

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

Volume 12

NOVEMBER, 1953

Number 11

OF IOWA SLEEPERS AND SNOOZERS

FOX AND COYOTE TRAPPING

By Tom Berkley
Area Game Manager

Coyotes and foxes are highly intelligent and can adapt themselves quickly to changes in their surroundings. They are able to live in close contact with man, often at man's expense. Both animals are members of the dog family and their habits are similar, as are the methods used for trapping them. Sets that will take coyotes will often take foxes, and fox sets may take coyotes.

If there is any real secret to successful fox and coyote trapping, it is locating the trap set in the proper place. Time and effort are wasted if the trap is not set in an area regularly used by the animal.

Both coyotes and foxes are dog-like in their habit of establishing scent posts—places used for urinating along their regular routes of travel. These scent posts are used regularly by resident animals and are also visited by other animals that are traveling through the area. After depositing urine upon the scent posts the animals always scratch in the ground. This behavior is a means of communication used by the animals. The habit is the undoing of many wise predators, since sets made at a scent post are highly effective. These spots may often be found along the routes of travel by locating the scratches made by the animals after urination. Sometimes they may be located by the odor of the urine, for it may smell strong enough to be detected by man.

When a natural scent post cannot be located it is necessary to set up an artificial one. This must be made near the travel lane of the coyote or fox or in an area that is being used by the animal as a hunting ground, den site, or resting area. The scent post is established by using urine taken from an animal or purchased from a

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Although Br'er Possum is a typical snoozer, he often wanders out during cold weather and literally "freezes his tail off." This is the origin of that popular expression.

TO THE DEER HUNTER

This is Iowa's first deer season in 75 years. Its success or failure is in your hands.

Iowa deer hunting, like all hunting, depends on good farmer-sportsmen relations. Most farmers welcome sportsmen who conduct themselves as gentlemen and show consideration for the landowner and his property. An accident involving livestock may bar hunters from an entire area. The same is true of gates left open, broken fences, and rudeness toward landowners.

Everyone in Iowa will be watching our first modern big game season. Here are some suggestions for its success:

1. Ask permission before entering land to hunt.
2. Determine the location of all livestock on the land on which you are hunting.
3. Check and doublecheck your target before shooting. Make sure of a good backstop. Don't shoot toward farm buildings.
4. Do not park in farm driveways, blocking them. Close all gates and be careful of fences.

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By John Madson
Education Assistant

Old man woodchuck labored slowly up the hill, breathing heavily and stopping now and then to rest. He was hog-fat now that late September had come, and with each passing day he grew lazier.

Although the sun still swung high in the south and the noontimes were warm, something in his dim mind spoke of winter. So, rolling with fat, he entered his hillside tunnel late one afternoon and left the last of summer behind him.

In a daze the old 'chuck moved to the end of a long passage to a chamber almost filled with dried grass. With the last of his wakefulness he scraped dirt from the wall of the sleeping chamber and packed it at the chamber's entrance, sealing himself from the main tunnel. His energy spent, he rolled into a ball and slept.

He was so tightly curled in his sleep that even his lungs were compressed, and breathing became only a trickle of air through his nostrils. His pulsebeat slowed, and his body temperature dropped forty-five degrees. More than a sleep, it was almost death, a spell that would be broken only by the south winds of early March.

Above the 'chuck's den at the pasture's edge, a thirteen-striped ground squirrel had retired a month earlier. During the summer the little federation squirrel (so called because of his thirteen stripes) had become so fat that his belly almost touched the ground. Although he had frolicked in the broiling sun of July and August, the heat had somehow become oppressive by the first of September, and the ground squirrel retreated to the coolness of his burrow until the following March.

Three-fourths of this squirrel's life is spent in sleep. In his deepest slumber his heartbeat slows from two hundred beats a minute to only five. He is safe from winter in his nest of grass, for the temperature in the home burrow is far above that of the world outside. But even so, the ground squirrel has a built-in thermostat

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Iowa Conservationist

Published Monthly by the

IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION
East 7th and Court—Des Moines, Iowa
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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE.....51,500

Subscription rate.....40c a year
Three years \$1.00

Entered as second class matter at the post office in Des Moines, Iowa, September 22, 1947, under the Act of March 24, 1912.

Subscriptions received at Conservation Commission, East Seventh Street and Court Avenue, Des Moines 9, Iowa. Send cash, check or money order.

SHIPPING FURS OUT-OF-STATE

Iowa trappers are reminded that there are certain state laws governing the out-of-state shipment of furs.

A permit is required for sale of furs out-of-state. It is unlawful for any person except a licensed fur dealer to ship, transport or sell any skins or hides of any fur-bearing animals defined in this chapter to dealers or buyers outside of Iowa unless he first obtain from the commission a special permit tag authorizing such shipment.

Applications for permit tags may be obtained from county recorder offices, or write to the State Conservation Commission in Des Moines, giving your name and address, numbers and kinds of furs you wish to ship, name and address of the fur company to whom you wish to ship, and your license number or state if trapped on own land without license.



A permit from the State Conservation Commission is required before trappers may legally ship furs out of the state for sale.



"So when dad gives his lad a gun it follows that in the gift of the gun the dad is included." Jim Sherman Photo.

GUN PALS

Wish I could have my way—every boy would get the privilege to own and use a real gun, and I don't mean a popgun or a BB gun. I mean a good .410 shotgun or a good .22 calibre rifle. If I know boys (and I think I do) there are two things ultra-vital in a normal boy's life—first, his dog, and second, a gun. There's a combination that's full of meaning—a boy, a dog and a gun. It's as natural as the sunshine, the earth and the water.

But before the boys I'm thinking about can have a gun, they must prove themselves entitled to a gun and they must be able to demonstrate that they know how to use a gun intelligently and safely. Every boy past the age of twelve years who can pass tests in how to safely use a gun and whose character and reputation guarantee the legitimate employment of a gun ought to have a good rifle or shotgun.

I'm a firm believer in the father-son hunting combination. The father who genuinely loves his son will give to his son a mighty lot of companionship. Fathers who don't love their sons seldom manifest any concern about the activities of their sons. So when dad gives his lad a gun, it follows that in the gift of the gun the dad is included. Unless the dad instructs the lad, unless the dad imparts to the lad the sportsmanship involved in owning a gun, the deal is all sour.

You're a dad who definitely loves his lad! Then give your son a gun

—a real good gun. But when you make the presentation of the gun, give yourself to your boy in the deal.

In all of this life of ours there is no more beautiful picture than that of a father and his son trudging away as pals and partners in going a-hunting. —Manchester Democrat-Radio.

A ringneck pheasant has been known to fly three miles, but the average flight is only about 200 or 300 yards.—J. M.

Pheasant cocks have been found starved in winter by their long tails, which froze to the ground and imprisoned them.—J. M.



Some of the most useful, valuable and interesting animals of our woodlands are missing when there are no trees with dead limbs or hollow trunks.

HOLLOW TREES

By David H. Thompson
and Roberts Mann

You may have heard the expression: "They couldn't see the forest for the trees." There was a time, especially in Germany, when foresters grew trees as farmers grow cabbages: thousands of acres covered with just one kind planted in long rows that were kept free of all seedlings, underbrush, dead or injured trees and everything but perfect specimens. For a while these plantations produced astonishing yields of lumber and the Germans boasted of them as models of "efficiency." The fact that they supported practically no wildlife—only a few birds, no food for deer, and so forth—was contemptuously dismissed.

Suddenly the soil turned "sick." Insect pests swept through them like forest fires. They withered and died. Finally the Germans turned to the planting of mixed forests, including "worthless" species such as beech and birch, where natural reproduction and undergrowth was permitted. They put up nesting boxes to attract the many kinds of birds that help control harmful insects. They actually imported and propagated some species, including owls. They planted earthworms in the soil. They found that woodlands which comprise a natural community of a great variety of living things was more productive and gave less trouble than artificial plantings. They became apostles of *Naturschutz*—a natural forest. We know now that wildlife is valuable for more than meat and fur, or to provide sport for the hunter, or as something sacred to the long-haired few who write sentimental essays and poems about "naytch-ah."

Some of the most useful, valuable and interesting animals of our American woodlands are missing when there are no trees with dead limbs or hollow trunks. Honey

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Iowa State College Photo.
Observations during the mowing of 156 acres of hay revealed 8 hens were killed and 25 injured, more than a third of the estimated spring nesting population of 90 hens.

PERSISTENCE—THE 1953 HEN PHEASANT

By Russell Robbins

Iowa Cooperative Wildlife
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of Zoology and Entomology
Iowa State College

With the advent of the nesting season modern farming practices and nature place a series of obstacles in the path of the hen pheasant. However, the hen seems to be guided by the old and time-worn motto of "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

As in previous years data were obtained during the spring and summer of 1953 on the nesting of pheasants on the 1520-acre Winnemago Pheasant Research Area. Observations on 104 nests revealed just what the hen must overcome in order to nest successfully. With the approach of warmer weather (late April and early May) the hen searched for a nesting site. About the only suitable cover available was in the narrow fencerows. So it was there that she attempted to nest. Her work turned out to be largely just so much wasted effort; for the fencerows were kept under careful observation by crows, who place pheasant eggs high on their list of preferred spring delicacies. Also, the fencerows served as "travel lanes" for mammals, such as ground squirrels and skunks, with a fondness for pheasant eggs. Of the 14 nesting attempts observed in fencerows, only one nest hatched.

Frustrated in her nesting attempt in the fencerow, the hen searched for another nesting site. By this time the alfalfa and red clover fields and some oat fields had grown enough to provide suitable nesting cover. However, the hayfields provided more cover and attracted the majority of the hens, so she followed the crowd and set up housekeeping there. Everything went along fine. It looked like the nest would hatch for sure; that is, until a high speed tractor mower moved into the field. Within a

few hours her nest was destroyed along with many others. The hen considered herself lucky to have escaped uninjured. Just how lucky? Observations during the mowing of 156 acres of hay revealed eight hens were killed and 25 hens injured, more than a third of the estimated spring nesting population of 90 hens. Only six of 56 observed nests in hayfields were hatched prior to the time of mowing.

Forced to change her nesting site for the third time, she selected a site in an adjacent oats field. As it was already late in June, she would have to hurry to have her nest hatch before the harvest. But this time she was lucky, her nest hatched a few hours before the stream of harvest equipment moved into the field. She had just enough time to lead her young brood to the safety of a cornfield. This hen was the exception rather than the rule. The majority of the hens that had their nests destroyed in the hayfields and then tried to nest in the oat fields did not have sufficient time to hatch a nest before the harvest began. Of the 27 nests found in the oat fields, 15 had hatched before harvest. Hens that had nested in the oat fields in preference to hayfields were undoubtedly responsible for the majority of the hatched nests.

Thus, it takes a lot of persistence on the part of the hen pheasant, not to mention luck, to hatch a nest in the present era of mechanized, intensive farming.

The shrew is the only poisonous mammal known. It feeds largely upon insects, to which the saliva of the shrew is toxic. The physical processes of the shrew are so rapid that it will starve to death in only a few hours if deprived of food.—J.M.

The woodcock has its ears located ahead of its eyes.—J.M.

THE CASE OF THE TRANSIENT PHEASANTS

This is a mystery story. So far, the case has remained unsolved, although thousands of sportsmen and a number of biologists have tried to crack it. We're offering no solution here, but only a few theories and the mystery itself.

The puzzle is this: Why do ring-necked pheasants thrive in northern Iowa (roughly that area north of Highway 30), but can't seem to get along in the southern part of the state?

Some sportsmen believe that high fox populations in southern Iowa destroy pheasants as fast as they are stocked. It is known that under certain conditions predators can hit game birds hard. For instance, when there are many foxes and so little cover that the birds can't escape them. There are other situations, too, in which predators can nearly wipe out local populations of game birds. In some parts of southern Iowa pheasants winter in river bottoms where they are vulnerable to fox predation, while in northern Iowa much winter roosting may be in farmstead windbreaks not frequented by foxes. But pheasants are more or less limited across the entire southern half of Iowa, particularly in the southeast. Can predation be a limiting factor over such a tremendous area? Biologists claim not.

Carrying this predation theory along, other sportsmen believe that poachers in southern Iowa are responsible. However, all predators, man included, usually prefer to hunt the most easily taken game. A poacher is not a sportsman, and would anyone but a real sportsman hunt all day for one or two pheasants? We doubt it. Besides, not only are there fewer pheasants in southern Iowa, but they seem to avoid roads more than in the northern part of the state, discouraging poaching.

Another theory is that until recent years most country roads in southern Iowa have been dirt or shale. As a result, this theory goes on, there was no gravel or grit so vital to a pheasant's digestion. But in all of southern Iowa there is certainly enough grit in exposed hillsides and stream beds to support pheasants, even in the poorer pheasant counties.

Still another idea is that quail and pheasants just don't get along together—that southern Iowa is a quail's world. That is, that "interspecific strife" between the birds prevents their using the same habitat. Yet pheasants and quail are good neighbors in more northern areas, and it seems that if there was any friction it would be the quail, not the pheasant, that would give ground.

Some persons maintain that food and cover in southern Iowa are too poor to support pheasants. However, biologists have found areas there that seemed ideal for pheasants, although the birds had other ideas. The southern counties have many excellent cornfields that yield grain high in food value. Iowa's "banana belt" also has many wild plants among which pheasants could find food, and certainly have more cover than the windswept prairies of northern Iowa.

Another suggestion is that southern Iowa may have soil types unsuitable to pheasants, and that the birds might prefer northern Iowa because of its slightly greater precipitation and water supply. Some Missouri biologists claim that there is no apparent correlation between soil types, humidity and the seasonal distribution of moisture in determining pheasant range. They believe that pheasants occur both on humid and semi-arid lands and lands with

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Jim Sherman Photo.
Why have pheasants done so well in the northern part of the state and not so well in the southern half?



Jim Sherman Photo.

Deer of any age or any sex may be taken during Iowa's first deer season in more than 75 years.

To the Deer Hunter . . .

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5. If a farmer refuses you permission to hunt, accept it gracefully. After all, it's his land, and he has his reasons for not wanting you to hunt on it.
6. Use courtesy, consideration and common sense at all times.

Regulations

Counties Open: Lyon, Sioux, Plymouth, Cherokee, Woodbury, Monona, Crawford, Harrison, Shelby, Pottawattamie, Dickinson, Clay, Palo Alto, Emmet, Kosuth, Winnebago, Worth, Mitchell, Hancock, Humboldt, Wright, Webster, Hamilton, Hardin, Boone, Guthrie, Dallas, Polk, Adair, Madison, Union, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe, Taylor, Ringgold, Decatur, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Fayette, Clayton, Black Hawk, Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson. All other counties of the state are to be closed to deer hunting.

Dates: December 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 1953.

Time of Day: Hunting for deer is permitted only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily.

License Fee: Resident only, \$15.

Bag Limit: Daily bag limit, one (1) deer, possession limit one (1) deer. Deer of any age or sex may be taken.

Weapons: Deer hunting will be limited to bows and arrows and shotguns shooting rifled slugs. Bows must be of at least forty pounds pull and shoot a standard, broadhead big game hunting arrow.

Legal shotguns include 10, 12, 16 and 20 gauge arms shooting rifled slugs. Shotguns of .410 calibre are not permitted, nor are rifles or any other type of shot.

Bows may not have automatic cocking device, and crossbows are prohibited.

The use of dogs, domestic animals, automobiles, aircraft or any mechanical conveyance, salt or bait is prohibited.

License: Resident only.

(a) Owners or tenants of land and their children living on said land, may hunt, kill and possess one deer, provided it is not removed from said land, whole or in part, unless tagged with seal affixed to animal by Conservation Officer.

(b) All hunters required to purchase licenses must possess a 1953 deer license and wear red license number and insignia provided them when hunting deer. This insignia is for your own protection. Fasten it to the back of your hunting clothes with safety pins and scotch tape.

(c) A metal locking seal bearing license number of licensee and year of issuance must be affixed to the carcass of each deer between the tendon and bone of hind leg before carcass can be transported on public highways.

(d) A hunt report postal card provided with each license must be mailed to State Conservation Commission, Des Moines, Iowa, within three days after close of the season, stating whether a deer is killed or not. Licensees failing to return this card may be refused licenses for subsequent seasons.

(e) Applications for deer hunting licenses for the 1953 deer hunting season must be made on forms provided by the State Conservation Commission and returned to the State Conservation Commission office in Des Moines, Iowa, accompanied by check or money order in the amount of \$15, not later than November 15, 1953.

(f) Deer may be possessed for 10 days following the close of the season. After that time a permit to store wild game must be obtained from the State Conservation Commission in Des Moines. This permit is free of charge.

(g) If the number of applications for deer licenses exceeds 20,000 a drawing will be conducted to determine applicants who will receive licenses. Applicants who do not receive licenses will have their license fees refunded immediately.

How to Attach Tag

Do not "practice" with the seal, for if it becomes locked it cannot be undone. Insert end of band into seal and push it in as far as it will go. Pull back on band to see that it is locked. Band should not travel over a quarter of an inch in either direction if seal is properly locked.

Deer Checking Stations

During the deer season, voluntary deer checking stations will be set up in areas of the greatest deer concentration.

These stations are established to obtain valuable information about hunting methods, sex ratios of deer, their age and general physical condition.

Hunters are NOT required to check their deer at these stations, but to do so will help Conservation Commission biologists in the studies of Iowa's deer herd. In each station there will be scales for weighing deer and Commission personnel to answer your questions about skinning and butchering.

Deer checking stations will be located in the following places:

ALLAMAKEE COUNTY STATION—at the D-X Service Station on Main Street (Highway 9) in Lansing.

BLACK HAWK COUNTY STATION—on the parking area of the "Hitchin' Post" on Highway 29 between Waterloo and Cedar Falls. This is next door to the "Tipi Inn."

BOONE COUNTY STATION—on the parking lot of the "Cookie Jar Drive Inn" across U. S. Highway 30 from the county courthouse in Boone.

CLARKE COUNTY STATION—at Kerns' Sinclair Service Station at junction of Highways 34 and 69 in Osceola.

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY STATION—on the county courtyard in Avoca on Highway 64, one block north of the junction of Highways 83 and 64.

HANCOCK COUNTY STATION—just west of the Butz D-X Service Station at the junction of Highways 69 and 18, two miles west of Garner.

DICKINSON COUNTY STATION—at the Conservation Commission Biology Building on Highway 71 at the south end of the Okoboji bridge in Arnold's Park.

WOODBURY COUNTY STATION—at Posey's Standard Station at the intersection of U. S. Highways 20 and 75 and State Highway 141 at the east end of the Grand Avenue viaduct in Sioux City.

Your Weapon

If your shotgun is modern and in good condition, it should shoot rifled slugs well. These slugs will not harm a full-choke gun or any variable choke attachment.

At 100 yards your shotgun will probably shoot from 10 to 15 inches low. At 50 yards the slug will drop about 2 or 3 inches. Groups of shots at 100 yards will show spreads of about 15 inches, but there should be no difficulty in keeping all shots at 50 yards within an 8-inch group.

Few shotguns shoot rifled slugs the same way. For that reason it is wise to fire a number of slugs through your gun to determine its accuracy and performance. A receiver's peep sight will greatly improve your shotgun's accuracy.

Great care should be used with these slugs. They will convert your shotgun to a heavy rifle that is dangerous up to 600 yards. **BE CAREFUL!**

Your Target

Place your shots within the shaded vital area. Hits elsewhere will cripple the deer and you may not recover it. (See page 181.)

How to Care for Your Meat

The Indiana Game Regulations make the following suggestions:

1. Take with you a sheath knife, whetstone, belt ax, and 15 feet of 1/4-inch rope.

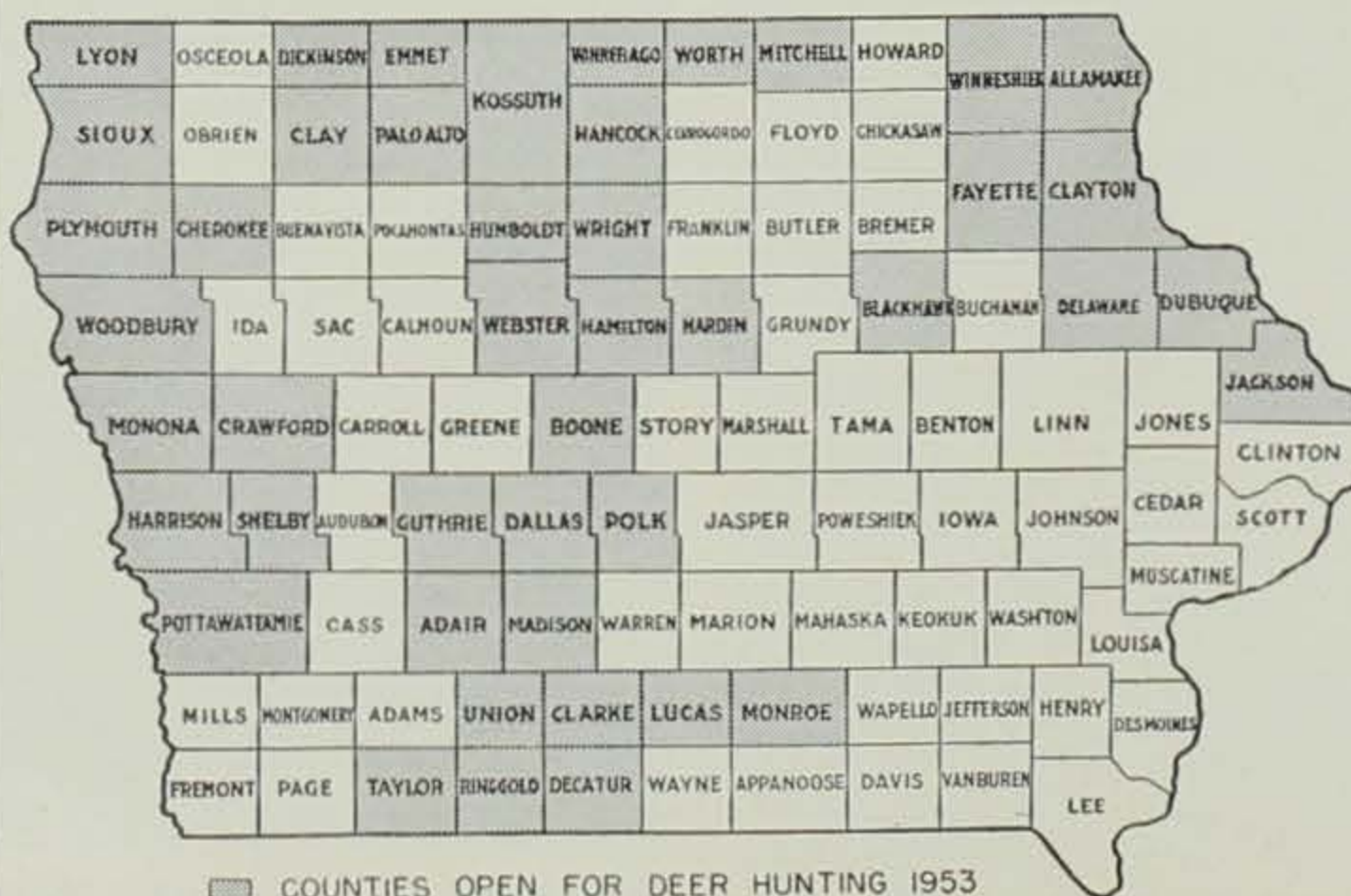
2. Make sure the animal is dead!

3. Make the animal yours by fastening seal between tendon and bone of hind leg.

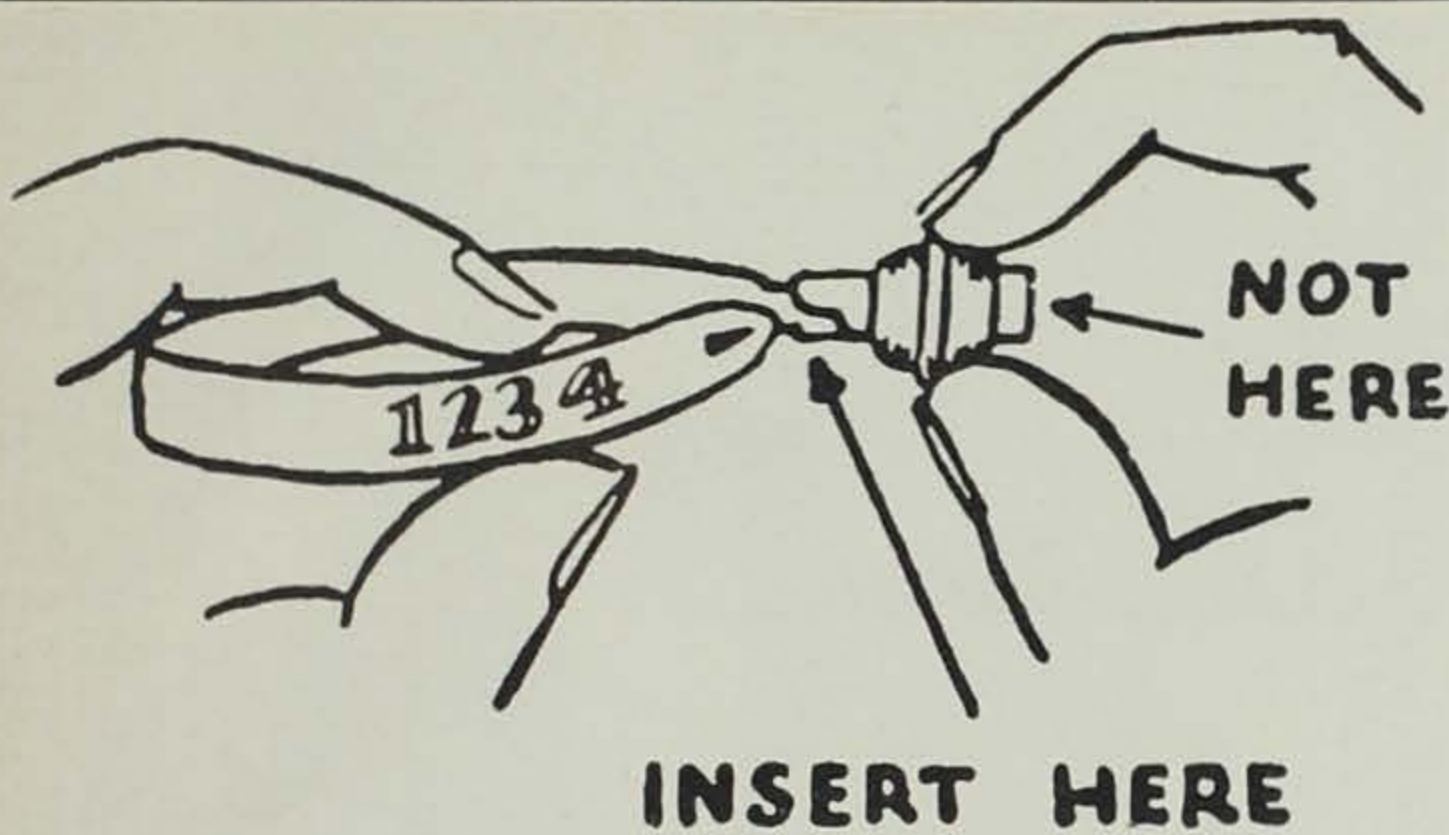
4. Bleed by inserting knife five inches at base of neck and chest, cutting sideways to sever blood vessels.

5. Lay animal on left side or back with hind quarters down hill. Make shallow incision through skin and abdominal wall just above sexual organs. Turn knife, sharp side up, and cut up to ribs. Cut out diaphragm (the muscular sheet separating the lungs from the abdominal cavity). Reach up into chest and cut windpipe and foodpipe. Pull lungs, heart, liver, stomach and intestines out of body. Cut around anus so it will

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■ COUNTIES OPEN FOR DEER HUNTING 1953



Do not practice with the seal, for if it becomes locked it cannot be undone.

To the Deer Hunter . . .

(Continued from page 180)

pull out with intestines. Separate liver and heart and discard the rest of the offal. Split pelvic bone and remove all organs exposed.

6. Hang in shade to drain. Remove bloodshot meat, and prop chest and abdomen open to hasten cooling. Wipe body cavity dry with cloth or paper, but *never* wash out with water.

7. If you have a long trip home or if weather is hot, it is best to skin and quarter the carcass. Rub salt into the meat and wrap in cloth. If you must transport on fender, wrap cloth about exposed meat to protect against road dirt, heat and insects.

8. After skinning, tack hide up in shade, scrape off flesh, and let dry. If you do not intend to have it tanned, sell it to your local meat packer or hide dealer. The U. S. Armed Forces need deer skins for garments. You will be paid for the hide and help the defense effort.

9. Let the carcass cool at 40 degrees for a week before storing it.

Do not let it alternately freeze and thaw. This ruins the meat.

10. Checking stations will be located near many deer hunting areas. Conservation Commission personnel will be glad to give you any information you desire.

Hunt Safely!

The rifled shotgun slug has an extreme range of about 600 yards. It is a heavy, large calibre bullet, and is capable of killing a hunter as easily as a deer.

It is expected that the major Iowa deer ranges will have many hunters, and great care must be taken in shooting. Unlike rifle bullets, which often explode on impact, the rifled slug's low velocity prevents this, and it will ricochet instead. Make certain of your target and the area behind the target.

The red identification tag issued to hunters should be regarded as only minimum protection. It is advisable to also wear at least 50 per cent red hunting clothes. Avoid solid brown or gray garments.

When you shoot a deer, approach it with caution. A badly

wounded deer can be extremely dangerous, and may attack you with antlers and hooves.

ASK THE FARMER FIRST

FOR YOUR HUNTING SUCCESS there is nothing more important than your relations with your farmer host. In a state that is 97 per cent private property, you will be doing most of your hunting as a guest, and your future hunting depends on what kind of a guest you are.

Asking permission to hunt is not only a legal necessity; it is a matter of common courtesy. No gentleman enters a strange house without asking. No real sportsman hunts on private land without asking.

By asking the farmer first, you'll enjoy your hunt more. A lot of posted farms will be open to you, and the farmers can give you some good tips on the location of game. You may even receive a standing invitation to hunt there whenever you please.

When you ask the farmer's permission to hunt, ask him to join you. Leave your car in the farmyard, out of the way, and find out the location of livestock in the fields. Close gates after using them and be careful of fences. Watch where you shoot and above all, remember that one rude, careless hunter can blackball sportsmen in an entire district.

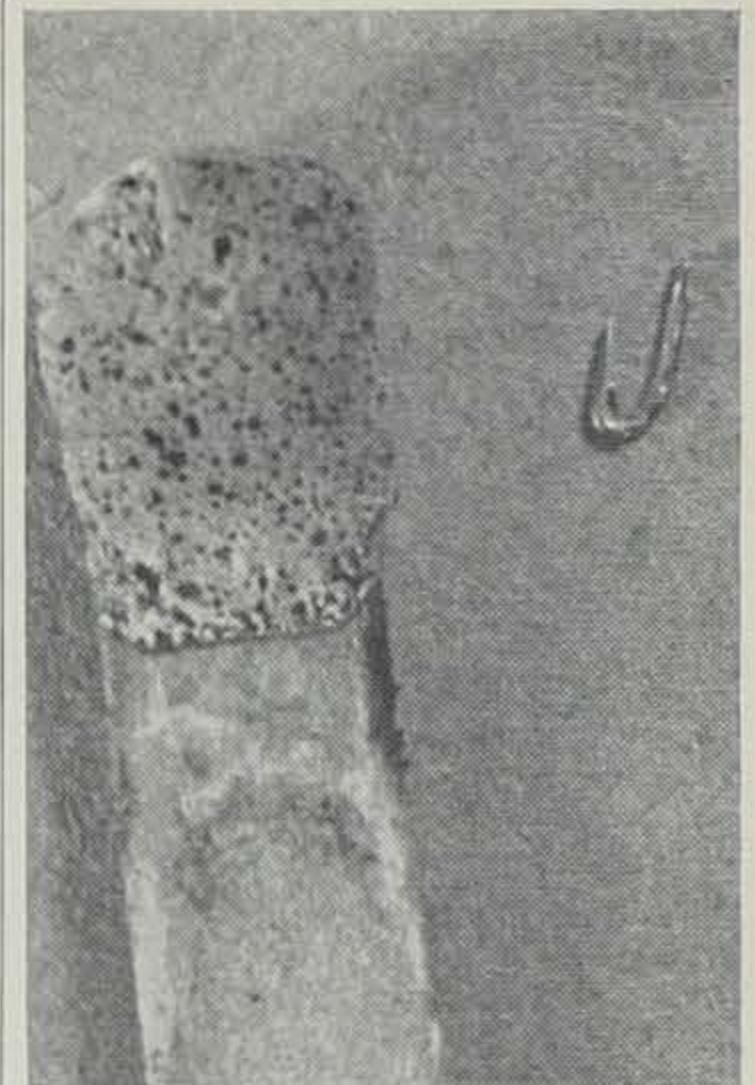
Be courteous, considerate and ask the farmer first. You'll have more fun this season and you'll be laying the groundwork for many seasons to come.

Hollow Trees . . .

(Continued from page 178)

bees and other bees, wasps, the hibernating butterflies, moths, certain mosquitoes, spiders, snails, tree frogs, and many other kinds of insects, lower animals and fungi are found in such places. A list of some of the higher animals that nest, den or find shelter there, and perhaps food, includes: raccoon, possum, deer mouse, all the tree squirrels, all the woodpeckers, chickadee, tufted titmouse, the nuthatches, brown creeper, bluebird, three kinds of wren, crested flycatcher, phoebe, warbler, chimney swift, purple martin, tree swallow, starling, house sparrow, screech owl, barn owl, barred owl, sparrow hawk, and eight kinds of ducks—wood duck, bufflehead, American goldeneye, Barrow's goldeneye, fulvous and black-bellied tree ducks, hooded mergansers and American merganser.

A good way to learn what lives in such trees is by sauntering through the woods in winter. Squirrels prefer the holes made when a small limb is broken off and decays back into the trunk. Woodpeckers drill holes in dead limbs and excavate a nest cavity which is frequently used the next year by other kinds of birds. One day we spied some chunks of honey



Jim Sherman Photo.

Size 32 hook shown in comparison to a common bookmatch.

YOU TIE FLIES? TIE ONE ON THIS HOOK!

The size 32 hook shown here with a common book match will never catch a record trout, but it's interesting to examine if your eyes are good. About an eighth of an inch long, it is one of the smallest commercially made hooks in the world.

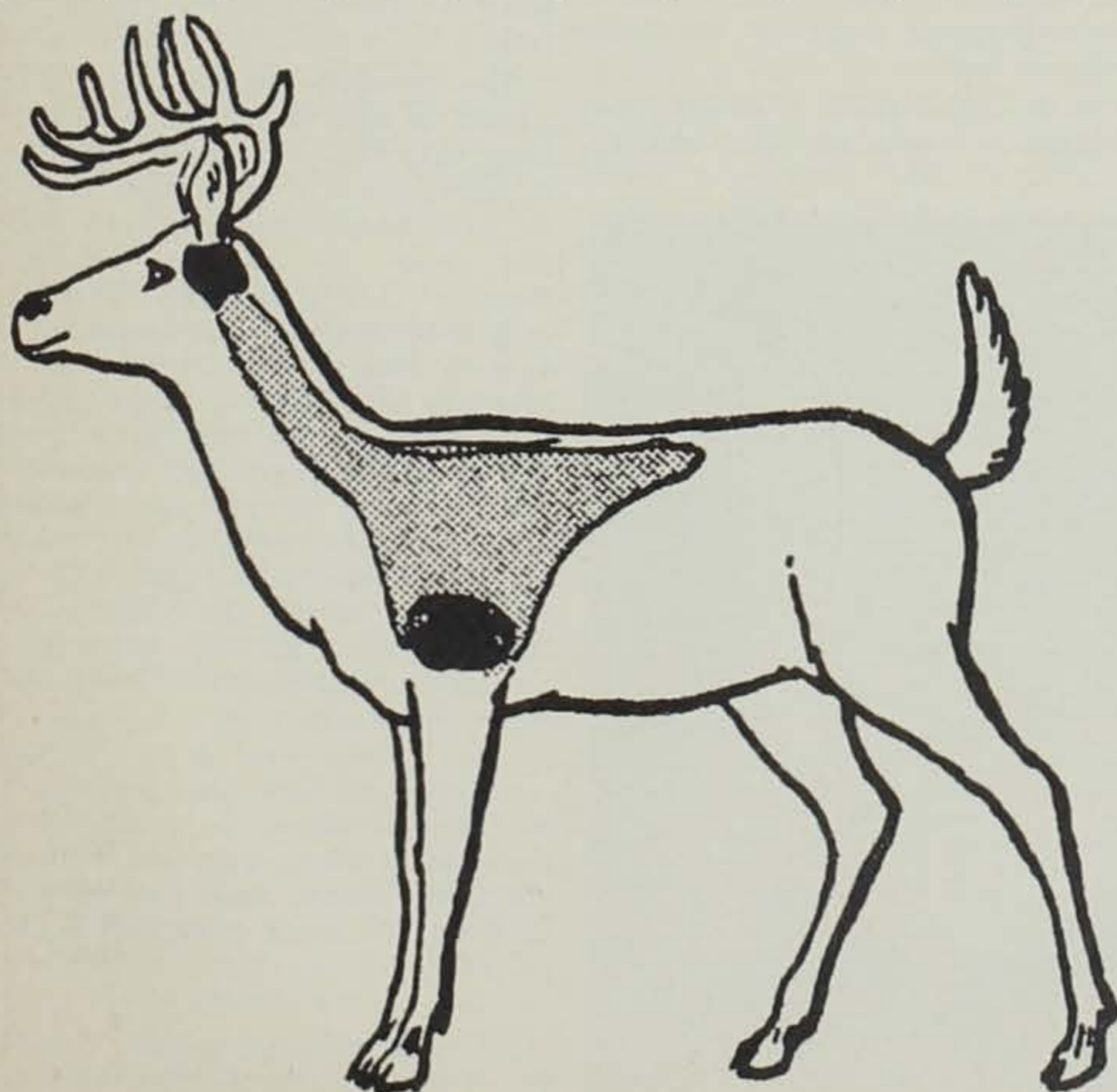
Two of these Norwegian hooks were recently given to Lacey Gee of the Wapsie Fly Company by a salesman who claimed there were only fifty of them in the United States.

The little hook is gold-plated and has no eye, but is flattened at the end of the shank. A tiny bit of fluff is glued to the hook and it is used with a horsehair leader. It is said that in Norway trout up to two pounds are caught on this fly. In some European countries such flies are fastened to a leader in "gangs," an unlawful practice in Iowa.

Hooks as small as No. 24 and No. 26 are not uncommon in this country, and are often used for golden trout in mountain lakes at high altitudes.

comb at the foot of a tall red oak in the woods back of Punkin Knob. Deer mice are fond of honey and sometimes rob a hive in midwinter. Sure enough, on the next balmy sunny day there were bees streaming in and out of a hole up on the trunk of that tree. Not far from there is a hollow linden where possums and a family of flying squirrels have their dens. Farther on, there is a big soft maple on the bank of a small creek. Leading to it, in the snow, we have seen raccoon tracks and, on the bark, their claw marks and a few hairs. That must be the varmint that scared our "missus" half to death when he stuck his head up out of the garbage barrel.

Learn to saunter. *Natura non facit saltum.*—Forest Preserve District, Cook County.



Place your shots within the shaded area for clean, quick kills.



Thousands of trappers have learned to successfully trap fox and coyotes at the Conservation Commission's trapping schools. Jim Sherman Photo.

Trapping . . .

(Continued from page 177)

commercial source, such as the National Scent Company, Chilhowee, Missouri. This scent has proven successful in Iowa, and is a good choice for the beginner. Coyote urine attracts both coyote and fox, while coyotes are not strongly attracted by the urine of fox.

Travel lanes of the coyote are most often on open ridges, meadows and open pasture lands. Tracks, digging, dens, animals that have been killed by the predators, or seeing the coyotes themselves will show if the area is used. In traveling, the coyotes commonly use trails of cattle or sheep, farm work roads, often traveling through dry washes and ditches. It is open areas such as these that scent posts are found or established by the trapper.

The fox spends much time hunting mice and other rodents in old meadows, pastures, open fields, along hedge fences and in weed patches. He also uses work roads, stock paths and dry washes through fields for his travel lanes. Tracks, diggings, droppings and other signs will show when the animals are using these areas.

Trapping foxes and coyotes in Iowa is often difficult because of the alternate freezing and thawing in winter. In spite of this it is possible to successfully trap both predators if a little extra effort is taken.

First of all, it is wise to have a supply of dry dirt on hand. The dirt hole bait set, the scent post set and the trail set may be used during freezing weather. Each set must be remade after thaws or freezing rains, for the traps will be frozen down. In addition to dry dirt, several other materials may be used successfully to cover the traps but are satisfactory only when the traps are cleaned, waxed and dyed. Some of these materials are chaff from straw, chick-

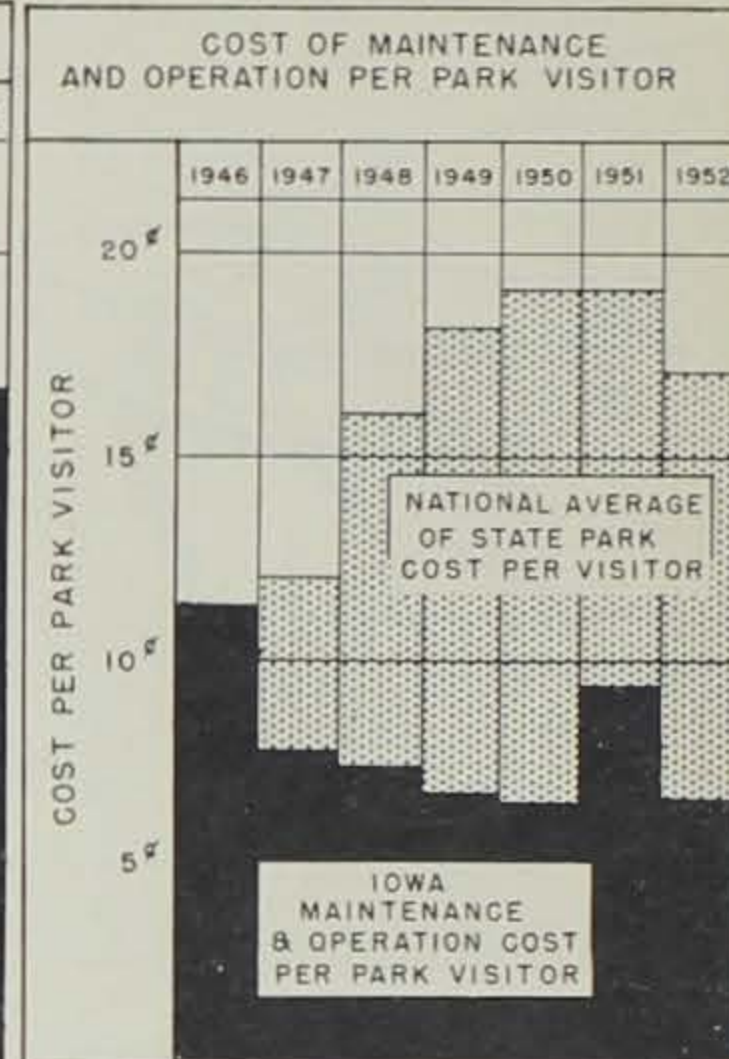
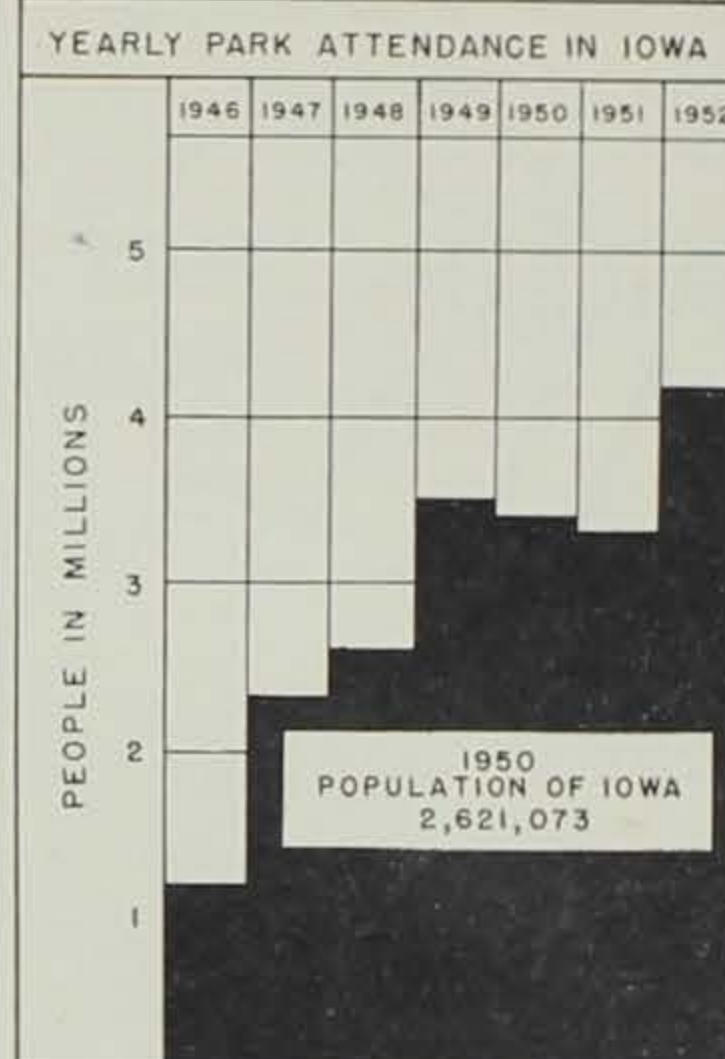
en manure, or chicken manure mixed with peat moss litter from the floors of chicken houses. These materials must be completely dry or they will cause the traps to be frozen in. The chicken manure and litter mixture have the advantage of covering up a foreign odor that might be on the traps. The odor of the chicken manure seems to appeal to both fox and coyote.

To the dry dirt that has been collected, one quart of calcium chloride per eighteen quarts of dirt may be added. This mixture should only be used with well treated traps, as it will cause untreated steel to rust badly. It may be used with waxed and dyed traps with good results as an effective anti-freeze.

One of the snow-covered sets that will take both fox and coyote is the scent post set. Once a natural scent post is located in the snow and a trap is set this method is quite effective. The trap is located in the tracks made by the animals. The trap bed is made



Trapping know-how plus a few simple tools guarantee the fox trappers success. Rex Pendry Photo.



Iowa's yearly state park attendance increased to over 4,000,000 people by the end of 1952 as shown on the above graph. Iowa now ranks eighth in the nation for total state park attendance, surpassed only by New York, Illinois, California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and Oregon.

Iowa falls far below the national average on money available for cost of maintenance and operation of state parks as graphically shown here. Figures were taken from a compilation of state park statistics by the United States Department of the Interior.

by removing enough snow so that the trap will be covered by about two inches of snow. Waxed paper is used under the trap and also over the pan and under the jaws. After the set has been made, human tracks should be brushed out for a distance of about two rods from the set.

Another effective snow-covered set is the blind trail set, placed in a trail used by coyote or fox. The trail should be approached from the side and the traps placed in the trail, covered with waxed paper and two inches of snow. Human tracks should be brushed out.

One of the most effective of all fox sets is the famous dirt-hole bait set. The set should be made near a gopher mound, a low bush or clump of grass where tracks and droppings indicate the presence of fox.

If the set is made near a gopher mound or bush, the fox will ap-

proach the bait over the trap, rather than coming to the bait from the rear and avoiding the set.

After locating the exact spot for the set, spread out a ground cloth and with a trowel dig a hole two inches wide and five inches deep at about a 45 degree angle at the base of the grass clump or gopher mound selected. Now dig a shallow hole directly in front of the bait hole large enough to take the trap and stake or trap and drag, whichever is to be used. Only one trap is needed. Secure the stake or drag in the center of the trap hole and set the trap so that the pan will be six inches from the bait hole. The jaws are placed so that the animal will step over the hinge of the jaws and not over the outside of the jaw which would be likely to throw his foot from the trap.

The ground under the trap should be firm and level and about flush with the surrounding ground. A pan cover of waxed paper should be used under the trap and jaws and over the pan in freezing weather. Using a sifter, cover the trap with one-half inch of fine dirt, smooth with a twig, and the set is ready to bait. Baits with the greatest appeal to the fox seem to be the flesh of housecat, muskrat, rabbit, mouse or chicken. The set may be further improved by making fox tracks in the dirt, and by scratching around the bait hole so the completed set will look as if an animal had buried a tasty tidbit in the hole.

One nail on each hind foot of the beaver has long teeth on one edge, forming a fine comb. It is said that the beaver uses this nail to free its fur from mud and burrs. —J.M.

The fox squirrel is the largest of all the squirrel in North America. —J. M.



Three-fourths of the "squinties'" life is spent in deepest hibernation. Then his heart slows from two hundred to only five beats per minute. Jim Sherman Photo.

Of Iowa Sleepers . . .

(Continued from page 177)

for emergencies. If the den temperature drops a deadly four or five degrees below freezing the sleeper is awakened, and his body temperature rises almost immediately. If he slept on, there would be death by freezing.

Across the river in a limestone crevice, hanging up in bed, is the only flying mammal—a bat. During the summer days he slept in the safety and darkness of this home crevice, fattening on flying insects at night. As the days shortened, the temperature in the crevice dropped to thirty-five or forty degrees and the bat became drowsy, finally falling asleep like his neighbors.

Except for a breath every five minutes and a rare movement, the little flier might be dead. But sometimes in his deathlike coma he awakens briefly, even drinking a little water if it is available. And, if his crevice grows too chilly, he may fly long distances in search of warmer quarters. Otherwise, he sleeps the winter through, awakening with the first spring hatches of flying insects.

Below, on the valley floor, these sleepers have been joined by the jumping mouse. In the late summer he had grown so fat that he could hardly hop on his kangaroo's hind legs, and finally gave up sleepily and hit the sack. Safe in his burrow below the frostline, he will sleep until spring with no danger from foxes, hawks or owls.

These are the true sleepers, the animals that seldom see the winter

world.

There are other animals that join them briefly, but they do not attain the near-death of the true hibernators. These, for want of a better word, are the snoozers.

Old Br'er Possum, a traditional southerner, also occurs widely in the north. He is a typical snoozer. He often wanders out of his warm burrow, hollow tree or nest during cold weather. This is a mistake, and he literally gets his tail frozen off. The naked tail of the possum does not have much protection against a January cold snap, and many animals are trapped or shot that have only stumps where their handy, prehensile tails once were.

His sleeping quarters may be almost anywhere, and are never invested with much labor. Winter



Beneath winter's feathery blanket of snow, hosts of living creatures sleep peacefully awaiting spring's warming suns.

or summer, the possum is a tired animal. He may winter in a hollow tree or in an old squirrel's nest. Or, he may just share a burrow with an animal too lazy to care, usually a skunk. The possum brings his own bedding, curling his tail on the ground, filling the loop with dead leaves and dragging it into the burrow. Although he sometimes gets out of bed during the winter, he will remain completely inactive and torpid for weeks during cold weather.

The same pattern is followed by the skunk, raccoon and badger—becoming very fat in the summer and fall and then wintering in a snug den. They do not hibernate, and will even eat if something turns up. Skunks, particularly males in late winter, may require temperatures of below zero to keep them at home.

Like his bigger cousin, the bear, the raccoon becomes drowsy in early winter, but does not hibernate. His respiration, metabolism and heartbeat are not lowered like a woodchuck's and as the winter wears on, the 'coons may even go on hunting trips for mice and other small animals.

The squat, rug-like badger also dozes in the winter, insulated with fat and warm fur. Like the woodchuck, he may wall his bedroom off from the main tunnel to avoid winter drafts, and like the bear, skunk and 'coon he makes short forays to the outer world, seeking food.

Many of the reasons and mechanisms of hibernation are still unknown to science. But an old farmer once put the whole thing in a nutshell during a discussion of woodchucks.

"What's the riddle," he snorted. "Why shouldn't a groundhog sleep all winter? He ain't got nothing else to do!"

Late in the pheasant season, when it seems there isn't a bird left in the cornfields, try hunting open plowed ground. Although it wouldn't seem that there'd be pheasants there, plowed fields are sometimes very productive.—J. M.

CRAZY GRAPES!



A Pottsville (Pennsylvania) newspaper recently ran a story on the evils of alcohol and the transgressions of game birds. The paper also ran a photograph of an inebriated cock pheasant lying in an apparent stupor beside a bunch of fermented grapes.

According to the story a man from Deer Lake, Pennsylvania, found the bird staggering about after a grape-gorging spree. The pheasant was nursed through a hangover and was eventually released in a game refuge.

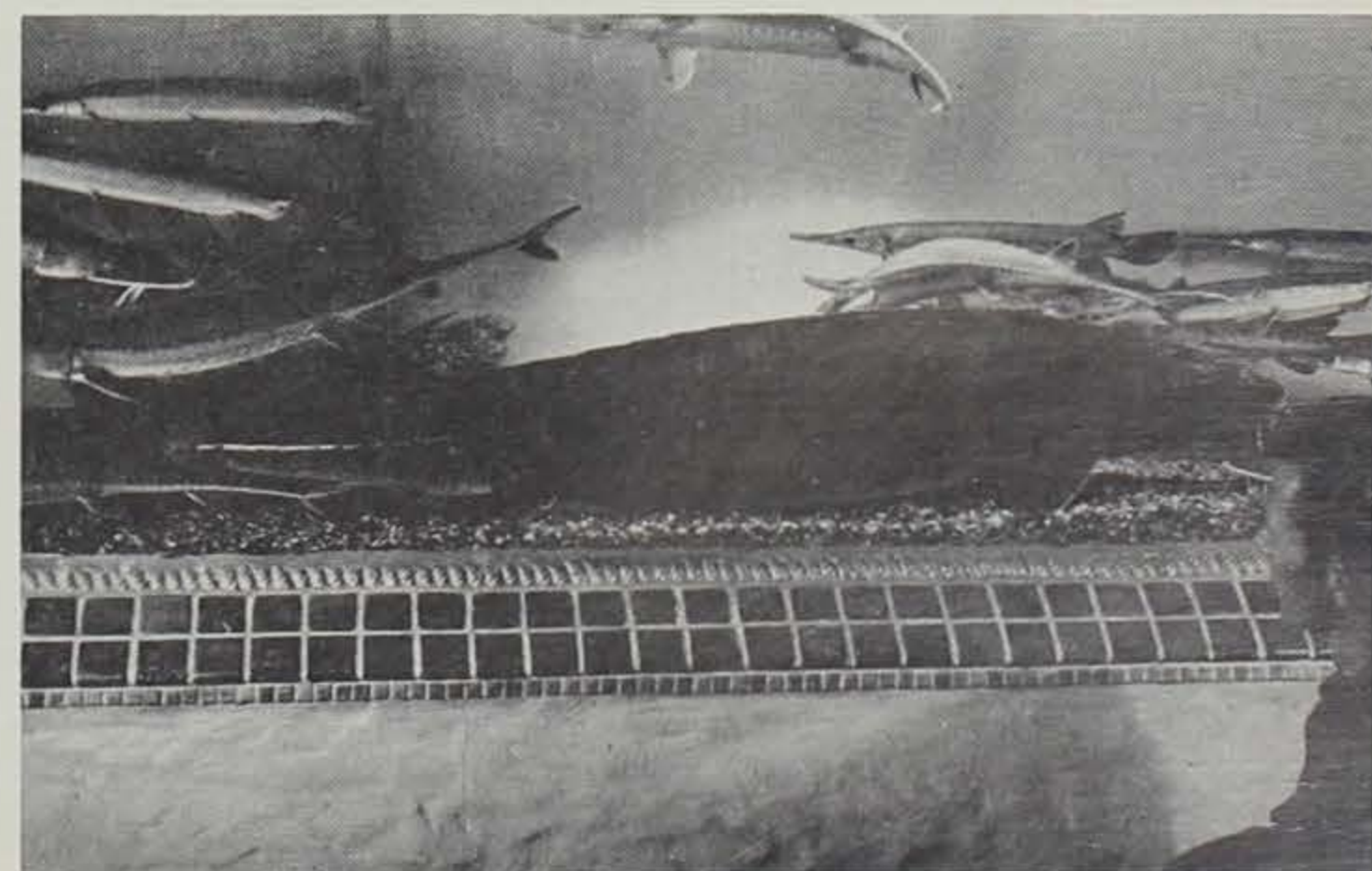
The newspaper explained that in the fall when frosts nip the grapes, warm sunshine during the day causes them to ferment. If a pheasant finds them, there's a good chance he'll get higher than a Gaw'gia pine.

MORAL: If you're a pheasant, eat grapes in the fall. You'll sleep it off in a safe game refuge while your teetotaling friends get shot during hunting season.—J. M.

OLD OSCAR

I didn't realize when I toured the Conservation exhibit at the state fair that Old Oscar, the giant sturgeon was on his death bed. One couldn't help but be aware, however, of the fact that he and his many wild friends were doing a great job in focusing the eyes of thousands of people on conservation here in Iowa.

Interest in this exhibit at the fair is almost unbelievable, which is a healthy sign. As long as people show such enthusiasm, they can be reached through a conservation education program. And when Mr. John Public becomes aware and concerned and in-the-know about conservation problems the conservation cause will progress at a much faster and efficient rate.—Palmer Erickson, Jr., *Jewell Record*.



Old Oscar, the famous rock sturgeon, died the last day of his 28th State Fair. He was 53 years old at the time of his death.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

The honey of the wild bee was almost as valuable to the settlers as ambrosia and nectar to the gods. The honey bee was not a native but came into the woods from domestic hives. Unlike the housefly and rat, however, which followed settlement, the bee, by reason of its swarming and migrating tendencies, was usually a hundred or more miles in advance of the frontier, and the product of its labors, found on all sides, was one of the most sought after treasures which the woods could yield.

Woods near prairie regions were especially well provided with honey because of the great variety of the flowers. Flagg said that Illinois had more honey than any other place in the world. Bee trees were as much hunted as big game, and more valuable. On sunny winter days when snow covered the ground, frozen fallen bees gave a certain clue; in warm weather the buzzing sound of the hive revealed the location.

A more scientific method of location called for a little box, glass if available, and a bit of honey or sweet. Bees gathered their cargo from it and their flight home was noted, then the box and a few captive bees were carried some distance to one side and as the bees were released another line was established. Somewhere near the intersection of the lines of flight was likely to be the bee tree, upon which the discoverer was entitled to place his mark, and by the law of the woods it became his property.

Another sport the woods present,
When brown October's frost has lent
Its chill to have the sylvan bee,
That stores its sweets in hollow tree.
Then forth he hies, when sunny day
Has lur'd the insect 'round to play,
Kindles a fire amid the grove
Where'er he sees a wanderer move,
Two stones within its furnace heats,
Then throws between the honeyed sweets,
Which, fuming upwards, odors spread
Through all the forest o'er his head.
Attracted by the fragrant air,
The vagrant bees assemble there,
Circling awhile in dubious flight,
Then darting swiftly out of sight,
He sees them as they eddying rise,
And marks the course each insect flies,
With hapless instinct sure they dart,
And all the fatal truth impart.
Pursuing on, with eye upturn'd,
The index tree is soon discern'd,
Where, basking in the noon-tide ray,
The hovering bees their hive betray.
He plies the ax, whose frequent blow
Soon lays their lofty refuge low.
As it descends, the branches rive,
And ope the treasures of the hive,
While left on high, the buzzing swarm
Flies 'round and 'round in wild alarm,
Nor thinks to trace the ruin down,
Till sweets and robber, all are flown.

—The Emigrant,
Henry Whiting, 1819.

It was not unusual to gather hundreds of pounds of honey from one hollow tree, and the sweetening properties of such a find opened new culinary possibilities to the housewife. The only other sweetening available was syrup and sugar from the sap of the sweet maple, but the preparation in quantity required equipment and labor which the settler at first could ill afford. The beeswax was as valuable as the honey. Often the bees were redomesticated and



In this south Iowa nest both pheasant and turkey eggs were laid. The pheasant eggs failed to hatch.

Transient Pheasants . . .

(Continued from page 179)

adequate moisture throughout the year.

From what we've said so far, don't get the idea that pheasants are entirely lacking in southern Iowa. It's just that they don't thrive over such broad areas as in northern Iowa. Some southern counties, such as Cass, Shelby, Adair and Union, may have high concentration of pheasants. Even in the poorest pheasant counties there may be small local pockets of many birds.

For years "fingers" of the great northern flocks have extended briefly into southern Iowa, only to retreat back into the north after a season or two. The opposite is

true of quail, whose coveys may move north for a time but are cut back sharply every few years, limiting the bulk of our quail populations to southern Iowa. But in the case of quail, the limiting factor in most of northern Iowa is severe winters and winter food problems. What is the limiting factor of pheasants in southern Iowa? Severe summers? Here's the most popular theory of all.

It is known that while adult pheasants can take hot weather, their eggs cannot. Biologists have found that one reason for the failure of pheasants in more southerly climes is high egg temperatures and the resultant death of the embryos.

"But," you can argue, "it gets

the settler housed a dozen or more hives or bee gums. With cattle range and bees both avail-

able it was truly "a land of milk and honey."—From *The Old Northwest*, Volume I.



The honey bee was not a native, but by reason of its swarming and migrating tendencies it was usually a hundred or more miles in advance of the frontier.

hot in northern Iowa, too." Sure it does, but air temperature can be high without fatal results to pheasant embryos. But high air temperature, combined with the high ground temperature of dry, sun-baked earth, does a deadly job. In Missouri some of the best pheasant range is in the basins of streams draining Iowa. It is thought that the heavy alluvial soils of these river valleys hold moisture and coolness longer than the uplands, and also furnish more top cover to protect nests and earth from the burning June sun.

In experiments a continuous exposure of pheasant eggs to temperatures of 103° F. have killed half the eggs before they could hatch. At higher temperature mortality increases, until at only a three-hour exposure at 120° F. all pheasant embryos will perish at any stage of incubation.

Quail eggs, on the other hand, are more resistant to high temperatures. One study showed that between 78° and 83° F. there was a drop in the hatchability of pheasant eggs but an increase in the hatchability of quail eggs. This may be why quail adults and their eggs thrive in southern Iowa, where pheasant adults can also thrive but their eggs cannot. Across the entire northern part of the United States an invisible barrier of climate marks the southern boundary of the pheasant flocks. Ringnecks are tough old birds everywhere, but their eggs can be sensitive to departures from normal temperatures in May or June. And no living thing can survive in an area where it cannot successfully reproduce.

The best theory so far is this one of climate—something about southern Iowa's weather that most pheasants just aren't equipped to take.

But there's hope, because in recent years some pheasants have been taking it. The "fingers" of pheasant populations extending down into southwestern Iowa are becoming well established. Pheasants have not only survived in that part of Iowa, but have flourished. It may be that of the thousands of birds stocked there over the years there has emerged a nucleus of pheasants of a certain genetic strain that can take this unknown climatic factor in its stride. If this is true, the Case of the Transient Pheasants has solved itself. Time will tell.—J. M.

The common baldpate is often called the "thief duck." Because it is a surface-feeding duck, it cannot dive for the wild celery roots that are its favorite food. Instead the baldpate keeps company with redheads and canvasbacks, carefully watching them while they dive for the celery roots in deep water. When the ducks break surface the baldpate is there waiting for them, and snatches the celery roots from the divers' bills.—J. M.