IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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QUEER EXPERIENCES IN GAME MANAGEMENT

UNEXPLORED WATERS

By William M. Lewis

Iowa Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit

Take your cane pole, casting rod or fly rod, and spend a few afternoons trying out the accessible farm ponds in your community. (But ask the farmer first.) You might well be surprised at the excellent fishing some of them offer.

Many of the southern Iowa farm ponds recently examined by the biologists of the Iowa Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit contained nice bass and bluegills. To be sure, some of the ponds offer nothing more than paper-thin crappies, but there are enough good ponds to make your effort worthwhile. Few people fish in farm ponds, and in most cases more fishing would actually produce better fishing. There is little danger of overfishing a pond using the legal methods.

You can't always afford to take someone's word as to whether or not catchable fish are present in a pond. The only sure method is to give it a whirl. It is usually best to fish specifically for bass and/or bluegills but in some cases the crappies are worth a try.

The angling method which usually produces results most quickly is fly fishing with cork-bodied poppers—very small ones for bluegills and larger ones for bass. This fishing should be done in the afternoon after the wind has died down. When fishing from the bank, one should cast four or five feet out from the bank and well ahead of himself or stand fifteen or so feet back from the bank and fish straight out into the pond.

For plug casting, the Lazy-Ike type of lure is hard to beat. Here again a person should pay particular attention to staying back from the water's edge and causing as little disturbance as possible.

Cane pole fishing for bluegills should be done with a light line, light lead, small hook and small float. The worm should be hooked

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Which should quail fear, foxes or mice? Jim Sherman Photo.

CARP A SPORTS FISH FOR THOUSANDS

By James R. Harlan

Assistant Director

(Reprinted, by request, from the May, 1948, issue of Iowa Conservationist.)

Sixty million Frenchmen can't be wrong, nor can one hundred thousand Iowans. That would probably be a conservative estimate of the number of anglers that fish for carp each year in Iowa. They have found out for themselves what some folks will probably never let themselves learn—that the carp is a sporty fighter and, when taken from good water, delicious to eat. Smoked carp, for instance, rivals the famous smoked salmon of the northwest!

Let's talk a little about the habits, background, personality of this fish, and point out the good and bad qualities of the carp so that we can know the truth rather than depend on the old wives' tales that so often pass as fact.

Since earliest times the carp has been well thought of by man. It was raised some 3,000 years ago by the Chinese, brought to and cultured throughout continental Europe and England at an early date. Emigrants to America brought it to this country about 1870 and it was raised in ponds much as it had been for centuries in the old country.

About 1880 the fisheries departments of many states, including Iowa, began to stock carp in the public waters, and in a few years it became firmly established in practically all of the suitable carp waters of the United States.

After a short period of popularity the carp became cursed and unpopular. Typical of many people's

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By Charles N. Elliott

Director, Georgia Game and Fish Commission

(Reprinted from the American Legion Magazine, March, 1949.)

The heath hen, a grand American game bird, is extinct today, and it is probable that well meaning bird-lovers blocked the step that would have saved that bird.

The last known heath hens lived on Martha's Vineyard, an island off Massachusetts, where they had plenty of food and protection. When it was noted that there were more males than female birds, experts suggested killing some of the males to balance the sexes. The idea of deliberately killing any of the waning species was more than well meaning nature lovers could stand. They successfully summoned support to block the proposal—and soon the birds were extinct!

How come? Could killing off some of the birds have saved the race? Probably so. Among many creatures, if boys outnumber girls, the constant courtship of many males affects females so that they appear to become barren.

The things we learn in game management are often the opposite of what we had always supposed. Not only may we sometimes favor a certain species by removing some of its kind, we may also help a species by sparing its apparent enemies. But when we learn these things unbelieving public opinion frequently prevents the proper action.

The heath hen fiasco is but one example of the balance of sexes theory, which might require the destruction of males for the good of a race. Recently, in an experiment, a number of cottontail rabbits were released in an extensive wire enclosure with all the good things to make rabbits grow fat and prosperous. As they multiplied, half the females were removed. Then what happened to the heath hen happened again! The remaining female rabbits were either so

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FUTURE BRIGHTER

Although much time will be consumed before final steps are taken to restore to Lake Oelwein its beauty of a generation or so ago, the anti-pollution bill passed by the last Iowa General Assembly undoubtedly will have its effect and the future appears brighter.

Through the conservation club, and cooperation of city as well as industrial leaders and the Chamber of Commerce, much progress was made last year and is seen for this year.

No one knows better than Mayor Harrington and his council that improved sewage disposal facilities are mandatory. But they are also wrestling constantly with the little problem of not enough money to take care of everything the city needs, including the quarter or third of a million seen as the cost of the right kind of sewage disposal.

Our lawmakers down at Des Moines were reasonable in the provisions of the anti-pollution bill to the extent that cities whose facilities are inadequate would be allowed sufficient time to make the change, and a number of years are involved. We understand that new plants, however, must conform at once and the entire matter assures Oelwein people and northeast Iowans that eventually our lake will be cleaned up.

The state has been calling Oelwein's attention to dangers of bypassed sewage, and first steps have been taken to correct it. But Oelwein has grown up into too large a city for the size of its disposal plant, and a completely new plant seems to be the only ultimate answer.—Oelwein Register.

Fishing is a place to go when life becomes boring to you, either at the office or at home. Jim Sherman Photo.

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MEN AND FISH

Seems like that fishing as a hobby is growing and becoming more and more popular and the fish are becoming less and less prevalent.

Most men like to fish—they are natural born adventurers, and like to try and out-guess the fish. We ourselves have become interested in the art of angling, and we have discovered that the desire to go fishing leads us into many new activities.

For instance, the craving will take you out on wet nights to walk around all humped over, straining every muscle and nerve as well as your eyesight, looking for night crawlers. These big fat juicy worms are supposed to be a delicious dish for the fish, if there was some way that you could get that idea over to the fish.

Last week when the first warm rain came, the night crawlers were all over the cement driveways and sidewalks, and gallons of the bait were picked up by men who profess to know just how and when the fish are biting. Naturally we got out and picked up a quart of the slimy fellows, and since that time we have threaded the worms one by one onto a hook and dunked them in the Black Hawk, and our only catch has been the lowly carp.

Fishing takes men into old abandoned places, through brush and fences, along wet, slushy, sandy and muddy shores, over rocks and fallen trees, in hot sunshine, and in the cool fog of the evening, yet man thinks that all this is good for him, so we trail along with the rest and do the same antics, but get no fish.

Men tell us that fishing gives a fellow time to sit and think—we challenge this statement. All the fishing that we do, it seems like we are much busier than ever before. Either pulling the line out and rebaiting, or untangling a snarl in the line, and trying to unsnag the hook from some debris in the water, or getting it out of a tree-top where we threw it.

Time spent fishing is absolutely wasted—and unless you are in a position where you can afford to waste the time, you better not take up the art of fishing. It is not a cheap sport, nor is it expensive; in fact fishing costs what you make it cost. From what we observed last week, we with all our paraphernalia did not catch a thing, and yet another young man with a homemade pole and a worm caught some fish.

Fishing is a place to go when life becomes boring to you either at the office or at home. Try it and we believe you will agree with us. —Reinbeck Courier.

G.I.'S NOW NEED A LICENSE TO FISH

The right of servicemen to hunt or fish in Iowa without a license ended when the war did.

This is what Assistant Attorney General Kent Emery said in a ruling in response to a question from State Conservation Director Bruce Stiles.

Persons in the armed forces, he said, must obtain licenses the same as anybody else.

During the war, service men and women were not required to have licenses.—Centerville Iowegian.

AROUND THE TOWN

Howard Dale, grain buyer for Quaker Oats, called Eddie Sommer, National Oats grain buyer, the other day and asked if Eddie had a barometer. Dale explained that he had a small one but doubted its accuracy and wanted to check it. Sommer, in a fine spirit of cooperation toward a competitor, volunteered to locate someone who owned a good barometer and told Dale he would call him back.

Sommer called The Gazette for a clue, was informed that the airports, Collins Radio, or the utility companies might have barometers. Sommer called Hunter Airport. "No," came the reply, "we have none, but try the Municipal field; United has one." But Municipal replied, "No, there is none here, but we're certain Hunter has one." Sommer called Hunter's again, asking if they were sure they didn't have a barometer. "Positively, no," came the reply, "we have no barometer. Ask The Gazette."

So Sommer called The Gazette again, got the weather reporter this time, and was told that Clarence Simon, on Ellis Boulevard, had one, if you could find Clarence. All of this consumed about 45 minutes. Sommer then decided he had better call Dale back, as the business for which Quaker had need of a barometer might be pressing. So he did, with profound apologies that he had not been of more help but with the news that he had a good clue and might help him later.

"Oh, never mind," the Quaker man replied. "It wasn't anything of importance. I just read a story saying the fish won't bite when the barometer is falling, and I didn't want to go fishing on that kind of a day."—Cedar Rapids Gazette.

BEAVERS CHEW EDDIE'S BOAT

Eddie Olson has a nice boat which he keeps in a boat house north of the dam in Humboldt. But Eddie isn't sure that keeping the boat there is such a good idea for when he opened his boat house the other day he discovered that the beavers had chewed four holes in the boat.

The holes were not clear through the sides but were so deep that it required a lot of repair work to keep the boat usable. Eddie further states that the beavers must have lined up in formation to do their chewing for the three holes on one side were spaced evenly apart as though three beavers had sat there and chewed. The one hole on the other side was directly opposite a hole on the first side.

Now Eddie is wondering whether or not the beavers are wards of the state, for if they are he thinks that the state owes him a new boat.

Other boat owners have reported that beavers have chewed their boats, too, although not to the extent which Olson's boat was damaged.—Humboldt Independent.

Five new recreation lakes will soon be under construction and will relieve some of the pressure on existing areas. Lake Macbride, Johnson County. Jim Sherman Photo.

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IOWA'S RECREATIONAL LAKES

The State Conservation Commission has announced that construction on five new Iowa artificial lakes will begin this month. They are to be built with funds appropriated by the legislature in 1947 and 1949 as part of a 25-year expansion program which calls for construction of lakes throughout the state so that ultimately a body of recreational water will lie within 25 miles of every home in the state. The five lakes will be located at Cold Spring Recreational Reserve near Lewis in Cass County; Rock Creek Park, east of Newton in Jasper County; Honey Creek Park, between Washington and Fairfield in Washington County; Geode State Park in southeast Henry and southwest Des Moines County; and Nine Eagles State Park, southeast of Davis City.

Perfection of Iowa recreational areas is bound to bring pleasure to those persons unable to make vacation trips into the Minnesota lake area, the Black Hills or the Ozarks. It likewise will provide the ever-increasing horde of Iowa anglers with more fishing waters as the proposed lakes are completed and stocked with bass, crappies, bluegills and other fish suitable to this territory. But perhaps of most importance is the fact that Iowans who find themselves short of time or money will be able to get in an occasional fishing trip, some swimming, boating or just plain loafing that they would have missed otherwise.

There are few pastimes more relaxing than a week or so at a good lake. Thanks to the vision of the state legislature and the Conservation Commission a goodly number of Iowans may look forward to some additional recreation in the years ahead.—Sioux City Journal.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

Any thinking person will agree that the most important long-range problem confronting the United States today is the conservation of our natural resources. First and most important is the conservation of our soil. Also important is the conservation of our forests, lakes and streams, and the wildlife that finds refuge there. Let's realize, first of all, that the problem is not one to let somebody else worry about. It's with us right here in Bremer county and there is something we can do and should do about it! We've known the problem was there for years but we've sat idly by until erosion of our soil, destruction of our timber lands, and pollution of our lakes and streams have progressed to such a dangerous point that time is running out!

A minor illustration of what can be done in this direction was furnished last week by a group of farmers living southeast of Hampton along a stream known as Mayne's Creek. For some time the farmers had noticed a coating of oil on the water which was so polluted that livestock refused to drink it. Needless to say what happened to the fish. Repeated protests by letter and telephone produced an investigation by a state board of health representative along with a conservation officer. They found a leak in a large fuel oil storage tank near Hampton, stopped the leak and cleared up the stream.

Sewage disposal and stream pollution have become problems of major importance in our state, but not all pollution can be traced to improper sewage disposal. Much of it comes from the inexcusable thoughtlessness and carelessness of individual citizens who have little or no respect for the beauty of nature and the value of our streams. They regard the Cedar River as a convenient tin can dump and a place to dispose of kitchen garbage. Until we teach these people, by force of law if necessary, to do their part in keeping Iowa's waters clean, government action alone cannot accomplish very much.

A Waverly sportsmen's organization, similar to the Wapsie Valley Sportsmen's Club organized at Tripoli, could perform a real public service. Since no such organization exists here, what's wrong with having our service clubs devote some attention to this important matter?—Waverly Democrat.

ANGLING FRATERNITY GROWS AND SPENDS

Fishermen spend more on equipment than do any other sportsmen.

This is the conclusion of the U. S. Census Bureau. In a report on its 1947 census of manufacturers, it said the factory value of fishing tackle amounted to more than $58,000,000, or more than one-fourth of the $210,000,000 worth of sporting goods of all kinds turned out.

The figure of over $58,000,000 represented an increase of 351 per cent over the $12,000,000 factory value of fishing tackle produced in the year 1939. The percentage increase is the thing which caught the eye. Allowing for an increase in the cost of labor and materials over the 1939 period, there is yet enough margin to indicate that the demand for tackle is about double the 1939 demand, and we may safely conclude that the number of anglers is approximately double the 1939 figure.

On the other hand, there is no more water area available for the increased number of anglers, allowing an exception for a few artificial lakes constructed during the past ten years. This then explains in part, at least, why conservation departments are so hard put to satisfy the millions of fishermen who wish to be satisfied. It just cannot be done, and the day when fishing was done on the basis of filling the creel limit in the terms of figures printed on the back of the fishing license has vanished.

We have now reached the point in the history of our natural resources—and fisheries resources are important—when the American angler must develop a psychology of fishing for sport and recreation only. The fellow who goes to his favorite lake or stream expecting to catch a full creel limit of fish every time will have to revise his thinking. In fact, in the more heavily populated of our states, fishermen are being urged to think in terms of sport and recreation, rather than in terms of creel limits. This is a healthy sign, but the inevitable product of tremendous fishing pressure that gives no indication of letting up.

We think that fishermen can adjust themselves to this trend of thought, since most disciples of Izaak Walton are quite realistic and call a spade a spade. The future is not dark. There will always be some fishing, which is a great deal better than no fishing at all. And when we get rid of our pollution problems, get soil conservation fully underway, improve our streams, adopt a reforestation program and stop illegal fishing practices, there will be even more and better fishing. — Davenport Democrat.

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The factory value of fishing tackle in 1947 was 58 million dollars. Iowa's half million anglers purchased their full share. Jim Sherman Photo.

Muskrats ordinarily are vegetarians. One at the Leslie Cook farm, however, developed a taste for warm cow's milk. Jim Sherman Photo.

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A MUSKRAT THAT LIKED MILK

A muskrat that spent the winter and spring season in the barn on the farm where Leslie Cook lives has disappeared. This muskrat made its appearance at this barn early last winter and in time became quite tame, and it was on friendly terms with the family dog and the cats.

This muskrat developed a liking for fresh warm milk, and it was always on hand at milking time. The cats would let the muskrat drink first. This muskrat also liked ground feed, but the cows objected to the brown-furred animal sampling their feed. They seemed to detect its musky odor and refused to eat anything the muskrat had touched.

Mr. Cook thinks that this muskrat returned to a pond in the pasture for the summer, and now he wonders if it will return to the barn again next winter.—Ruthven Free Press.

BUCKET OVERBOARD

A Des Moines man went fishing one day last week, and when the conservation officer happened along and asked him for permission to inspect what he had in his fish pail he just threw the pail with his minnows in the river, and if he had any "unlawful" fish in that pail it also went down the stream. Result, thirty days in the hoosegow in Des Moines for refusing to show his fish. That is another new one, on which some of our nimrods should be informed. The usual ten to twenty dollar fine would have been better—to most persons—than that thirty days in jail. So, show your minnow pail to the officer if he asks to "take a peek."—Algona Upper Des Moines.

A GREBE UPON THE WATERS

With a solemn stare and no fuss, the little grebe sank slowly from view. Like the disappearing Cheshire cat in Alice in Wonderland, the grebe simply vanished slowly, rear end first, and the last to go was, if not a grin, the watchful eye and the stubby beak.

A grebe can vanish as fast as an eye can wink when there is a sudden need to get out of sight. But the little duck-like bird can take its time when there is no great necessity for speed. A flock of a dozen or more grebes, slowly vanishing and reappearing in this silly manner, is something to stud a November day with a laugh and make of the grebe something more than a dull and morose character.

For the pied-billed grebe, known also as hell-diver, dipper duck and water witch, is not the sort of bird one would associate with a merry life or a gay disposition. Its only call is a primeval gulping sound, somewhat like a guttural "gow-gow-gow." It gathers together a mass of decaying water weeds for a soggy, floating nest, and flies very seldom except during migration. The grebe, with the loons, related to the most remote and primitive of all birds, is almost reptilian. Structurally it is simpler than other birds; the feathers are almost hair-like, are waterproof, and are delicately colored with tones of Novemberish brown. The grebe's only claim to frivolity is the stub-tail lined with white, and the band of black upon the grey-white beak.—Living Museum.

PATIENCE OF AGE + ANGLING KNOW-HOW

Not far from our boat on East Okoboji a week ago last Saturday afternoon was a lone fisherman in a boat of his own. He was fishing from an old-fashioned Hafer, the ong and narrow-of-beam kind, with a sweeping bow and gunwales cut low toward the stern. We've all seen these old rowboats. They were among the first strip-built boats on the lake 50 years ago.

There was a fresh coat of paint on this one and it hadn't been dry long. It had the colors these boats invariably have, gleaming white outside and dull French green inside where you want something easy on the eyes of the oarsman when the sun's beating down.

The boat and the fisherman fit together like a key in a lock. The fisherman was older than his boat, probably by 15 or 20 years. He was grey, lean and grizzled, and very solemn as he sat erect on the boat seat, his eyes alert to two long cane poles, radiating out, antenna-like, from the gunwales, and both within handy reach.

From the poles his lines looped down to red striped bobbers, plenty big enough for a pair of 70-year-old eyes to see. Lashed to the bow, a foot or two back, was a live fish cage, part in the water and part out, for his day's catch. On the other side a minnow bucket, tethered to the boat by an old stringer, surfaced gently on the lake.

At first the fisherman fished with his anchor out, letting his boat swing with the breeze, but he caught nothing. Then, still leaving the anchor out, he rowed upwind against it and let the boat slowly drift back. He did this three or four times and suddenly caught a crappie, a big one, quickly flipping it into the boat, then into his fish cage, and as quickly rebaiting with a shiner minnow and setting his pole in position again.

He did this with such fast and expert handling we believe we were the only other person among the dozen or fifteen fishing from boats nearby who saw him do it.

After a little while he silently hoisted the anchor and we knew he would be using a sash cord, no rattling chain, and carefully set the anchor down in the bow. Then he maneuvered that boat around as only a veteran could do it. He didn't hurry it at all; you could barely see his oars lift and fall but you knew he knew just what was going on down in the crappie heaven under him.

We are sure there was absolutely no guesswork in his mind about how deep the water was or how far down in it his live minnow was kicking up a tiny fuss in the lake.

The fisherman had his back to us as he slowly rowed in our direction. We saw the portside bobber make a dive, then pop up and rock on the wavelets. When it thumped down again, we felt like shouting and putting some action into that straight back and those unconcerned hands on the oars in the other boat.

It is well we didn't. On the third yank the bobber went out of sight for keeps and before you could shake a stick our friend had his crappie in the boat and stowed away in his fish cage. He quit fishing then, hauled in his cane poles and minnow bucket, and rowed serenely to his dock, his erect figure (or as much of it as we could see)

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The old-time fisherman doesn't write columns on fishing and isn't worrying about fast action reels. He doesn't have to. He has a rich stock of know-how and the patience of age. Jim Sherman Photo.

Would you shoot a doe? Jim Sherman Photo.

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Queer Experiences . . .

(Continued from page 145)

harried or so delighted with the increasing number of suitors per lady that they failed to produce any children. Within a few years there were no rabbits within the enclosure. Rabbits, mind you!

A violent example of what can happen to a lady animal with too many husbands happened in a monkey cage. The toughest monkey had a lovely wife, the only female in a large group. So long as her muscular and ill-tempered husband lived the other boys left her strictly alone. Then came the morning when papa was dead, and in the terrible battle among the heirs for possession of the dead one's female property, Solomon's judgment was fulfilled. Each surviving male made off with a little piece of the widow, and nothing else remained of her.

Many reasons have been advanced to explain the total disappearance of the passenger pigeons. They were hunted and shot unmercifully in the days when they filled the sky—but did man shoot 'em down to the last few birds? He hasn't done it with other game birds. James Silver, regional director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, believes that here again the imbalance of the sexes finally destroyed the race. Slaughter **near the nesting grounds** in the last part of the nineteenth century took a tremendous toll of the females. Though many were left they were outnumbered by the males. Then, Silver suggests, the lady passenger pigeons, like the heath hens and the experimental rabbits, just quit bringing up kids.

Would You Shoot a Doe?

Yet sometimes it may be wise to weed out some of the females of a species. Should a deer hunter shoot a doe? **Never!** That is, never unless the law permits him to. Then perhaps he ought to!

Open season on does is only allowed in states where some does should be exterminated to help nature's balance.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission ran into one of the hottest controversies in the history of game management over this question in 1928—and the story is being repeated in Wisconsin today. From 1896, when there were practically no deer at all in Pennsylvania, to 1928, when the storm broke, the game commission built up its herd of whitetail deer. From 1905 to 1928, does were generally protected. And the **law** that they should not be shot became a **custom.**

Hunters took an increasing number of bucks in season; 1,287 in 1915 and 14,374 in 1927. But by 1920 there was growing evidence that deer were becoming a curse in Pennsylvania. In 1928, in spite of every effort for relief except a general open season on does, the over-population of deer had created a wildlife emergency.

These protected animals—whose only natural enemy in Pennsylvania outside of a few bobcats is man—were overrunning many areas, overbrowsing the forests, destroying the cover of other game and ruining farmland to such an extent that many farms were being abandoned!

So what happened? In 1928 the game commission wisely forbade the hunting of bucks and declared a general open season on does. And it tripped heavily over the **custom** of sparing does. Hunters rose up in wrath and secured injunctions against the open season on lady deer. The attorney general denied the right of the commission to permit doe hunting, and the fight was on in earnest.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission, without a friend in sight, persisted in its efforts to whittle down the does and slowly gained some acceptance of the idea—with the help of the terrible pressure of the deer.

Deer, more than any other wild animal, are mixed up in politics—because of the special but conflicting interest caused by their beauty, their "big game" status and their destructiveness. Yet deer suffer when game management is run by ballot rather than science. The West Virginia game commissioner began this year to prepare for a doe season next fall in view of present overbrowsing. He may have a fight on his hands. Montana has one of the few laws which says clearly that the game commission may regulate the deer population when and where necessary. The Pennsylvania commission is now permitted to hold doe seasons when needed, but hunters, by vote, may block a doe season in their county. Farmers can't vote as farmers in such a deal, though they are vitally concerned. Nevada permits local groups of all interested parties to study and recommend steps for the control of wild grazing and browsing animals in their areas.

Today Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin have too many deer, as do Utah, Maine, Colorado and other states to a lesser and more local extent. Several states occasionally have an open doe season, and others which should are blocked by political pressure. And though doe hunting is never permitted except for the good of wildlife including the deer population, you will still find sportsmen's groups patrolling the forests in legal doe seasons urging hunters to leave the prolific lady deer alone! Just last fall the governor of Wisconsin prevailed upon the conservation commission to abandon a planned doe season—and yet for over ten years deer in northern Wisconsin have been starving to death by the thousands on the winter range.

Last year Pennsylvania deer were "runty". Too many deer for the amount of winter feed, even though in 1938 the biggest deer bag in the state to that time was all does —171,662 of them! When deer starve on the winter range the fawns and young adults die first, for they can't browse as high as the others. Nothing could be kinder in over-populated deer areas than to thin out the does with the hunter's quick bullet. Winter starvation is by far more frightful and cruel, but has steadily been the choice of sentimentalists and many sportsmen's groups.

Friendly Enemies

In the whole business of game management it doesn't pay to guess. Which would you suppose quail should dread most, foxes or mice? **One** quail may shiver in his cover when Br'er Fox approaches, but **all** quail may depend on the foxes to save them from the mice. Herbert Stoddard, who grew up around southern hunting plantations, was employed by the sportsmen owners of the Cooperative Quail Association to increase the

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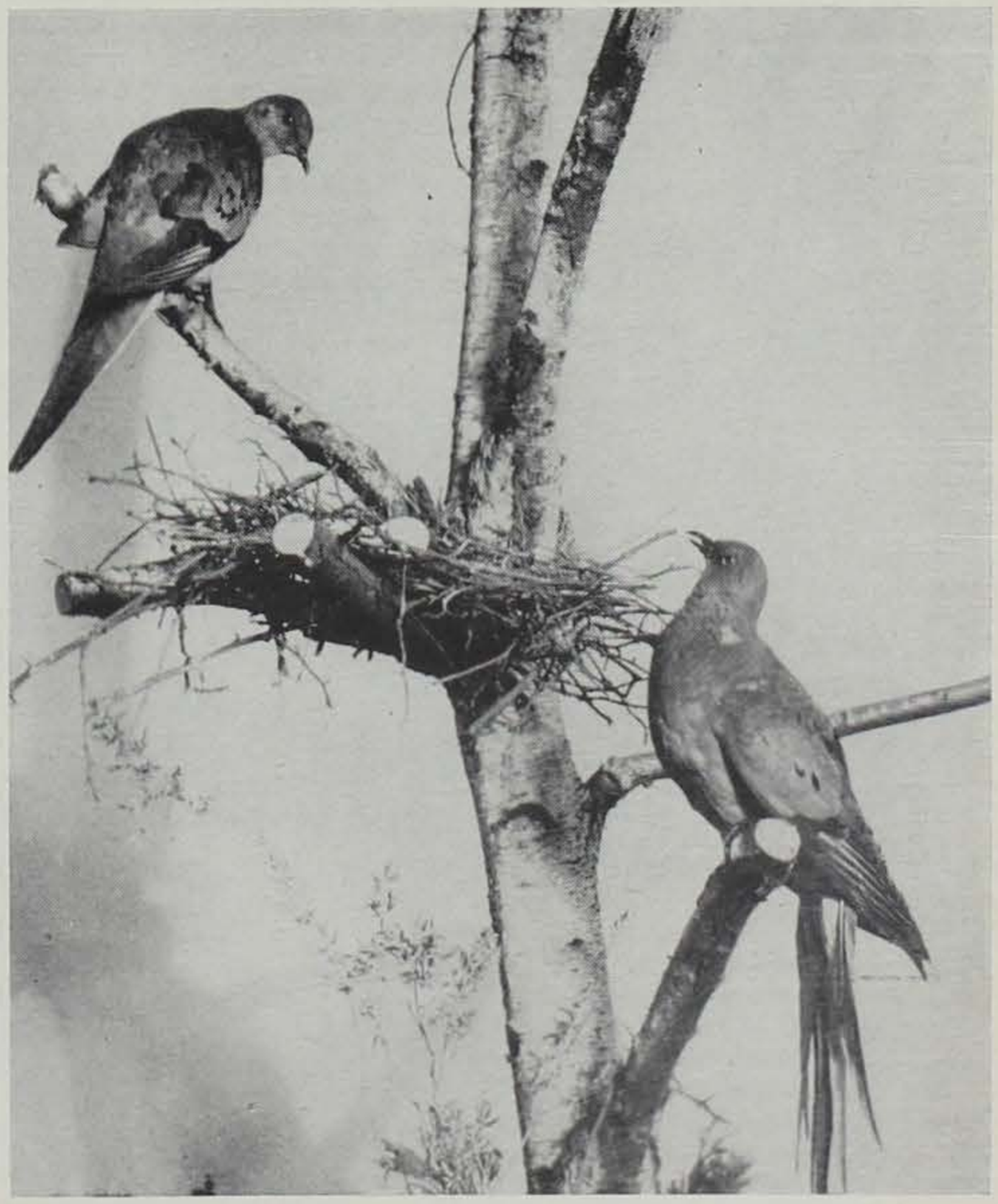

The total disappearance of the passenger pigeon still remains a mystery. There may be, however, a very simple reason for their extermination.

Carp taken from clean running streams have a delicate flavor. The smaller fish may be scored and the bones eaten without being removed. Jim Sherman Photo.

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Carp . . .

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attitude toward this fish is the old recipe gag on how to bake planked carp.

"Catch a five-pound carp. Dress it, stuff with dressing, put it on a white pine plank or board, place in oven, and bake for two hours. Remove from the oven. Throw the carp away and eat the plank."

This is nonsense.

How did this fish gain such ill repute as a food fish? There are three important reasons and we will discuss them briefly.

First, the carp is charged with having a muddy taste. Let us see about this.

Like the largemouth bass and some other popular game fish, at certain seasons of the year and in certain waters the carp does acquire an unpleasant taste from its surroundings. This generally occurs in shallow water during the latter part of July and August when shallow waters become very warm. Many people have experienced the eating quality of carp from this type of water and have declared them bad.

Carp taken from running streams and from moderately deep lakes during the cool season of the year have a delicate flavor, superior to that of some of the popular native game fish. This is the collective opinion of the hundred thousand anglers who know.

The second charge against the carp is that it is bony. This is true. It has the same major bones as, for instance, the catfish; but in addition has numerous bunch bones above the lateral line from head to tail. These little bundles of bones are the cause of the difficulty but they are not of enough importance to condemn the carp as a good fish.

Small carp up to two pounds may be scored and these very fine bunch bones may be cooked and eaten without removing them. For larger fish, it is easy to determine the pattern of the bunch bones and pick them out by hand. The result is a bone pattern much the same as any other fish.

The third major charge against the carp from a food standpoint is that it is soft. This is true to some degree, especially in shallow lakes during the warm summer months. Carp found in deep cold water lakes and in streams remain rather firm-fleshed even in July and August and do not become as soft as, for instance, crappie from the same body of water.

Carp are a sporty fish and even the game fish purist will have to admit that a five- or ten-pound carp when taken on light tackle gives the angler plenty to think about before the fish is safely landed.

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Carp are here to stay, so see for yourself what 100,000 other Iowans have learned about carp fishing. Jim Sherman Photo.

Carp generally feed in schools. They are located in streams much in the same types of water that catfish are found. Most fishermen believe, however, that if the school of carp moves into a hole the catfish move out. Although catfish are often taken in very shallow water even in the daytime, carp prefer deeper water during the daylight hours. Carp, for the most part, do not prefer to feed in the center of the channel, but like the quieter deep water holes, especially those that contain drifts where they feed with a loud sucking noise on the underside of logs.

Carp baits are very numerous. The fish may be taken readily on fresh sweet corn, worms and the white meat of crawfish tails. By far the most popular carp bait, however, is dough ball. Basic dough ball may be made by stirring a cup of white cornmeal into a cup of boiling water and cooking about two minutes. The cornmeal then may be worked into a sticky ball.

Some carp fishermen use a treble hook; however, the experts use a No. 2 or 4 single hook, upon which a small round ball of dough ball is formed.

Cook up a batch of dough ball and take it along the next time you go on a fishing expedition. If your favorite fish is sulking and will not take your bait, slip on a chunk of dough and see for yourself what a hundred thousand other Iowans already have learned.

NEW DEVICE CONTROLS BEAVER POND LEVELS

A simple, yet ingenious, method of controlling the level of waters backed up behind beaver dams has been developed by Research Technician Roger Leighton of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the Wildlife Management Institute reports.

To hold beaver-impounded waters at a static level, Leighton hit upon the idea of inserting a four-inch fiber drain pipe through the dam at the desired height. To prevent the fur-bearing engineers from plugging the bore of the pipe with sticks and mud in their usual manner, Leighton perforated the entire wall of the outlet to make an unpluggable sieve. Three months of testing the method in the Granite State showed that it is highly effective in preventing beaver from flooding valuable agricultural or forest lands. Through its use, water levels may be maintained at a constant level best suited to the needs of trout and for flood control without disturbing the beaver. Beavers, when their food supply on the shores of the pond becomes exhausted, usually raise the height of the dam and inundate more acres, often swamping and killing valuable timber or flooding roads.

The beaver is the largest rodent living in North America. Average adults weigh from 30 to 50 pounds, although occasionally heavier specimens are found.

Wardens Tales

Shop Talk From the Field

Conservation Officer Joe Hopkins, in charge of Mitchell, Floyd and Howard counties, writes:

"A pair of robins have been building a nest under an old wooden bridge near Lourdes. The female is a partial albino and is a very unusually marked bird. She has a white collar, possibly one and a half inches wide, around her neck, and all the secondary wing feathers are white. The remaining parts of the bird seem to be of normal coloration.

"If you can imagine a robin in flight with those two large white wing patches and white neck, you'll understand what a strange and exotic looking bird this is."

The following story on Jack Stevens, conservation officer for Cerro Gordo and Hancock counties, appeared in the Clear Lake Reporter:

"A fisherman was lolling lazily in his boat with eight poles strung out. Conservation Officer Jack Stevens was naturally quite interested and accosted the gentleman, reminding him that the law allowed him only two lines at one time, and at the same time requested him to pull the other six lines out of the water.

"The fellow was a little sharp about the matter and told Jack to 'pull them in himself.' Jack didn't like his attitude either but finally started to pull the first line out of the water himself.

"The topper is that the fellow wasn't fishing with the extra lines at all. He was merely cooling his supply of beverages with the six extra lines while fishing with the other two."

Wesley Ashby, conservation officer for Iowa and Johnson counties, writes:

"On a Monday morning I spent several unsuccessful hours hooking an area where I had reason to believe a fish trap was operating. The next morning I ran up the Iowa river about twenty miles by boat to apprehend some illegal trot liners. Gravel bars had worn my old propeller nearly to the hub and I had just put on my only new one.

"Returning down the river about noon, full speed ahead to keep a 2:30 court appointment, there was a sudden crash and a horrible chewing sound from the rear, and my boat was hauled back as though hooked onto a spring. As I shut off the motor, the obstruction released the prop and the boat drifted free. My new prop had a huge chunk chewed out of each blade and was so badly sprung as to be useless.

"After repairs I went back to see what I hit. That's right—it was a trap—of wire—and within six feet of one of the places I'd hooked so industriously the previous day.'

Not all the big cats are caught at Oakland Mills. Here eight-year-old Jimmy Chamberlain displays a 22-pounder caught at Ottumwa. Ottumwa Courier Photo.

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BIG FISH CONTEST IN HENRY COUNTY

The Skunk River at Oakland Mills is producing some "big" catches of carp and flathead catfish this spring. Entries in a big fish contest sponsored by Crane's Hardware at Mount Pleasant have included carp weighing from 15 to 20 pounds and flatheads weighing up to 44 pounds. The heaviest carp reported to date, a 20-pounder, was caught by Sam Clauson. Leading the flathead race is a 44-pounder caught by Joe Strang. Other heavyweights entered in the contest, which is for fish caught only in Henry County, include:

41-pound flathead—C. E. Devol.
38-pound flathead—C. E. Devol.
36-pound flathead—Dallas Shrimer.
36-pound flathead—Wilbur Cooper.
35-pound flathead—Marion Thorington.
34-pound flathead—Ed Gohlson.
19½-pound carp—Lester Thomas.
18-pound carp—Sam Clauson.

"JOE BEAVER" By Ed Nofziger

Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture

"I'm a sentimental fool perhaps, but I just can't cut it!"

THE BADGER

By Roberts Mann

One of the largest of the weasel tribe, which includes the skunks, mink, otters, martens and wolverine, is the badger. It is much different from the others. Like the mole, it is a digger built for digging—squat heavy muscular body, short neck, and short powerful legs with large strong claws which are more than one inch long on its big forefeet. Its small flat broad head, with low rounded ears and white cheeks, with a black bar in front of each ear, is featured by a narrow white stripe that runs from the sharp-pointed nose back over the forehead to the shoulders.

It has a very short bushy tail and its long shaggy fur is grizzled yellowish-gray, parted in the middle along the back and hanging down almost to the ground. A badger, 27 to 29 inches long including a 5-inch tail, is so low, flat, broad and shaggy that even when running—which he does awkwardly—he reminds you of a galloping doormat.

Badgers occur in North America from Indiana to the Pacific coast and from central Canada south to Texas. Wisconsin is known as the "Badger State," (some say because Wisconsin pioneers working in the lead mines, commonly lived in hillside caves resembling badger burrows) and the animal was once common in the north half of Illinois where it is now rare. It prefers the plains inhabited by prairie dogs, and the grasslands or open forests where ground squirrels, gophers and field mice are plentiful. They also eat some insects, snails, turtle eggs, young rabbits and, occasionally, the eggs or young of ground-nesting birds.

They excavate and live in deep long burrows. In cold northern regions they hibernate. They are most active at night when they industriously dig for rodents, leaving numerous large holes into which a horse may stumble and break its leg. One naturalist came upon a badger leisurely digging out a ground squirrel. Immediately, accompanied by a furious snarling and rumbling, a continuous geyser of earth shot out of the hole and in a short time the badger was deep below the surface.

Shy and sly, the badger becomes a vicious formidable fighter if surprised away from its den and given no chance to dig. Blows that would kill most animals seem not to affect him, probably because of his heavy fur, tough skin and compact muscular build. This fierceness, stubbornness and remarkable endurance led to the cruel "sport" of badger-baiting, formerly practiced in England and some of our western states, where a badger would be placed in a barrel lying on its side and relays of dogs sent in to try to drag him out. From this came our expression: "to badger," meaning to tease, harass and worry.

Apparently a pair of badgers, once mated, stay paired a long time. They have from two to five young in a litter, late in the spring. They are probably able to avoid the only animals, such as lynx and wolves, powerful enough to prey on them. Man is their chief enemy, although they are cunning enough to be difficult to trap.

The long coarse hairs of their fur, tipped with silvery white above a narrow black band, make excellent brushes, especially artists' brushes and those used in shaving. The fur was formerly considered useless otherwise, but after World War I, badger pelts from the northern and mountainous regions where the fur is more dense and

(Continued on page 152)

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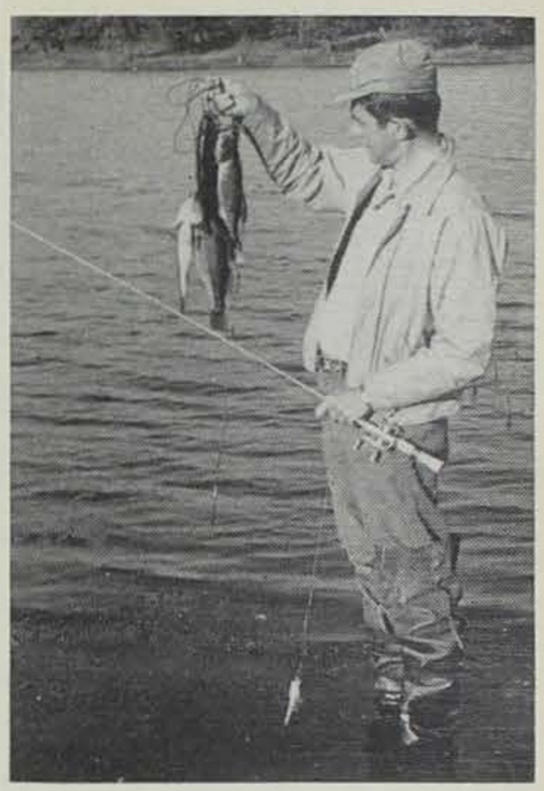
The badger, like the deer, beaver, and wildcat, has made a remarkable comeback during the past 20 years and now is found in almost every county of the state. Jim Sherman Photo.



Spend a few afternoons fishing farm ponds in your community. You may find some excellent new fishing spots. Jim Sherman Photo.

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Unexplored Waters . . .

(Continued from page 145)

in only two or three places, thereby allowing it to stream out as it descends.

Fishing near or even on the bottom in the deepest part of the pond is the best bet for the larger bluegills. When fishing on the bottom, it is a good policy to frequently retrieve and recast the line. If small bluegills continually steal the bait, the fisherman should try for deeper water and add a bit more lead to take the bait through the upper water more rapidly.

Since bullhead fishing in farm ponds as a rule is rather poor, the conventional large hook and heavy weight used with a casting rod is of little value in pond fishing. A few ponds do produce moderate to good bullhead fishing.

Some idea as to the presence or absence of a sizable bass population may be obtained by observing the various animal forms in the pond. If frogs and crayfish are numerous throughout the summer and/or if bullheads and green sunfish are abundant, bass are absent or at least not very numerous. If these forms are scarce and bluegill fingerlings are numerous, it is very likely that bass are present in some numbers.

By a bit of looking around in southern Iowa one stands a very good chance of locating some excellent new fishing spots.

The honey-bee is not a native; they were introduced into America more than three centuries ago.

CORRECTION!

In a list of state-owned lakes carried in last month's issue of the "Iowa Conservationist," Storm Lake was omitted. Storm Lake is a state-owned lake and women are required to have a license to fish there.

NEW BOOK

"Fresh Water Fishing" by Arthur H. Carhart, published by A. S. Barnes and Company, 101 5th Avenue, New York 3, New York; price $5.00.

Arthur H. Carhart, former Iowan, has done an excellent job with his "Fresh Water Fishing." It is complete, readable, and reasonable. It is a book of "why's" and not "rules." It outlines basic principles applicable to angling for all fresh water species and will be a valuable addition to the expert's library, as well as to the tyro's.

It is well illustrated with "how to" drawings by Hamilton Greene and contains 18 color plates of lure types and equipment.

Carhart writes: "I got my start in fishing way back when in Monona County, catching sunfish out of a prairie slough. And then fished for carp, bullheads and cats on the Maple River." From this modest beginning, the author graduated to the most famous fishing waters in the United States and Canada. That he was a good student of the "gentle art" is evident by the fishing "savvy" in the pages of "Fresh Water Fishing."

Patience . . .

(Continued from page 148)

etching a silhouette against the slanting evening sun we're likely to remember a long time.

Watching this fisherman had a humbling effect upon us. He undoubtedly had a good mess of crappies, more fish than we had, despite our feverish casting in assorted waters during the afternoon. No noisy outboard motors, gasoline smoke or long boat ride for him. Just pull out from the dock and catch a bunch of crappies!

Such an oldtime fisherman does not write columns on fishing and would gain nothing by reading them. He isn't worrying around about fast reels, dry action rods and nylon lines. He doesn't have to. He's got a rich stock of know-how and the patience of age. We wish we had it.—G. K., Jr., Emmetsburg Democrat.

Badger . . .

(Continued from page 151)

silky, came to be worth as much as $50 each. As a result, the badger has been so greatly reduced in numbers as to be in danger of extinction. Used principally for linings in women's cloth coats, a more important use of the fur is in "pointing" other kinds of fur—a skillful process whereby the long silvery badger hairs are glued in groups on the less desirable grades of fox, or other pelts dyed to imitate fox. At the present time badger pelts are of very low value.

We also have the expression: "gray as a badger." And another: "the badger game," which can be a joke or a gyp.—Nature Bulletin.

MORE FISH AND GAME BY WISE LAND USE

Most state conservation departments are constantly being pressured by hunters and anglers alike to do a tremendous amount of restocking both in field and stream.

After due reflection and considerable reading on the subject we have come to the conclusion that most of this money thus spent is wasted.

Now, boys, we know that with some of you this statement is going to rub your hair the wrong way but there is no use trying to kid you about such matters. Let's lay the cards face up and see what goes.

It is a well established fact that abundance of game and fish is in direct proportion to the amount of food and cover such game can find to reproduce and in some cases to maintain life. As an example let us consider what happens with chickens. A hen house containing approximately 300 square feet has the ability to properly take care of approximately 100 hens. Do you know what happens if you put 150 hens in the same house? In case you don't—in most cases they die off until the total is down to where it should be. In the meantime if you haven't increased the amount of feed then your egg production goes way down.

The same situation holds true of fish. An acre of water can properly handle only a certain amount of fish. Accordingly what is the use of crowding more in than the water can handle? It is true that with the use of the proper commercial fertilizer this ability can be increased but even so, only a certain amount can be handled.

The point we are trying to get across is this. Most conservation departments know that these facts are true but continue restocking as a sop to sportsmen through no fault of the technicians.

What the sportsmen and anglers must do to improve their lot is to do some work themselves both directly and indirectly. One way, and in our opinion the main way, to help indirectly is to do everything in your power to encourage and assist farmers to get into the soil conservation movement. The program of this group is the salvation of the nation and of the outdoorsman for the years to come as pertains to proper use of soils and waters.

Our farmers have been slow to take hold, at which we are not too surprised, but once this group realizes what this basically sound program will do for their farms and pocketbooks as well, we predict that they will fall in line rapidly. Now maybe you think we are kidding about this soil conservation deal but if you ever want to see real game environment then you ought to visit a few of these farms who are following the soils plan.

Don't forget that soil conservation is the real answer to clearing up siltation in our streams, too. There are a few other problems connected with pure water such as dams and stream pollution but more about that at a later date.—Burlington Hawkeye-Gazette.

DDT, 2,4-D VS. WILDLIFE

Conservationists throughout the nation are beginning to wonder just what effect use of the new weed-killing chemicals will have upon the future of upland game birds and animals.

Research work conducted by the federal government has already determined that the use of DDT in high percentages can be very damaging to bird life and beneficial insect life, even though this substance is almost invaluable to agriculture. Now there is another element over which to ponder, the use of 2,4-D and allied chemicals.

Driving through the countryside of Scott County before the freeze with Oscar Schaefer, he pointed out to us the areas along the roadside which had been sprayed with 2,4-D. Beyond any question the weeds were being killed, but along with this went the destruction of much beneficial vegetation which acts as a source of food and shelter for quail, pheasants, and rabbits.

We observed a number of young trees destroyed; berry patches were withering, such as the black raspberry and the blackberry; sumac and wild honeysuckle, a source of seed in the winter time, was being destroyed; and there were many other instances of valuable seed-bearing plant life having been killed by the use of the chemical.

Are we driving our upland game birds out of their natural habitat to kill a few weeds? That might well be the question. Pursuing the question a bit farther, will the use of the new weed-killing chemicals become so common that it will eradicate much valuable cover for quail and pheasants? Will there be enough winter cover remaining so that birds will have protection from the elements and their natural enemies? Are we to become so weed-conscious that in our attempts to destroy all noxious weeds we will also sweep the harmless ones out, and with them our valuable bird allies which include quail and pheasant?

This is not a problem for today or tomorrow. It is a problem which affects the future, many years hence. Our chemists have worked wonders with their test tubes and retorts, but in working these wonders they did not have the welfare of wildlife in mind. We are no Jeremiah, scolding the people, but we do say that unless there is a very wise use of the weed-killing chemicals on the part of midwest agriculture the best friend the farmer ever had, the bob-white quail, is doomed.—**Davenport Democrat.**

Queer Experiences . . .

(Continued from page 149)

wild quail and turkey on their hunting grounds.

When Stoddard arranged the extermination of the quail's natural enemies—foxes, hawks, owls and other varmints—the quail also disappeared! Why?

Give up? Well, Stoddard learned that rats and mice, instead of quail, formed the chief food of foxes, hawks, owls and weasels. With these predators out of the way the rodents multiplied unchecked. They overran the fields and woods and destroyed all quail nests and young quail. For the good of the game birds the flesh-eaters were brought back—and up went the turkey and quail population, thanks to the presence of their "enemies".

Then there were the Kaibab deer herds in Arizona. Wildlife experts estimated that each mountain lion killed about fifty deer a year there. Less lions should mean more deer, so they polished off the lions with hunts and high bounties. Then the deer increased so rapidly that they overbrowsed the forest. Food grew short and crowded conditions drove down the stamina of the deer. Septicemia struck and the beautiful little creatures died by the thousands while the new hordes that were born were poor and sickly. This "protected" deer herd shrank from 100,000 in 1924 to 10,000 in 1939. Complete extermination threatened until the call went out for more lions. After a few years of living with lions again the deer population once more stabilized.

Nature's creatures and ways often seem cruel and immoral. But man, who changes the face of the earth, is learning one of nature's oldest and oddest laws; hard-headedness is often merciful, while sentimentality can be murderous to the creatures we love.

Today, in every state in the Union, game commissions try to adapt their hunting and fishing laws to the facts of the balance of life so that the taking of game and fish **legally** may help, rather than hinder, nature's balance and the welfare of our wildlife.

Several species of fish have the ability to produce a sound audible to the human ear. Among freshwater fish, the peculiar grunting sound made by the sheepshead or freshwater drum is the outstanding example.

The carp is native to China and was introduced into Europe as early as 1227, and was first brought to England at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The first introduction of carp into the U. S. is said to have been in 1877.

Approximately 1,500 to 2,000 people are bitten by poisonous snakes in the U. S. each year, but only about 10 per cent of these people succumb to the poison. In fact, 85 per cent of the victims recover without antivenom treatment.

Wood consumption of one cubic meter annually constitutes the minimum per capita for a satisfactory standard of living in industrial countries. To meet such a standard a 60 per cent increase over the 1946 production of the world's forests is needed.