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IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 1 | SEPTEMBER 15, 1942 | NUMBER 8

Watch 'Em or Hunt 'Em, Squirrels Are Sporting

To some people the thought of shooting and eating timber squirrels is intolerable. People who enjoy squirrels only for the esthetic pleasure they derive from watching these nimble rodents cry "Barbarian!" when the hunter returns from the woods with squirrels for the dinner table.

The dyed-in-the-wool squirrel hunter cries "Barbarian!" too, and often uses stronger language, when he hears the boom of a shotgun instead of the sharp crack of a small bore rifle in his favorite squirrel timber.

Between the two, the nature lover and the squirrel hunter, it seems that the hunter has the advantage, for he enjoys all the frisky antics of Sciurus niger and, in addition, enjoys the sport of outwitting the fox squirrel in its own environment. The hunter, in fact, has his cake and eats it, too.

Long before Daniel Boone and Kentucky, timber squirrels, both the fox and the gray, were prized as game. It is significant that even while the forests were literally filled with deer, bear, wild turkey, and passenger pigeon, the long-barrelled rifles of the woodsmen were known as squirrel rifles. Keeping the tradition of their pioneer ancestors, thousands of city dwellers and their rural blood brothers take to the tall timber with the opening of the squirrel season.

The "Simon pure" squirrel hunter scoffs at the idea of a hunting companion. He is a "loner". He carries a small caliber rifle and growls, "There oughta be a law," when a scatter-gun is mentioned. He shoots no livestock and leaves no gates open. He is the dry fly fisherman of the hunting fraternity. Opening day for him means a quick trip to the

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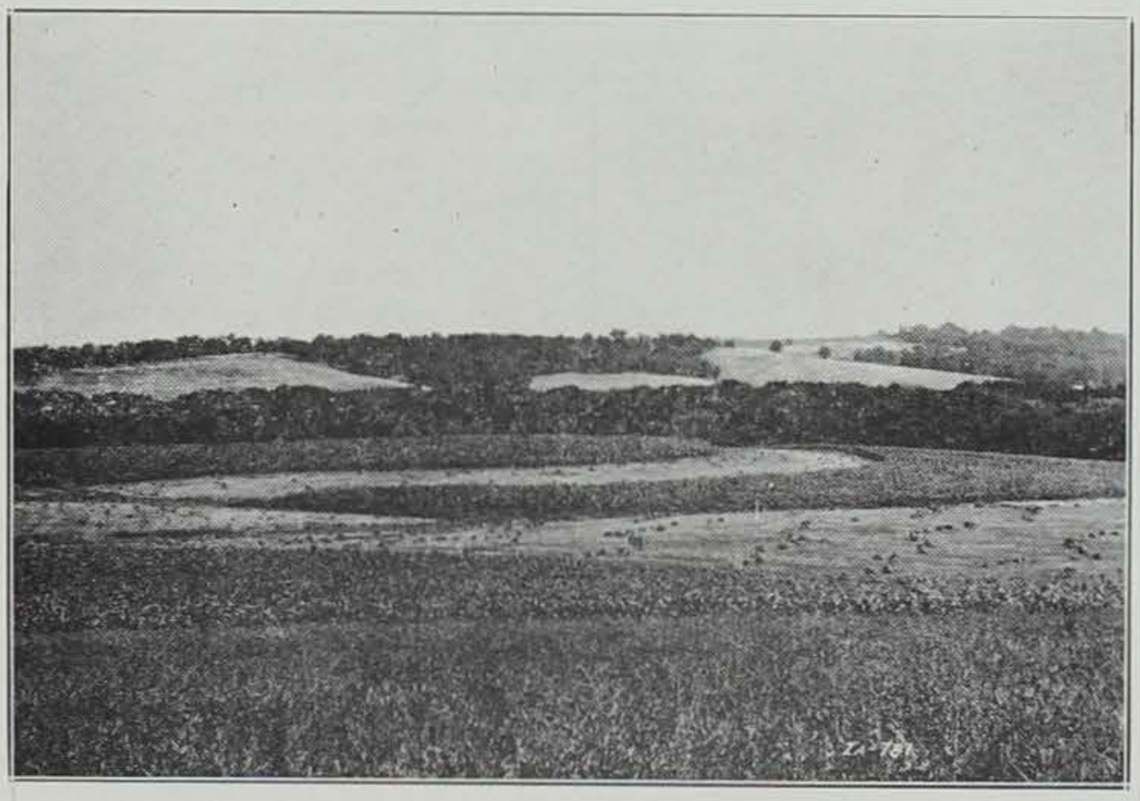
Total Soil Conservation A Necessity To Win Total War



Strip cropping is a vital part of the soil conservation program. The view above pictures strip cropping with corn and oats on a farm near Van Meter, Iowa.

Seizure of Pribilof Islands By Japs, Perils Fur Seal Program

By F. H. DAVIS, U. S. Game Management Agent for Iowa.

In 1786, 45 years after the discovery of Alaska, a Russian navigator discovered a treeless group of islands of volcanic origin in the Bering Sea, about 300 miles off the mainland of Alaska. They now bear his name, Pribilof. There are five islands in the group. St. Paul Island, about 14 miles in length, St. George Island, 12 miles long, and Sea Lion Rock, a small islet adjacent to St. Paul, are the breeding ground of the North American or Alaskan fur seal herd comprising about 80 per cent of the fur seals of the world. The annual herd count in 1940 showed approximately 2,185,000 animals.

The Pribilof Islands have reportedly been occupied by the Japanese and are therefore particularly interesting to us at this time.

The United States bought the territory of Alaska (which is one-fifth as large as the United States) from Russia in 1867, paying $7,200,000, one of the world's greatest territorial bargains. As part of the purchase, this country received the Pribilof Islands and the great Alaska seal herd. Since that time the value of the fur seals taken from these islands amounts to many, many times the purchase price of the entire territory of Alaska.

The Pribilof Islands were under Russian management from

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Balanced Program Vital To Victory In World Struggle

By FRANK H. MENDELL
Asst. State Conservationist
S. C. S., Ames, Iowa

Editor's Note—It is suggested that representatives of sportsmen's clubs, women's clubs, Boy Scouts, and all other groups interested in conservation of soil, water, and wildlife, in counties where soil conservation districts have been established, make the acquaintance of the district commissioners and learn first hand about the program being developed in their areas.

Soil conservation is frequently defined as "the utilization of soil and water resources without waste". In discussions on soil conservation among groups or individuals, however, one frequently gains the impression that mechanical practices such as contouring or terraces are the all important part of conservation, or that good land use and the proper crop rotations will solve all erosion problems, or that applications of lime and fertilizer, or planting of steep and badly eroded areas to trees, or food and cover plantings for wildlife are the essential part of a soil conservation program.

In soil conservation districts organized by farmers for the purpose of cooperative action in solving their erosion problems, the district commissioners (elected by the farmers in the district) in-

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IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

Published Monthly by
THE IOWA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
10th & Mulberry—Des Moines, Iowa
JAMES R. HARLAN, Editor
F. T. SCHWOB, Director
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Soil Conservation

(Continued from Page One)

clude in a well-rounded program for the district all of the practices and measures essential to the maximum production of crops with minimum loss of our most valuable resources — soil, water, and wildlife.

In the April, 1942, issue of the magazine SOIL CONSERVATION, Dr. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, said: "There has been one basic reason for soil conservation—the extent of its contribution to the welfare of mankind. Today that welfare depends on success with respect to the prosecution of total war. It is not enough to conserve soil and water.

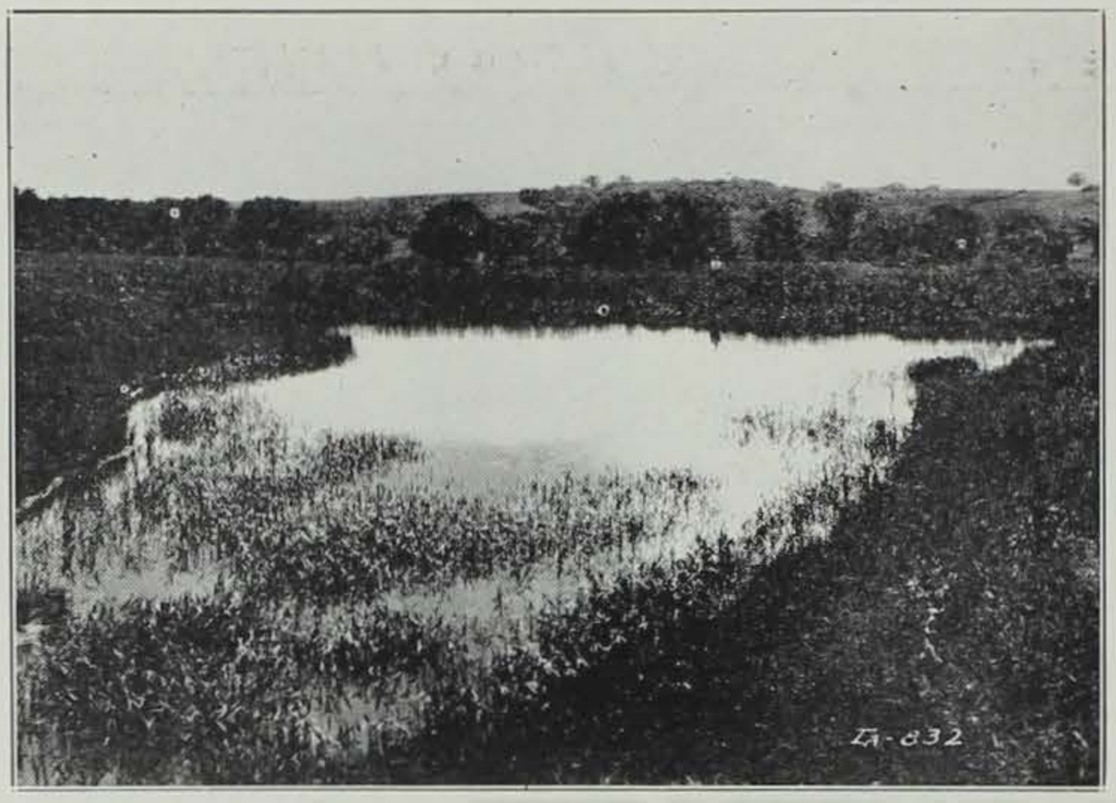
"Soil conservation must result in the utmost yield, without waste of any kind of those products of the soil needed by the United Nations . . . . Since the last war we have learned that we cannot achieve maximum production on all lands unless we fit our crops to the capabilities of the land itself."

The results of research and experiences of many farmers have shown that Iowa farmers can maintain and improve their crop yields and increase their income by following a good soil conservation program on their land. For example, contour farming conserves soil and water and increases crop yields. Many farmers report 5 to 15 bushels increase in corn yields due to planting on the contour or around the hill on the level.

The application of lime and fertilizer, where needed, makes it possible to grow high protein quality legumes. Legumes add nitrogen and organic matter to the soil, and organic matter helps absorb rain as it falls and thereby reduces erosion, another example of how increased production of needed crops and soil conservation go hand in hand.

Yes, soil conservation is a wartime necessity if we are to produce the pasture, hay, and grain necessary to feed the increased numbers of livestock that our government has asked farmers to produce. It is **not** something we do only during peace-time in the interests of future generations.

Ponds Serve Useful Conservation Purpose



This farm pond supports a good growth of arrowhead and other planting around its edge and on the earth fill supports an excellent stand of Reed canary grass. This pond is one of three which helped control an eroded gully.

Value of conservation extends far beyond farm boundaries.

In connection with the benefits of conservation, R. M. Evans, during his administration of the AAA program, said: "It is our earnest desire that all people understand that the agricultural conservation program does more than benefit the farmer through adjusting the production of crops to provide an abundance for domestic and export demands and in conserving our soils. The benefits extend to all industries supplying farmers with goods and to all who are interested in the maintenance and improvement of the soil, woodlands, streams, and lakes and of the living creatures of field and forest."

Soil conservation through organized districts.

Farmers in 27 counties have taken the initiative in organizing soil conservation districts. With two exceptions, districts follow county line boundaries. The state Soil Conservation Committee, composed of Clark Huntley, chairman, Clyde Spry, Earl Elijah, Mark Thornburg, and R. K. Bliss, with Frank H. Mendell, advisory member, and Harry Linn, secretary, have the main responsibility of receiving petitions, conducting hearings, and referenda and elections, and assisting districts in carrying out their program after they complete their organization and election of commissioners who serve as the governing body.

The State Committee also assists district commissioners in securing assistance from local, state, and federal agencies who are in a position to contribute to their program.

Practically all of the assistance the Soil Conservation Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is giving to Iowa farmers is being made available to them through districts. Upon request of the district commissioners, the Service assigns technical personnel to assist in developing farm plans, making soil conservation surveys, making recommendations for land use, contour tillage, terraces, gully structures, farm ponds, and other practices.

The Agricultural Extension Service, Agricultural Experiment Station, State Conservation Commission, County Farm Bureau, sportsmen's clubs, and other agencies are responding to specific requests being made by district governing bodies.

Organization geared to work program

Recent adjustments in the organization of the Soil Conservation Service have increased the direct assistance to soil conservation districts. From the standpoint of direct assistance given to farmers in planning and applying soil conservation measures on the land, and numbers of these men now located in the 27 organized soil conservation districts, they are the most important arm of the Service. These men are assisted by 15 district conservationists whose territory includes from one to four soil conservation districts.

The administration of activities of the Soil Conservation Service in Iowa is centered in a state office at Ames, Iowa, under the direction of R. W. Oberlin. These activities include (1) assistance to soil conservation districts, (2) Farm Forestry Demonstration Project in Allamakee County, (3) erosion control demonstration projects located at Waterloo and Spirit Lake, (4) assistance to cooperating agencies, and (5) cooperative relations.

Soil program aids wildlife

A desired wildlife program usually goes hand in hand with proper land use, erosion control, and increased production. Biologists of the State Conservation Commission, Iowa State College, and the Soil Conservation Service have found through trials and observations that on many farms and in many areas where a good soil conservation program has been applied to the land, you will usually find plenty of food and cover for wildlife and well-established travel lanes for use in traveling to and from shelter and feeding areas. Travel lanes are as essential to wildlife as our railroads and highways are to our transportation needs.

In most parts of Iowa a program that meets the requirements of the definition of soil conservation (utilization of soil and water without waste) will provide for a variety of regular farm crops which, together with a few food and cover patches in fence corners and waste areas, will also provide the desired conditions for wildlife.

Although Iowa is primarily an agricultural state engaged in the production of corn, hay, grain, and livestock, the fur business in 1940-41 yielded close to a **million dollars.** It is estimated that around 70 per cent of the annual wild fur crop is trapped on farms, mostly by farmers and farm boys. This is one example of the monetary value of wildlife.

Farm ponds

Of particular interest to sportsmen, hunters, fishermen, and livestock farmers are farm ponds because they provide for a water supply for livestock, gully control, conservation of water, a desirable habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreation.

Ponds vary widely in capacity, size, depth of water, watershed area above the dam, and location. Some of the main points that determine the kind of pond to construct are: the use to be made of the pond (one constructed primarily for gully control may be quite different from one constructed for recreation and a water supply for livestock), land use program on the drainage area above the dam, probable silting and life of the pond, soil conditions (pervious soils will not hold water), availability of equipment and materials and cost of construction.

As a source of food and more particularly recreation, many Iowa farmers have stocked their ponds with fish secured from the State Conservation Commission and the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior. Bullheads, bluegills, and crappies are suitable for small farm ponds and will provide 100 to 200 pounds of fish each year for each acre of water surface.

The War

Winning the war is the number one job before the American people today. Let's make soil con-

servation contribute to increased production of needed crops so that our soil resources may be maintained with minimum permanent losses.

Squirrels

(Continued from Page One)

timber and into the land of make-believe.

What if sales indices look bad or hogs are off two cents? Today he is Simon Kenyon on moccasin feet, with the best Kentucky rifle west of the Ohio. In his fairy-land he is a match for Huron or Wyandotte. He has shot in his pouch, powder in his horn, jerky in his pocket, time on his hands, and timber ahead.

What's that? Crisp, tell-tale rasping high up in a giant shell-bark. A careful search of the tree reveals, 70 feet up, flattened on a limb, a russet-colored form with curious eyes watching the ground below. A carefully-drawn bead, a sharp crack, and down end-over-end tumble together fox squirrel and half-eaten hickory nut.

A flash of color! It takes sharp eyes to see Mr. Squirrel slip into the leaf nest in that second growth white oak! He is a smarty! "What can't be seen cannot be found." Shoot through the nest? Oh, no. Tain't ethics—and who can take home a squirrel shot through the belly. Sit on that stump a while. Smell the moist air of the woodland. Listen to the voice of the flycatcher. He'll winter in Central America soon. Look at that snail in the leaf mound, carefully feeling each step as he carries his house on his shoulders. There is your squirrel on that limb by the nest! Curiosity killed him. Remember the lesson.

Thump! from that elm to the ground—a streak of gray through the brush. It's a gray squirrel! Watch that big basswood on the side of that draw. See that well-worn hole in its side? There, like oil, he pours into the safety of that ancient old den. He'll come out, too, if you'll wait. But don't take them all. Leave some for next time.

You can't skin a squirrel? It's easy. On the underside of the tail next to the body, cut through the tail bone, slitting the skin on the back about two inches. Take the two hind feet in the right hand and step on the tail with the left foot. Pull up on the legs until the skin peels up tightly against the shoulders. Change the hind feet to the left hand (still standing on the tail). With the right forefinger and thumb pull the exposed fore-legs out of the leg skin. Pull the unpeeled fur at the stomach over the hind quarters and legs. Cut off head and feet, and remove entrails through a full-length incision on the underside.

Squirrel Skinning In Two Easy Steps

You can't skin a squirrel? It's easy. On the underside, next to the body, cut through the tailbone, slitting the skin up the back about two inches, as shown at left. Then step on the tail with the left foot and pull up on the hind legs, as below, with a see-sawing motion, until the skin peels tightly against the shoulders.

* *

If this operation takes you less than 60 seconds, you are an expert; if over two minutes, you are in the novice class.

The two following cooking recipes are favorite methods of preparing squirrel for the table:

Squirrel Pot-Pie

Cut squirrel in pieces. Stew until done. Add seasoning and thickening; place biscuit dough on top. Bake in moderate oven until biscuit dough is done.

Ma Hummel's Fried Squirrel Recipe

Cut squirrel in pieces, wash, and wipe dry. Roll in white flour to which salt and pepper have been added. Fill skillet to about one-half with shortening; add squirrel when shortening reaches a moderate heat. Fry in open skillet until brown. Pour off excess grease, add a tablespoon of water, and cover immediately with tight lid. Add one-eighth cup of water at intervals until squirrel is tender. Care should be taken in not "drowning" the frying squirrel in water. Only enough water should be added to make immediate steam.

The average weight of the raccoon is 18 pounds.

The "crowing grounds" is the group of nesting territories used by the hens under the mastery of one rooster pheasant.

Peril Fur Seals

(Continued from Page One)

the time of discovery until Alaska was purchased by the United States. The Alaskan fur seal herd is now administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Fish and Wildlife Service.

When the government assumed control in 1910 and began sealing operations, the fur seal herd at the Pribilofs numbered only about 130,000 animals. The primary reason for the decrease of the herd to only a remnant of its former size, some four million, was the highly wasteful and objectionable practice of pelagic sealing, or the killing of seals in the water.

Pelagic sealing is wholly indefensible, both upon economic and humane grounds. It draws heavily upon the breeding female seals, which are protected from killing in sealing operations on land. If the mother seal is killed while at sea for food, it means death by starvation for her pup left ashore. The killing of female seals on their northward migration means also the loss of unborn pups. In pelagic sealing operations only about one out of five animals killed is actually recovered by the hunters before the carcasses sink.

The fur seal convention of 1911, entered into by the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Russia, prohibiting pelagic sealing, contributed greatly to the restoration of the fur seal herd. The benefits of the international agreement are shown by the fact that in the 29 years of direct government control and operations, from 1912 to 1940 inclusive, the herd has increased to approximately two million. During this period about 950,000 sealskins have been taken, 65,263 in 1940.

In return for prohibiting pelagic sealing operations by their citizens, Canada and Japan are each entitled to 15 per cent of the fur sealskins taken annually on the Pribilof Islands. The payments under treaty provisions to the government of Japan have amounted to a total of nearly $1,500,000.

A recent development is that in October, 1940, the Japanese government gave notice of its intention to abrogate the fur seal treaty. Such abrogation would not be effective until one year after the other signatories were notified, or in October, 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor.

The fur seals of the Pribilof Islands have very interesting nicknames. The old males are called "bulls". The unmated bulls are called "bachelors"; the females, "cows"; the young females visiting the Islands for the first time, "debutantes". The young are called "pups". Each old bull gathers as many females as he can into his family, which

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Beginning with the August issue, almost 9,000 rural schools in 96 of Iowa's 99 counties will receive a copy of the "Iowa Conservationist" each month. The bulletins will be sent in bulk to the county superintendents, who have kindly agreed to see that they are distributed.

The State Conservation Commission is very glad to have this new group of readers. We hope that the stories in this publication will kindle conservation fires in many of the minds that will in such a short time be guiding the fortunes of these United States. Who knows in what one-room Iowa school the Hornaday, Lacey, or Darling of the future is associating with the influences that will make him America's leader in conservation? Who can deny that the boy or girl who knows, loves, and understands the creatures of the fields and streams lives a richer, fuller life than he "who has eyes and sees not, ears and hears not"?

America, probably more than any other great power, needs a nation of conservationists to correct the errors of the past and prevent similar errors in the future.

This column, "Conservation in School", is to be about the schools' activities and participation in the conservation movement. The editor will be glad to receive comments, contributions or questions from teachers or students on any conservation matters in which they are interested. Suggestions as to what stories and information will help make this bulletin more valuable to the schools will be welcomed.

Many school groups are already engaged in conservation projects and programs, among which are an almost unlimited number of interesting and valuable activities. It is hoped that in the future we can print in this column reports of activities in which various schools are engaged. Readers are urged to send material for this column to the "Iowa Conservationist", State Conservation Commission, 10th & Mulberry, Des Moines.

"After the Norman conquest and before the Magna Charta of King John, it seems that the ownership of wild game in England was vested in the English king, who claimed such ownership in his individual capacity and as a personal prerogative." — Wild Game—Its Legal Status.

Peril Fur Seals

(Continued from Page 3)

is called his "harem". The number varies from a moderate sized harem of 40 wives up to as high as 100.

The old bulls arrive on the fog-shrouded islands from somewhere in the warm Pacific—no one knows where—in May, the cows coming some weeks later. The animals stay on the Pribilofs until September, and although the females, after the pups are born, swim out to sea some 150 miles to feed on squid, the old bulls do not leave the island during the season, and during that entire time neither eat, drink, or sleep.

Although the Pribilofs are covered with fog from spring through the fall and are commonly known to mariners as the "Mist Islands", their location can be determined far at sea by the tremendous, never ending roar that arises from countless thousands of baby seals, cows, and ferocious, fighting bulls guarding their harems.

It is of interest to note the great disparity in sizes of the sexes of fur seals. The breeding bulls average more than 500 pounds in weight and attain a maximum of upwards of 700 pounds. The cows average about 75 pounds and rarely attain a weight of 100 pounds. The cows give birth to their first pup at three years of age, but the males do not mature until six or seven years of age. The period of gestation is 11 months, and each cow bears but one pup a year. At birth the young are remarkably large considering the size of the mother. averaging about 12 pounds in weight.

The fact that fur seals are polygamous makes it possible to kill the surplus bachelor animals for fur without decreasing the number of young that may be born. Cows are never killed for fur.

The government has a contract with the Fouke Fur Company at St. Louis for dressing and dying and selling the skins at public auction. Incidental to the fur sealing operations on the Pribilof Islands is the management of blue foxes which roam at large and require feeding only during the winter months. Foxing operations at the Islands yield about 1,000 pelts per year. These pelts are sent to St. Louis and sold, the proceeds going into the Treasury of the United States.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year, 1918, the sum of $6,772,000 has been turned into the Treasury as net proceeds from the fur seal industry. Of this amount, $5,775,000 was derived from the sale of sealskins, $930,000 from foxskins, and approximately $67,000 from miscellaneous items, chiefly fur seal oil and meal.

What will happen to the Pribilofs and the fur seal herd during World War II no one knows, but one thing is certain—they both belonged to Uncle Sam before the war, and they will again after it's over.

Beautiful Egrets Returning To Old Iowa Haunts

Young American egrets, when they are old enough to fish for themselves, develop a wanderlust, leave their southern nesting grounds, and come into the north to fish. They stay until frost and then return to the Southland, never again to make the northward journey.

"Grandfather, I've got a bite!"

"But your cork's not bobbing."

"It did just a tiny bit, Grandfather."

"Son, you wouldn't fool an old man, now would you?"

"No, Grandpa, I won't fool you. I guess I didn't even have a tiny bite. Don't you think I should look at my bait? . . . .

"Oh, Grandpa! There's a big, white stork!"

Leisurely walking upstream in the shallows on stilt-like legs, a white, leghorn-sized bird approached the old man and the boy. Its spear-pointed bill deliberately turned from side to side on its long neck as it carefully tread the muddy bottom. The bird abruptly stopped, and with a quick thrust of its bill into the water, captured a gleaming, small fish. With an upward tilt of its head, the fish dinner slid down the long neck and was safely inside. Noting the pair on the bank, the bird took flight, and with slow, rhythmic wingbeat, flew down the river from whence it had come.

"That's not a stork, Son. It's a fisherman like you and me, although, as you saw, he is having more luck today than we are. That bird was an American egret. I could tell you an interesting story about him."

"Tell me the story, Grandpa."

And there on the banks of the Mississippi River the old man began his tale.

"From the present far back to where Man's memory can no longer be trusted, women have worn monstrous head - pieces called hats. There is probably no animal, mineral, or vegetable substance under the sun with which some woman at some time has not decorated her hat. When your grandmother and I went to New York on our honeymoon in 1897, the fine ladies decorated their hats with the feathers of rare and beautiful birds from all over the world.

"To supply these feathers, hunters were sent to the far corners of the earth in search of the birds that had them. Swamps and jungles, high mountains and deserts all claimed distinctive and beautiful birds of their own. The birds were killed, stripped of their plumage, and the feathers sent to London or Paris and sold in the feather markets.

Year after year the birds were slaughtered, until many of the most beautiful faced complete extermination. No bird was safe, from the largest and strongest like the eagle to the tiniest of the hummingbirds. Gulls, terns, swallows, kingfishers, owls, and hosts of other birds felt the heavy hand of the feather hunter.

"Egrets such as you just saw were among the most highly prized of the birds; their lace-like plumes or aigrettes were sold on the market for as high as 55 dollars per ounce. The fragile plumes that were so valuable are worn by the adult birds only during the mating and nesting season, and are frayed and come out by moulting shortly after the young leave the nest.

"Into the egret rookeries during the nesting season went the feather hunters. As the snowy white birds came in to feed the young, they were shot at the nests, the young left to die of starvation. To make an ounce of

(Continued to Page 5, Column 1)

Egrets

(Continued from Page Four)

plumes, six birds were killed and stripped of their feathers.

"Tens of thousands of ounces of plumes were sold at each feather sale. No rookery was too inaccessible for the plume hunters to reach, and rapidly both the American egret and its tiny cousin, the snowy egret, approached the point of extinction.

"When the egrets in America had dwindled from their myriads to a very few hundred individuals, there rose a cry, 'The remnant must be saved!' The long fight for protective legislation and enforcement began. Game wardens guarding the nesting grounds were murdered by the savage, money-mad plume hunters. The fight was finally won, the egret saved, and the use or even the possession of egret plumes, as well as other non-game birds, was made illegal.

"The egrets, unmolested, began to increase. Abandoned rookeries again became homes for the birds. They spread out over their original nesting areas and overflowed its limits. They now have become common and again grace the shores of our streams.

"Until recently there were no nesting egrets in Iowa. However, in midsummer when the young are able to fish for themselves, they develop a wanderlust and leave their southern nesting grounds and come into the north, where there is an abundance of fish in shallow water. They stay until frost and return to the southland, never again to make the northward journey.

"Recently a nesting colony has established itself in Iowa on the Mississippi River near Sabula. The colony, containing 1,500 birds or more, is increasing in numbers each year."

"Grandfather, I've got a bite!"

"But your cork's not bobbing."

"It did just a tiny bit, Grandfather."

"Son, you wouldn't fool an old man, now would you?"

"No, Grandpa, I won't fool you. I guess I didn't even have a tiny bite. Don't you think I should look at my bait? . . . . "

The world's best tiller of the soil is the earthworm. It has been estimated that an acre of ground harbors 50,000 of them which, in a year, carry in their bodies 18 tons of dirt. That is, they bring up from the deep down in the subsoil earth which, in successive stages, they deposit on top of the ground. Thus they literally plough their way up, loosening the soil and providing for the percolation of water to myriad root systems far below.—Cresco Times.

For These Beautiful Plumes, Millions of Egrets Were Destroyed

Egrets were highly prized by the feather hunters. Their lace-like plumes, or aigrettes, were sold on the market for as high as $55 an ounce. The small curved plumes are from the snowy egret, the larger, straight plumes from the American egret.

"I Hope He's Satisfied," Says Crippled White Heron

This little essay is addressed to sportsmen. I don't mean the fellow who thinks harpooning tarpon adds lustre to the sport of fishing, or the one who catches an amberjack, harnesses it, then keeps it swimming around the stern of his boat until every fish in the school has been boated. I mean men of conscience.

Ten days ago when Earl Shugars, Associated Press photographer, and I were down at Shark River we made the acquaintance of an interesting bird, a great white heron named, appropriately enough, Ichabod. Crane, I suppose the last name would have to be, although it never occurred to us to ask him.

Ichabod had a pitiful story to tell. It seems he came to spend the winter in the Cape Sable region, the last American frontier sanctuary for him and his fellows—although at one time vast areas of the everglades and tidewater mangrove marshes were white at dawn and dusk with their flights.

Naturally adapted to life in this latitude—at least as long as amateur marksmen and commercial hunters permit, and enjoying the gallant though inadequate protection of Audubon society agents, Ichabod had been getting along fine. It was great fun to wake up at crack of dawn, ruffle his feathers luxuriously, and with his mate flap off to Sable creek, Christian point or Seven Palms lake to greet the rising sun and pick up a bit of breakfast.

Boy, those fiddler crabs along the beaches are the stuff when you're hungry! Mutton minnows, water bugs, frogs and occasional small snakes are okay, too. In short, there was no lack of food in tempting variety around the Monroe county herony—"where every prospect pleases and only man is vile".

It was this quotation—he didn't know who originally said it, and I'm sure I don't—that brought poor old Ichabod to the point of his story:

"So I'm just a country bird trying to get along, but doing all right down here, when—bingo! down comes one of these big-shot sportsmen.

"He was a fisherman, he said, and all of us thought so, too, because he stuck pretty well to his plug-casting for a couple of days. Birds haven't anything against anglers. By and large they tend to their fishing and let us tend to ours. There's something to be said for that, you'll admit. We don't go poking around in men's affairs—except that cousin of mine, the stork, who apparently doesn't know any better. (Any grief he can bring mankind is so much velvet as far as I'm concerned, now!)

"I was within easy walking distance of the Shark River fishing camp dock on Coot bay when this fellow—a doctor from Birmingham, Ala., I heard the guides say—came in from his last day of fishing. He had a beautiful catch. You couldn't imagine what else he thought he needed to make his trip a success. I soon found out, though.

"Well, as I say, I was just hanging around the camp, hoping for a handout of fish entrails or some little tidbit. That's where I made my mistake. I'm white and pretty good-sized, and no doubt I was the only living thing in sight; so he shot me—broke my left wing, leaving me crippled for life.

"Now my mate's left me. I can't fly any more, and have to subsist on fish leavings mostly, and I hope that damn' sportsman is satisfied . . . Pose for a picture? Sure, what have I got to lose?"—Bob Munroe (Reprinted from "Florida Fish and Game").

Your Job: Love It or Leave It

A man's job is his best friend. It clothes and feeds his wife and children, pays the rent, and supplies the wherewithal to develop and become cultivated. The least a man can do in return is to love his job. A man's job is grateful. It is like a little garden that thrives on love. It will one day flower into fruit worthwhile for him and his to enjoy.

If you ask any successful man the reason for his making good he will tell you that first and foremost it is because he likes his work; indeed, he is wrapped up in it. He walks with his work; he talks his work; he is entirely inseparable from his work, and that is the way every man worth his salt ought to be if he wants to make of his work what it should be, and make of himself what he wants to be.—Mississippi Fish and Game.

WARDENS' TALES

SHOP TALK FROM THE FIELD

Jim Rector reports a telephone call from a farmer living on the Missouri River bottoms, where each spring thousands of blue and snow geese concentrate on their northern migration. The farmer requested the conservation officer to come out and see the geese. Rector, who had already spent 24 straight hours on patrol, had seen all the geese that he cared about —at least until he had 40 winks of sleep.

He asked the farmer, "How many geese are in your field?"

The reply was, "There's a blue million of 'em. Oh, more than that!—Maybe ten thousand!"

—WT—

Paralleling Rector's story is one about the ancient 'coon hunter of Tennessee antecedents who was checked one night while running his lone dog.

The officer said, "That's a mighty fine looking 'coon hound you have there."

"You bet it is," he said. "That's the best dang 'coon hound in the United States—maybe even in the whole county!"

—WT—

Walt Trusell reports that Leo Lechtenberg of Plymouth County got quite a surprise recently when threshing. When breaking open a new shock of oats, a skunk belligerently ran out from under the bundles.

As the bundles were loaded, the skunk's nest, evidently hastily constructed, was revealed. Leo investigated, expecting to find a litter of young skunks. To his surprise, there were two Maltese kittens with partially opened eyes. Mr. Lechtenberg believes that the skunk had lost her own young and had stolen the two kittens from a litter of young cats in his barn.

—WT—

Rae Sjostrom, in reporting a tremendous hatch of young ducks in the northwest Iowa marshes, nominates for the prize duck mother of the year a mallard hen he discovered on Prairie Lake, in Dickinson County, who was proudly herding a flock of 16 young through the rushes.

—WT—

Walt Harvey, while checking a hunting license during the pheasant season, checked a hunter whose license was not signed.

Handing him a fountain pen, Walt said, "Write your John Henry on there."

Walt was surprised by the reply, "How do you spell it?"

Conservation Officer Sam Hyde was assigned some river patrol work on one of the major streams outside of his territory. In order to familiarize himself with the territory in which he was to work, he took his fish pole and walked down the stream bank for several miles, carefully noting landmarks that could be seen at night.

As he came around a bend, he noted a fisherman downstream catching what appeared to be an under-sized catfish. Walking out into the open where he could be easily seen, the officer began fishing downstream toward the violator, meantime watching the fisherman catch and string several more short catfish.

When within a short distance of the fisherman, Sam called, "What luck?"

"Good," replied the unsuspecting fisherman, holding up a string of short catfish.

Closing the remaining distance by a few quick steps, Sam said, "Those fish look like they're under-size."

"Yes, I know it. They are."

"Aren't you afraid the game warden will get you?"

"No, I know all those —— —— —— around here."

"Well," replied Sam, "Here is one of those —— —— —— you're just getting acquainted with."

Was the fisherman's face red!

—WT—

"A man by the name of Frank Erkert of Blairstown caught a 2-lb. channel catfish July 4, that I had tagged at the Palisades Park above the fishway June 17, 1940. (We trapped fish in a basket as they negotiated the new fishway and tagged them with gill bands.)

"This fish was caught in Prairie Creek, Leroy Twp., Sec. 13, a tributary of the Cedar River, the point when caught about 150 miles from the tagging station, stream mileage. The fish was 14 inches in length when tagged and between 18 and 20 inches when caught. A nice record and indication of the value of small streams and their relation to the larger streams into which they flow."—Walt Aitken.

"Conservation is not concerned only with perpetuating fish and game, or forests or birds or other animals of any group, or waters, or recreation grounds, or soils, or stations for scientific research, or historic areas—it is concerned with all of them in well-balanced relation, and its exponents must have due regard for all the recreational, economic, sentimental and scientific interests involved. Its problems can be solved, and its ends attained, only by a fair recognition of all phases of its many-sided interests."—B. Shimek.

Belted Kingfisher Brightens Iowa Fishing Spots

If there is one bird which I would hate to see disappear from the shores and trees of our favorite stream or lake, or any old fishing hole for that matter, it is the belted kingfisher.

Rare indeed is the fishing trip which does not produce a glimpse of at least one of these flashing residents of the waterside, for the kingfisher is not a true aquatic bird.

When angling lags a bit, or you have just stopped for a smoke and a rest, watching the antics of the belted kingfisher is a show in itself. He is a good fisherman, and for his vantage point he usually selects the outermost limb of some dead tree. From this perch he is able to observe what goes on below, and we have watched many a minnow dive-bombed by the kingfisher.

A rather beautiful legend surrounds the kingfisher. It is said that once upon a time there lived a lovely maiden named Alcyone, or Halcyon. She was the daughter of Aeolus, god of the winds. Halcyon had a love affair with a sailor, whom papa disliked. Forbidden her suitor, Halcyon plunged into the sea, and was turned into a kingfisher.

Then father Aeolus relented, and being the monarch of wind and wave, decreed that during a certain season of the year when the kingfisher nests, there should be no dirty weather. Thus we have "halcyon days" when the waters are supposed to be tranquil and serene, and the winds only gentle zephyrs.

Of course, our busy scientists have disproved the legend of Halcyon. The kingfisher does not build a floating nest. The kingfisher's home consists of a tunnel driven into the perpendicular face of an earthen bank. Cut banks above streams and lakes are natural locations, but the kingfisher is not above using the walls of railroad cuts and other excavations, even those some distance from a stream.

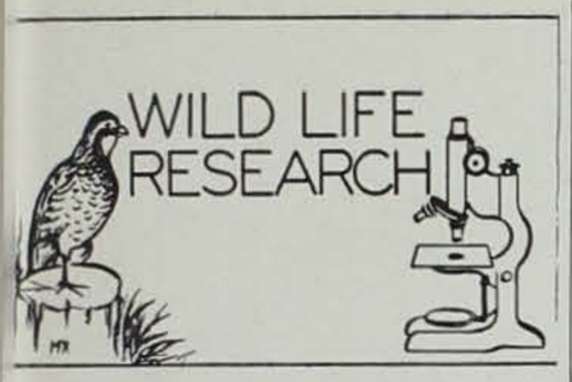
The tunnel extends from four to 15 feet or more, with an enlargement at the end, where on a mass of regurgitated fish bones, the female deposits from five to eight pure white eggs.

The kingfisher is a lone wolf, traveling alone except for a short period during the mating season. His diet is mainly minnows and crayfish. Occasionally a larger fish is caught, usually an injured one, and this the kingfisher manages to chop up with that ponderous bill of his.

Around a fish hatchery the kingfisher has no standing. He invades hatchery ponds, snatching tiny fish fry and fish fingerlings, and hatchery managers usually keep the shotgun handy for any belted kingfisher who deigns to take up permanent residence around hatchery grounds.

A lot of anglers cuss the kingfisher. We don't. We think he is entitled to his daily ration of fish where he can get them legitimately. We are willing to allow him every minnow or small fish that he captures in exchange for the pleasurable moments that he gives us along the streams and lakes. Without this big-billed fellow, with large, crested head, the streams would be mighty lonesome, and his going would leave a gap which could be filled by no substitute. Yes sir, we kind of like old Ceryle alcyon, the belted kingfisher.—The Nomad, Davenport Democrat.

The badger's habitat, almost to the exclusion of any other type, is dry, rolling uplands.



Studies With Mearns Cottontail
Project No. 568 Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa
By GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON, Project Leader

Between March and November, 1939, 1940, and 1941, research workers found 126 cottontail nests on 288 acres of selected fields in Davis, Wayne, Boone and Story Counties. The fields varied in area from five to 12 acres and each bore, or had ajacent, good shelter cover suitable to cottontails. The cover of the separate fields ranged from closely grazed bluegrass to lightly pastured well-shaded woods, including unmown weeds, timothy, clover, garden crops, orchards, groves, lightly pastured clearings, and rural school yards.

The most productive nesting tract, a lightly grazed clearing with partly sprouted stumps, bore about one nest to an acre in 1940. A woven wire-fenced rural school yard, carrying bluegrass and sweet clover ground cover, a dozen trees and as many stumps, was the banner single acre, yielding six nests in 1940.

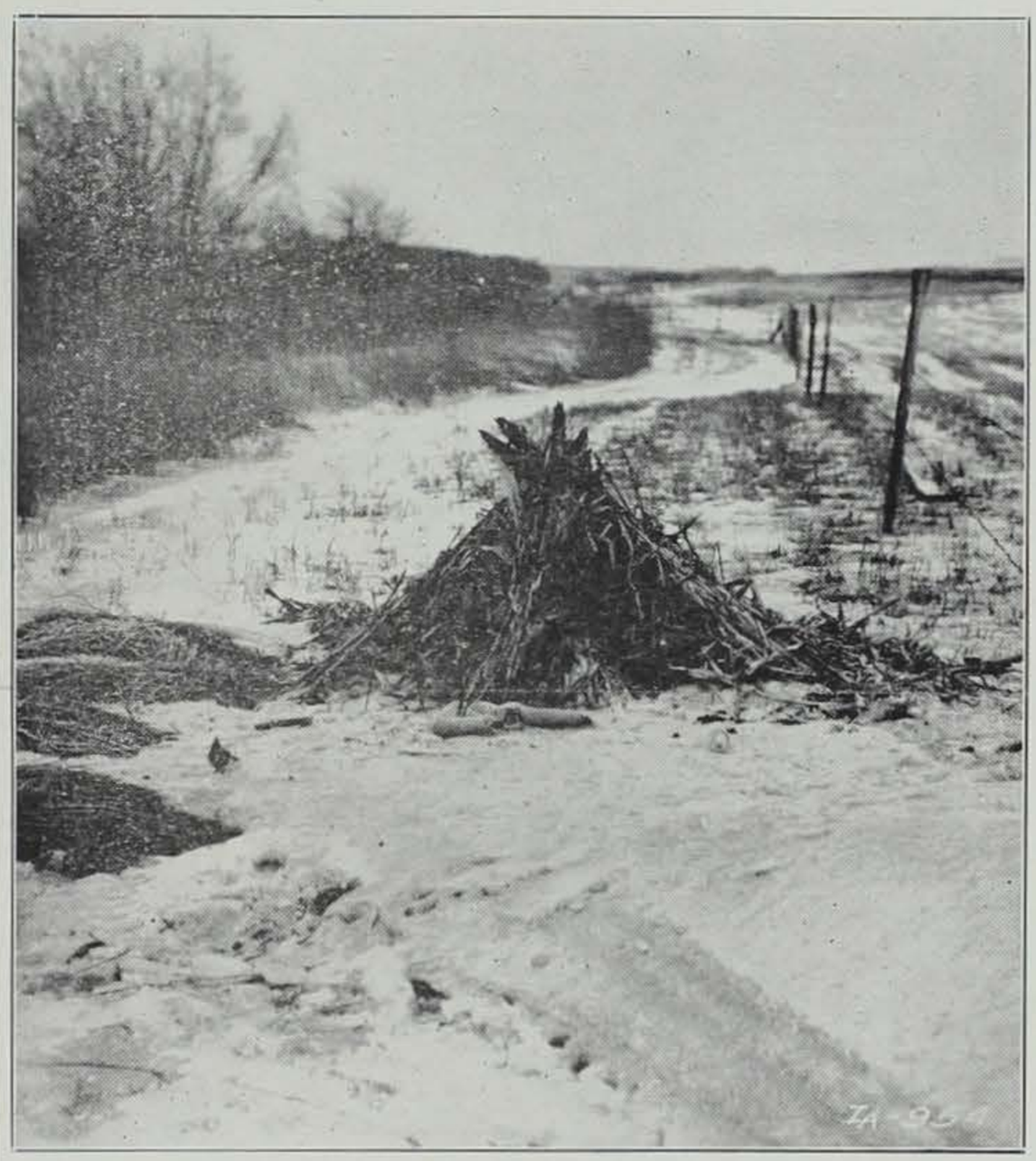
The nests were found as the workers walked across the fields at intervals of about eight feet one or two times a month. The nest-containing pockets in the soil averaged about four inches in depth, five inches in width and six inches in length, and in nearly all cases slanted back under the soil surface. A patch of bare soil about six inches in diameter, dug out and tramped down by the female cottontail in the nest pocket excavation, was visible in front of most of the nests.

In clearings nests were found often at the bases of stumps when the young cottontails revealed themselves by wiggling the nest contents or by squealing in response to the searcher's prodding with a stick. Usually the soil platform and the nesting material of a stump nest were covered with old leaves so well that one could not visually detect the nest. The nest material of an average nest was about one-third hair from the female's underparts and two-thirds soft plant material, usually grass.

An average of about four young to a litter was found in 18 nests discovered by the researchers, and an average of about six to a litter was reported by gardeners in 15 nests, of which one contained 11 young of two sizes and one had 12 young of two sizes. Evidently two females in those cases used a single nest at the same time. About five young cottontails composed an average litter. Slightly more than one-half of the nests were judged to have been used, i. e., young had been placed in them. About two-thirds of the used nests brought off young successfully.

Although March nesting is reported occasionally, the research workers found none in that month. In the quarter, April through June, about two-thirds of the nesting occurred, and about one-third in the quarter, July through September. No nest was known to have been used in October or later in the year.

Feeding Station Popular Spot With Birds and Animals Alike



This feeding station is located in a vegetation waterway developed for wildlife. Pheasants, rabbits and song birds have used this area for the last two years. Clump plantings of pines and spruces were made along the waterway and willows and grass cover the bottoms. Corn and hegari cane are present along the edge in feeding station and food patch.

* *

This lightly grazed cut over bluegrass pasture on the Moingona research area in 1940 was most productive of cottontail nests. Many of the fur and grass-lined nest pockets were found in the ground snugly against the stumps.

Hunting A Real Sport Now-a-Days

"Man no longer hunts for the sake of killing nor kills for the sake of living. With dog and gun he traverses his own and his neighbor's land unmolested, free to take from that land the game which rises before him under a code established by him for the preservation of these same birds and animals which are as free as the man who hunts them.

This 'sport', as it is called, creates a binding tie between all who participate in it and is one of the strongest links in the chain which holds freedom fast to democracy." — Pennsylvania Game News.

By FLOYD H. DAVIS
U. S. Game Management Agent for Iowa

The Fish and Wildlife Service announced the new Waterfowl Regulations on July 15, 1942. They were recommended to Congress following biological investigations by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and consultations with state game officials. The January waterfowl inventory, which was carried on throughout North America by service employees, state game officials, and other competent observers, indicated a population of about 100,000,000 North American waterfowl. This population is more than three times greater than estimated seven years ago. Reports from northern breeding grounds also indicate that this fall's flight of waterfowl will be the heaviest in more than a decade.

"FLICK"

In the intermediate zone which embraces the states of Iowa, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and California, the season opens October 15 and closes December 23, a total of 70 days. In the northern zone the season opens September 26 and closes December 4, and in the southern zone opens November 2 and closes January 10.

Duck hunting hours are from sunrise to sunset. Legally killed birds may be held for 30 days following the close of the season. However, Iowa state law requires that a permit must be issued to hold game longer than 10 days.

Daily bag limits on ducks are 10 in the aggregate of all kinds. Not more than one wood duck or more than three singly or in the aggregate of redheads or bufflefleheads may be included. The possession limit is not more than 20 ducks in the aggregate of all kinds, and not more than one wood duck nor more than six of either or both of redheads or buffleheads may be included. The possession limit on the first day of the hunting season is the same as the daily bag limit.

(Continued to Page 8, Column 1)

Flick Says

(Continued from Page Seven)

In Iowa open seasons, hunting zones, shooting hours, and methods of hunting are the same for geese as for ducks. The daily bag limit on geese and brant is two, but in addition four blue geese may be taken in a day. If blue geese only are taken, the daily bag limit is six. Excepting blue geese, any person at one time may possess not more than four geese, but in addition two blue geese are allowed, and if only blue geese are taken, the possession limit is six. On the opening day the possession limit is the same as the daily bag limit.

Migratory waterfowl may be taken during open seasons with bow and arrow or with a shotgun not larger than No. 10 gauge, fired from the shoulder, but they cannot be taken with or by means of any automatic-loading or hand-operated repeating shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, the magazine of which has not been cut off or plugged with a one-piece metal or wooden filler incapable of removal through the loading end thereof, so as to reduce the capacity of said gun to not more than three shells at one time in the magazine and chamber combined; they may be taken during the open season from land or water, with the aid of a dog, and from a blind, boat, or floating craft.

Waterfowl cannot be taken from a sinkbox (battery), powerboat, sailboat, any boat under sail, and any craft or device of any kind towed by powerboat or sailboat, or by means, aid, or use of an automobile or aircraft of any kind, or by the aid or use of cattle, horses, or mules.

Waterfowl cannot be taken by means, aid, or use, directly or indirectly, of corn, wheat, oats, or other grain, salt, or any kind of feed whatsoever, placed, deposited, distributed, scattered, or otherwise put out whereby such waterfowl are lured, attracted, or enticed, regardless of the distance intervening between any such grain, salt, or feed and the position of the taker.

It is not intended to forbid the taking of such birds attracted by growing or standing crops of grain or by harvested grainfields so long as such crops are not or have not been manipulated. The use, directly or indirectly, of live duck or goose decoys is not permitted, regardless of the distance intervening between any such live decoys and the position of the taker. No one may use aircraft of any kind, for the purpose of concentrating, driving, rallying, or stirring up waterfowl and coots.

A person over 16 years of age is not permitted to take migratory waterfowl unless at the time of such taking he has on his person an unexpired Federal migratory-bird hunting stamp, validated by his signature written across the face thereof in ink. Persons not over 16 years of age are permitted to take migratory waterfowl without such stamp.

Wanton Cutting of Den Trees Causes Huge Loss to Nature

By JACK MUSGROVE
State Museum Director

Annually hundreds of fine den trees that are the homes of wild animals and birds, as well as bees, are destroyed by unthinking people who, for a small amount of honey, chop down so-called bee trees. Den trees are generally old trees that have taken years and years to grow, and although hollow, many of them are good for years to come. Those old trees house families of 'coon, squirrels, wood ducks, and many other kinds of wildlife that are valuable and desirable.

It is true that in some places it may be necessary occasionally to cut a bee tree to prevent the spread of foul brood. However, there are very few areas in which foul brood is prevalent. The bees in these areas die out within a single season, and any bees coming into the contaminated area are almost certain to contact the disease and die. In the past very few bee trees have actually been cut for the purpose of protecting the hives of the beekeeper. Many have, however, been destroyed by bee hunters.

Cutting of bee trees for honey is usually accompanied by many bee stings. There have been cases in this state of fatal stinging. I wonder if the discomfort of acting as the target of the hot end of wild bees is ever compensated for by the honey mixed with wood, broken comb, dead bees, and saturated with the liquid squeezed from the young brood. Seldom is a bee tree cut in which the combs are not broken and the brood scattered throughout. In such cases it is necessary to scoop out the prize and to squeeze it through fine mesh cloth in order that it may be used.

Anyone can obtain the honey from a bee tree without cutting the tree, leaving it intact for future use as a bee tree or den tree for wild animals, and also at the same time can obtain the swarm of bees to domesticate. The method used is inexpensive, easy, and eliminates the bee stinging that accompanies cutting of bee trees. To secure the honey and establish a domestic colony from the wild bee tree, it is necessary first to have a hive with frames and foundations, a cone of screen wire similar to the cone in a fly-trap, or a bee escape, and a bee smoker. Go to the nearest beekeeper and obtain from him a single frame containing bees, brood, and eggs, and place them in the hive with the foundation.

A fine old den tree cut for a few pounds of wild honey, mixed with wood pulp, broken comb, dead bees, and the juices squeezed from young brood bees.

Carry this material to the bee tree with enough rough lumber to build a platform strong enough to hold the hive near the entrance in the tree. With the bee smoker well-loaded with punk or waste, ascend the tree and smoke the bees back into the cavity. Place the bee escape or screen wire cone over the entrance so that the bees can come out, but will not be able to find their way into the hollow tree. Then place the hive on the platform as near as possible to the entrance.

The bees coming out will soon find their way into this hive unit and will, with the few bees which are already there, raise a queen from the eggs in the frame.

The hive should be left in this position for four or five weeks. During this time the new hive colony gets stronger by the "joining up" of the wild bees from the bee tree. By the end of this period the bees will have taken up permanent residence in the hive, drawn the foundations out into fine comb, and started rearing the brood.

It is then time for the bee man to again climb the tree, and with the smoker well-loaded with sulphur, kill the few remaining bees in the cavity with the sulphur gas. Then remove the bee escape from the den tree, giving the bees in the new hive access to the honey in the den tree. In a short time the bees will return to their old home, remove all the honey, and place it in the hive which the beekeeper has provided.

After the den honey has all been removed to the new hive, the beekeeper can take down the hive and move the bees to the location he has chosen for the new swarm's permanent home.

Otto Klinge

—Photo by courtesy Davenport Democrat.

The Iowa Conservation Commission lost by death one of its veteran conservation officers July 25. For 14 years Otto Klinge patrolled the woods and streams of Scott and Clinton Counties, not only searching for violators of the fish and game laws, but in organizing rescue operations for fish stranded by receding waters, conducting surveys of game populations, and many other conservation activities.

Otto knew the main roads and the side roads. He knew the main streams and the timber ponds and the pot-holes. He knew the city sportsmen, the Mississippi River people, and the farm boys of his territory—hosts of them by their first names.

He knew the history and the peculiar problems of southeast Iowa fish and game. Otto knew all this and he knew something more. He knew how to deal with many different kinds of people.—L. D. Parker, Davenport Times.

Muskrats, where sold as food, are often called "marsh rabbits".