deliciosa*, *Morchella esculenta*, *Morchella crassipes*, *Morchella angusticeps* and *Morchella semilibera* and four species of false morels, *Verpa conica*, *Verpa bohemica*, *Gyromitra caroliniana* and *Gyromitra brunnea*.

The Iowa morel and false morel survey is a comprehensive study of interest to mushroom scholars all over the nation. "Without the cooperation of people who know the morel-producing sites in their area, fresh material for analysis could not be observed and studied during such a short fruiting season," said George Knaphus of the botany department at Iowa State University. "The people of Iowa are showing that a project such as this can be an effective research study. The original plan was to conduct the survey for five years. However, there are still unanswered questions about the distribution of these fungi. It has been decided to continue the project, perhaps for an additional five years, with hope of a wet spring in 1989 and in the spring seasons of the next few years. Research of additional specimens will help answer some of these questions."

No morels or false morels have been available from the following counties: Adair, Adams, Audubon, Buchanan, Calhoun, Cass, Chickasaw, Clarke, Clay, Frank-

lin, Grundy, Hancock, Howard, Ida, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Pocahontas, Taylor and Wright. Researchers are especially interested in receiving specimens from these counties.

This spring the researchers on this project will again include Don Huffman of Central College at Pella, chairperson of the Prairie States Mushroom Club and president of the North American Mycological Association, and Lois Tiffany, Laura Sweets and or George Knaphus from Iowa State University. One specimen of each kind of morel and false morel collected should be sent to Dr. Lois Tiffany, Plant Pathology Extension Service of Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, or may be submitted to any county extension office in the state for shipment. They can also be submitted to Dr. Don Huffman, Biology Department, Central College, Pella, Iowa 50219.

The specimens can be past their prime, especially the true morels, because spores are produced late in their development and are useful for identification even when the morels are no longer appetizing as food. All specimens should be wrapped in paper toweling or newspaper and packaged in a protective paper container. The collections must not be put in plastic bags as they deteriorate very quickly in plas-





One variety of false morel is the *Gyromitra brunnea*.

tic containers. The following information for each specimen when possible should be included: 1) collector's name; 2) date of collection; 3) county where collected; 4) plants, especially trees, in the vicinity; and 5) collection area (hillside, bottom land, etc.).

Anyone, especially physicians, knowing of instances of suspected mushroom poisoning, whether from these fungi or others, are asked to report the instance to one of the previously mentioned researchers. More information on symptoms and seriousness of illnesses involving mushrooms is needed. This project can help to clarify the extent of this problem in Iowa and give all Iowans confidence in eating mushrooms safely.

Useful field guides for morels and other fungi in Iowa include:

- Morels, False Morels and Other Fungi. PM-1204 Iowa State University Extension Service. Available at county extension offi-

ces or Iowa State University Extension Service for \$2.00.

- Mushrooms and Other Related Fungi. Extension Publication 129. Available at county extension offices or Iowa State University Extension Service for 70 cents.
- Mushrooms and Other Fungi of the Mid-Continental United States. Available at Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa 50011 for \$19.95.
- Morels and False Morels, *Iowa CONSERVATIONIST*, April 1986, pages 21-23. Out of print. Available at most public libraries.

### DNR Newsletters Free To Public

The *Groundwater Protection News* is a cooperative publication effort of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Public Health, and the Iowa Board of Regents and associated institutions. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep the public informed of the effects of the 1987 Groundwater Protection Act.

The 1987 Groundwater Protection Act is a non-regulatory approach to environmental protection. It focuses its attention on research and education in the belief that the only rational approach to protection is the elimination of the problem at the source.

The *Groundwater Protection News* is part of the education effort outlined in the act.

The newsletter is free to any interested person or organization and it is published five or six times per year. To receive the newsletter, call the toll-free Groundwater Protection Hotline at 1-800-532-1114 or write to Kathryn Stangl, Editor, *Groundwater Protection News*, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

Energy works for us every day, from heating and lighting our homes to powering our industry. Energy policies have a profound effect on Iowa's economy, its environment and its people. Informing Iowans about energy is the goal of the *Iowa Energy Bulletin*.

The *Iowa Energy Bulletin* is published six times per year by the Energy and Geological Resources Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Recent issues include articles on a junior high class that broadcasts energy tips over their local radio station; a discussion of new, inexpensive solar energy technologies; and information on how to make your home more energy efficient.

The newsletter is available free from the Department of Natural Resources. To subscribe, write to Patricia Cale, Editor, *Iowa Energy Bulletin*, Wallace State Office

Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

### DNR Publications

New and recently revised publications of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources are listed below. This listing will appear periodically as additional publications are completed. These publications are free unless otherwise noted (\$). To request copies, write Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034, or call (515)281-5145. (We reserve the right to limit quantities.)

*A Guide To The Bats of Iowa* (New; 20 pages with color photographs; natural history of bats, including nine species found in Iowa.) (\$1 each)

*The Lizards and Turtles of Iowa* (New; 19 pages with color photographs; natural history of lizards and turtles including five species of lizards and 13 species of turtles found in Iowa.) (\$1 each)

*Fishing Guide* (Revised)

*1989 Fishing Regulations* (Revised)

### Fishing Report Available

For the latest update on fishing hotspots across the state, call (515)281-3307 for a recorded message. The recording is updated each Wednesday morning and is available through July.



## Boating Accidents Decrease During 1988

Iowa boaters were involved in 44 accidents in 1988, resulting in 24 personal injuries and eight fatalities, according to Iowa Department of Natural Resources' officials. Property losses exceeded \$100,000.

This is a decrease from 1987 statistics when

there were 48 reported accidents, resulting in 37 personal injuries and eight deaths.

Iowa's lakes and reservoirs proved to be the most dangerous, accounting for 27 accidents. Iowa's inland and border rivers accounted for 15 accidents. Types of accidents included four vessels capsizing, eight people falling overboard, two

vessels colliding with fixed objects, 13 boats colliding with other vessels and two fires on board.

According to Sonny Satre, recreational safety coordinator for the DNR, almost all of the accidents could have been prevented by using common sense and by following simple navigational rules. According to Satre, causes of accidents included overloading, rough or hazardous water conditions, an improper outlook, operator negligence, excessive speed, faulty equipment and alcohol use.

Satre urged boaters to be familiar with Iowa's boating regulations. To avoid collisions, boaters should be knowledgeable of right of way rules and speed and distance regulations. Boaters may obtain a copy of Iowa Boating Regulations from county recorder offices or by writing to the DNR, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034. "Keeping Iowa Waters Safe," a 16-page booklet on water safety can also be obtained.

The DNR has developed a home-study boating safety course which is ideal for ages 12 and older. Those who successfully complete the course will receive a certificate and boating patch from the DNR. Successful students may also receive a discount on their boating insurance from several companies.

## Charter Oak-Ute Students Win Water Safety Poster Contest

Three sixth-grade students from Charter Oak-Ute School have won the first, second and third places in the ninth annual boating and water safety poster contest. The theme for this year's contest was "Take a Boating Course."

Kirk Bode won first place for his poster with the message, "Think First About Water Safety." In addition to

### Boat Registrations Expire April 30

The Department of Natural Resources reminds boaters that this is the year to register boats. At midnight April 30, all boat registration certificates will expire.

Vessel owners may obtain an application for registration from the county recorder in the county in which they reside. Registration will be valid for a two-year period ending April 30, 1991. The fees are as follows:

#### Iowa Boat Registration Fees

			Odd-Numbered Year	New Registrations Only Even-Numbered Year
No Motor/ No Sail	Any Length	New	\$ 5.00	\$ 2.50
		Renew	5.00	----
Motorboat OR Sailboat	Less Than 12 Ft. In Length	New	8.00	4.00
		Renew	8.00	----
	12 Ft. To Less Than 15 Ft.	New	10.00	5.00
		Renew	10.00	----
	15 Ft. To Less Than 18 Ft.	New	12.00	6.00
		Renew	12.00	----
18 Ft. To Less Than 25 Ft.	New	18.00	9.00	
	Renew	18.00	----	
25 Ft. Or More In Length	New	28.00	14.00	
	Renew	28.00	----	
Documented Vessels	Any Length	New	25.00	12.50
		Renew	25.00	----

A \$1 writing fee is charged by the county recorder for each registration.



winning \$100 and a certificate provided by IMT Insurance, Kirk has been invited to meet Governor Terry Branstad and witness the signing of Iowa's safe boating proclamation in May.

Second place winner, Christian Berens, receives \$50 and third place winner, Garred Blume, receives \$25. Honorable mention certificates will be sent to 14 additional students



## HOOK YOUR FRIENDS ON FISHIN' FUN!

NATIONAL FISHING WEEK  
JUNE 5-11, 1989



whose drawings were selected by the judging panel. Hoover Elementary School of Mason City will receive \$50 for entering 59 posters in the contest, the most entries received from one school.

According to Sonny Satre, recreational safety coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the poster contest was a big success. "Choosing the best designs from about 300 entries proved to be a difficult task for our judges," he said. "The committee was pleased with the interest shown by students across Iowa. Every poster carried an important safety message."

Satre said the objective of the project is to develop water safety awareness among young Iowans. "We are happy with the response. Participating school administrators and teachers, as well as the students, are making a real contribution toward water safety in Iowa."

IMT Insurance will print a quantity of the winning poster for distribution throughout the state.

### Always Wear A PFD While Boating

Sonny Satre, recreational safety coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources, urges people who use small boats to make sure, before leaving shore, that everyone on board is wearing a properly fitted lifejacket.

The law requires that each boat have on board a personal flotation device for each person. If the boat is longer than 16 feet, wearable flotation devices are required. However, Satre warns if the lifejacket is tucked away inside the boat and not worn, boaters take a chance in becoming a boating statistic. Most fatal accidents are the results of capsizing or falling overboard. Accidents happen suddenly, without warning and with no time to get into a lifejacket.

If a boater falls into the water, a lifejacket will keep him or her floating while climbing back on the boat, getting to shore or keeping still in the water to forestall hypothermia until help arrives.

### Classroom Corner

by Robert P. Rye

Catching crayfish is an exciting exercise for a class. The students soon learn the reverse escape method used by crayfish and how to develop a trap to catch them. They learn about the body parts, including which pinch, and how to hold a crayfish so this does not happen.

Answer the following true/false questions and see how much you know about them:

1. Crayfish are arthropods, which means they have jointed legs.
2. Crayfish live in shallow, freshwater lakes, streams and ponds.
3. Crayfish burrow into moist ground and are found frequently feeding on land.
4. Crayfish must hide under rocks and debris at all times for protection.
5. Crayfish feed at night and hide under rocks and plants during the day.
6. Crayfish eat only animals such as tadpoles, insects, fish and snails.
7. Under the tail are little fingers called "swimmerettes" on which the eggs are attached.
8. The tiny newborn crayfish look very different from their parents.
9. Crayfish serve as food for larger animals such as raccoons, opossums, turtles, birds and fish.
10. Crayfish can regenerate lost limbs.

#### Answers:

1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False (They have an extra skeleton for protection.) 5. True 6. False (The greatest percentage of their diet is plants.) 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. True



## COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD FEATURE

### A Study In Contrasts by Lisa Schoning

Crystal Lake Park is located just north of the town of Crystal Lake in Hancock County. Owned by the state and managed by the Hancock County Conservation Board, the park contains more than 400 acres, including 263-acre Crystal Lake.

The park is visited frequently by campers and boaters, and picnickers by the hundreds have used the shelterhouse since the park opened in 1970. Through major improvements at the park in recent years, the park now offers additional recreational opportunities for visitors.

During the spring of 1988, modern rest rooms and showers were constructed, and a dump station was added. A sand volleyball court and concrete basketball half-court were also completed. With the assistance of local residents, a foot and bike path was built around part of the lake and a sand beach was constructed.

In September 1986, the lake itself was renovated. Rotenone was applied, and the lake's fish populations were killed. Better-quality fish, such as bass, bluegill, catfish and wall-eye, were stocked, and an aerator system was installed to prevent major winterkills. In the spring of 1987, wild celery was planted in the lake to attract canvasback ducks. During the summer of 1988, a new boat dock and fishing jetty were built to encourage fishing opportunities. Many of the stocked fish are now rapidly approaching "keepable" size.

Approximately 60 to 70 campers use the park each week during the summer, and the campground's 170



WINNEBAGO CCB

units become completely filled during holiday weekends. On a typical summer weekend day, 30 boats can be seen using the lake.

A study in contrasting parks can be found approximately five miles northeast of Crystal Lake Park where the Winnebago County Conservation Board owns and manages Thorpe Park, located about five miles west of Forest City. Thorpe Park is managed for very different forms of recreation. Covering 342 acres, the park is an excellent mixture of uplands, marshes and bottomlands, and scattered forest remnants.

The park contains a shelterhouse, picnic area with playground equipment, and a primitive camping area. But much of the area is managed for wildlife. Lake Catherine, an artificial 10-acre lake, offers excellent fishing opportunities, and two marshes provide valuable stop-over areas for migrating waterfowl. As a result, hunting and fishing are popular pastimes at the park.

Several years ago, a Canada goose flock was purchased and released at Thorpe Park. The flock expanded rapidly as the geese used the marshes and the lake to nest

and raise their young. Because of the lake's aerator system, the geese are able to spend much of the winter at the park. Although goose hunting is not allowed in the park, the geese attract many people to the area for a close-up look at these beautiful birds.

Also popular at the park is the bluebird nest box trail. More than 40 boxes throughout the park host numerous nesting bluebirds each year, and

dozens of young bluebirds are hatched each summer. Many other types of wildlife may be observed at the park, including kestrels, deer and pheasants. An eagle or two have also been spotted flying over during the fall.

All of this is *not* to say that Crystal Lake Park does not have anything for the wildlife enthusiast or that you have to "rough it" to visit Thorpe Park. In fact, Crystal Lake Park has an adjacent wildlife area, and the state is presently working to develop several wetland areas to attract more waterfowl. Likewise, the Winnebago County Conservation Board plans to purchase new playground equipment for Thorpe Park, and a foot trail at the park is being developed into a self-guided nature trail.

The emphasis of each park is distinctly different. From volleyball and swimming at Crystal Lake to a quiet afternoon of fishing at Thorpe Park, an enjoyable time is available for everyone.

*Lisa Schoning is a naturalist with the Hancock and Winnebago County Conservation Boards.*



# Wader Fishing

by Chris Larson

When I used to think of wader fishing, I would picture a man in hip boots, standing in a small trout stream, flyrod poised, water rushing around his legs and a light steam rising from the surface. I have since learned there is more one can do with waders than just fish trout.

Wader fishing can be an effective, exciting and inexpensive technique for catching all species of fish that inhabit Iowa's waters. I have used wader fishing to stalk and increase my catch of almost every species of gamefish in Iowa from bluegills to walleyes and even a few trout.

## The Stalk

When you slip on your waders and walk to the water's edge—stop. Remember, the most important step in wader fishing is the stalk. In order to sneak up on fish, you must proceed through the water quietly, slowly and cautiously. The best way to do this is by sliding your feet along the bottom, taking short steps. Use as little arm movement as possible when casting. You are near the fish, and motion, like noise, may alarm your quarry.

An important, but not often thought of, part of

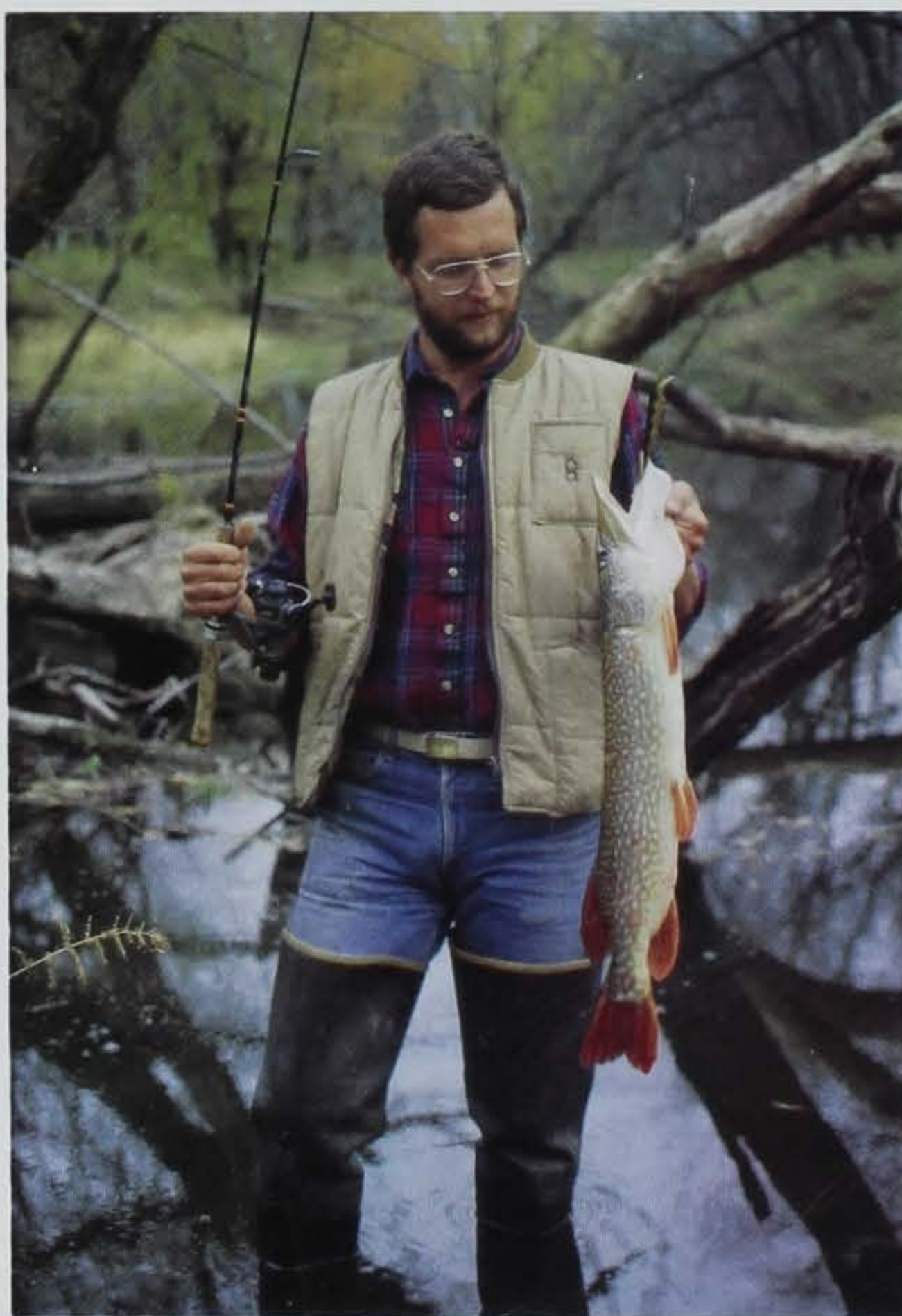
the stalk is the direction from which you approach the fish. Approach a fishing spot with the sun in your face, with your shadow behind you. This method will add secrecy and will be less likely to spook fish. Any fish you have caught

from shore in the past can be more effectively caught by stalking them in waders. This technique works anytime from ice-out to ice-up.

## Spring

I do most of my wader fishing in the spring when most fish are in shallow water, feeding and looking for spawning sites. The first species to stalk is the northern pike which is usually found in streams and rivers. Pike congregate below lowhead dams and riffles on their upstream journey to spawning sites. Wade out just below these congregation areas and look for pools or eddies at the end of fast water. Cast chartreuse or red and white 1/4-ounce leadhead jigs, tipped with minnows, up to the point where the fast water enters the pool. Bring the lure back very slowly with the current. If the fish are not there, try faster water.

Walleyes are next on the spring list. They can also be found moving up rivers and require the same methods used for northerns. Shallow natural lakes can also be good spots for spring walleyes. Try fishing shallow rocky areas where walleyes move to spawn or feed.



LOWELL WASHBURN

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## Not Just for Trout Anglers Anymore



The best fishing is around dawn or dusk. Switch to 1/8-ounce jigs in lakes. You can more easily feel fish pick up a smaller lure. Heavy jigs are essential in strong current, but not in a lake.

A couple of weeks after the walleye run is over, start stalking crappies. If you can locate their spawning sites along a lake shoreline, you can really hammer those old "paper mouths." You will probably find crappies around some sort of struc-

ture like fallen trees, submerged vegetation, or rocks in shallow water. You can cast from shore to their spawning beds, but I have found that they are more likely spooked by a large profile standing on shore. Wading perpendicular to the shoreline will cut a profile in half. Try using a 1/16- or 1/32-ounce chartreuse, red, yellow or white leadhead jig with a bobber set, so the jig lies one foot off the bottom. If the fish seem finicky, tip the rig

with a small minnow. Make short casts into open pockets and reel the rig back slowly. Any wave action will impart a jigging motion to your lure. If the water is calm, pop the bobber lightly as you bring it in.

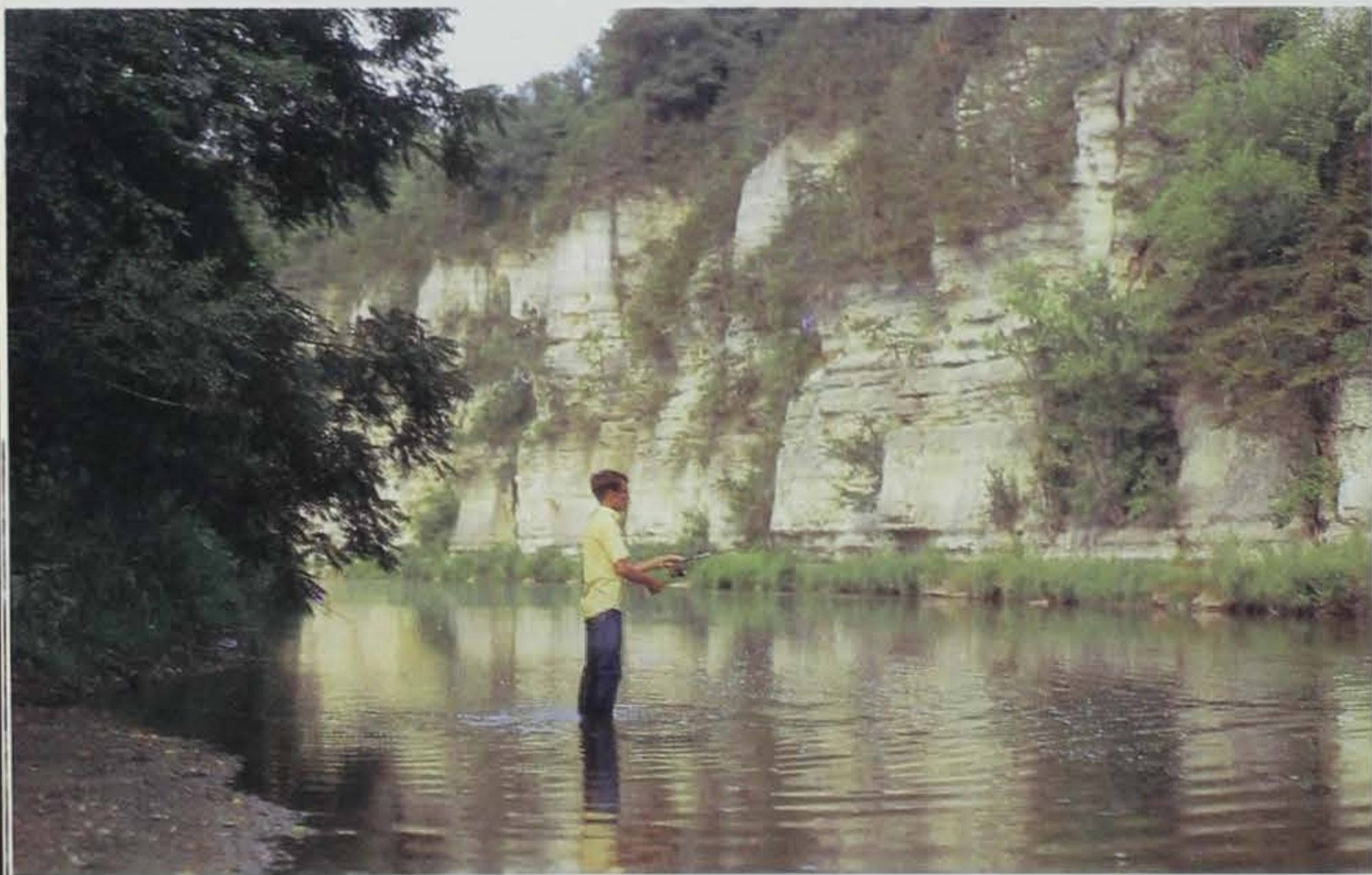
### Summer

Bluegills and summer go together, naturally. Early summer is the best time to try stalking "gills." Look for spawning beds that appear like elephant tracks in shallow water. Use almost the same technique for bluegills as used for crappies except with smaller 1/16-, 1/32- or 1/64-ounce black, brown or green maribou jigs. Quietly wade parallel to the shoreline casting out ahead until fish are located. Try to cast just beyond spawning areas and reel back slowly. Expect fast action from these aggressive fish.

Summer is also the best time to wade streams and rivers for catfish. Wait until the river has dropped to its summer stage and is safer to wade. Have someone let you out one or two bridges upstream from your car. Walk downstream. It is much easier to wade with the current than against it. Fish from one bridge to the next and expect wading to take around 1½ to 2 hours per mile. If you cannot get a friend to drop you off upstream from your car, wade upstream first when you have the most energy.

Fish any pool that is at least two feet deep, especially if there is a log or large rock in it. Catfish like to hide in shady areas during the hot summer months. Use a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce slip sinker and a #2 hook with 8- to 10-pound line. A small split shot can be used to keep the slip sinker one foot away from the hook. Let your favorite catfish bait drift through the pool from four or five directions. If you do not get a bite, move on to the next pool. This past summer I used this technique and came up with 12 cats between one and five pounds in two hours!

If you are in an area that has smallmouth bass, wade the rivers or streams using small crankbaits, jigs or spinners. Cast them into back eddies or pools using an upstream to downstream presentation. This makes the lure look more natural to the fish.



BRUCE ADAIR

*Whether it is smallmouth, catfish, bluegills or walleyes you are after, there is generally some point during the fishing season when wader fishing can be the most effective technique.*

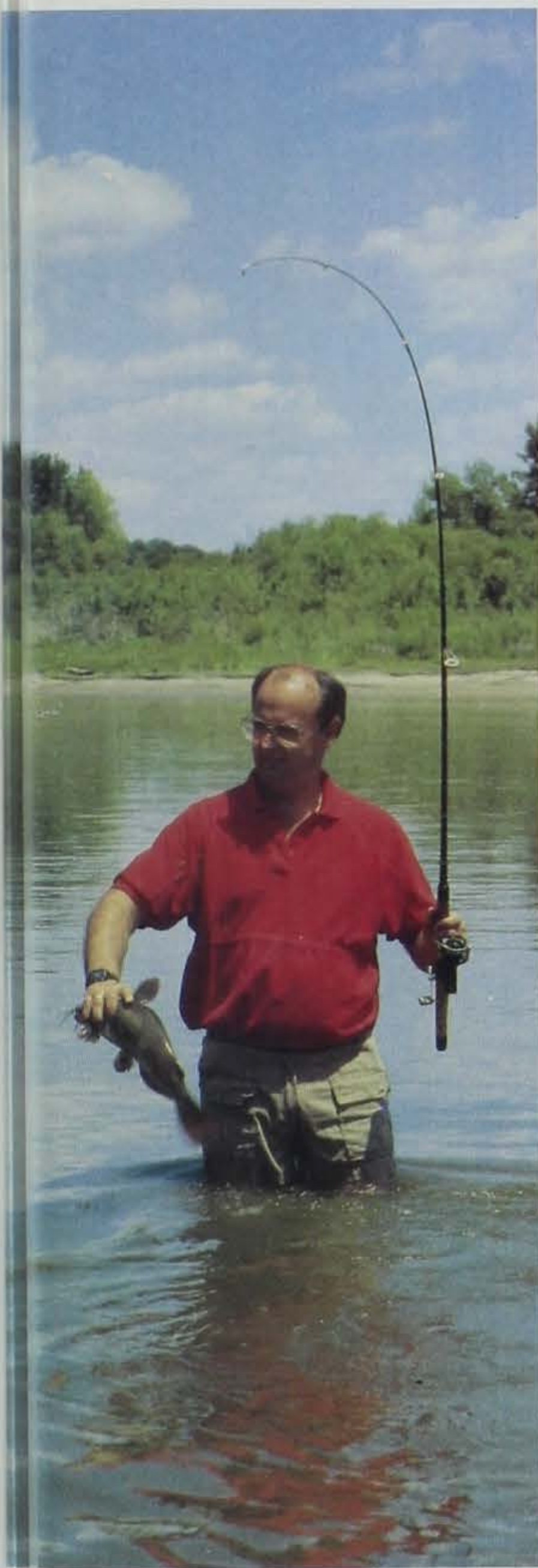


KAY HILL

*In the shallow water, bluegill spawning beds will resemble elephant tracks.*

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RON JOHNSON

## Fall

Just because you are busy hunting critters in the fall, do not hang up your waders just yet. Most people forget, prime-time for big walleyes is just before ice-up. They are just about as vulnerable in the fall as they are in the spring in both lakes and rivers. Use the same techniques as in the spring, but fish a notch or two slower than in the spring.

JIM WAHL



*One important piece of equipment to have while wader fishing is a stringer with clip-type fish holders.*

## Gear

The following are some items that will make your wading a little easier.

### Required

*Hipboots and/or chest waders.* It depends on the depth of water you will be fishing, but if you are just starting out, hip boots are easier to wade in.

*Wading belt or rope.* Tie this around your waist to attach all your paraphernalia. A belt will also help prevent water from spilling over into your waders if you step in deep water.

*Fish stringers or baskets.* Use a stringer with a clip-type fish holder. These do not require untying to string additional fish. Floating baskets work well for panfish.

### Optional

*Floating bait bucket.* Tie this to your wading belt.

*Headlamp or small flashlight* for night fishing.

*Purse-type shoulder bag* for storing lures, etc.

*Dip net.* You can tie it to your belt, but make sure it is as small as possible.

*Innertube.* Some people wear an innertube around their waist (this is also referred to as a belly boat). The tube helps keep you from falling in over your waders and makes balancing, while wading rocky areas, easier.

## Safety

I saved the most important item for last. Careless wader fishing can be dangerous. Wading in water is not easy and there is always the possibility of slipping into deep water and drowning. Here are a few safety tips.

- Watch out for holes and drop-offs especially in rivers. Slide your feet along the bottom keeping the weight on your back foot. If you feel a drop off with your front foot, step back to safer water.

- When wading in areas with big logs or boulders, make sure you have a firm foot-hold with your back foot before you take another step.

- If you have never walked in waders before, practice in shallow water before proceeding to deeper water.

- If you fall in, do not panic—waders offer some flotation if a wading belt is worn. Hip boots taken off and turned upside-down trap air and will support you.

- Of course, the best security is to wear a lifejacket.

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*Chris Larson is a fisheries research technician stationed at Cold Springs State Park.*

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# Spring Walleyes

Story and photo  
by Lowell Washburn

For those willing to brave icy waters and chilly winds, Iowa's natural lakes are the key to the season's fastest action.

There are good reasons why the walleye is one of North America's most popular gamefish. Perhaps foremost is the fish's sporting attributes. The walleye is a spooked-of-its-own-shadow sort of fish that spends most its life lying on the bottom of some lake with his jaw wired shut. The walleye is fickle and unpredictable, possessing all the frustrating elusiveness that anyone could ask for. Next to the muskellunge, it is our most difficult fish to catch.

In fairness, it should also be noted that many anglers spend their off-hours in pursuit of walleye due solely to the fact that the species' light, flaky fillets are simply out of this world. Personally, I enjoy the walleye for both of the above reasons plus the fact that it is a beautiful first-class fish in general and a pretty fair scrapper to boot.

I must admit that at times this elusiveness thing gets to be a bit much. Granted, the thrill of the chase is fine. But after hours of enduring sunburn, biting flies and snagged lines without so much as a single tap, I am ready to try something different—crappie, bluegill, Burger King, anything!

However, it seems as if during certain times of the year most fish experience some sort of window of vulnerability, and fortunately, finding and hooking your quarry becomes an even proposition. For the Iowa walleye, that window is never open wider than during the spring spawn. Although spawning walleyes are present in many of the state's river systems, one of the most unique, productive and accessible fisheries exists in a handful of Iowa's natural lakes.

Walleyes are one of the first fish to spawn in our natural lakes each spring, and the cycle begins as soon as the waters are free of ice. The

males are the first to migrate to the spawning areas, seeking clean stretches of sand, gravel or rock. Generally speaking, coarse gravel and softball-sized rock mark the optimum habitats.

As water temperatures rise, walleye males soon begin to stockpile, and spend much of their time cruising the shallows along suitable shorelines. By contrast, the females lurk in deep water by day and usually come in to deposit their eggs under the cover of darkness. Walleyes build no nests but rather broadcast their eggs along the rocky bottoms. A female may drop all of her eggs (up to 150,000 for an eight-pound fish) in a single night. After egg laying, females again return to deep water for a two- or three-week recovery period. The success of natural walleye reproduction in Iowa's natural lakes is almost nill. Consequently, the success or failure of stocking from state hatcheries is what actually determines walleye populations in these waters.

The spawning activity of the walleye is tied directly to water temperature. When temperatures hit the lower 40s, it is time to be there, and by the time the water warms to the mid- to upper 40s, the spawn will be nearing its peak.

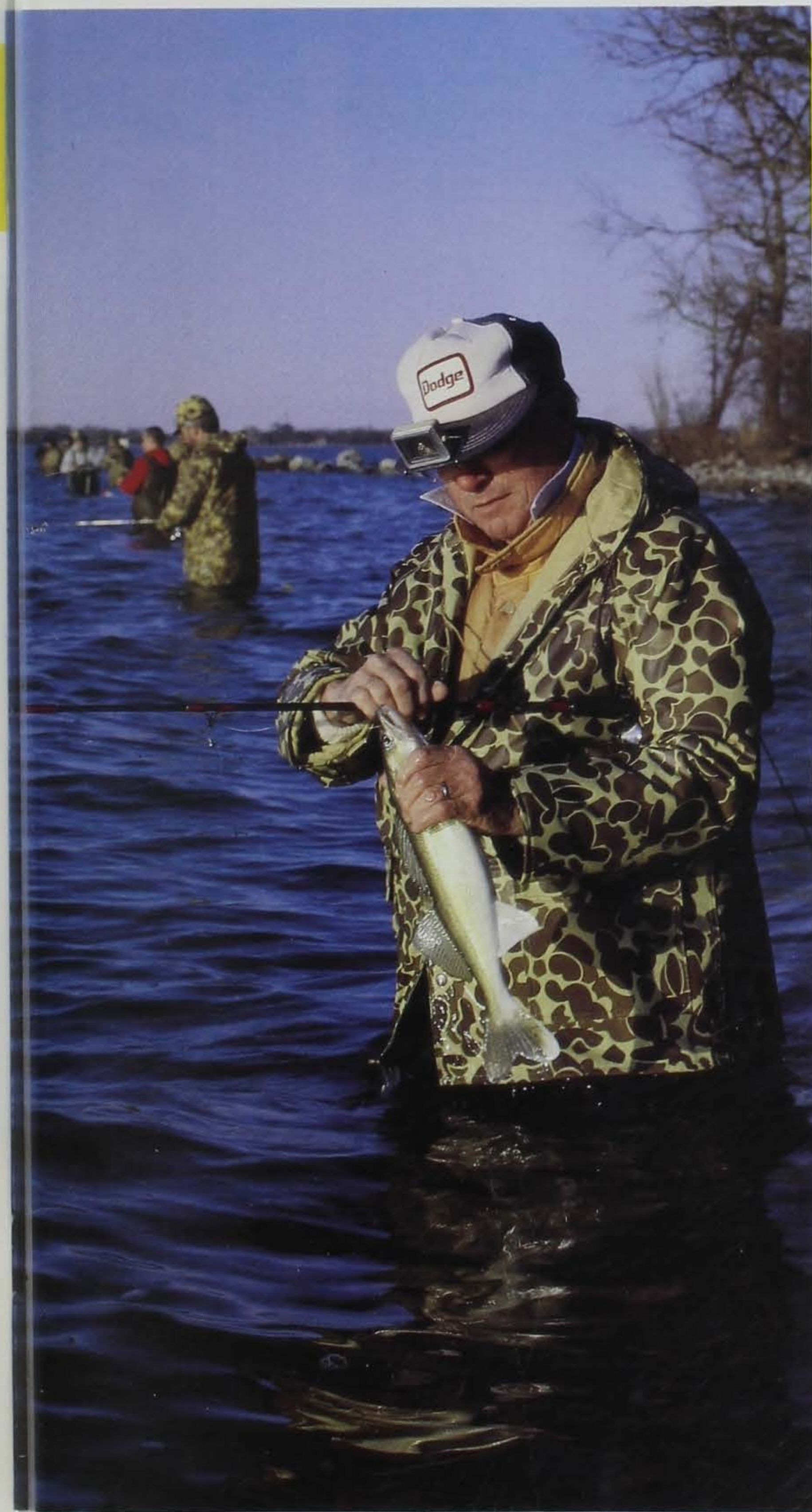
Females exhibit little, if any, feeding activity either during or immediately after the spawning run. Happily, the males present an entirely different picture and feed with gusto before, during and after the spawn. Consequently, virtually all walleyes taken during this period will be adult male fish, and therefore present no threat to the resource.

Unlike most methods employed in the pursuit of walleyes, fishing the spawn is neither complicated nor expensive and does not require the use of boats, motors or electronic gadgetry. In fact, the only equipment needed is a pair of waders, some sort of floating minnow bucket, and your favorite rod and reel. And, of course, since the water temperature may be only 10 degrees or so above freezing, plenty of warm clothing is a necessity.

Although the walleye is generally considered to be something of a deep-water fish, they are found surprisingly in shallow water during the spawn. In the lake setting, the greatest densities often occur in depths of only two to four feet. Obviously, this makes the fish extremely accessible to the average angler. But since the walleye probably feels a bit uncomfortable in such surroundings, it is wise to

Natural Lake	County	Acreage	Length of Dominant Year Class	Abundance
Clear Lake	Cerro Gordo	3,680	16-18 inches	Moderate to strong
Storm Lake	Buena Vista	3,097	16-17 inches	Moderate to strong
Silver Lake	Dickinson	1,200	13-15 inches	Excellent
Lost Island	Palo Alto	1,170	13-14 inches	Excellent





keep movements to a minimum. In most spawning areas, loose rock makes silent wading impossible.

One of the best ways to locate spring walleyes is with your feet. When you locate an area where wading could be likened to walking on greased cannonballs, you know you have arrived in the right place. Another way to locate fish concentrations is to look for other anglers. On the more productive habitats, human reefs of wading anglers often parallel the shorelines along most spawning areas. But there is always room for one more, and the spring fishery takes on an extremely social atmosphere.

Although these shallow-water walleyes can be taken on almost any type of gear, your success will improve greatly when using light spinning tackle spooled with four- or six-pound monofilament line. The most popular technique is to fish a 1/16- or 1/8-ounce leadhead jig with a live minnow. This deadly combination should be fished slowly along the bottom, bouncing from rock to rock. In addition to or instead of minnows, some anglers prefer to use plastic bodies with the leadheads, such as twister tails, fuzzy grubs, or mini-jigs. But whatever terminal tackle you choose, slow fishing is the key.

Although spring walleyes are quick to take advantage of an easy meal, the strikes are not the aggressive, slashing affairs that accompany warmer weather. In fact, at times the rocks may hit almost as hard as the fish, which reinforces the need for light, sensitive equipment. But once a walleye is hooked, the lethargy disappears and, cold water or not, this beauty is ready for a scrap. And if you think that is fun, wait until those first, flaky fillets hit your taste buds. I guarantee that you will be back for more.





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