

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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NUMBER 4

## Banding Hobby Teaches Habits Of Many Birds

By M. L. JONES

Bird banders are as definite a fraternity as are stamp collectors, photographers, or any other group who have a great passion for their hobby.

One of the sayings of this group is, "You can't tell a bird's age by his teeth." Have you ever found a numbered leg band on a game or song bird? Many people have. About 4,000,000 birds have been banded since 1920. Nearly 500,000 of these (including 445 species) were banded in 1940. Nearly 250,000 of these birds are reported as having been killed, found dead, or recaptured in North or South America. Returns have come from almost every country on the American continent. These exciting recoveries are one of the reasons why "once a bird bander, always a bird bander".

The writer has a letter written in Spanish from British Honduras, Panama Canal, reporting a band found on a grosbeak which had been banded at Ames, Iowa.

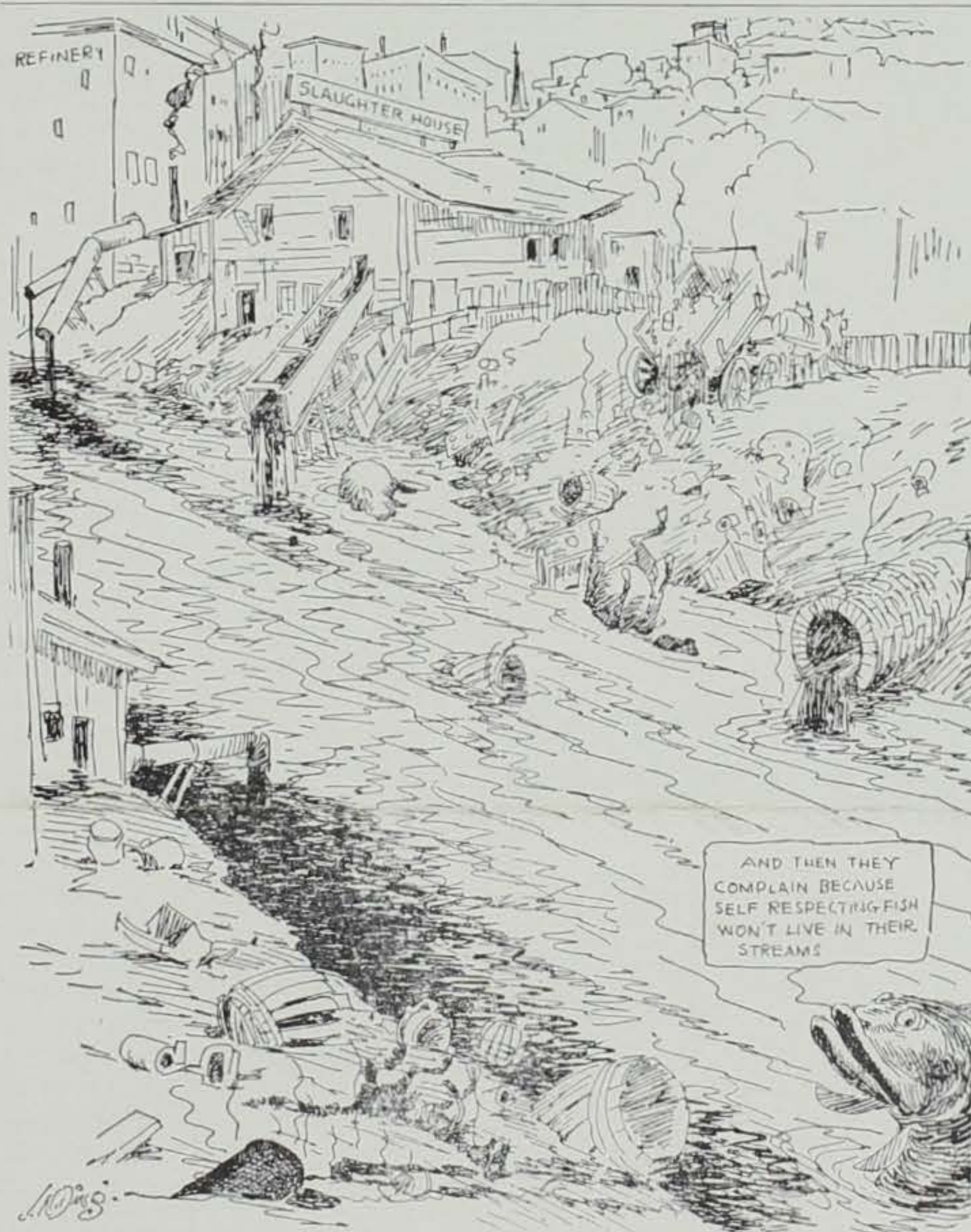
If you find a banded bird, by sending the information on the band to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C., you will be able to find out whether it was banded in North America or South America, in the United States or in some other country, in your state or some other state. You will also be able to find out how long it has been banded and how far it has travelled from the banding station.

The first question asked most bird banders is, "Why do you band birds?"

Many people seem to think that everything is known about birds that anyone needs to know. This

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## Iowa's Clam Industry May See War Boom For Buttons



## Western Iowa Flowers Have Unusual Names

By ARTHUR E. RAPP

Wild flowers seem to be given to acquiring common names, and it would be an interesting study to find out just how they get them. Easter blooms get their name because they are supposed to suddenly come into bloom on

Easter morning, although the method of how they contrive to do so with Easter being a movable feast day, without regard to wind or weather, is still a mystery.

Most often Easter blooms are known as pasque-flowers, which also has a reference to Easter. Botanically they belong to the anemones, and they have a crow-footed root system, which ac-

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## Clam Population Only Doubtful Factor In Picture

By EARL T. ROSE

World War II may again boom Iowa's pearl button industry. The demand is here, the organization is here, and so is the labor. But how about the raw material—clams? Without clams the button industry cannot operate.

Iowa is the leading state in the Union in the manufacture of pearl buttons. For many years this industry has centered in our towns along the Mississippi River. At one time thousands of Iowans were employed in the collection of clams from the Iowa rivers and streams and many more in the factories processing the shell. Our inland streams, notably the Des Moines, Cedar, Wapsipinicon, and Shellrock, annually produced hundreds of tons of commercial clam shell.

The value of this natural resource is shown by the following figures from a report of the State Fish and Game Warden for the biennium ending June 30, 1922: In 1920, 3,164,042 pounds of shell, valuing \$93,662.40, was taken from the Mississippi, Cedar, Shellrock, and Des Moines Rivers, and in 1921, 1,282,394 pounds of shell taken from these rivers valued \$17,990.76. These figures include only a few of the rivers clammed during these two years, but it shows the tremendous take and value of this fresh water product.

For several years prior to World War II, things were not as rosy for the pearl button industry as they had been in former times. The decline occurred for several reasons. The widespread

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**Clams**

(Continued from Page One)

manufacture of zippers and of plastic buttons for general public use was one important reason for this. Civilian use of zippers has been curtailed, and the use of plastics in war products has again caused a very heavy demand for pearl buttons. In the past few years it has been necessary for Iowa factories to obtain part of their shell from other states and from the coastal waters in order to supply a waning demand.

The question is asked, "What has become of the countless tons of clams in Iowa waters?" Unfortunately clams, like some of our other natural resources, have been over-exploited. Of course the heaviest drain by man on these shell fishes has been for commercial shell. Many additional tons of clams have been removed each year by fishermen for fish bait.

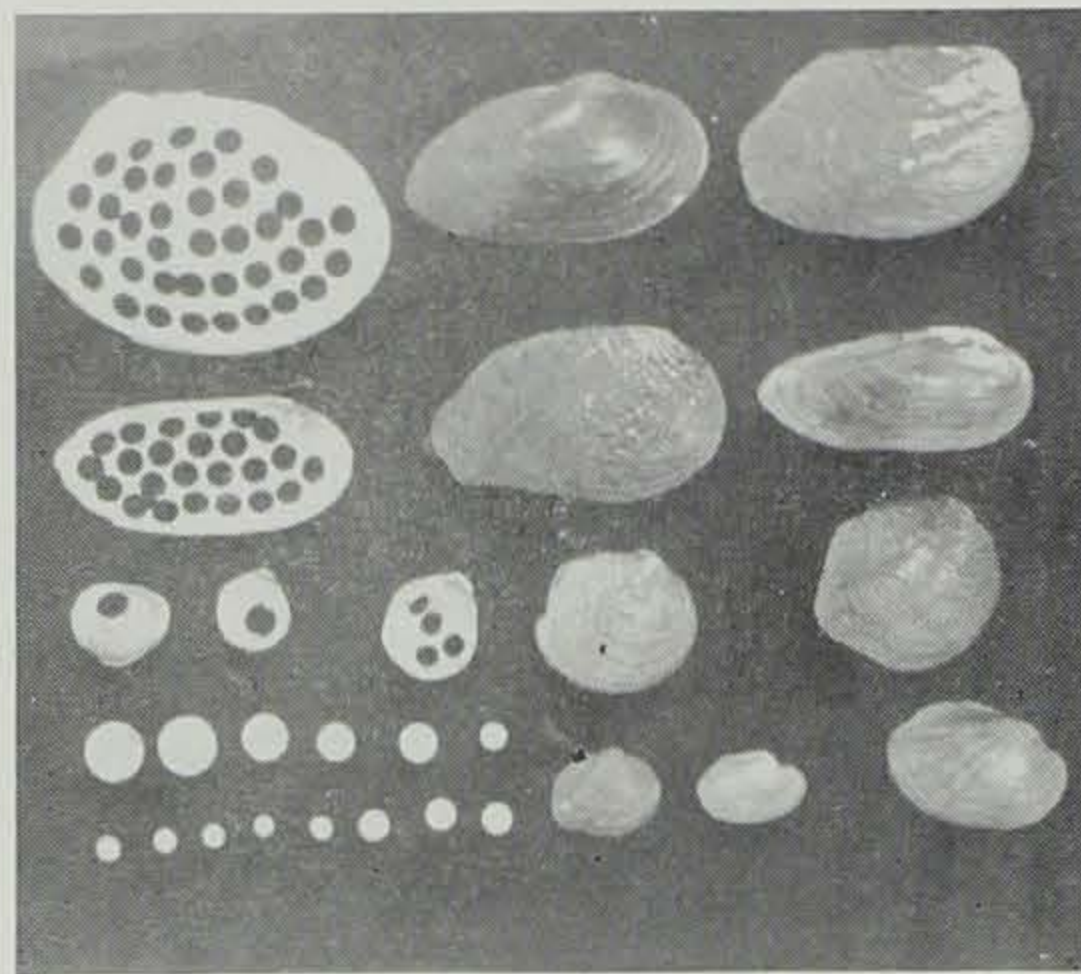
Both of these uses are justifiable up to the point where natural reproduction replenishes the supply. There is one heavy take of clams for which no justification exists. That is hunting clams solely for pearls or slugs they may contain.

In the early days of the clam industry on the Mississippi River, pearls and slugs (the irregularly shaped pearls) occurred in clams at a ratio of about an ounce and a quarter per ton of shell. The value at that time of the slugs and pearls was almost equal to the value of the shell. At the present time, the ratio of slugs and pearls is less than one half ounce per ton of shell, and the value of slugs has decreased to an average of less than two dollars per ounce. Therefore, the amateur pearl hunter, in order to find a half ounce of slugs worth less than two dollars, destroys a ton of shells worth on the present market approximately \$40.

Concurrently with over-commercialization, two other factors, even more damaging to clam populations than the actual taking of shells, are evident.

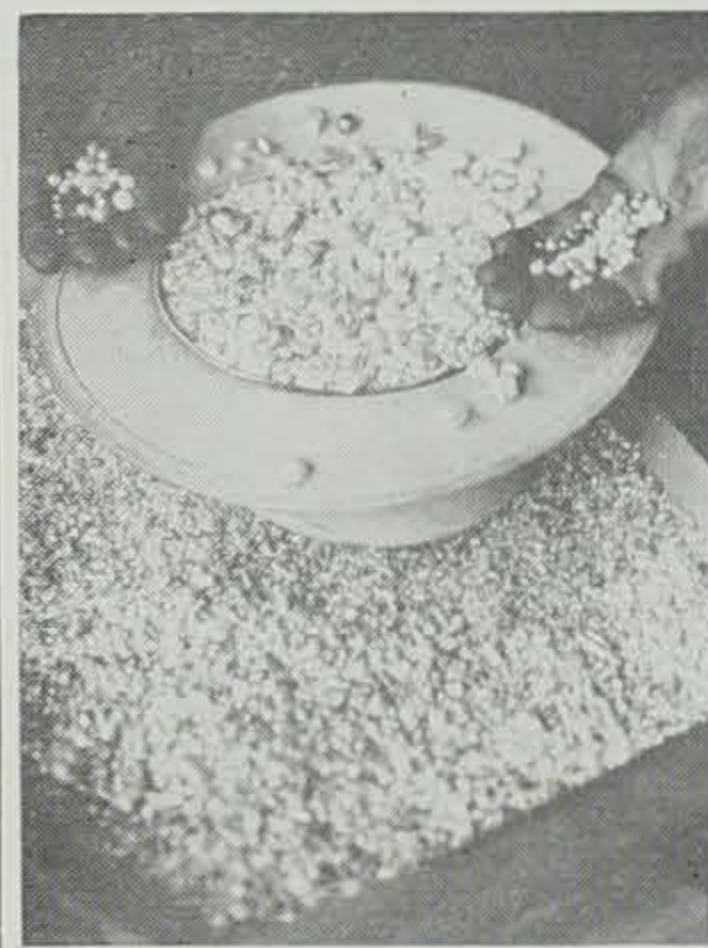
One of these factors is siltation. During the first World War, thousands of acres of timber on

**Life Story of a Pearl Button**

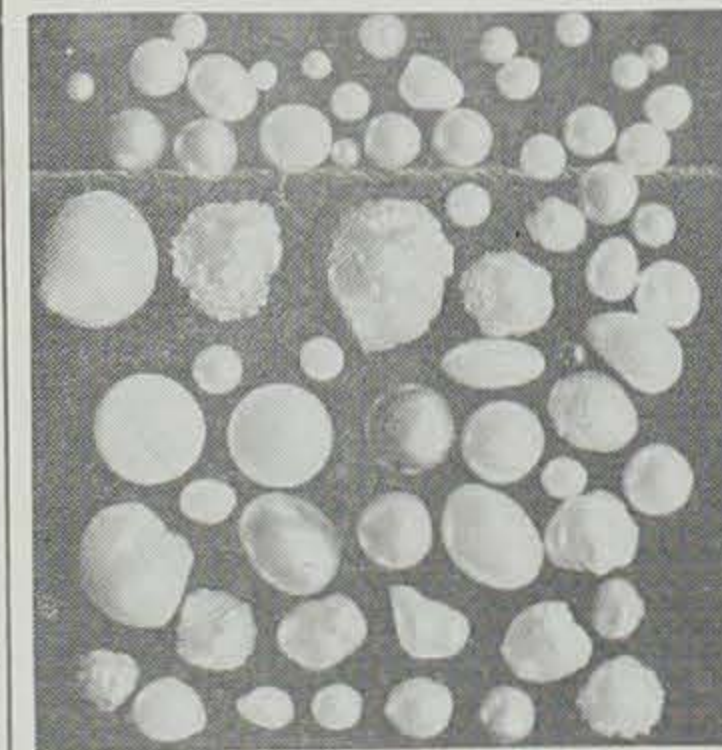


Typical Iowa clams, punched shell and blank buttons.

**For These Pearl Hunters Destroy Clams**



Japanese cultured pearls have almost destroyed the market for Iowa pearls and slugs.



This close-up view of pearls and slugs reveals some unusual and beautiful specimens.

the various water sheds were cut, and the steep slopes were put into grain crops. We have all seen these lands erode, these farms abandoned, and the farmers go bankrupt. The top soil is gone. But where? It has washed down the slopes into the gullies

and ultimately into our primary water courses.

Top soil is truly the problem child of conservation. The farmers want it and haven't yet learned how to keep it. The Iowa streams have it, don't want it, and can't get rid of it.

After entering main streams, the farmers' top soil, in suspension in the rushing water, begins its disastrous process of sedimentation, due to the slowing down of stream currents as the stream hits the lower portion of its course. Clams, and nearly all other forms of fish life, are seriously affected by these heavy silt deposits.

The State Conservation Commission recognizes soil erosion control as the most important single phase of its problem to improve and restore fishing in the waters of the state. Working hand in hand with other federal and state agencies, preliminary steps have been taken to alleviate this condition, not only from the standpoint of fisheries products and game, but also from the agricultural standpoint.

Since canalization of the Mississippi River, the clams in many beds behind the huge dams have been buried alive in the soft silt which necessarily accumulates behind them. Inland dams have also buried many clam beds. Clams, being very slow moving animals, cannot move with sufficient speed to more favorable environment and are consequently smothered by the heavy deposits of silt during high water.

Another factor contributing to the reduction in Iowa's clam population, and possibly the most important factor, is stream pollution.

Clams depend on oxygen dissolved in the water for their respiration or breathing. Without a constant and plentiful supply of this gas, clams, as well as most other aquatic animals, perish almost immediately. Formerly most of our urban centers

dumped their municipal and industrial wastes and sewage directly into the nearest stream without treatment. The chemical reactions resulting caused periodical depletion of the dissolved oxygen in the streams and subsequent loss of fish life.

The appalling fish losses were apparent to the general public. Clam mortality, though as widespread and more complete, was not so apparent to the casual observer, since dead clams do not float. However, the fact remains that clams perished to the point of almost complete extinction in some of the streams affected.

Backed by an aroused public that saw health menaced and acres of fish floating downstream, the Iowa State Department of Health sponsored corrective sewage disposal legislation. Fortunately sewage pollution is now being rapidly overcome by construction and operation of effective treatment plants which remove the oxygen-robbing substance from the sewage before it enters Iowa streams.

As we survey our streams to see if they can meet the emergency demand for shell, a knowledge of the interesting life cycle of clams is necessary. Some species have separate sexes. Others have both male and female within a single clam. In a typical life cycle, of one of the bisexual species, fertilization takes place early in July or August. The free-swimming male sperms are discharged in the water by the male clam. The female eggs, developed in the genital portion of the body, pass into a portion of her gills (structures normally used for respiration). The free-swimming male sperms are drawn into the gill structures of the female clam when breathing, and the fertilization of the eggs occurs.

The fertilized eggs develop to larval clams, called glochidia, in a portion of the gills of the female clam called the marsupium. (A marsupium is also found in the kangaroo and opossum, and is commonly known as the pouch.) The larval clams are carried in the marsupium until the following spring, when they pass out into the water as the clam breathes.

The tiny animals are now able to swim about and finally attach themselves to the gills or other portions of a passing fish. Some species of clams require a particular species of fish on which to "hitch-hike". The niggerhead clam glochidia supposedly require the river herring or moon-eye as their host. The high-valued yellow sand-shell is believed to require the gar for the host of its glochidia. Other species of clams are not so fussy and may "hitch-hike" on any one of a number of kinds of fish.

The little "hitch-hikers" are  
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truly parasitic and derive their food from the fish on which they ride for from one to three months. After this time they are fully developed and able to take care of themselves, and as the fish swims up or down stream, the glochidia drop off and become full-fledged clams.

From five to 10 years are required for clams to reach full growth, and in most species their age may be told by "annual rings" that show distinctly on the outside of their shells. Normally fish are migratory in habit, and inasmuch as larval clams are distributed by fish, their range in normal waterways is very wide.

Civilized man has prevented, in many cases, wide dispersal of this shell fish. In early days many dams were erected across streams for development of much needed power, especially for grain grinding. These structures have been largely superseded by higher, more effectual hydro-electric dams. These dams provide absolute barriers and prevent migration of fishes and, of course, their tiny passengers, the clam glochidia.

Many years ago laws were passed that required fishways in dams. These early day fishways were, for the most part, ineffectual. Recently the State Conservation Commission, in cooperation with the Iowa Institution for Hydraulic Research at the State University of Iowa, has perfected the most efficient fishway known. This fishway in the future, when properly installed, will greatly facilitate the free passage of fish and the consequent dispersal of clams in Iowa streams.

Early last winter a stream survey was started to determine whether it was feasible to open certain Iowa waters to clamming. Preliminary investigations have been completed in two of the major streams. This preliminary survey was carried out in the winter months and at a time when clams are almost dormant. However, at that time the rivers are clear, and the examination of the stream beds proper was made possible by the use of a specially constructed glass bottom observation box.

Findings in many areas studied during this survey are very discouraging. Vast beds of dead clams were found in some areas, indicating high losses from former heavy pollution. In areas reported abounding in clams, relatively few live specimens were found, and the stream bed proper was covered with empty shells. Some few areas were located that contained a fairly abundant supply of high quality clams. However, further investigation must be made before it will be possible to determine whether additional rivers contain a marketable surplus of clams.

## Pasque-Flowers, Beauty of Easter



Pasque flower, early blooming native of northwest Iowa.

Photo by Ada Hayden

## Flowers

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counts for their hardiness and persistence.

They prefer the north and westerly sides of the loess bluffs that extend along the Missouri River through Harrison and Monona counties up to and through the Dakotas. As they grow farther north, they seem to be willing to leave the dryer hillsides for the prairies, while in the Black Hills they can be found on the lower mountain slopes.

Much of their attractiveness is because they come so early, for being stemless, the flowers are not displayed to the best advantage; indeed, in some respects the seed stalks which stand up so bravely and for so long are more attractive than the blossoms. Just over the line our neighbors to the north, and probably our northern counties, have a prairie flower having a plumose fruit or seed stalk somewhat like that of the pasque flower that has been given the common name of "Grandpa's Whiskers", which is hardly to be compared with Easter blooms.

As the season advances, the exposed faces of the western Iowa bluffs have many other wild flowers, all of them very attractive. During the last week in May, many of these steep hillsides will be covered with *Pentstemon grandiflorus*, the largest and, in the minds of some, the best of the pentstemons. Before June is over, the yuccas, or Spanish bayonets, will send up their flower stalks hung with countless bells.

As the days become longer and hotter, the yellow discs of the chrysopsis, or golden aster, become larger and brighter, and finally as midsummer is almost past, then the brilliant white and gold blazing star, or more appropriately, evening star, comes with blooms in the late afternoon to attract the night flying moths.

All of these wild flowers prefer and almost demand the intense heat and drouth which go with a high western exposure. While they can be transplanted, with the possible exception of the blazing stars or *Mentzelia*, they do not gain by being pampered. To see them at their best is to see them in the place of their own choosing, for almost all wild flowers are more attractive in their natural setting than they are in a garden.

## Bird Banding

(Continued from Page One)

is not true. Ornithologists are constantly discovering important new bird facts.

For 2,000 years people believed what they heard or read about "hibernation" of birds, and only a little more than 50 years ago, Coues, a well-known American ornithologist, cited more than 150 so-called scientific papers dealing with the hibernation of swallows.

Some early naturalists wrote fantastic accounts of flocks of swallows seen in marshes in such great numbers that their accumulated weight bent the reeds down and submerged the birds. It was



Iowa City, Iowa.  
April 10, 1942

State Conservation Commission  
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Sirs:

All of our science work during the first semester of our sixth grade deals with conservation. We especially study the conservation of soil, wildlife, and forests.

Before beginning our study of conservation, we never realized its great need and its wonderful results.

Now we, also, realize that everyone should aid in our conservation program. We realize that each member of our class has a definite responsibility. We are going to try to do our part.

Our class reads and enjoys the "Iowa Conservationist".

Yours very truly,

The 6-B Class  
Longfellow School  
(Teacher: Olive Gjerstad)

even recorded that when fishermen in Northern waters raised their nets, they often had a mixed catch consisting of fish and hibernating swallows. One publication seriously asserted that these hibernating birds, if taken indoors, would soon warm up and fly about.

In 1703, a "probable solution to bird migration was written by a person of learning and piety", suggesting that birds flew to the moon to spend their winters.

In recent years, true migration facts have been obtained about many kinds of birds by attaching to their legs small numbered bands. When these birds are recaptured, their movements from place to place, length of life, and many other habit characteristics are learned. Sometimes pet theories are exploded—even now. Cite the house wren as an example. Probably more bird houses are built in North America for the wren than for all other birds combined. We often hear our neighbors say, "Our wren is back", or that "the same wren has been building in that old box for the past six years".

But how does our neighbor know? Probably a few wrens do come back to nest two or three years in the same place, but positive banding records often tell a different story. The writer has banded 126 wrens, and not one of them was ever trapped in the same locality again. Of course many individual birds do come back year after year, but only by

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### Banding

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banding records can we be sure of this.

The regular return of some birds is shown by the banding data on a robin, No. C333345, first banded April 10, 1934. It returned April 18, 1935, again on April 1, 1936, and was recaptured five times on April 2 of that year, three times on the 3rd, once on the 4th, and once again on the 5th.

Another question frequently asked bird banders: "How do you catch them?"

A complete answer would be too lengthy to include in this story. However, all of them are captured unharmed, banded, and immediately returned to the wild. Several trapping methods have been devised. One of the most common employs a cage-like enclosure provided with funnel openings much like a fly trap, or with very light doors. When doors are used, they may be equipped with a tripping mechanism to be released by the bird, or the operator may use a string for remote control.

Bird banders seldom struggle along with a single trap. Some banding fans have equipment running into thousands of dollars. The writer operates enough traps to catch perhaps 50 birds at one setting. They are, however, never all set at one time. Twenty birds at one round of the trap line is my best record, and these were all tree sparrows. Large numbers of birds are banded while fledglings still unable to leave the nest.

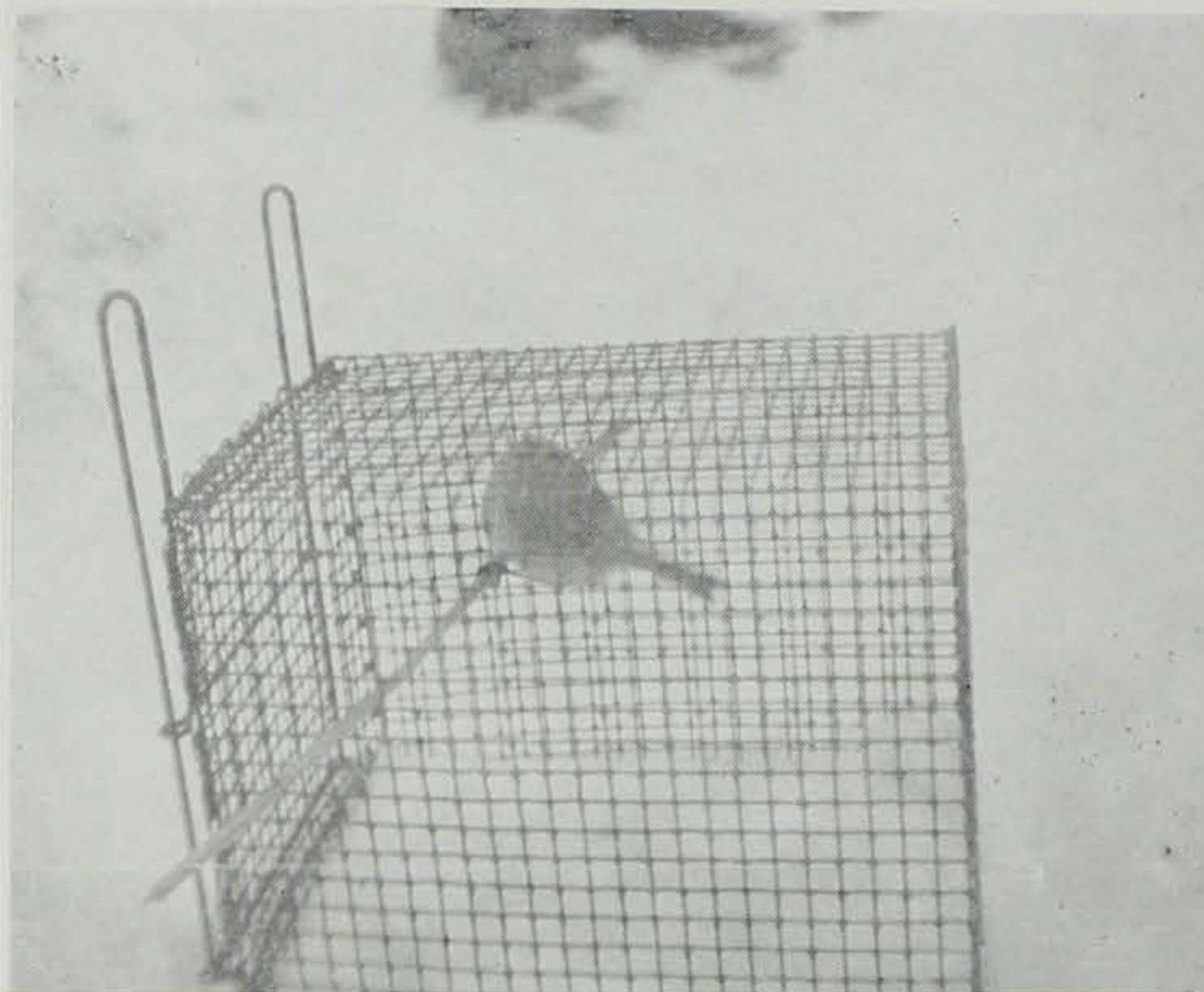
The writer has banded about 6,000 birds, half of which have been native sparrows. Native sparrows are not to be confused with the house or English sparrow, the bird most of us think of when the name "sparrow" is mentioned. The native sparrows are all 100 per cent beneficial, and some of them take their places high among the most beautiful American songsters.

The native sparrows are extremely difficult to identify, and that is one reason why promiscuous use of air rifles is frowned upon by every bird student. It is not unusual to find 15 or more species of sparrows in a single area in Iowa. Junior cannot tell the house sparrow from the rest.

Trapping and banding stations for ducks and geese require considerable outlay of materials, but such stations do yield very interesting results. The fact that ducks and geese are shot for food and sport results in a very high percentage of band recoveries on game birds. Many records show that game birds travel considerable distances.

A blue-winged teal banded at Thief Lake, Minn., was killed at Yucatan, Mexico, the following year. A mallard duck banded in 1923 at Cuivre Island, Mo., was

### Bird Banders Use Humane Traps



Tiny golden-crowned kinglet in a bird bander's trap.

\*\*\*\*\*  
shot in 1937 at Montreal Lake Post, Hudson Bay County, Saskatchewan. This record not only shows quite a long distance flight, but it also tells us positively that this particular duck lived at least 14 years.

Bird banding is a year-round, all-weather hobby. No day is too cold and no day too hot for bird banding. A woodpecker was captured when the mercury dipped to 30 degrees below zero. In July of the same year, when the mercury soared to 117 degrees above, 55 birds, including 15 varieties, were banded. Some birds enter the traps to feed or bathe as early as five o'clock in the morning. Thrushes have been trapped long after the sun goes down, as late as eight o'clock in the summer-time.

Every bander adds to the facts known about birds. Banding is a clean recreation with a scientific

angle that may be pursued at home with little cost and without burning precious gasoline or wearing out rubber tires. Banding is strictly controlled by both state and national laws, and permits are hard to get, but "once a bird bander, always a bird bander".

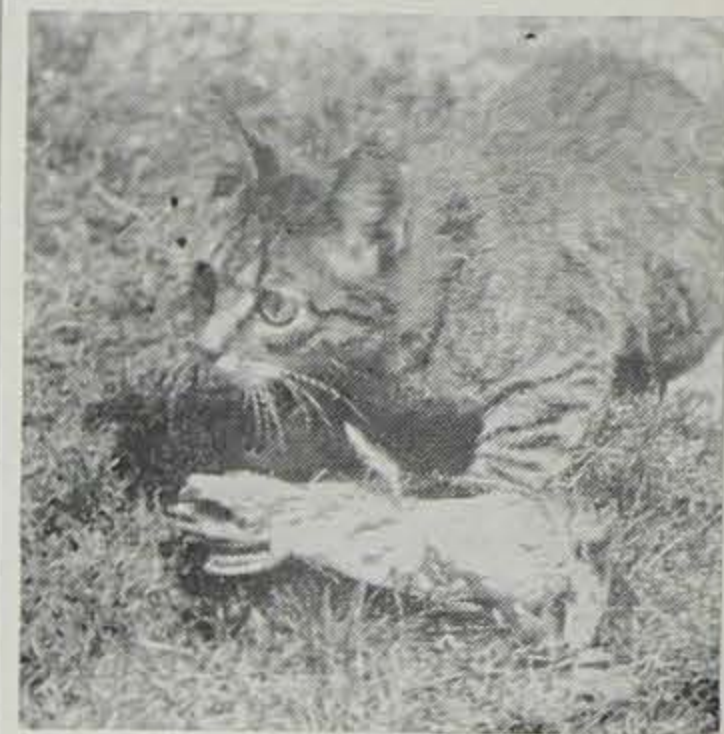
There is no method of making a hard-shelled crawfish soft shelled except by feeding them and waiting until they shed their shells voluntarily. After crawfish shed their heavy shell, they may be kept semi-dormant by keeping them in a cold place. Metabolism will slow up and growth will be retarded, with the result that the shell does not harden very fast. When the "soft shells" are removed from cold storage, they must be used in a short time because the shell hardens very rapidly.

### Handling Birds Calls For Skill



White-breasted nuthatch about to be banded.

### Predatory House Cats Deplete Bird Population



Marauding cat and its victim, an Iowa quail.

The ordinary house cat has long been recognized by game technicians as most destructive to wildlife. Some even go as far as to state that cats destroy more game than all other predators combined. Some states have taken steps to curb the stray house cat. In most instances nothing has been done except to talk about the problem.

The worst of the cats, of course, is the one that actually goes wild and does not associate with civilization. These cats call home a nest under an abandoned building or in an abandoned groundhog den. They truly live off the land. There are thousands of such cats in Iowa. More than once individuals have found what they believed to be a fox den with feathers and bones scattered around the entrance and, to their surprise, instead of digging out a litter of young foxes, they have found a nest of common house cats, born in the wild.

These wild house cats must live off the land or starve. They seldom starve. Quite often conservation officers are called to see a new species of animal, "some kind of a wildcat". Sure enough, it is a wild cat, but only a house cat gone wild that has grown to tremendous size.

For every cat that takes up permanent habitation in the fields, there are hundreds of occasional hunter cats. These are the milk-lapping "tabbies" who, part time, quietly lie in front of the fireplace or hunt mice in the barn. They are truly the Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hydes of the animal world. It is their inherent nature to stalk live prey, and even the most docile, home-loving tabby, with a warm bird in its mouth, reverts to savagery. Try to remove a bird from a cat's mouth. You will be greeted with an angry flashing of narrowed eyes and a deep-chested growl that you never dreamed could come from the pussy-cat you petted a few brief hours ago.

Cats selected for their mouse-  
(Continued to Page 5, Column 1)



## WARDENS' ❖ TALES ❖

### SHOP TALK FROM THE FIELD

One of the favorite yarns of all the conservation officers who work the area along the Missouri River, composed of loess hills through which high perpendicular road cuts are made, is this:

"I was driving along the road one afternoon, and a man tumbled off a cut bank onto the highway. I was barely able to stop my car without hitting him. I jumped out and asked, 'Are you hurt?'"

"Sitting up on the pavement he replied, 'Hurt? No, I'm ding gol darn mad, though. That is the third time I have fallen out of that field this afternoon.'"

—WT—

**Illegal trot line fishing in some sections of the state gives enforcement officers considerable trouble.**

One dark night Conservation Officers Sam Hyde and Dutch Lille discovered some light, flashing back and forth on the Racoon River. In order to get evidence of illegal fishing, Dutch crept through the brush close to the scene of activity. Upon his arrival, the lights were extinguished, and the officer sat on a nearby log beside the path to await developments.

Hearing some movement in the brush, Dutch lay flat beside the log. A man walking down the path from the opposite direction stepped squarely in the middle of Dutch's back. Surprised, both the violator and the officer yelled almost simultaneously. The fisherman: "I thought you were the game warden!" Dutch: "I am the game warden!"

—WT—

In almost similar circumstances one dark night after a heavy rain, Dutch and Sam were walking along a high cut bank; immediately beneath on a sand bar was pitched a tent occupied by suspected seiners.

The fishermen were sitting in front of the tent talking as the officers approached along the high cut bank from behind. In order to hear the conversation, Dutch approached too near the edge of the wet bank, which caved off, and he tumbled down into the camp fire. Getting to his feet and dusting off the sparks, he inquired, "Having any luck?" The startled fishermen asked, "What are you doing here?"

Dutch replied, "I was just going by and I thought I'd drop in for a visit."

—WT—

While patrolling on the goose

flight, Conservation Officers Mike Youngblood and Jim Rector saw a farmer out in a field with a shotgun, sneaking up on some geese.

The farmer saw them coming and immediately got to his feet. A pair of mules were grazing in the field, and with loud cries and gesticulations, he started driving them toward the farmyard.

The officers met him at the gate and asked him what he was doing. He replied that he had just gone down into the field to drive the mules up to the barn.

"Boys," said he, "Them's the orneriest danged mules in Fremont County, an' I hav'ta take a shotgun with me every time I go down into the pasture after 'em."

## Cats

(Continued from Page Four)

catching ability are useful if kept in their proper place, but they should never be allowed to run wild. Granting the value of cats as mousers, Forbush, in Massachusetts, found that only one fifth are efficient ratters.

John Burrough once estimated that "each cat in the United States kills an average of 50 birds per year". Herbert L. Stoddard says, "Cats are the most serious enemies of bob-white quail."

House cats roam the fields both day and night and catch birds of all ages. Human beings, if caught killing a single quail out of season, pay a heavy penalty in reputation and money, but hunting house cats kill large numbers of quail without causing any general public comment.

Cat owners are advised to feed cats sufficiently, destroy unwanted cats in a humane manner, and keep cats confined, especially during May and June, when fledgling birds are unable to protect themselves.

## Pittman-Robertson Act Brings \$72,425 to Iowa

The very tidy sum of \$54,319 now comes into the treasury of the Iowa conservation department from the federal government, through the workings of the Pittman-Robertson Act. To this sum will be added Iowa's own contribution of \$18,106, making a grand total of \$72,425 available for wildlife restoration projects within the borders of the state.

To say that the funds come from the federal government is but technically correct. The funds actually come out of the pockets of the thousands of hunters, trapshooters, skeet shooters, riflemen, and other sportsmen who actually purchased guns or ammunition in the preceding 12 months.

## Pine Lake Cabin--Mecca For Vacationists From Panama



A Pine Lake cabin, 3,600 miles from the Panama Canal Zone.

Box 1880

Balboa, Canal Zone

March 22, 1942

State Conservation Commission

Des Moines, Iowa

U. S. A.

Dear Sirs:

I suppose you will be surprised to know that a person 3,600 miles from Eldora, Iowa, wants to rent a cabin at Pine Lake State Park for a week and a half this coming summer. I plan on being in Iowa about the first of June. I am very much interested in renting one of your cabins for my wife and myself from about June 10 to about June 20. In 1937 we were both there with a group of young folks from Waterloo. We had a stone cabin by the river. It was very enjoyable, and we would like to have a little vacation there next summer if possible.

I would appreciate your writing me as to whether I can reserve a cabin and what it will cost. I am unable to enclose a stamped envelope as we have no U. S. stamps here. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Leo W. Cagley.

The money is created by a 10 per cent excise tax on these items, which in turn is ear-marked by the Pittman-Robertson Act for wildlife use, allowing but a small charge for government overhead expense. Consequently, this is a very definite instance of the taxpayer not footing a bill for the benefit of the sportsman, but on the other hand, an instance of the sportsman, especially the hunter, digging down a little deeper to pay for the preservation of his sport.

The 10 per cent excise tax on guns and ammunition goes into the federal treasury, and is then apportioned to the 48 states on the basis of area, plus the number of hunting licenses sold within the state for the similar fiscal period.

While the Pittman-Robertson Act provides that all funds be used in wildlife restoration projects, substantial benefit is recorded to related projects, not strictly within the meaning of the act itself.

For example, when the state of

Iowa purchased an abandoned lake bottom in north central Iowa and made of it a refuge for pheasants, and by re-flooding a portion of the lake-bed, a haven for waterfowl, it created fishing as well. The lake was stocked with bullheads and became one of the best bullhead spots in the entire state.

The benefits of the Pittman-Robertson Act are naturally slow. Funds are only expended after an exhaustive study of any project, and then only under federal supervision. No funds can be expended on privately owned land. Thus the state must first acquire land before a development project can begin. This often takes time. We do know, however, that no preference is being shown for any section of the state, and that projects have been submitted covering the four geographical corners of Iowa.

The Pittman-Robertson Act gives every promise of being the best "game insurance" the state has ever had.—The Davenport Democrat.



## Wildlife Babies Don't Need Mothering By Us



(Photo by S. W. Locke)

Wildlife babies often get into trouble.

## Babes In Woods Not So Helpless As They Seem

"Lost in the woods", or "I found it", is the explanation of well-meaning people who "rescue" helpless and seemingly abandoned wildlife babies. Conservation officers are often asked by such individuals for permission to keep the young animals for pets, or are asked to take them and take care of them.

The mother of the "lost" creature is equipped to care for the young. The conservation officer is not. The statutes specifically prohibit removal or possession of protected birds and animals from the wild during definite closed seasons. Almost always when young animals are found, the mother is, figuratively speaking, nearby wringing her hands, unable to protect her young from her greatest fear—man.

Depending on protective coloration, woodland mothers often hide their young in clumps of grass or bushes while they feed nearby or while they are leading potential enemies away from the hiding place. Woodland children, like human children, tired of inactivity or out of mischievousness, wander away, and while temporarily separated from their parents, get into trouble. If left alone, the mother and youngster

will soon get together again.

By "rescuing" these young animals and taking them home "to keep them from starving," people are not doing an act of kindness, but are almost always participants in a wildlife tragedy. Young animals, more often than not when taken from the wild, do not have proper feed and care, and consequently die.

It is true that sometimes mother animals with young are killed by accident. In such cases, human care for the young is justifiable and humane. However, they should be cared for in a proper and legal manner. In such cases, the individual finding the orphaned animals should contact the local conservation officer, who in turn will pick them up and send them to the Game Farm at Boone, where they will have expert care and where their chances of survival are greatly increased. In addition to the Game Farm "hospital" at Boone, there is a migratory waterfowl "hospital" at Lake View, where crippled ducks and geese are sent to recuperate.

It is a great temptation to pick up young birds and animals, but it is no kindness to them. Woodland babies apparently lost should be left alone.

The wild mallard duck breeds freely in captivity, but it domesticates rapidly and loses those qualities desired in wild game birds.

## Old Mr. Crow Is Always With Us In Iowa

By TAYLOR W. HUSTON  
Supt. of Game

The crow is one bird that is known to every Iowan. You may not know a "Spinus tristis tristis" from a "Colinus virginianus virginianus", but you will know the crow by its coal black dress or by its familiar cawing notes. It is probably the most cursed and discussed bird in Iowa. In its food habits it is omnivorous. In fact, it seems to eat with equal relish anything from carrion and corn to young chickens, song birds, game birds, and their eggs.

Many differences of opinion have been expressed regarding the value of the crow. As long as it is the tendency of the crow to eat insects such as grasshoppers, caterpillars, wireworms, weed seeds, and carrion, they are a definite asset to the farmer. But when their food habits include the farmer's corn, poultry, song birds, and game birds and their eggs, then it is a different story, and the problem is, what to do about it.

Many methods of control have been undertaken, ranging all the way from use of scarecrows to dynamite, shotguns, poisoning, trapping, and the use of deterrents. But so far this shrewd bird has been able to outwit man's best efforts directed towards its destruction; and, as Dr. Thomas S. Roberts tells us in *The Birds of Minnesota*, "Instead of diminishing in numbers, it has thrived and multiplied as man has thrived and multiplied, and in the same places. Crafty and wise, it has been able to take care of itself and to profit greatly by the increased food supply and freedom from its natural enemies that have resulted from man's activities."

As a means of control, the Iowa law, Chapter 275, Code of 1939, says that boards of supervisors may authorize the payment of bounties on crows. In such instances the bounty is ten cents. But before the bounty can be collected, the claimant must file with the county auditor a verified claim showing that each crow was caught and killed within the county within 30 days prior to the filing of the claim, and the claimant shall exhibit before the county auditor the head and feet of each crow.

Not all Iowa boards of supervisors have authorized such bounty payments, but many counties have paid out hundreds of dollars in bounties on crows, and in some instances, persons have been prosecuted for filing false claims, i. e., for claiming bounties on crows that were killed in some other county or state. This method of seeking to control crow popu-

lations has never been sufficient to do the job. However, it does compensate the crow shooter for the ammunition he uses, if he is a good shot.

The sport of crow shooting has become rather widespread in Iowa during the past few years. Many sportsmen, by the use of crow calls and/or crow decoys of various kinds, provide themselves with much "off season" sport in this way. A mounted or live specimen of a great horned owl placed in a conspicuous place along a crow fly way makes a very successful decoy and brings the crows within gun shot of the concealed hunter.

In winter, crow roosts cause many complaints. Such crow roosts can usually be broken up by firing into the roosting with shotguns. If this is done for a few nights, crows are not apt to re-establish themselves at that point again during the winter. Some state departments have employed the use of dynamite in destroying crows and breaking up crow roosts. However, this has never been done in Iowa, nor is it advocated by the State Conservation Commission.

Also, some state departments sponsor crow control contests. The most recent that has come to our attention is the control contest being sponsored by the North Dakota State Game and Fish Department. This contest is being held from April 1 to June 25, and all scores must be sent in by June 30. Under the rules of this contest five points are to be awarded for each crow leg and five points for each crow egg. Trophies are to be awarded to the three top county organizations, and three similar prizes will be awarded to the three highest individual clubs; in addition, three prizes will also be awarded to individual shooters having the highest scores.

At this season considerable inroad can be made on potential crow populations by the destruction of nests and eggs, as well as the young crows. Crow nests are easily recognized, even by the most inexperienced. The nests are usually bulky in their appearance, being built of large sticks and lined with strips of bark, grass, etc. Nests are usually located in trees 15 to 40 feet from the ground. The clutch numbers from four to seven eggs, they being greenish or bluish white spotted and blotched with brown, varying greatly both in ground color and density of marking.

The period of incubation for crow eggs is about 18 days, and by watching a nest closely, it is possible to determine whether or not it is a nest that is being used, and if so, the eggs should be removed and broken or the young killed and the nest destroyed.

In summarizing and in weigh-  
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By FLOYD H. DAVIS

Have you ever heard your partner in a duck blind exclaim as a pair of teal came down the slough



and passed before he could get his gun to his shoulder, "Boy, those birds were going 80 miles an hour"? Or have you watched a duck pass when blue-bills (scaups) or black-jacks (ring-necks) were crossing with a tail wind and observed miss after miss and heard speed estimates anywhere from 60 to 20 miles per hour? Sure you have. We all have.

Flight discussions overheard on his spring while on duck and goose patrol prompts me to pass on some information published by the U. S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, titled "Flight Speeds of Birds."

It is impossible to make a hard and fast rule covering flight speeds of birds because there is often a difference in the top speeds of various birds of the same species because of different ages, states of plumage, and physical condition, all of which affect their flight. Variations in speed are also caused by wind forces and atmospheric conditions. Top speeds of various birds are recorded below.

Species	Miles Per Hour	Timing Service
Canada Goose	60	Airplane*
Snow Goose	50	Airplane*
Mallard	60	Airplane*
Pintail	65	Airplane*
Redhead	42	Train
Canvas-back	72	Airplane*
Golden-eye	50	Train
Golden Eagle	120	Watch
Huck Hawk	175+	Airplane
Bob-white	48	Stop Watch
Am. Golden Plover	70	Automobile
Ruby-Throated Humming Bird	45-55	Automobile

The above flight speeds indicate that most people credit birds with flying faster than they do. At the same time, most people believe that birds are slower on the ground than they really are. Although flight speeds have often been recorded, few records of running speeds are available.

Recently two biologists of the Fish and Wildlife Service clocked a number of running speeds and recorded some surprisingly fast times. One ring-neck pheasant was clocked at 21 miles per hour, which is a shade faster than a



As I'm settin' here a-dreamin'—  
A-dreamin' every day  
Of the sunshine that's a-gleamin'  
On the rivers far away,

I kinder fall to wishin'  
I was where the waters swish,  
Fer if the Lord made fishin',  
A feller orter fish.

While I'm studyin' or a writin'  
In the dusty, noisy town,  
I kin feel the fish a-bitin'—  
See the cork a-goin' down;

And I nod, an' fall to wishin'  
I was where the waters swish;  
Fer if the Lord made fishin',  
A feller orter fish.

—Unknown.

### Crows

(Continued from Page Six)

ing the evidence for and against the crow, it must be said that it is a bird capable of doing both harm and good, but like all other forms of wildlife, the population must be kept at a proper balance with other species.

Friend: What's the trouble?

Fisherman: My wife says if I don't give up fishing she will leave me.

Friend: You have a mighty good wife.

Fisherman: Yes, I am sure going to miss her.

## Nation At War Needs Relaxation Of Park Areas

By V. W. FLICKINGER

Chief, Division of Lands and Waters

Iowa's state recreation areas are well prepared to meet the vacation problems of a nation at war by providing recreation facilities at all seasons of the year near home.

More than ever in our history as a nation, it is essential that we keep our health and mental balance. Sound bodies and alert minds are essential to defense

production and the future security of our country. Industrial workers need tuning up periodically exactly the same as the machines they operate.

Constant hours at work without let-up cause fatigue, which lessens efficiency and reduces productivity. We must profit by the experience of the warring nations who "learned early in the conflict that too long hours at high pressure result in decreased production". Actual records from England and Canada have proved beyond any doubt that relaxation is vital if production is to continue at a high rate. The Axis nations recognize that vacations are essential during war. Even Hitler recognizes the need for relaxation.

Records kept by the United States Travel Bureau show the importance Germany places upon the recreational program of the Reich. These reports show that Germany has constantly encouraged recreation, even to the extent of opening new tourist areas during the summer and fall of 1941. "Paid vacations for from three weeks to a month are encouraged by the Berlin government."

The availability of rubber will have a material effect upon travel during the months to come. However, by budgeting mileage and using recreational facilities nearer home, many pleasant hours of leisure may be enjoyed by all members of the family during the trying months to come.

What better time than now to adopt, not as a patriotic duty but as a pleasant necessity, the policy of "seeing Iowa first"?

Perhaps your fortune has been good and in the past you have enjoyed vacations in our neighboring states or you have taken

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sprinter doing the hundred yard dash in 10 seconds flat. A chukar partridge ran 50 yards at 18 miles per hour; Hungarian partridge, nine. The slow-poke of the birds clocked was the sage grouse that ambled along at a two mile an hour shuffle.

These running speeds are not necessarily the best or even average speeds, but they do present interesting facts. This timing was done by the biologists when they happened to be driving their car in the same direction in which the birds were running.

Iowa park rules are designed to afford maximum pleasure for all. By cooperating you do your bit to make the visit of others a bit more enjoyable.





## Parks

(Continued from Page Seven)

long motor trips and gone long distances for recreation. Did you drive until you were exhausted, stop a few minutes, and hurry to the next place? Why not plan a more leisurely pace to a state area, where there is time to rest after you get there, and to which you do not have to spend long hours driving? How often in the last few months have you heard some friend describe some outstanding beauty spot or interesting location in this state and said to yourself, "I didn't realize such things existed in Iowa"?

The state of Iowa is among the leaders in planning and development of recreational facilities. This program of parks and reserves has been under way since 1920 and under intensive development during the past 10 years. The facilities provided are in many instances somewhat ahead of the actual needs previously required, but the foresight of the planners and designers is now evident.

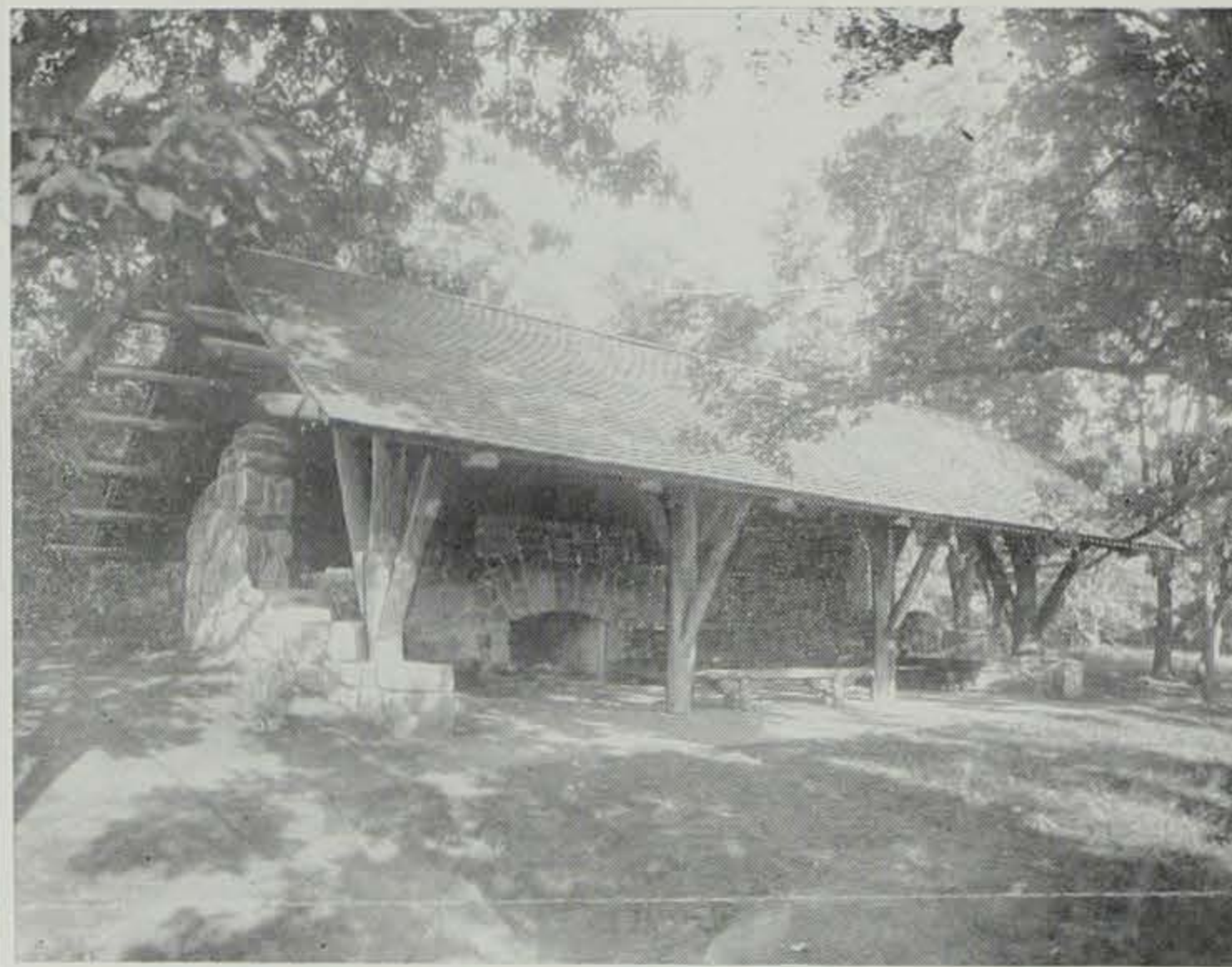
Certain definite policies have governed the development of our park and recreational systems. All man-made developments have been kept to a minimum consistent with maximum usage. All facilities not essential to public convenience and enjoyment have been eliminated. An attempt has been made to intrude as little as possible on nature, and where construction scars have been necessary in the development, nature has been assisted in healing them as quickly as possible. All areas are designed to bring out their natural beauty rather than to intrude upon that beauty.

This type of development makes relaxation in a setting of calm and peace, far from the hustle and bustle of ordinary tasks, possible.

From the first breath of spring until the last leaf has fallen and the geese are honking their way south, there is a theater of nature playing every minute of the day and night. With the last vestige of snow and the first warm days, hepaticas, trilliums, bloodroot, violets, and many others of nature's leafy actors peep shyly from the scenery. Buds burst forth almost overnight; leaves unfold. Truly a magnificent, age-old drama. The song of bluebirds in the distance, a delicate fern climbing through the leaf mold, warm, lacy clouds drifting by, the chatter of a squirrel, fish leaping in a nearby stream—true signs of spring. Here relaxation and diversion in its truest sense may be enjoyed.

The season advances. School picnic time is here, and the children have their day. Arriving early, healthy, eager, and full of curiosity, they scramble over rocks, wade streams, and gorge themselves with picnic fare, re-

## Picnic Areas Dot Iowa Parks



Iowa parks are equipped with many shelter houses such as this for the pleasure of visitors.

turning at the end of the day weary in body, but refreshed in mind and spirit.

Summer with its heat has come. Many are the shady nooks and quiet glens where one may visit with friend and neighbor and enjoy banquet lunches of golden-crisp fried chicken. Those laden tables make every individual forget himself and fill to overflowing.

Come cool fall days and woodland breakfasts, wood fires, and aromatic smoke, together with the bacon-coffee smell. No matter if the coffee is strong and there are ashes in the bacon.

Evening steak fries and dying embers, the melody of nature at dusk. Your little world is at peace. You are relaxed, and your cares have melted with the rising moon.

Around the calendar Iowa's recreation areas are waiting for your visit, whether it be a leisurely ramble along the many trails, a picnic, a fishing, boating, or bathing party, or just plain visiting with Neighbor Joe.

"A nation at war must see to it that its people—all of its people—get good food, healthful recreation, diversion, and relaxation to promote health and morale."

Your state recreation areas will contribute to the recreation of the people who live in Iowa, where "Of all that is good, Iowa affords the best."

Outdoor Indiana says the height of a fisherman has nothing to do with the selection of a rod. Six foot rods are usually recommended for light weight lures and for accuracy, and five and five and a half foot rods most efficient for all around use.



Ottawa, Canada—Farm woodlots are making an important contribution to the war effort, reports the Dominion Forest Service of the Department of Mines and Resources. About one-third of all the wood cut in Canada is taken from farm woodlots, and because the most economical wood comes from this source, many pulp and paper concerns and lumber companies are fostering even greater production from woodlots. The increased demand for forest products for war purposes is also giving new impetus to the establishment of managed farm woodlots.

A well-managed woodlot consisting of hardwoods can produce a cord of fuelwood per acre per annum in perpetuity. From his woodlot the farmer can raise most, if not all, of the fuel he requires, thereby reducing his cash outlay and at the same time providing himself with employment at a time when there is little other activity on the farm.

### ICE MINNOW CANS

To carry minnows long distances on a hot day in a minnow bucket, a small piece of ice placed on the lid of the bucket where the drip will run into the can will help keep minnows alive and active.

## Iowa Pike Season Opens May 15



A good catch of wall-eyed pike from one of Iowa's inland lakes.

May 15 adds northern, wall-eyed, and sauger pike, yellow perch, yellow bass, and silver bass to the list of fishes already open in Iowa. The nesting species of game fish on which the season does not open until June 15 include large and small-mouth bass, warmouth bass, rock bass, sunfish, bluegills, and crappies.

The minnow and frog season opened May 12, and they may now be used as bait. Four dozen frogs is the daily catch limit, with eight dozen the possession limit, bait dealers excepted.

The catfish season in the inland streams closes May 30 at 12:00 midnight and reopens in all inland waters at 12:01 July 1.

A copy of the Iowa fishing laws may be secured anywhere fishing licenses are sold and, in addition, from the various county recorders and from the State Conservation Commission in Des Moines.