

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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NUMBER 2

A Trapper Gives Us Something To Think About

Shortly before the 1943 trapping season opened, the State Conservation Commission received in its morning consignment of "fan mail" a letter from a trapper who, after giving a resume of the fur prospects in his vicinity, made the following thought-provoking comment:

"I love the outdoors. I hunt and fish, but I am first of all a trapper. My two boys are trappers, and last year my oldest grandson put out a trap line. We trap for fun, recreation, and cash, and we don't believe that the quail shooter or trout fisherman have a monopoly on sport when they get a double over a dog or net a rainbow along some trout stream. Did you ever catch an old residenter mink after days and weeks of trial and error? Thrills? Satisfaction? Brother, you don't know.

"During the past few years the fish and game department has spent thousands of dollars of license money to improve outdoor sport. Fish trucks go all over the state stocking fish. Carp are seined from the streams. Fish hatcheries and nurseries show up all over the map. Thousands of quail and pheasants are raised and released. Land is purchased for refuges and public hunting grounds. Duck marshes are restored, and many other fish and game projects are carried on.

"I am not against this because I like to hunt and fish, and hunting and fishing are getting better every year. But, as I said, I am first of all a trapper.

"According to your own figures trappers take a million dollars worth of fur each year. You say trapping in Iowa is big business. What I want to know, then, is why you don't pay the same at-

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Summary of Outdoor Sports In '43 Through the Eyes of Other Writers



After two or three trips to trout waters near at hand, many anglers turned their fishing efforts to other species.

Limits Easily Taken When Transportation Was Available

Looking backward at 1943 and summarizing its effect upon the angler and nimrod, we may truthfully say that it was one long to be remembered.

For the first time since the motor car became a popular means of transportation, sportsmen discovered what it meant to have its use denied them. More than one fishing and hunting trip was shelved for the duration because Uncle Samuel had better need for the precious gas and tires which fishermen and hunters alike had long taken for granted.

Iowa trout fishing reached a new low, at least so it seemed. A disastrous start never seemed to be quite overcome in spite of the efforts of the Iowa conservation department, and after two or three trips to trout waters close at hand anglers turned their fishing efforts to other species.

Fishing on the inland waters of the state turned out exceptionally well. Catfishing in particular was good, although other species were caught with regularity. Crappies, bass, walleye pike, bluegills, and perch were taken from inland waters which had not produced these varieties in many years, probably because the anglers worked at catching them instead of giving up after a few tries.

Pheasant shooting was tops. The 45 shooting days of 1943 provided all of the gunning even the

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Of Chokeboring and Gauges-- Dope for the Hot Stove League

By BRUCE F. STILES

Chief, Division of Fish and Game

The invention of the chokebored gun is credited to Fred Kimble. For many years shotgun makers had toyed with the idea of constricting the muzzle of the bore to force the pellets in the outside of the charge toward the center of the pattern so as to prevent the shot from scattering. This had been tried many times without success, and gun makers had given it up to the extent that all guns were true cylinder bore.

This story is told by Fred Kimble, who made his own guns and was the outstanding shot of his time. He bored out the tube of a nine-gauge gun, leaving quite a constriction in the muzzle. After patterning the gun he found that it scattered the shot much

more widely than the true cylinder bore, and being disgusted with it he took it back to his workshop to bore out the restriction in the muzzle and make it a true cylinder. In boring it out, his reaming tool did not retain its proper set, and without his knowledge a slight constriction of some 15 or 20 one-thousandths of an inch was left. Then on trying out the gun he was amazed to find that it shot a closer pattern than any gun he had ever fired. He was at a loss to know why this was true. He carefully re-checked all his work and finally came to the conclusion that it must have some connection with the fact that he had originally left the constriction in the muzzle and then bored it out. On re-checking the bore, he found

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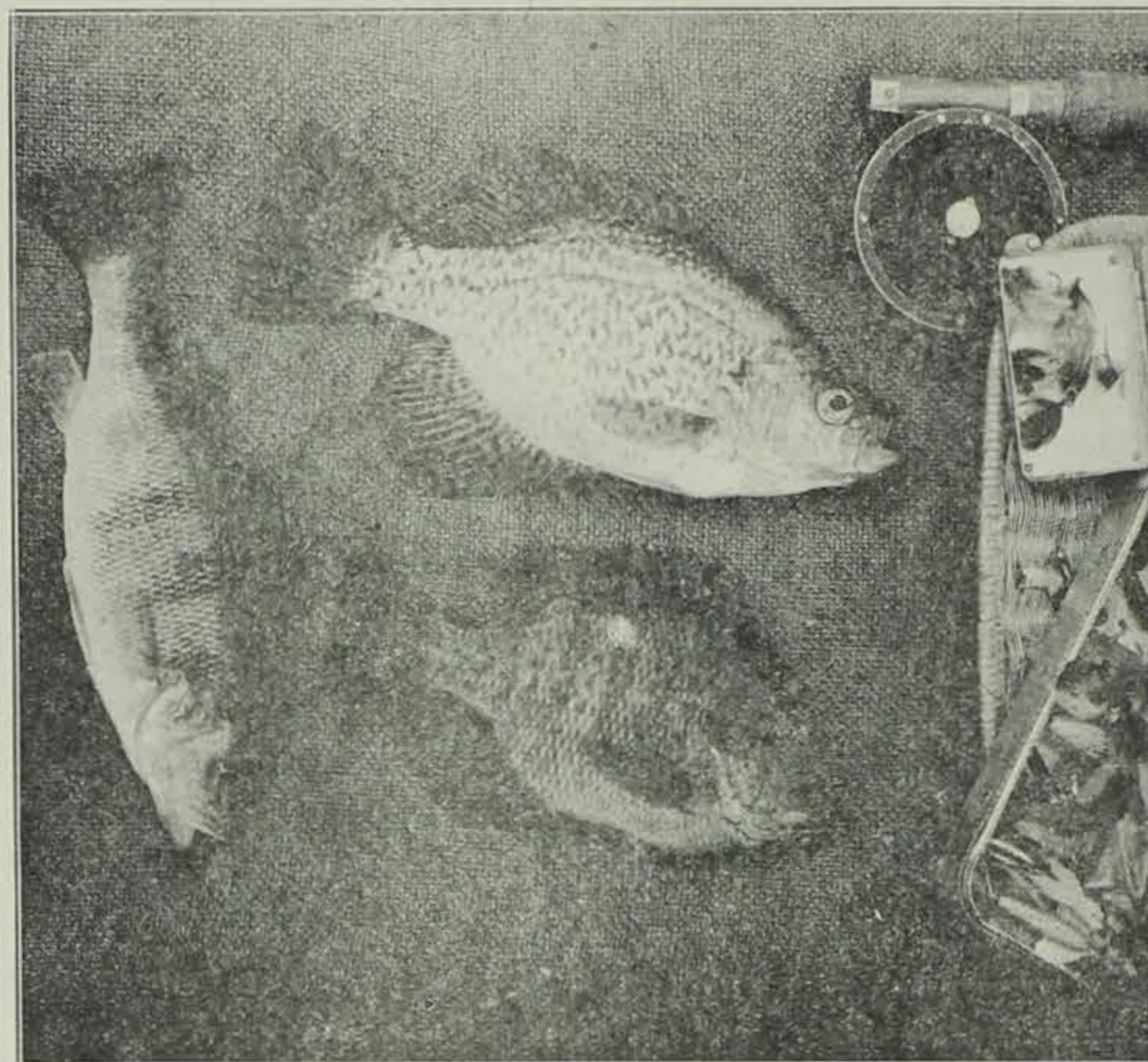
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Summary

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most ardent pheasant enthusiast demanded. Eight days in the spring, and 37 days in the fall reduced the pheasant population to a point where agriculture will have no worries, yet left a sufficient seedstock to populate the coverts during the 1944 breeding season. Unless some untoward incident takes place this winter, there will be fine pheasant gunning again next October and November. We are willing to go on record that there will be no spring season in 1944, so you may as well put that shooting iron away in proper gun grease.

For those who had the time and the properly trained bird dogs, quail shooting was deluxe. Never did Iowa furnish such a crop of quail. At least not within the memory of the present generation. The southern Iowa quail country was actually little-gunned, but quail abounded in every covert and it was just a question of shooting them. One



Crappies, bass, walleye pike, bluegills, and perch were taken from inland waters which had not been productive in many years, probably because the anglers worked at catching them instead of giving up after a few tries.

weakness in our Iowa quail setup is the possession limit. The effects of this possession limit were never so obvious as in 1943. The law permits but eight birds per day to be taken, and but eight in possession. Good quail country being 100 or more miles away, there was little inducement to go after them. No gunner wanted to drive this far for just eight birds when he could gun for pheasants or ducks with more success.

Duck shooting was both good and bad, but mostly good. Almost every duck spot had better shooting than in the preceding year, and where records were carefully kept and compiled the total number of birds killed usually exceeded that of the 1942 season. There was no denying the fact that there were more ducks in 1943. Every duck hunter with whom we have discussed the matter reports seeing more birds in flight than for many, many years. The year 1943 accomplished a record duck-production in the Canadian duck factory.

The squirrel and rabbit shooters had their innings, too. Squirrel hunting was very good. Our mild autumn with abundant tree foliage helped the bushy-tails to keep the hunter on the alert, and in spite of heavy shooting in some timbers there is a good carry-over of squirrels for the 1944 breeding season.

Rabbit hunting, while a bit off-color in Scott County, is splendid elsewhere. Light snow usually brings out the greatest number of rabbit hunters, and until this happens it will be hard to determine just how the cottontail fam-

ily is holding up in the county. Early reports are of a diminished supply, but in other nearby counties bunnies are said to be very plentiful.

Fur trappers are finishing up their best season in many years. Prices are high, very high, in fact, and the supply of furs, with the exception of skunk, is the best in a decade. The catch is certain to double the 1942 take, and may even triple 1942 figures.

All in all, 1943 was not too bad a year for the boys engaged on the home front. There was good fishing and good hunting if you could get to it. It would have been much more enjoyable had the nation been at peace. You can't help but wonder what all those swell lads out there on the firing line were doing. The boys up on the icy wastes of Kiska, in

the steaming jungles of the Solomons, in the mud of Italy, in the sands of North Africa, on the sub-infested Atlantic, and in the limitless blue skies. Most of them like to fish and hunt, too. They don't have much time for it now. They are scrapping so that you and I can continue to fish and hunt, unmolested and with absolute freedom. Let us not abuse our heritage. Let us see to it that when these lads come back there will still be plenty of fishing and hunting.—The Campfire, Davenport Democrat.

Looking back you see that you have probably had one of the best hunting and fishing seasons you have enjoyed for many a year. Longest pheasant season in the history of the state. Also longest quail season since old Hector was a pup. Lots of ducks went south in the big flight. In fact, it was a darn good year for the outdoorsman. If you didn't have near enough shells to satisfy your desires, just think of the seedstock of game that has carried over this year. That's bound to mean more game in years to come.

All in all—hurrah for old 1943, and here's hoping 1944 is no worse. Let's just hope those kids can come back to get in on the fishing and hunting, and soon.

Lots of good reports on the farmer-sportsman good fellowship spirit during the last year. Very few cases of refusals to hunt where the fellows drove right up to the farm house and asked permission.

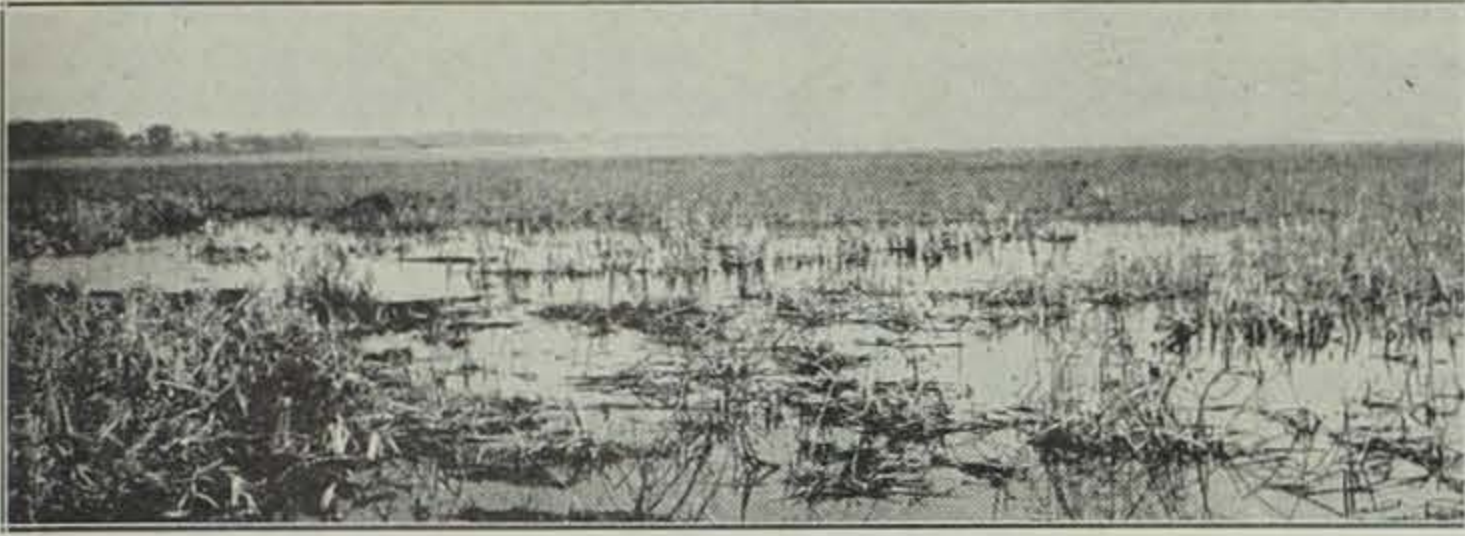
Farmers are beginning to appreciate the fact that a certain amount of the crop of wild game must be taken off each year or the crop as a whole cannot survive. You can thank your Conservation Commission for spreading such education.

There were a few cases where sportsmen were turned down, and I am sorry to report

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Almost every duck spot had better shooting than in the preceding years, and at clubs where records were carefully kept and compiled, the total number of birds killed usually exceeded that of the 1942 season. There was no denying the fact that there were more ducks in 1943.





The trapper also thumbs long distance rides indirectly. Part of the hunter's dollar is spent on development of marginal lands, developed primarily with the thought of increasing the hunter's sport, but fur in every case has increased in these areas without costing the trapper a dime.

Trapper Writes

(Continued from Page Nine)

tention to increasing fur as is paid to increasing bass, pheasants, and ducks? I don't mean by closing the trapping season every so often to let Mother Nature do all the work, but by some sound management plan that will increase the number of pelts that can be taken each year. In short, give the trapper his share of the license dollar.

"When I hang up my traps for the last time, I want to feel sure (the duck hunters have been saying this for years) that my grandson will have the opportunity to continue to enjoy the sport of trapping that is rightfully his."

We like that letter. The Conservation Commission and every other public service organization is pleased and surprised whenever it receives a letter containing this kind of constructive criticism. Letters like this help make us tick.

The Commission is well aware of the fact that there is a thrill in trapping, and of course trapping is a profitable sport. During the 1942-43 season there was a total of 418,454 furs worth \$741,621 taken by Iowa trappers.

We are glad to know from the letter that this trapper (and, we hope, all trappers) recognize the value of the game and fish management programs that have helped to lift Iowa out of the fish and game famine class into its present place as one of the finest hunting and fishing states in the Union.

We appreciate our trapper friend's desire to perpetuate trapping, and we intend to keep it the wholesome and profitable sport that it now is.

There is in Iowa a definite program designed to increase the production of fur-bearing animals. Although this program is not as far advanced nor as widely recognized as the game or fisheries programs, it is nevertheless steadily progressing.

There is one statement in the letter that is well worth analyzing. It is, "Give the trapper his share of the license dollar." We must flatly state that this is a little like asking for a salary cut. The trapper is now getting more

than his share. He is, in fact, hitchhiking, riding a large part of the way on the hunters' and fishermen's gas.

This fact can be most easily shown by figures. The total income for the fiscal year 1942-43 from hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses was \$405,794.10. Trapping licenses and tags accounted for \$10,446.85 of this figure, or 2.5+ per cent of the whole.

Not only is the entire trapping license dollar spent to enforce the trapping laws, but a part of the fisherman's and hunter's dollar as well goes to police trapping.

In addition to funds for fur enforcement, more revenue goes directly for administration (trap tags, leaflets, licenses, etc.), for fur research, animal rescue, nuisance removals, and many other phases of the program.

The trapper also thumbs long distance rides indirectly. Part of the fisherman's dollar goes into fish nurseries, lake and stream improvements, etc., and each of these improves fur-bearing animal environment and consequently increases the annual fur crop.

The game dollar gives fur a lift. Thousands of acres of marginal land have been purchased with hunting license fees and developed for game lands within the past 10 years. These lands have been improved with the thought primarily of increasing the hunter's sport, but fur in every case has increased in these areas without costing the trapper a dime.

Thousands of acres of marsh have been created, restored, or improved with funds from a federal tax on arms and ammunition (Pittman - Robertson Act), and always fur has increased—and without cost to the trapper.

These examples can go on at length and to the same conclusion: the trapper in Iowa does not pay his own way, and his sport has been protected and improved at the expense of the hunter and fisherman.

It is not that the million dollar trapping industry cannot buy a "tux" and come to the party. It is not that it cannot afford to pay its share for hiring the hall. The difficulty has been in figur-

ing out a simple plan whereby sufficient funds can be secured from the business to pay for its protection and carry out a fur program comparable to that of fish and game without inflicting any hardship on the individual trapper.

Various methods to increase license revenue have been tried in the past, and each attempt has ended in complete or partial failure. Graduations in trapping license fees ranging from one to 10 dollars have been tried. The increase in revenue was negligible, and because of the difficulty in enforcing this law it was commonly violated.

The present trap tag system does not produce the results its originators hoped for, and it is cumbersome. Issuance of and accounting for trap tags is a great trouble to both the county recorders and to conservation officials. Under the statutes it is not necessary for landowners to tag traps when trapping on their own land, and consequently the tags have been but little help in the fight against illegal trapping. Last but not least, the trap tag system is unpopular with a large majority of Iowa's trappers.

What, then, is the answer to the problem? Perhaps Minnesota gives us the answer in their control of the "Christmas tree" industry. That state exercises careful management in the harvesting of surplus evergreen trees. In the forests the trees are thinned to give more room to allow the more perfect ones to thrive and ultimately produce marketable lumber. Trees, like furs, are a crop that should and must be harvested to the greatest public advantage.

In this timber management program to prevent abuses and waste the industry is strictly supervised by the state. Supervision costs money, and to provide these funds every cut "Christmas tree" is tagged with a tax seal which must remain affixed until the tree reaches the ultimate consumer. This program is economically and from a conservation standpoint sound.

If in Iowa the statutes allowed trapping with unlimited traps for a nominal fee and required that a small tax tag costing 10 cents be placed on each fur by the fur-buyer before the pelt

could be shipped outside of the state or processed inside of the state, much of the problem of revenue for an extensive fur management program would become available.

Under this plan roughly 500,000 furs taken annually would return \$50,000 to the Commission for the improvement of the industry, and trappers could expect an increase in fur-bearers during the next decade parallel to the increase seen in game during the past 10 years.

A Letter of Appreciation

Waterloo, Iowa

Mr. F. T. Schwob, Director
State Conservation Commission
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Mr. Schwob:

Please convey to the Iowa State Conservation Commission my deep appreciation of the 37-day open pheasant season.

When I was a boy and got in only on the tail end of prairie chicken shooting, I thought that never again would I enjoy any upland game shooting in the State of Iowa. Little did I think that Wm. Benton's Mongolian pheasants would ever furnish the seed for the great pheasant population of Iowa.

My own unbiased opinion is that the pheasant is a better bird than the pinnated grouse, and I have shot a great many chickens in the Dakotas and Manitoba. Anyway, it takes a smarter setter or pointer to successfully cope with the pheasant, and while there are those who contend that the pheasant is ruinous to pointing dogs, I firmly believe that any basically sound dog that is given a thorough education on pheasants each year from July 15 until the season closes will be one that can handle anything, including a job on the O. P. A.

Maybe it is only the early phase of senility expressing itself, but I derive more pleasure and more exercise working a dog on pheasants from July 15 on than I ever did from golf, and I used to think I was a top-light golfer.

Pheasants in north Iowa and quail in south Iowa help make this state one that's really worth living in.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Burr Lichty
Waterloo, Iowa.

These tile mean but one thing—that this marsh which for generations has produced fur-bearing animals will soon be drained, perhaps successfully. Thousands of such projects, however, have been unsuccessful and now produce neither fur crops nor agricultural produce.





For 17 days following the November 8 duck flight Davenport nimrods enjoyed good shooting. Plenty of Canadas came along with the millions of ducks.

Summary

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they were handled in a rather unsportsmanlike manner by farmers. Remember this is a game of give and take. Any hunter that is sportsman enough to drive in to your farm-yard and ask your permission to hunt isn't the type of fellow that would crawl over the fence down on the back forty and hunt without your permission. He has purposely driven in to get permission as a gentleman would, and the least he can expect, and should get, is treatment due a gentleman and a true sportsman. Mr. Farmer, don't be abusive to that kind of fellow. If you don't want any hunting on your land, tell him why and he will understand. Don't treat him like a poacher or a person who is trying to take advantage of you. He isn't that kind of person. If he were, he would never have come to you for your permission to hunt on your land.

Wish I had some way of finding out how many service men took advantage of the free hunting and fishing privilege extended by the State of Iowa. Only two states in the Union did such a thing, and old Iowa was one of them. Aren't you proud of her?

Just imagine, old Iowa, the state where we grow the tall corn, has to shoot off a surplus in the crop of deer in the vicinity of the Ledges State Park. It was just a few years back that the state of Pennsylvania wondered what deer looked like. Now they annually harvest a deer crop that will equal the record of any state.

Why? Because of a fish and game commission management that realized "fish and game can-

not vote". They have administered their duties because they loved the work they were doing, and not because of any monetary or political gain. You have had the same kind of management over your fish and game in Iowa now for several years, and the past year was a good example of the results. Let's extend our best wishes to the entire membership and personnel of the Iowa Conservation Commission at this time and also our THANKS.—Forest, Field and Stream, Cedar Rapids Gazette.

Remember 1943? That was the year Iowa hunters were hunting squirrels with BB-caps and duck and pheasant with everything from skeet loads to hand-loads charged with black powder and soft shot. A few of the more enterprising were resurrecting and learning to shoot the long-barrelled, muzzle-loading flintlock and percussion cap rifles of early days.

Nineteen forty-three was the year when Iowa fishermen waded after their favorite streamer or plug when it was snagged instead of breaking off the end tackle and tying on some more. But it was a swell year for the outdoorsman and woman even though activities were restricted in time and distance.

Nineteen forty-three was a year of intelligent and conservative management of fish and game facilities by the officials charged with that duty. The national emergency brought out a bumper crop of crack-pot proposals for the abandoning of hard-won gains in the restoration of wildlife, but to the everlasting credit of conservation officials, local, state, and national, 1943 goes into the record as a year of generous seasons and bag limits without

detriment to the long-range supply.

Let's take one more quick look over our shoulder at the local scene in the year just past. First the fishing: Lake Dalton took its annual beating and yielded the customary several hundred trout on opening. However, trout fishing, in general, could only be classed as below average because of high and muddy stream conditions during May and June, and not many local anglers took advantage of the extra month allowed by the Commission in the fall. Fishing in the big river enjoyed a boom during the spring and early summer and really nice strings of walleyes, striped bass, crappies, and perch were taken right in front of town.

The New Boston back-waters produced some excellent bass fishing, especially during the fall months. For our own part, we won't soon forget May 30 at Guttenberg—we took nine species of game fish in one day. The Wapsie and Cedar produced their quota of channel cat; Dr. Des-saint, who knows the Wapsie thoroughly, took in the neighborhood of 350 cat but called it a disappointing season because of the absence of any real big ones. We know of one really outstanding catch on the Wapsie last May—a Cedar Rapids party, fishing near Waubeek, had 90-odd for four days' fishing with one nine-pounder in the lot.

Roy Reed, conservation officer at Lake Macbride, writes that this popular and nearby spot afforded the best fishing of any time during the past three years. A large number of bass of over five pounds were taken; one was weighed in at seven pounds. (That's in Iowa, not Michigan, Maine, or Minnesota.) Roy also tells of crappies and bluegills in large numbers and limit strings of bullheads averaging two pounds each.

Crystal Lake, near DeWitt,

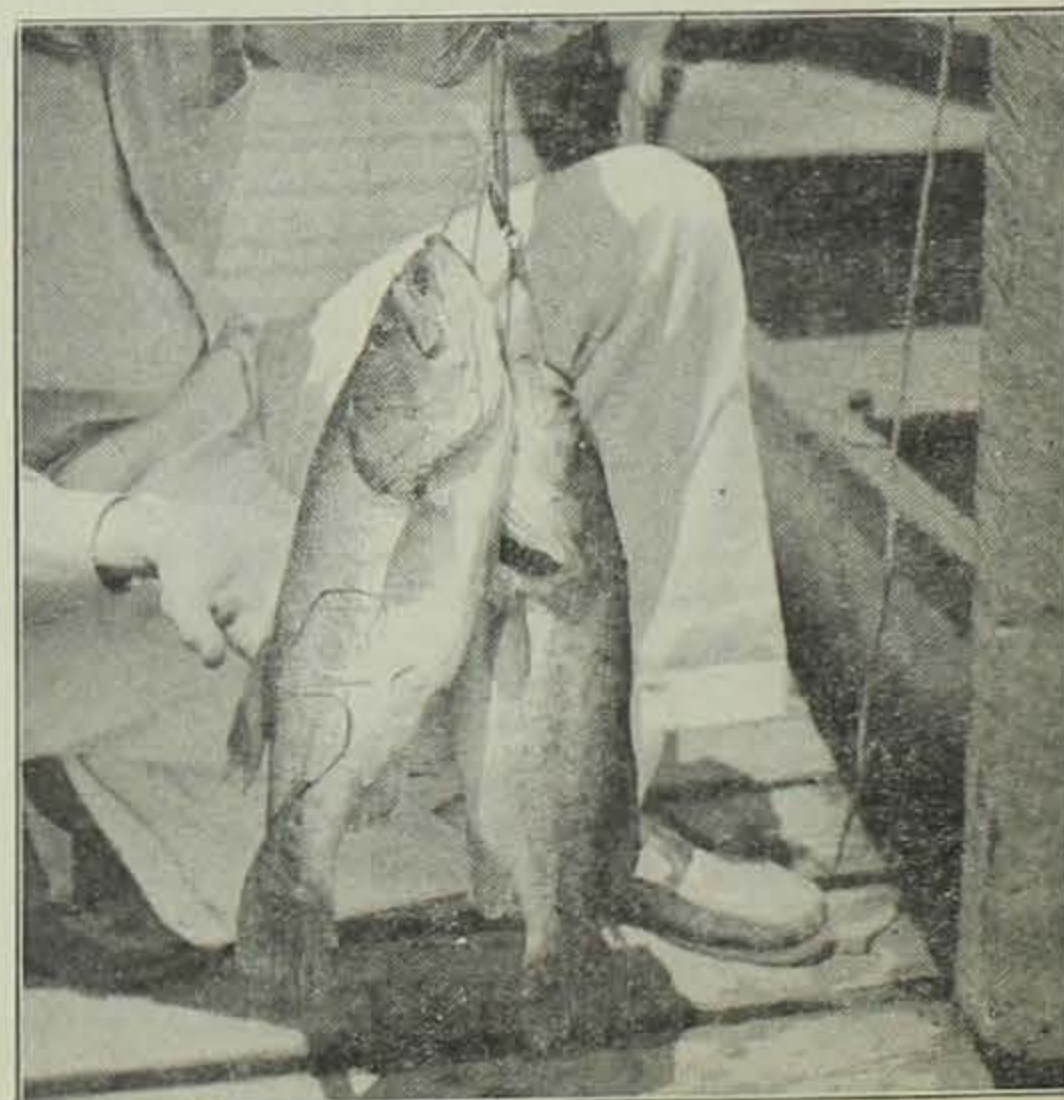
produced some fine fishing and fine fish. Dr. James Thayer tells us that two six-pound bass were taken last season—one was caught by Al Stecher of DeWitt, the other by "someone from Davenport". We suspect that's the voice of modesty because the good doctor is a fine angler with either fly or bait rod and is no stranger to big bass. Stream fishing for smallmouths was poor until late in July because of stream conditions. August and September were elegant and more than made up for the slow start.

Next year? Well, they'll be a year bigger and a year smarter! We do have one heartening bit of information to pass on—E. B. Speaker, superintendent of Iowa fisheries, has this to say about 1944 trout: "We are hopeful of producing as many or more trout for distribution next year as were produced this year. Our production, obviously, will depend upon the availability of good food. So far we have been quite successful in securing meats unfit for human consumption and dry foods which are not on a priority list. If we can continue to secure these foods, I see no reason why we will not be able to produce a normal amount of fish."

If you like figures, here they are: 38,502 rainbow; 15,963 brown, and 8,075 brooks released in northeast Iowa streams in 1943.

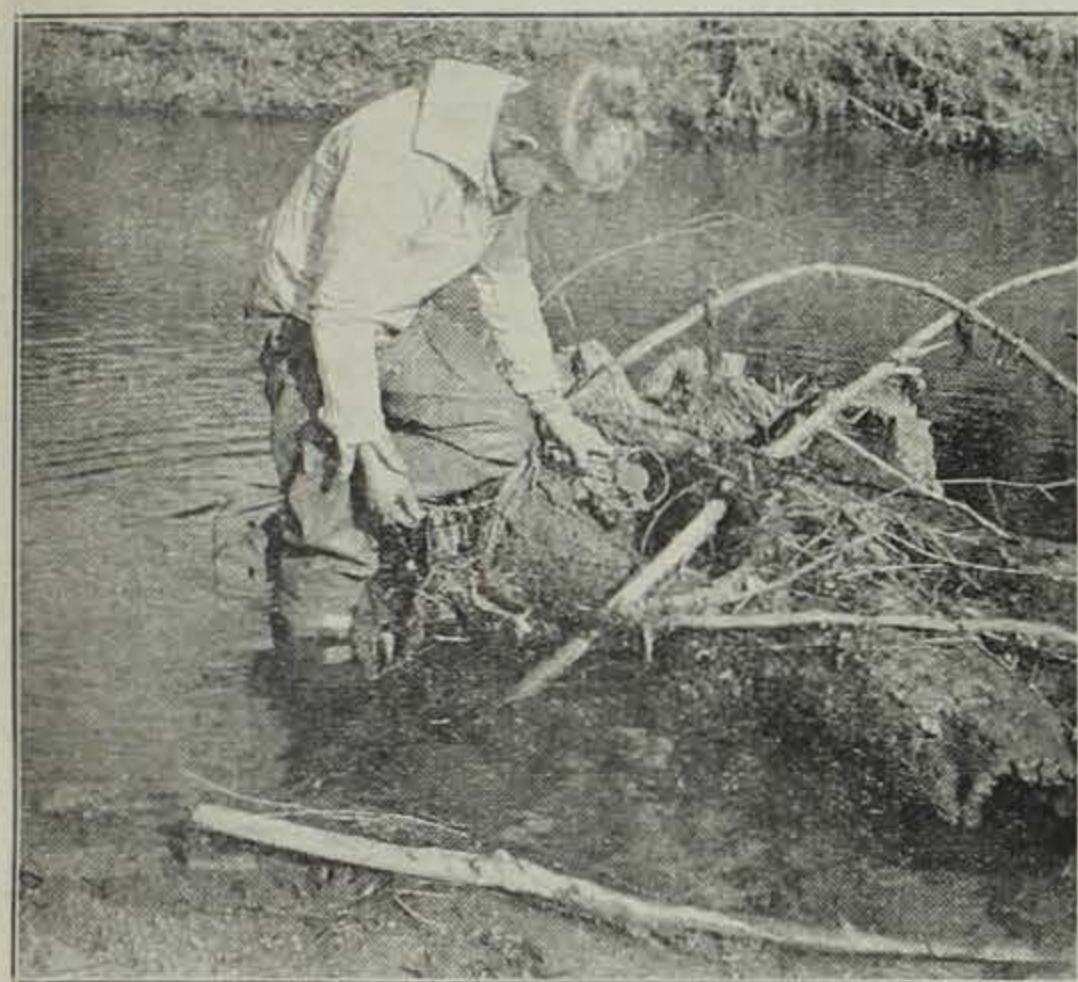
Nineteen forty-three was the year of the first spring pheasant shooting ever allowed in Iowa, eight full days in March. The weather ranged from bad to lousy; the birds were plentiful, but the graduates of the previous fall session were plenty spooky. The fall season on upland game was the most generous in many years—37 days for pheasant; 45 days for quail—and the length of seasons and higher bag limits correctly reflected the game supply.

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At Lake Macbride a large number of bass of over five pounds were taken. One was weighed in at seven pounds. (Lake Macbride is in Iowa—not Michigan, Maine, or Minnesota.)

The Joke Was On Father-- He Didn't Read the Fine Print



We made a deal with the boys that we would skin anything they caught. We hadn't figured they would catch much, but they bagged some 20 furs, and we had to keep our promise. It brought back memories of our own trapping days, memories already nicely seasoned with the sauce of nostalgia.

The trapping season is again with us. Last year, as we recorded in this column, we made a deal with the boys that we would skin anything that they caught. We hadn't figured that they would catch much. But they bagged some 20 furs, and we had to keep our promise and prepare the catch for market. But we rather enjoyed it.

It brought back memories of our own trapping days. Our first muskrat, which we caught in a lone lodge in a little pond. Our little skunk, which we caught on a Thanksgiving Day. Our first (and only) mink, which Father happened to see and which he brought up. Memories already nicely seasoned with the sauce of nostalgia.

Well, this year the boys asked us if we would again take care of all the pelts they caught and we said yes. But alas, we didn't read the fine print that was on the contract. For the boys had seen an advertisement that said, "Trappers' Big Chance! Over \$7,500 in Cash Awards!" These rewards were to be given for careful pelt handling in connection with a national fur show. You have probably seen the same advertisements in your own paper.

The first we knew about this new setup was when the boys brought in their first pelt, a brown weasel. We started to skin it in the old-fashioned way, but the boys stopped us. "You have got to leave the claws on!" they said. Leave the claws on? Well, this was a new clause in the contract! Before we had finished with that pelt we had gotten an education on how properly to skin a weasel.

And from then on it was a nightmare. They caught skunks and civet cats. These all had to be taken care of in the new style. We said that we could only hold

our nose so long. They got out their "Tips to Trappers" booklet, which gave all the details in the proper care of pelts, and they quoted from it. There was a trapper as near as Estherville, Iowa, who had gotten \$50 because he had skinned a skunk the way one should be skinned. Maybe we could do better—maybe we could win the sectional award of \$250. Maybe, they suggested, we could even win the grand award of \$1,000. We began to prick up our ears, like a horse does when a jackrabbit runs across the field ahead. Yes, we could use an extra \$1,000. Our boys dangled that \$1,000 bait in front of our eyes and we went for it like a mink for a bait.

We exercised all possible skill on that skunk pelt. After we had skinned it we fleshed it until it shone as white as the inner shucks of a roasting ear. When we were young we never fleshed our furs. We just sold them, lard and all, and no buyer ever complained about it either. But now we knew better.

There were also some new wrinkles about stretching. Or maybe we should say that there were some new ideas about stretching. For surely there weren't any wrinkles left when the pelt was finally stretched. Even the tail had been given new treatment—flattened down with a cardboard and string.

At last the prize skunk pelt was shipped away, and we sat back to wait. But the \$1,000 check didn't come. Somewhere we had done something wrong. There wasn't even a \$50 award.

And on top of injury was insult. The boys got out their trapping booklet (which was greasy by now and which smelled), and showed us pictures of some of the prize winners. One was from Nebraska. He had won two

prizes, one a \$50 one and the other a \$250 one. There was his picture. He had only one arm. "If that man with one arm can win those prizes, Daddy, then you ought to be able to win the grand prize!" There was scorn and pity in their voices.

As a desperate last resort to self-defense we suggested that the boys quit trapping for the season. After all, steel traps were cruel things, we said. They countered by pointing out that the government was demanding more and more furs. U. S. airmen in the high-flying bombers needed fur-lined garments. To trap was to be patriotic. We couldn't argue against that.—The Country-side Column, Forest City Summit.

Summary

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More satisfying than the memory of fine successful hunts just passed, however, is the knowledge that more than adequate amounts of breeding stock are left. We believe that there are many more pheasants left in Scott County than were killed; one area of perhaps 200 acres roosts at least 100 birds; another little patch holds 35 every night; several spots that we know of roost from 10 to 25 birds. Since the season closed, we've seen at least two coveys of quail that had never been shot at, and there are probably many more. Barring extremely severe weather and predator conditions, another good year should be starting.

The real story of the '43 duck shooting in these parts is best told by the game chart kept by the Hill Hunt Club of Conesville, Iowa. One of the Davenport members of this group let us have a peek at the records the other day, and we believe the comparison is representative of other duck spots in this area.

In 1939 the total kill was 947; the big day was the opening day (Oct. 22) and the best shooting was from then until Oct. 30. In 1940 the total was 863. The peak days were from Nov. 16 to Nov. 24; the largest single day, 70 on Nov. 17.

The 1941 total was 871—best days Nov. 6, 7, 8, and 9 with 62 high on Nov. 7. In 1942, 773 were killed—105 on Oct. 25; the best period from Oct. 24 through the 27th. This last season (1943) the total jumped to 1,263; the largest single day's bag was 136. The real action started, of course, with the start of the flight on Nov. 8 and 17 days of steady good shooting followed.

There are a lot of sportsmen whom we are missing pretty badly, and our most sincere wish for 1944 is that their names will again be appearing in this column before the end of another year.—Woods and Waters, Davenport Times.

Chokeboring

(Continued from Page Nine)

that it was not exactly true and was constricted by a couple of one-hundredths of an inch. He was very excited and immediately built another barrel, leaving a constriction of 20 one-thousandths of an inch, gradually tapering in the last five or six inches. This gun also shot the same close pattern that hunters had been looking for for many years.

He kept it a secret for some time, but of course the art eventually became general knowledge of gunsmiths and lead to our modern accurate chokeboring. The theory is this. The average muzzle velocity of shot in any gauge shotgun is approximately 1,300 feet a second, while the velocity of the gas on being released from pressure at the muzzle is nearly 4,000 feet per second. As the charge comes out of the muzzle or a true cylinder, the wad presenting the largest surface of resistance is blown forward through the then compact shot group, scattering it in all directions. The felt wad between the shot charge and the powder charge acts as a gas seal under pressure coming down through the tube. In a chokebored gun the choking at the muzzle momentarily holds up the felt wad until the shot has cleared the muzzle by a sufficient distance so that the wad is not blown into the pattern.

There is another kind of chokeboring not used any more in modern guns called recess choking. In this gun the diameter of the bore just before reaching the muzzle is enlarged by some 20 or 25 one-thousandths of an inch for a space of five or six inches just inside the end of the barrel, but the extreme tip of the muzzle for the last inch or so retains its original dimension. In this type of boring the felt wad goes up through the tube, forming a gas seal until it reaches the larger dimension, where it no longer extends from one side of the tube to the other and allows the gas to escape around the wad and leave the muzzle ahead of the felt wad. This also prevents the gas from blowing the wad into the shot charge.

The bore or gauge of a gun was originally determined in this way. If the barrel of the gun would just take a perfectly spherical lead ball of a size that ran 10 to the pound, it was known as 10-gauge. Or if that size ball ran 12 to the pound, it was known as a 12-gauge, etc. That was, of course, in the days before accurate micrometers were used. Now modern gunsmiths have cast perfectly spherical lead balls with a specific gravity of 11.352 and measured them. The decimal

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WARDENS' ❖ TALES ❖

SHOP TALK FROM THE FIELD

Conservation Officer Garfield Harker of Maquoketa tells this yarn on a couple of old-time quail hunters, Jim Gage and Harold Kelly of Maquoketa, members of the Carson's Coffee Counter Club.

The three were hunting heavy cover and Gage in particular was having trouble connecting with the birds. The constant razzing by his companion was not helping his marksmanship. As the men came out of the thicket, Gage pointed his gun at a fence row ahead where a covey of quail were running.

Kelly yelled out, "Don't shoot those running quail, Jim!"

The much-heckled hunter replied, "Don't worry, Kelly, I won't. I'm going to wait till they stop."

—WT—

Conservation officers can't always guess right, and as a result sometimes end up in the red face department. Conservation Officer Wogen of Estherville tells this embarrassing tale on himself.

While on pheasant patrol Wogen topped a rise on a gravel road and saw a bird thrown from a moving car ahead. Then a second, and finally a third. Stepping on the gas and siren at the same time, the officer soon overtook and stopped the driver. To the question "Do you have a license?" the culprit replied, "No." And to "Do you have any more birds?" the answer was the same.

With a chop-licking purr in his voice, the officer asked, "Were they all hens?"

"I think so," replied the nervous driver.

"All hens and no license, eh? And that's why you threw them out!"

"Oh, no! They were dead—the pigs killed them."

Investigation revealed three badly mangled, very dead Barred Rock hens.

—WT—

Conservation Officer Jock Graham forwards the following letter received from Oregon:

"Mr. Game Warden: This is concerning a baby quail. When I was just a little girl I caught a little quail and I killed it and stuffed it. I don't remember whether it was in season or out of season when I killed it, and besides I didn't have a license. I was just a little girl, about 12, maybe less. Well, it might not seem much to some people, but God saved my soul and showed me I had done wrong, and I feel like I should confess it to who-

Lt. Faber Tells of Interests Of Men In the Armed Service



It's a long way from a belly crawl in hunting clothes in an Iowa cornfield to the same method of locomotion in uniform in the South Pacific islands. But when it's all over, these boys are going to want (and need) good hunting and fishing and plenty of it.

Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
Dear Jim,

One of the many questions asked when a man enters the service is, "What was your favorite hobby?" A large percentage answer, "Hunting and fishing", and although those favorite hobbies must necessarily for the most part be set aside until our present job is finished, we haven't forgotten the joys of field and stream. You who are still at home continuing with conservation work must remember that there will be a large number of men who are going to want to go hunting and fishing when they come home, so you, too, have a job to do.

I have had several opportunities to take small groups of men on weekend fishing trips to nearby streams and rivers. These trips were made in preference to weekend passes to surrounding towns. Our equipment consisted of only the barest essentials. Hooks and lines were purchased for the occasions, but like back in boyhood days, the poles were cut at the streamside. The infrequent chances to fish and the added luggage to carry do not warrant more elaborate tackle.

One man in our group fashioned for himself a fly-rod by adding wire guides with friction tape, from the thinnest pole he could find. By wrapping the excess line around the butt of the pole he was able to "play" his catch.

The zeal for the sport these men displayed was obvious and gratifying. When a soldier does not show up at chow call, he is really enjoying what he is doing,

ever was game warden in Appanoose County. Hoping you can find it in your heart to forgive me for the wrong, I remain, —

and this occurred on many occasions.

To listen to remarks at the conclusion of the trips is proof enough they are successful and that others should be arranged whenever possible.

In the evenings around the fires these men would sit and gaze into the flames. When asked their thoughts they almost always replied home and plans for future hunting and fishing expeditions they were going to make when they returned.

The sight of ducks along the rivers or of deer, squirrels, or quail invariably brought to mind past hunting experiences, and along with such talks there were always plans for future trips.

When a new rifle is issued one may invariably hear, "Boy, oh boy! Would that make a neat deer rifle! I wonder if I can get one when the war is over." And about the jeep. "When this is over, I'm going to get me one of these for hunting and fishing." Even some of the GI rations are discussed with the thought of their future use for extended trips into the back woods and waters.

From these observations you may think that these men do not have their minds on the job at hand. Let me assure you they know what their job is and how to perform it. They also know why they are doing it and what they want to do when their work has been completed.

But believe me, when it's over they are going to want (and need) good hunting and fishing and plenty of it. So you boys, too, have a job to do.

Sincerely,

Lt. Lester F. Faber
182nd F. A. Bn.

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Chokeboring

(Continued from Page 13)

fractions in one-thousandths of an inch for the various gauges are as follows:

8 gauge	----	.835
10 gauge	----	.775
12 gauge	----	.729
16 gauge	----	.662
20 gauge	----	.615
28 gauge	----	.550

The "four-ten" coming after the days of the micrometer is not a 410-gauge but a .410 caliber, just as the 12-gauge gun would be a .729 caliber.

For many years the hot stove league has argued the merits of various gauges of guns, and of course everyone is entitled to his own opinion. However, there is no more an all-around gun than there is an all-around golf club. We frequently hear the expression that a certain gun is a hard-shooting gun. Actually, it is as ridiculous to say that a certain gun is a hard-shooting gun as it is to say that a certain hammer is a hard-hitting hammer. This does not mean that certain guns will not shoot more even and better patterns than others, but how hard a gun shoots providing it is in good condition depends upon the load and not upon the gun. The thing that makes hard shooting is the velocity of the pellets of shot at the time of impact, and oddly enough the muzzle velocity of all guns from the 10-gauge to the 20-gauge is approximately the same, around 1,300 feet per second at the muzzle and falling off in proportion to the shot size fired, the larger shot maintaining its velocity better and the smaller shot size falling off more rapidly. In other words, if you shoot number six shots from an eight-gauge gun or from a 20-gauge, they will strike the target at 40 yards with the same hitting power. The big-gauge gun has a distinct advantage over the small bore because of the larger shot charge bringing a greater number of pellets into the pattern and therefore enabling it to handle a larger shot size than the small bore. Let us assume that the target is set up at 50 yards. We fire a charge of number four shot from a 20-gauge. Because of the small number of pellets, not enough of them reach the pattern at the same time to assure us that one or more pellets will hit a game bird, even though the aim is correct. The number four shot fired from a 10-gauge carries a sufficient number of pellets so that ordinarily the pattern is dense enough at 40 yards to assure us that one or more pellets will hit the bird at that distance. I am not arguing the advantage of a big bore gun over a small bore gun: I only maintain that at all ranges the large bore gun will always

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Chokeboring

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outshoot the small bore gun, in their ability to kill game. This does not necessarily mean that the big gun is the best because the small bore gun does have many distinct advantages. Being lighter, it can be brought to bear upon the target much more quickly, and game can be brought down at 30 yards that would have gotten out to 40 yards in the additional time required to swing and point a heavier gun.

I have owned and killed game with practically every bore from an eight-gauge to a .410, and I like them all. To me it seems a bit incongruous to see a little 125-pound man struggling through the field with a 10-pound 10-gauge, but it is just as much out of keeping to see a big 225-pound man out hunting with a .410. No gauge has any magic qualities; it simply represents a certain size hole in a metal tube through which a charge of shot is fired.

To shoot a three-inch 12-gauge shell in a magnum gun merely gives you a 10-gauge load in a 12-bore gun, or what was a 12-bore before it was bored out as a magnum. Isn't it more sensible to shoot a 10-gauge load in a 10-gauge gun than to build up your shot columns so that you are shooting a 10-gauge load in a 12-gauge gun? The reason for developing the 12-gauge magnum is because the 10-gauge load will kill birds at a greater range than the 12-gauge load. For instance, it is against the federal law to shoot a gun larger than 10-bore at migratory waterfowl. In order to circumvent this, the 10-gauge magnum was developed, and instead of boring the guns at 775 one-thousandths of an inch, they were bored out to 800 one-thousandths of an inch, which is approximately the diameter of the bore of the eight-gauge, and the shot charge was increased from about 1½ ounces to 2 ounces. It is generally true that the higher you build up your shot column the poorer your pattern, and under the same conditions 1½ ounces of shot fired from a 10-gauge will make a better pattern than the same charge fired from a 12-gauge.

Well, all this will never settle the argument of which is the best gauge gun, and after all as long as we are hunting for pleasure I think the best advice to anyone is to buy the type of gun and the size gauge that he likes best, and then he will get more enjoyment out of hunting with it, for after all, we are out after pleasure and not to prove any point.

In World War I, the Germans maintained a special hospital at Jena to care for dogs wounded in war service.

Preserving Iowa



Plum Grove, the home of Robert Lucas, Iowa's first territorial governor.

Eighty-eight years after his death, the state acquired Plum Grove, the home of Robert Lucas, Iowa's first territorial governor, at Iowa City.

Now two years later, emergency restoration has begun. When completed after the war, it will be administered as an historic monument by the State Conservation Commission. Immediate improvements, for which the legislative interim committee has allocated \$3,225, will include only those which must be done at once to protect the historical building from further disintegration.

Later the brick work will be restored to its warm rose color by removal of the burnt umber paint which has covered it for years. Eventually the floors, of oak, and the interior doors and woodwork, of walnut, will be brought back to their original

beauty. Every room had a fireplace. These have been blocked off for more than half a century. They, too, will be restored. The outstanding detail of this fine old house, representative of a frugal and pioneer period in Iowa's growth, is the solid walnut staircase to the second floor. With completion of the restoration, Plum Grove will be fitted with furniture from the home of Samuel J. Kirkwood, the state's Civil War governor.

Iowa is rapidly coming into the period at which centennials are appearing—the state itself to have one in 1946. We, heretofore, have been far too negligent about the preservation of these historical shrines. Money spent for their restoration and maintenance will pay heavy dividends—intangible perhaps, but of extreme value to our citizens of the future, even of today.—Ottumwa Courier.

Smokeless Powder And Powder Smoke

The smell of powder smoke has always intrigued the American sportsman. It is associated with rolling hills dotted with quail coverts; open spaces where pheasants or prairie chickens thrive; pine-scented woods which nurture the ruffed grouse; cold, crisp mornings in the duck blind; mountain fastnesses wherein big game roams—and many other locales dear to the heart of the gunner.

But hunters are inquisitive persons, and have no hesitancy in asking questions, sometimes to the embarrassment of technicians. Among the many thousands of questions asked the Remington Arms Company, Inc., manufacturers of small arms and ammunition, this one frequently bobs up: "If 'smokeless powder' smokes, why call it 'smokeless powder'?" This is a real poser, but not unanswerable.

The term "smokeless powder" is merely comparative. There is still some smoke in "smokeless" powder, but it is merely a wisp compared with the cloud produced by its predecessor, black powder. Through common usage the term has become universally accepted, but technically it is incorrect.

Until nearly the beginning of the 20th Century the only kind of small arms ammunition propellant used was black powder, a mechanical mixture of charcoal, sulphur and saltpeter.

Black powder was used by the Chinese centuries ago, but its principal use was for religious observances to drive away the evil spirits. For hundreds of years the Chinese did not appreciate the possibilities of black powder as a blasting explosive or as a propellant in the manufacture of ammunition.

A combustible known as "Greek Fire", and somewhat similar to black powder, was used in incendiary bombs prior to the fall of

the Roman Empire. Roger Bacon described black powder in about the year 1260. It was used in firearms at the Battle of Crecy in 1346. The Germans used it as a propellant for missiles from hand-cannon as early as 1361, the rate of fire of these guns being about seven shots in eight hours.

Black powder, with its lower pressures and slower velocities, carried on until just prior to the 20th Century, when a new material described as "smokeless powder" was being developed by the French and Russians. About that time a different type of smokeless powder, called Cordite, was being developed by Alfred Nobel in Great Britain. Through the greater strength of these powders, their cleanliness of burning and comparative absence of smoke, it was possible to reduce the bore of some military arms from about caliber .45 to approximately caliber .30, make use of a jacketed bullet of lighter weight and much higher velocity, and considerably reduce the weight of a soldier's ammunition!

A number of improvements have been made in the manufacture of smokeless powder. The purpose of one of them was to remove metallic fouling in the bore from the bullet. Another improvement is the addition of materials to reduce muzzle flash.

It is true, so-called smokeless powder smokes some—but in no degree comparable to its predecessor, black powder. Right now the little wisps of smoke which come out of Allied rifles are aiding in sending bad news to the Axis. It smokes some, but it smokes less and it packs a pile of power.—Remington News Letter.

Things You May Not Know

That a number of queer designations have been given animal and bird groups. For instance it is:

A **covey** of partridges; a **nide** of pheasants; a **wisp** of snipe; a **flight** of doves or swallows; a **muster** of peacocks; a **siege** of herons; a **building** of rooks; a **brood** of grouse; a **plump** of wildfowl.—Remington News Letter.

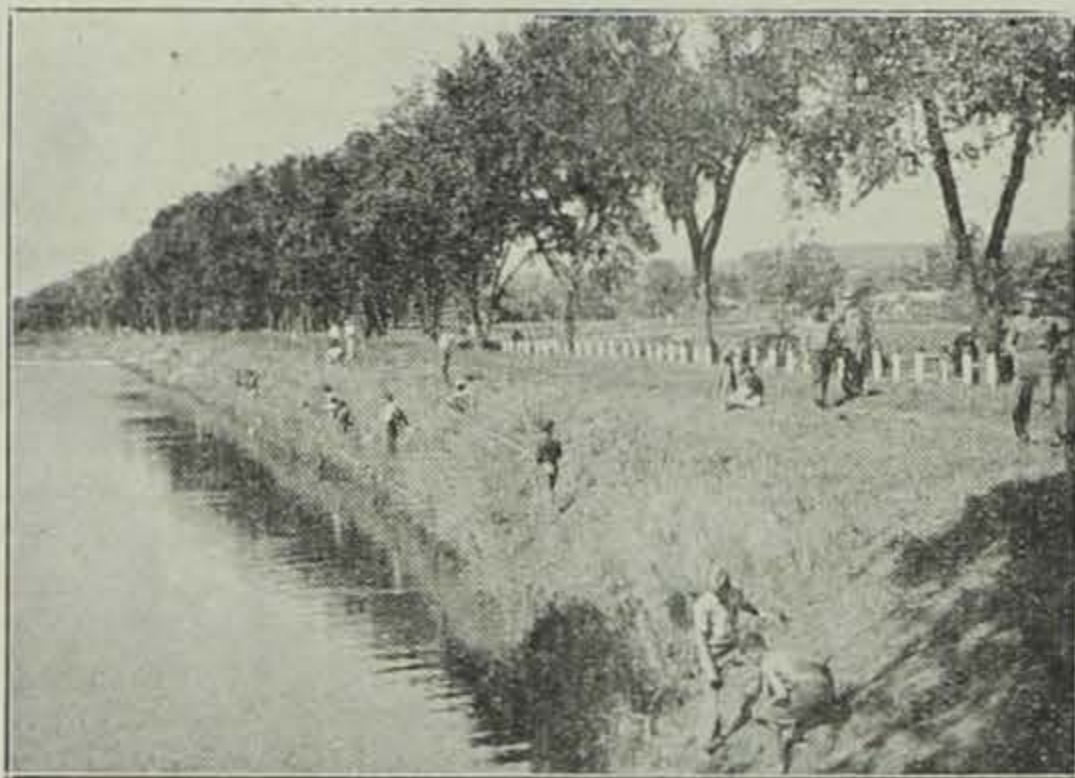
Heritage of American Boyhood

With fishpoles and lunches they drove away,
My little son and his father, to-day.
I watched through a rainbow of happy tears,
Saw life unfold down the vista of years.
No boy could ever turn out very bad
Who'd studied life with a Fisherman Dad.

—Leta M. Burdick
in Outdoor Georgia.

You Steal from Yourself When You Take Over the Legal Limit

When you cheat on the fish and game laws, you are not stealing from the conservation officer in your district, and you are not stealing from the Conservation Commission. You are stealing from every man, woman, and child that is a citizen of the state. So if you ever have the urge to take more than the legal limit, ask yourself first if you want to be put in the class with the common thief.



During a conversation recently with a local sportsman, we drifted to the subject of violations of the fish and game laws, and particularly the taking of more than the legal bag limit. He had a thought that appealed to me and the more I mulled it over in my mind the more it impressed me.

We discussed the fact that not all the violators were from the "other side of the tracks", figuratively speaking, and that a lot of fellows who will come home from fishing and hunting trips with much more than a legal bag limit, don't seem to feel that they have done anything very wrong. Yet those same fellows wouldn't think of going into a store and buying a pair of shoes or a peck of potatoes and then, when the clerk's back was turned, steal another pair or peck. No sir, that would be stealing. Yet that is just what you do when you take more than the legal limit of fish or game.

You are not stealing from the conservation officer in your district and you are not stealing from the Conservation Commission; but you are stealing from the state. And that means you are stealing from every man, woman and child that is a citizen of the state. Worst of all you are even stealing from yourself.

So if you ever have the urge to take more than the legal limit, ask yourself first if you want to be put in the class with the common thief. — Forest, Field and Stream, Cedar Rapids Gazette.

Nature Study Bulletins For the Asking

The Extension Service, Iowa State College, Ames, has available for distribution several fine paper-covered nature study bulletins. Single copies may be secured free by writing directly to the Extension Service, Ames, Iowa.

Two of the bulletins, "Winter

Birds Around My Home" and "Nesting Birds of Iowa", are of especial interest to beginner bird students and are packed with practical suggestions for the enjoyment of bird study.

"Upland Game Birds of Iowa" contains chapters on the ring-necked pheasant, European partridge, bob-white quail, eastern wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and prairie chicken, as well as a section on winter feeding and a brief outline of game management practices.

"Native Ferns of Iowa" is a bulletin on the fern and fern allies of the state and has been prepared so that "boys and girls may have available information to guide them in becoming better acquainted with an important group of plants".

"Iowa Trees in Winter" is designed to enable the student to identify trees during the winter months when leaf characters are not evident.

"Some Common Iowa Fishes" gives a brief story of some of the more common fish in this state, in addition to a chapter on Iowa fish management.

All of these bulletins are expertly written and profusely illustrated, and while primarily designed for student use, they nevertheless will make an important addition to any outdoor enthusiast's library.

It's a Round--But It's Not a Round

For years beyond the ken of any of the old-timers who are still "sticking around", a single cartridge or a single shotgun shell has been known as a "round". Recent research leaves the origin of the term still in doubt.

According to Mister Webster, speaking in terms of the military, a "round" is (a) one shot discharged by each soldier, gun or cannon of a command; (b) a unit of ammunition for one shot.

It has been assumed by many that the term was developed from the fact that the original missile fired from any sporting gun was a round ball. Other old-timers who hark back to the muzzle-loading days are of the opinion that a complete set of components was necessary to make up a "round". This included the ball, the patch, the powder and cap. The real origin of the term is still somewhat obscure and, according to Remington Arms Company authorities, subject of debate. But by constant usage through the years, a single unit of ammunition, whether it be cartridge or shell, has now the well-known designation of a

"round". This encompasses the bullet, or shot, the powder, the case, the primer, battery cup and anvil, the wadding, etc. So a "round" of ammunition is not really round! Simple, isn't it?

And speaking of "rounds", one company alone has produced more than TEN BILLION rounds of small arms ammunition, since the beginning of its military production program in the summer of 1940. This quantity is approximately three times greater than the total produced in the United States during the entire period of World War I. It is enough to shoot more than 500 times at every Axis soldier.—Remington News Letter.

The Fool and the Wise Man

He loved to lean upon the fence
And watch the swallows dart,
And hear the lark with joy immense
Let song pour from its heart.

He loved to linger by the brook
And watch the bubbles play,
And drowse and dream above his hook,
With trouble far away.

With simple joys he was content;
He had no wish to rule,
Men said his days were all misspent
And called the man a fool.

Another, where the crowds were great,
Went scheming day by day;
He filled men's hearts with fear and hate
And piled his gains away.

He never knew one hour of rest,
His brow was lined with care,
If joy had e'er been in his breast
It had not lingered there.

No birds enchanted him with song,
His dreams were full of sighs,
But people saw him push along
And thought that he was wise.

—S. E. Kiser, Ohio Conservation Bulletin.

Busy As a Beaver

The beaver is a busy beast;
He works, and works, and works.
He cuts down willows with his teeth
And drags them out by jerks.

To lazy men they always say,
"Be like the beaver—work,"
But if you ask me what I think,
The beaver is a jerk.

—Kodiak Bear.

