

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Number 9

## AN EVALUATION OF THE RED FOX

### FUNDAMENTALS OF FISHING

#### Part VI: The Fly Rod

By E. T. Rose and Jim Mayhew

The catching of fish with hook and line is as old as man himself. Archaeologists have found primitive fishing hooks made of bone, antlers, quartz, and flint from burial mounds of ancient human races now extinct. The use of nets or entrapments was well known to them but maybe the sturdy "dawn man" liked to sooth his ulcers and get away from it all, relaxing along some tranquil waters with his pole and line. Thus the fly rod with all its fancy trappings has evolved from the desire to have a little more fun with fishing.

The history of the fly rod and fly fishing can be traced back to about the beginning of the fifteenth century. In these years crude rods were hand made from lancewood, greenheart, willow and ash. In the middle of the seventeenth century the first split bamboo fly rods as known today were made. Of fly fishing Isaac Walton once said, "The culmination of the angler's art, is by common consent, the capture of fish with the artificial fly."

Fly rods of our modern day are made principally of three different materials, split bamboo, tubular steel, and fiberglass. Although much has been written and said concerning the quality of the different materials the final choice should be left to individual preference. You can pay as little or as much as you wish, up to a thousand dollars or more, but twenty dollars will buy a very good rod. It is often well to remember the old adage "the best is the cheapest". Don't start with cheap, junky tackle.

Basically there are two weights of fly rods manufactured today. The trout action rod, light in weight and with good power in the butt section, has a very "fast", lively tip action. This rod is used for medium length casts and for delicately dropping a fly to the surface of the water. Usually it is

(Continued on page 163)



Even sworn enemies of the red fox must admit his great beauty. Dr. Scott asks such enemies to also regard the fox as a "complete" animal—neither good nor bad, but simply a wild creature.

Adolph Murie Photo.

### SQUIRREL HUNTING IN A NUTSHELL

Squirrel hunting isn't a complicated game, but like every other game there are certain tricks that'll help you win. For instance:

1. Wear comfortable, neutral-colored clothing. Don't dress too heavily and wear light shoes or moccasins for quiet walking. Many hunters insist on old, soft hats to break up the outlines of their heads and faces.

2. Early in the squirrel season, take along some good mosquito dope. You can't still-hunt squirrels if you're slapping bugs.

3. A small pair of low-powered binoculars or field glasses are handy, even if you shoot a rifle with "scope sights". Trees and ground can be "glassed" with little movement on the part of the hunter.

4. Squirrel hunting is of two types: still-hunting and walking. In still-hunting, pick out a comfortable place under a tree where

you can see a number of large trees distinctly. Sit with the sun at your back. Scan the tree limbs and trunks constantly with little head movement, paying close attention to crotches and watching for a telltale fluff of orange fur. Allow about 20 minutes for each "sit". If you haven't seen a squirrel in that time, move slowly on. When you kill a squirrel don't pick him up immediately. Wait awhile. The shot and the falling squirrel may stir up other bushytails in the area. If you've been sitting in a place for several minutes and other hunters walk through, stay put. Squirrels may be distracted by them, watch them leave, and come out of hiding.

5. In walk-hunting, travel very slowly and stop frequently. Inspect every possible tree limb and crotch for "frozen" squirrels. Some walk-hunters travel in pairs, preventing

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### PART I

(This is the first of two articles by Dr. Scott, one of the country's outstanding fox authorities. Much of his early work on foxes was in Iowa.—Editor)

By Dr. Thomas G. Scott

Illinois Natural History Survey

Human interest in the red fox tends to take form in several points of view. The sportsman who loves the chase sees this fox as a magnificent quarry for the hounds; the small game hunter responds with concern that the fox is making inroads on his game bag; and the poultry raiser fears the fox as an enemy of his flock. And so it goes; each of the several roles which this fox plays attracts its own particular brand of attention.

There is a need for bringing the various interests together for evaluation as a whole. Such an approach may lead to an understanding of the red fox as a complete animal, and not, in a sense, as a dismembered creature.

Red fox populations have held up remarkably well in recent times. As a matter of fact, red foxes have shown unusual capabilities in the severe competition for survival in our civilization. Recent numbers of red foxes and the numbers present before the arrival of white settlers cannot be compared as a means of emphasizing this point, because detailed information on the fox populations of early times is not available. Our understanding of favorable environment for red foxes, however, indicates that the opening up of forest lands and the reduction or elimination of wolves and coyotes favored these foxes.

Some conception of the possible levels of supply of red foxes in recent times may be had from published records. On 576 square miles of average range (Boone County, Iowa), a population of one red fox to 1.6 square miles was estimated for late spring in 1938. In Boone County two fox families containing 4 adults and 11 cubs are known to have lived within a home range of approximately 3 square miles. Sheldon reported an extreme case in which five litters of red fox

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## 1955 WATERFOWL SEASON

Iowa's 1955 waterfowl season  
has been set by the State Conserva-  
tion Commission, and will extend  
from October 8 to December 16,  
both dates inclusive.

Shooting on opening day for the  
new waterfowl season will com-  
mence at one-half hour before  
sunrise, rather than at noon as it  
has for several years. Daily shoot-  
ing hours will be from one-half  
hour before sunrise to one-half  
hour before sunset.

The bag limit for ducks is 4,  
with a possession limit of 8. One  
wood duck is allowed in a bag or  
possession limit, and one hooded  
merganser is allowed in a bag or  
possession limit. The daily shoot-  
ing time was set for the Mississippi  
Flyway to end at one-half hour  
before sunset, rather than at sun-  
set, in an effort to protect wood  
ducks, which are particularly vul-  
nerable at sunset.

The bag limit for geese is 5,  
with a possession limit of 5. No  
more than 2 Canada geese or their  
subspecies, or 2 white-fronted

geese, may be included in any  
single bag or possession limit. No  
more than 1 Canada goose and 1  
white-front may be held in any  
bag or possession limit. The bag  
and possession limit of geese may  
be comprised entirely of snow  
geese, blue geese, or any combina-  
tion thereof.

The bag and possession limits  
of coot is 10.

The season for jacksnipe or  
Wilson's snipe will be 15 days, ex-  
tending from October 8 to October  
22nd, both dates inclusive, with a  
bag of 8 and a possession limit of  
8. Daily shooting hours for snipe  
are the same as for other water-  
fowl.

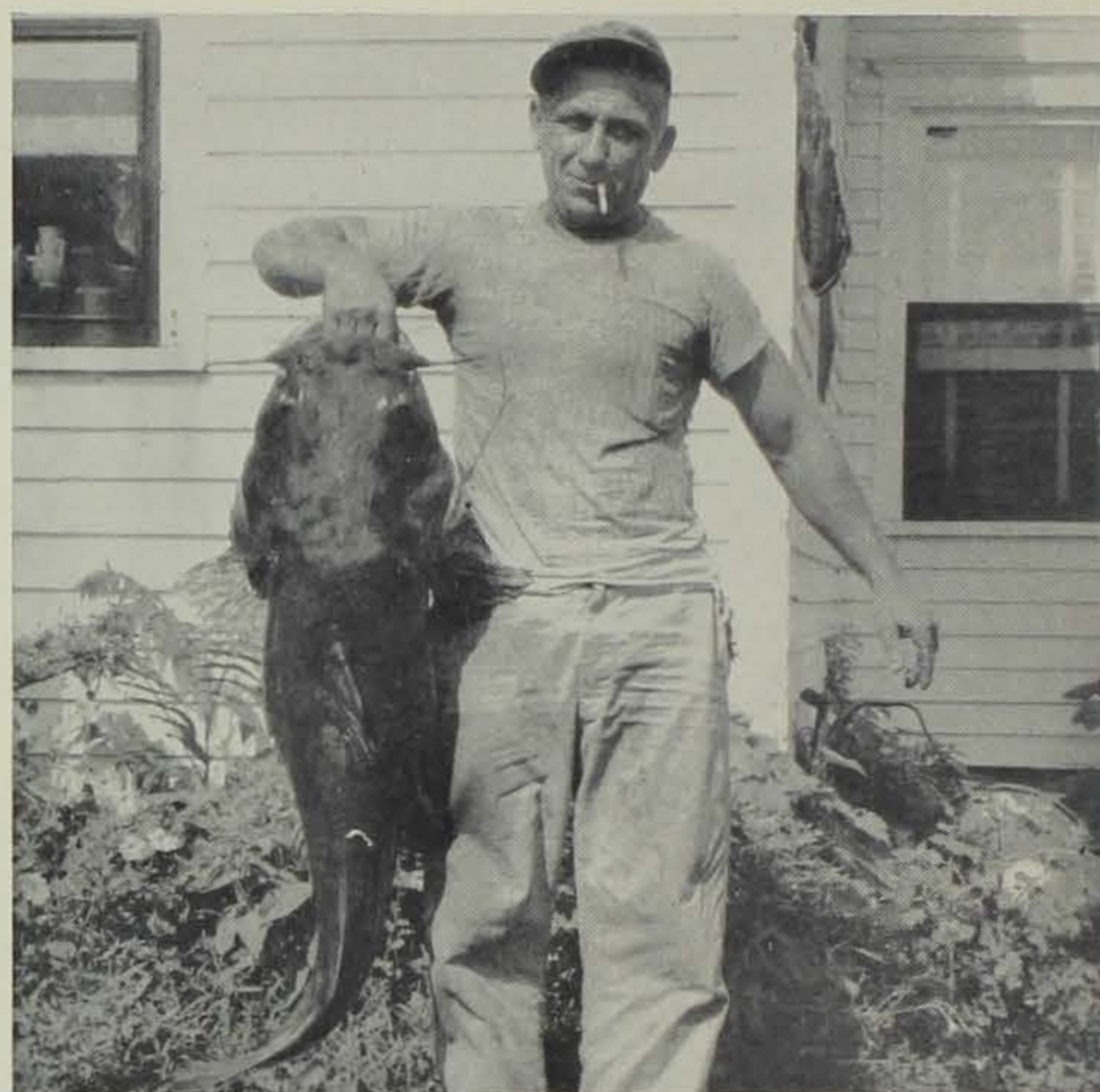
Officials of the U.S. Fish and  
Wildlife Service and of Ducks Un-  
limited in Canada report that  
bumper crops of ducks have been  
reared this year in Canada's prairie  
provinces. Alberta, Manitoba and  
Saskatchewan are said to have had  
excellent duck hatches, with the  
second hatch being even better  
than the first in most areas.

Tom Berkley, Game Manager for  
the Conservation Commission, re-  
cently returned from a special as-  
signment in Saskatchewan where  
he assisted federal agents in band-  
ing and marking ducks.

"The water conditions up there  
are excellent", Berkley reports.  
"And there are plenty of young  
ducks. Some Canadian and Ameri-  
can duck men told me that they  
could never remember seeing a  
better duck hatch in the Canadian  
pothole country."

To most Iowa duck hunters,  
however, reports of high northern  
duck production were tempered  
with the knowledge that Iowa  
rivers and ponds are shrinking  
rapidly and that heavy rains will  
be needed to attract the northern  
flocks.

Turtles always lay their eggs on  
dry land. Even the species that  
live in the open oceans come to  
the beaches to deposit the eggs  
high and dry from the water.—  
H.H.



Some Iowa anglers say they measure flathead catfish between the eyes, scoring total length measurement. By this rule, Joe Baze's 45-pound catfish was only about a "7-inch".

## LUCAS COUNTY'S BIG CATS

Melvin Johnston  
State Conservation Officer

Joe Baze and his son Fred have  
probably done more fishing for big  
catfish than any other anglers in  
the Chariton area. They've made  
some nice catches, but they've lost  
a few good fish, too.

Early in the morning on July  
31st, Joe and Fred began fishing  
about 4:30 a.m. in Ellis Lake, an  
old reservoir east of Chariton in  
Lucas County. After baiting their  
hooks with small sunfish they  
settled down on the lakeshore to  
wait for a strike from one of the  
big fish they knew was in the  
30-acre lake.

It was not until 6:05 that the  
big fish hit. As soon as Joe realized  
he had hooked a lunker, he and  
Fred jumped into their boat that  
was pulled up nearby. From ex-  
perience, they have learned that  
chances of landing a big flathead  
are much better from a boat than  
trying to bring him up through  
the weeds and moss near the lake-  
shore. After playing the huge  
flathead back and forth across the  
small lake several times, Joe man-  
aged to bring him up to the boat  
where Fred gaffed him.

They had fought the big catfish  
for 30 minutes, and it weighed 45  
pounds and measured 46½ inches.

In the past 8 years 6 of these  
big catfish have been taken from  
Ellis Lake, all weighing 40 pounds  
or more. One of the biggest was  
a 58-pounder caught in 1949 by  
Earl Threlkeld of Chariton, who  
landed the fish on an 18-pound test  
line. Later that same year Emory  
Callison, also of Chariton, took a  
56-pounder.

The heartbreaker was a huge  
flathead hooked by Bob Dale of  
Chariton one evening in 1951. Fish-  
ing from a boat, Dale hooked the  
fish on a fly rod. He and his fishing  
partner followed the fish all over  
the lake through that night and  
most of the next day while friends  
brought out coffee and sandwiches  
and cheered from the banks, only  
to see the catfish finally break  
loose. The tired fishermen were  
thrilled by the experience and not  
too unhappy over losing their  
trophy.

(Maybe it was the fisherman  
that got away, and not the fish.—  
Ed.)

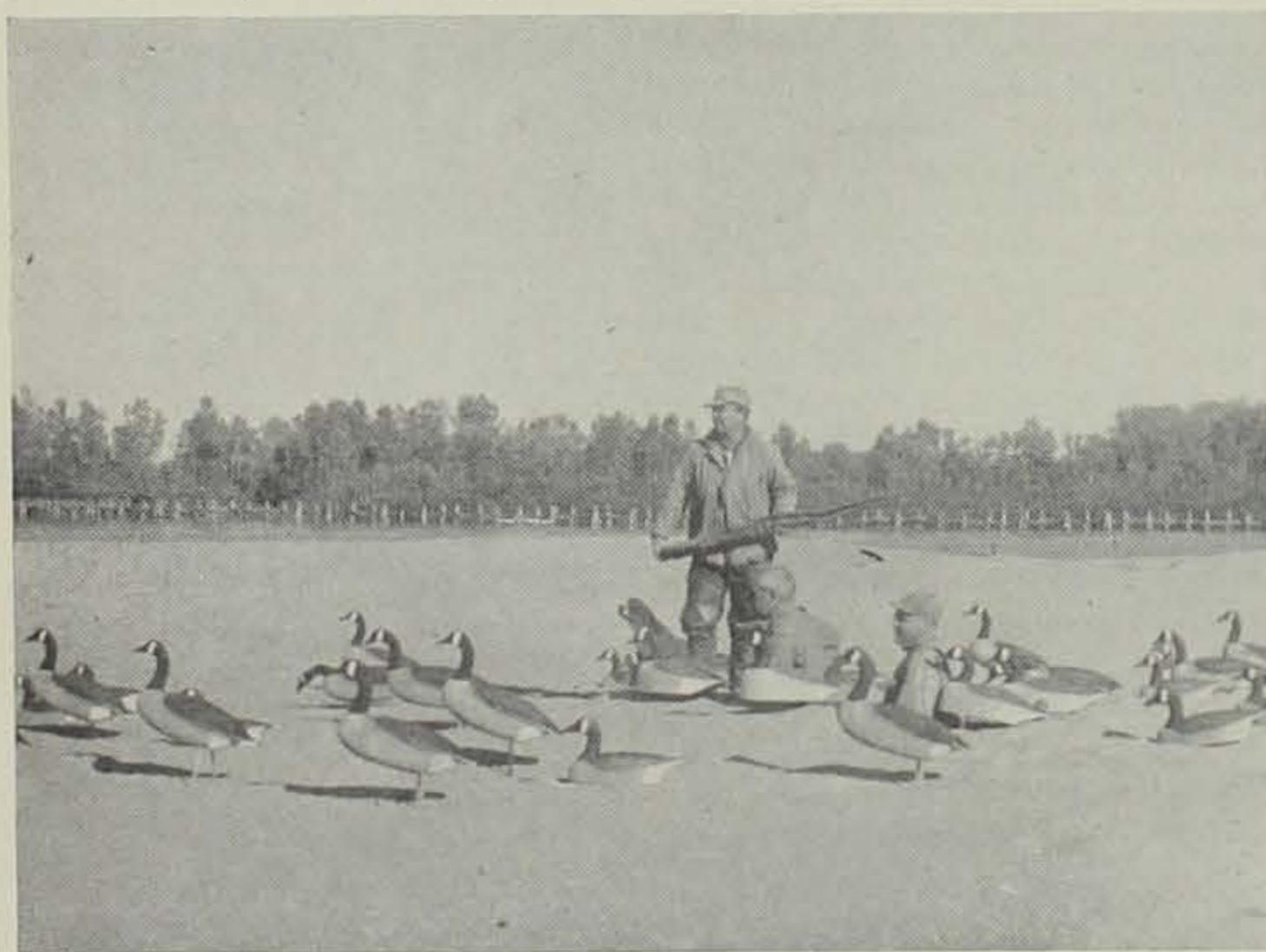
Snakes live on a wide variety of  
localities; some on land, some in  
trees, others in the water, while  
others live in the open oceans.—  
H.H.

### TO THE READERS:

Do any of you have spare  
copies of the Iowa 25-Year  
Conservation Plan, a thin,  
light-green book published  
by the Commission in 1933?

The Commission's supply  
is exhausted, and we have  
only our two library copies.  
Several other conservation  
departments have written us,  
asking for copies of the Plan  
to aid them in setting up  
similar programs in their  
states. We have had to turn  
down these requests because  
we simply didn't have the  
books.

If you have any copies of  
the Iowa 25-Year-Plan, and  
care to part with them, we'd  
be extremely happy to have  
them.



Missouri River hunters are ready for the geese, and most of them have been "goosered" since the setting of the waterfowl season. Sober, responsible men have become indifferent to families and jobs, and lie awake at night listening for the sounds of geese.



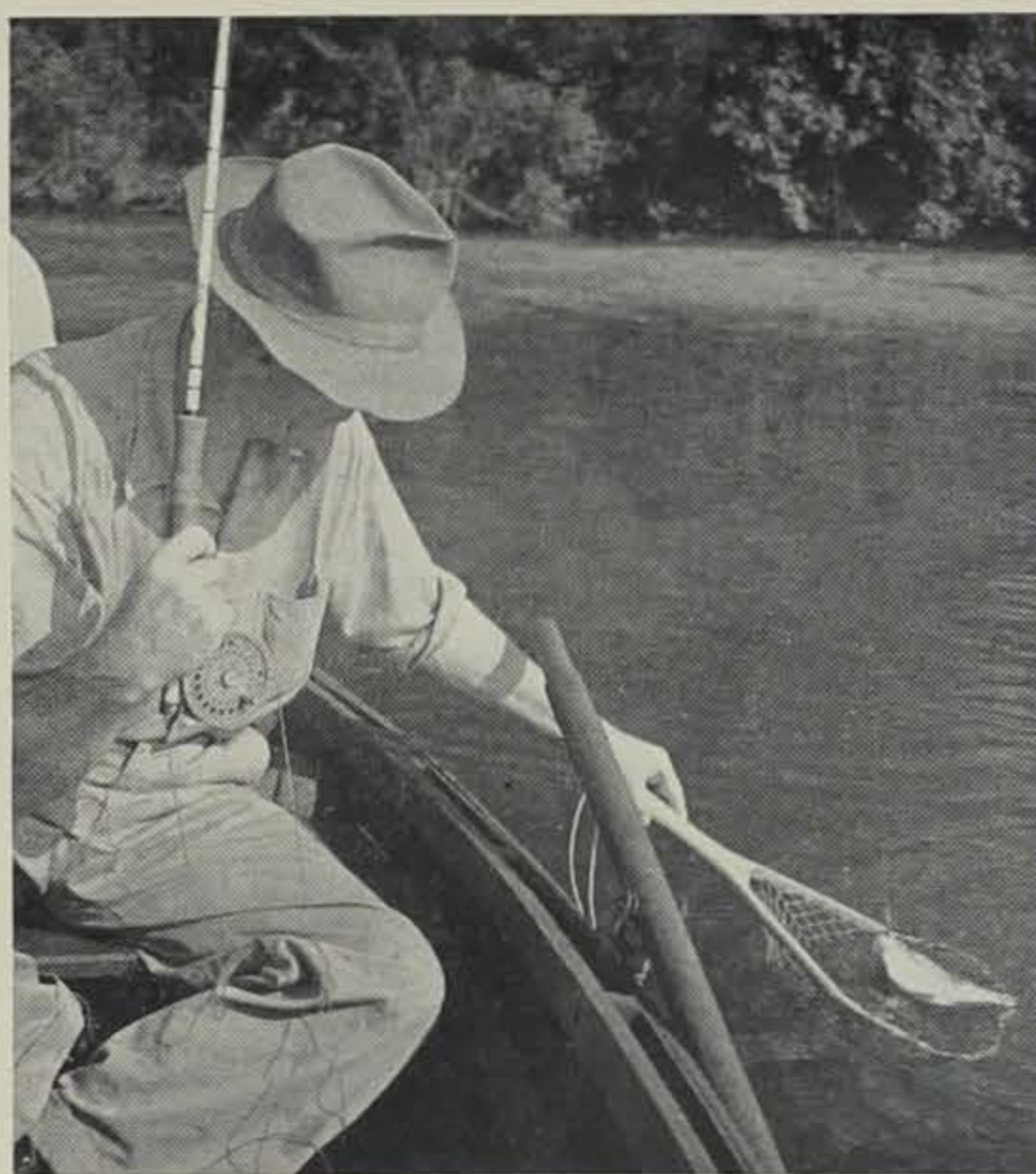
## Fishing Fundamentals . . .

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less than eight feet in length and weighs less than four ounces.

The bass action rod is of medium weight with a strong, powerful butt section needed when casting large bass "bugs". This rod is seldom under eight feet in length and weighs up to seven ounces. For all-around fishing it is recommended that the heavier rod be selected. A small fly can be cast well with a bass action rod, but large bass flies or streamers are difficult to cast with the lighter rod. These heavier outfits are also much more effective in "playing" larger fish.

The selection of a fly line is of prime importance to the fly fisherman. The line must be matched in weight with the rod to make satisfactory casts. All fly lines are heavier than casting or spinning lines because in fly fishing it is the weight of the line and not the lure that provides the inertia for the cast. The manufacturers of good fly rods always recommend the weight of line to be used with their rods, and these recommendations should usually be followed. Fly lines are made in three types: level, double taper, and "torpedo head" or bug taper. (See illustration). Although the tapered lines are easier to cast, they are more expensive, and level lines are completely satisfactory for the beginner. A six foot tapered nylon leader is attached to the line and the fly tied to the fine point by a blood or jam knot. Diagrams of these knots are found on many leader packages.

Fly reels are used primarily to store the line while fishing and to give correct balance to the rod. The single action and automatic



The greatest use of the Iowa fly rod is for panfish. Perch, bluegills, crappies are found in most parts of the state and give splendid action on a "buggywhip". The fly rod is the most effective way to catch panfish, is extremely simple, and provides the most fun.

reels are the two types available on the market today. Again the choice should be left to the individual. Both reels have distinct advantages and disadvantages; however, for the beginning fly fisherman the inexpensive single action reel will undoubtedly prove more satisfactory. These reels are very simple to operate and with a reasonable amount of care will last a lifetime.

In fly fishing the reel is not used in making the cast or retrieve as are the casting or spinning reels. About ten or twelve feet of line is stripped by hand from the reel through the rod guides and by a series of "false casts" more line is fed by hand stripping from the reel till your fly reaches the likely fish-

ing spots. When the proper amount of line is finally fed out by false casting a final forceful forecast is made and the line speeds from the coils released from the hand, shooting out to the area you wish to fish. It's extremely simple. Your instructor (tackle dealer or friend) can give you the idea in a few minutes. The development of the finer points is simply up to you.

In general, a good fly fishing "rig" will feel well balanced in your hand, and cast easily without causing undue fatigue. When purchasing, the novice will fare much better if he relies on the knowledge and recommendations of a reliable tackle dealer for his rod, reel, line, leaders, and flies. Most of these folks are expert fly fishermen and are more than willing to advise the beginner on his needs and still remain within his price ranges. Also, they have an eye for future business and will want you to be satisfied. We know many of them who will not only sell you the tackle, but will be happy to teach you the principles of using it. After these are learned, practice constantly. You don't need a lake for this—a backyard casting range has made many experts.

Among the great fishing clan, which may disagree on basic angling concepts, few will argue that the fly rod doesn't provide the most enjoyable means of fishing. With the fly rod, panfish such as crappies and bluegills put up a vigorous scrap that is amazing to those who formerly caught them with the long cane pole or casting rod.

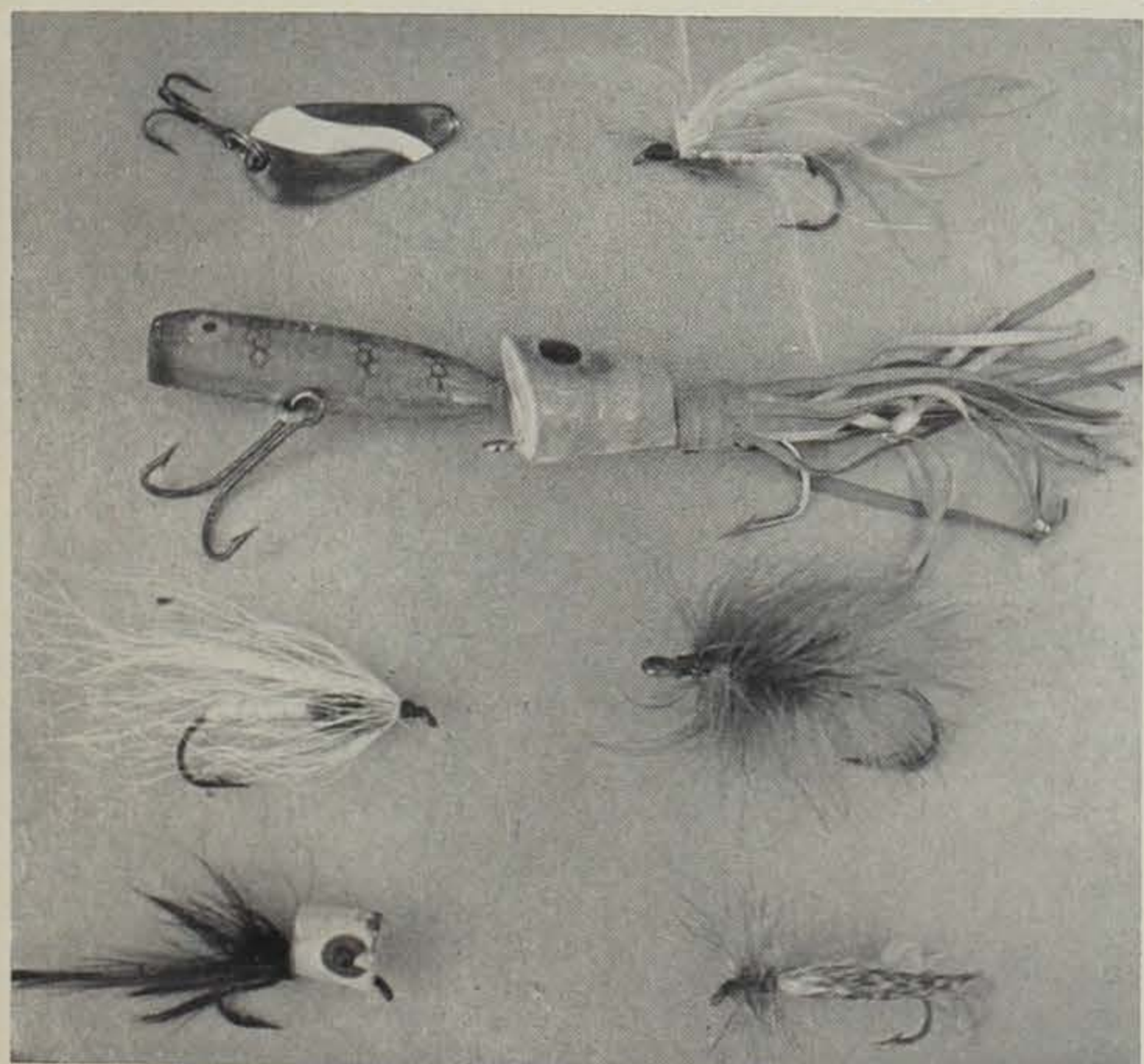
Except for trout, the ultimate in fly fishing in Iowa is in catching the panfish such as crappie and bluegill. This may start an argument, but an artificial fly, properly used, will consistently catch many more of these fish per unit effort than will natural baits. Since these fish feed primarily on small aquatic insects and min-

nnows, they are easily caught on the artificial flies selected to represent the real thing. Therefore it is important to note that in retrieving the fly must be activated by rod-tip action or by short jerks on the line to simulate the action of live food. In other words—give the fish credit by having some brains.

Early in the spring and summer, panfish are caught most readily on wet flies and streamers that presumably imitate larval insects and minnows. After the first hatch of aquatic insects in the summer, dry flies and poppers are usually more effective. The best areas are quiet, weedy bays and inlets of the natural or artificial lakes. These regions are easily fished from boats (quiet—no dropping of tin tackle boxes or anchors banging around) or by wading from shore with boots or wading pants. Early morning or evening is the best time of day, and since we hate to get up in the morning, we prefer the dusk period. Watch the quiet water regions around the weed beds for swirls of feeding fish and cast your fly as close to these spots as possible. You'll never forget the thrill of your first bluegill taken on a dry fly or popper. One authority has said that the smallmouth bass was "inch for inch and pound for pound, the gamest fish that swims." Maybe he never tied into a big bluegill on his fly rod. They'll out-fight any trout or smallmouth of equal size or we just don't know our fishing.

One of the distinct advantages of the fly rod is its versatility. In late fall and spring it is very effective on the bigger game fish such as the walleye, northern pike, and bass. During these cool water periods the shallow areas can be fished effectively for them with the fly rod using larger flies of the streamer type. Still-fishing and drift-fishing with natural baits are also possible and often done with

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Some typical fly rod lures. From upper left, top row: fly rod spoon for bass and pike; maribou streamer fly for crappies and walleyes. Second row: surface plug for bass and large bass popper. Third row: bucktail fly for walleyes and Palmer-tied dry fly for bass. Bottom row: large bluegill popper for bluegills and bass, and dry grasshopper fly for large trout.



# 15 Years of Iowa Trapping

In spite of several declines in fur prices and trapping effort, the total Iowa fur revenue for the past 16 years nearly reached the 20 million dollar mark, totalling \$19,107,334.83. This represents a considerable increase over previous years, for during the 16-year period from 1930-46 total fur revenue was \$15,448,698.17. Part of this recent increase may be due to the beaver seasons that began in 1943.

Mink and muskrat continue to lead the list; the old stand-bys of the Iowa trapper and the most consistently valuable of our furs.

The 1955-56 trapping seasons had not been set at this writing, but are now available from all state newspapers and from the new hunting laws.

The following records are from annual fur dealers' reports; required of all persons and companies purchasing raw furs from Iowa trappers.



Jim Sherman Photo.  
Iowa beaver grow big, and since 1943 their pelts have brought a total of \$215,000.

## Number and Value of Furs Taken in Iowa 1939-54

### RACCOON

| Date         | Number Taken   | Average Value  | Total Value           |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1939-40      | 16,465         | \$ 2.45        | \$ 40,339.25          |
| 1940-41      | 19,756         | 3.71           | 73,294.76             |
| 1941-42      | 22,512         | 4.90           | 110,308.80            |
| 1942-43      | 20,128         | 3.65           | 73,467.20             |
| 1943-44      | 38,303         | 7.25           | 277,696.75            |
| 1944-45      | 36,803         | 2.75           | 101,208.25            |
| 1945-46      | 41,084         | 2.89           | 118,732.76            |
| 1946-47      | 61,880         | 1.97           | 121,903.60            |
| 1947-48      | 55,601         | 2.61           | 145,118.61            |
| 1948-49      | 61,419         | 2.23           | 136,964.37            |
| 1949-50      | 58,527         | 1.95           | 114,127.65            |
| 1950-51      | 56,075         | 2.95           | 165,421.25            |
| 1951-52      | 67,211         | 2.67           | 179,453.37            |
| 1952-53      | 62,356         | 1.72           | 107,252.32            |
| 1953-54      | 79,939         | 1.57           | 125,504.23            |
| 1954-55      | 49,592         | 1.71           | 84,802.32             |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>747,651</b> | <b>\$ 2.94</b> | <b>\$1,975,595.49</b> |



Jim Sherman Photo.  
For every boy who's seen this sight, there's been a boy sent home from school. But for their bravery, Iowa's young trappers have netted \$810,000 from skunk pelts since 1939.

### OPPOSUM

| Date         | Number Taken   | Average Value | Total Value          |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1939-40      | 39,050         | \$ .25        | \$ 9,762.50          |
| 1940-41      | 30,131         | .28           | 8,436.68             |
| 1941-42      | 33,839         | .27           | 9,136.53             |
| 1942-43      | 29,691         | .42           | 12,470.22            |
| 1943-44      | 35,579         | .65           | 23,126.35            |
| 1944-45      | 27,513         | .50           | 13,756.50            |
| 1945-46      | 22,501         | .65           | 14,625.65            |
| 1946-47      | 22,501         | .65           | 14,625.65            |
| 1947-48      | 15,846         | .42           | 6,655.32             |
| 1948-49      | 7,563          | .37           | 2,793.31             |
| 1949-50      | 6,681          | .35           | 2,238.35             |
| 1950-51      | 4,090          | .36           | 1,472.40             |
| 1951-52      | 2,600          | .27           | 702.00               |
| 1952-53      | 2,632          | .27           | 710.64               |
| 1953-54      | 3,203          | .21           | 672.63               |
| 1954-55      | 1,758          | .19           | 334.02               |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>285,178</b> | <b>\$ .38</b> | <b>\$ 121,518.75</b> |

### MUSKRAT

| Date         | Number Taken     | Average Value  | Total Value           |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1939-40*     | 46,003           | \$ 1.05        | \$ 48,303.15          |
| 1940-41      | 350,700          | 1.21           | 424,347.00            |
| 1941-42      | 262,007          | 1.32           | 345,849.24            |
| 1942-43      | 262,562          | 1.47           | 385,966.14            |
| 1943-44      | 722,360          | 2.25           | 1,625,310.00          |
| 1944-45      | 457,573          | 2.03           | 928,873.19            |
| 1945-46**    | 418,417          | 2.18           | 912,149.06            |
| 1946-47      | 387,614          | 1.71           | 662,819.94            |
| 1947-48      | 17,059           | 2.40           | 40,941.60             |
| 1948-49      | 164,736          | 1.62           | 266,872.32            |
| 1949-50      | 171,820          | 1.38           | 237,111.60            |
| 1950-51      | 117,051          | 1.81           | 211,862.31            |
| 1951-52      | 263,563          | 1.37           | 361,081.31            |
| 1952-53      | 393,440          | 1.13           | 444,587.20            |
| 1953-54      | 335,451          | .69            | 231,461.19            |
| 1954-55      | 143,886          | .93            | 133,813.98            |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>4,514,242</b> | <b>\$ 1.53</b> | <b>\$7,261,349.23</b> |

\* Open season only on Mississippi River.  
\*\* 30 Day season only.

### MINK

| Date         | Number Taken   | Average Value  | Total Value           |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1939-40*     | 2,877          | \$ 6.25        | \$ 17,981.25          |
| 1940-41      | 38,817         | 7.30           | 283,364.10            |
| 1941-42      | 33,650         | 6.75           | 227,137.50            |
| 1942-43      | 23,297         | 6.15           | 143,276.55            |
| 1943-44      | 52,760         | 12.50          | 659,500.00            |
| 1944-45      | 47,040         | 16.50          | 776,160.00            |
| 1945-46**    | 48,145         | 28.16          | 1,355,763.00          |
| 1946-47      | 60,397         | 18.14          | 1,095,601.58          |
| 1947-48      | 27,638         | 29.73          | 821,677.74            |
| 1948-49      | 16,571         | 18.30          | 303,249.30            |
| 1949-50      | 17,973         | 12.15          | 218,371.95            |
| 1950-51      | 17,007         | 23.50          | 399,664.50            |
| 1951-52      | 23,257         | 17.48          | 406,532.36            |
| 1952-53      | 27,222         | 16.40          | 446,440.80            |
| 1953-54      | 30,459         | 13.49          | 380,891.91            |
| 1954-55      | 20,051         | 17.59          | 352,697.09            |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>487,161</b> | <b>\$15.65</b> | <b>\$7,888,309.63</b> |

\* Open season only on Mississippi River.  
\*\* 30 Day season only.

### SKUNKS

| Date         | Number Taken   | Average Value  | Total Value          |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1939-40      | 91,838         | \$ 1.35        | \$ 123,981.30        |
| 1940-41      | 74,251         | 1.70           | 126,226.70           |
| 1941-42      | 68,840         | 1.80           | 123,912.00           |
| 1942-43      | 32,437         | 1.60           | 51,899.20            |
| 1943-44      | 53,199         | 3.15           | 167,576.85           |
| 1944-45      | 35,737         | 2.13           | 76,119.81            |
| 1945-46      | 30,755         | 2.24           | 68,891.20            |
| 1946-47      | 32,458         | 1.17           | 37,475.86            |
| 1947-48      | 11,903         | .87            | 10,355.61            |
| 1948-49      | 9,712          | .72            | 6,992.64             |
| 1949-50      | 6,136          | .60            | 3,681.60             |
| 1950-51      | 4,270          | .77            | 3,287.90             |
| 1951-52      | 2,558          | 1.03           | 2,634.74             |
| 1952-53      | 2,730          | .86            | 2,347.80             |
| 1953-54      | 4,511          | .71            | 3,202.81             |
| 1954-55      | 2,278          | .76            | 1,731.28             |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>463,613</b> | <b>\$ 1.34</b> | <b>\$ 810,317.30</b> |



## CIVET

| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value   |
|---------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1939-40 | 56,708       | \$.30         | \$ 17,012.40  |
| 1940-41 | 63,256       | .60           | 37,953.60     |
| 1941-42 | 60,944       | .83           | 50,583.52     |
| 1942-43 | 38,508       | .87           | 33,501.96     |
| 1943-44 | 60,238       | 1.50          | 90,357.00     |
| 1944-45 | 41,235       | 1.20          | 49,482.00     |
| 1945-46 | 44,827       | 1.77          | 79,343.79     |
| 1946-47 | 40,661       | .78           | 31,715.58     |
| 1947-48 | 13,944       | .54           | 7,529.76      |
| 1948-49 | 7,815        | .54           | 4,220.10      |
| 1949-50 | 4,532        | .48           | 2,175.36      |
| 1950-51 | 3,321        | .55           | 1,826.55      |
| 1951-52 | 1,872        | .73           | 1,366.56      |
| 1952-53 | 2,143        | .51           | 1,092.93      |
| 1953-54 | 1,892        | .41           | 775.72        |
| 1954-55 | 1,122        | .57           | 639.54        |
| TOTAL   | 443,018      | \$.71         | \$ 409,576.37 |

## RED FOX

| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value   |
|---------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1939-40 | 5,706        | \$ 2.50       | \$ 14,265.00  |
| 1940-41 | 6,505        | 2.70          | 17,563.50     |
| 1941-42 | 6,137        | 4.50          | 27,616.50     |
| 1942-43 | 6,560        | 5.40          | 35,424.00     |
| 1943-44 | 8,695        | 10.00         | 86,950.00     |
| 1944-45 | 9,785        | 4.75          | 46,478.75     |
| 1945-46 | 11,554       | 3.95          | 45,638.30     |
| 1946-47 | 12,259       | 2.03          | 24,885.77     |
| 1947-48 | 8,963        | 1.26          | 11,293.38     |
| 1948-49 | 6,015        | .88           | 5,293.20      |
| 1949-50 | 4,826        | .60           | 2,895.60      |
| 1950-51 | 5,618        | .75           | 4,213.50      |
| 1951-52 | 3,703        | .39           | 1,444.17      |
| 1952-53 | 3,313        | .42           | 1,391.46      |
| 1953-54 | 2,573        | .36           | 926.28        |
| 1954-55 | 1,679        | .36           | 604.44        |
| TOTAL   | 103,891      | \$.255        | \$ 326,883.85 |

## GRAY FOX

| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value  |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1939-40 | 1,413        | \$ 1.85       | \$ 2,614.05  |
| 1940-41 | 1,730        | 2.25          | 3,892.50     |
| 1941-42 | 1,967        | 2.50          | 4,917.50     |
| 1942-43 | 1,823        | 1.75          | 3,190.25     |
| 1943-44 | 2,516        | 3.00          | 7,548.00     |
| 1944-45 | 2,332        | 2.00          | 4,664.00     |
| 1945-46 | 2,350        | 2.18          | 5,123.00     |
| 1946-47 | 2,223        | 1.07          | 2,378.61     |
| 1947-48 | 2,009        | .73           | 1,466.57     |
| 1948-49 | 192          | 37 1/2        | 724.00       |
| 1949-50 | 983          | .35           | 344.05       |
| 1950-51 | 917          | .75           | 687.75       |
| 1951-52 | 443          | .25           | 110.75       |
| 1952-53 | 420          | .31           | 130.20       |
| 1953-54 | 399          | .25           | 99.75        |
| 1954-55 | 196          | .26           | 50.96        |
| TOTAL   | 21,913       | \$.124        | \$ 37,941.94 |

## WEASEL

| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value  |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1939-40 | 6,692        | \$.30         | \$ 2,007.60  |
| 1940-41 | 6,290        | .40           | 2,516.00     |
| 1941-42 | 4,440        | .45           | 1,998.00     |
| 1942-43 | 2,982        | .40           | 1,192.80     |
| 1943-44 | 3,966        | 1.60          | 6,345.60     |
| 1944-45 | 2,905        | 1.40          | 4,067.00     |
| 1946-47 | 4,334        | 1.04          | 4,507.38     |
| 1946-47 | 4,334        | 1.40          | 4,507.38     |
| 1947-48 | 1,714        | 1.64          | 2,810.96     |
| 1948-49 | 881          | .91           | 801.71       |
| 1949-50 | 433          | .90           | 389.70       |
| 1950-51 | 509          | 1.58          | 804.22       |
| 1951-22 | 412          | .92           | 379.04       |
| 1952-53 | 584          | .79           | 461.36       |
| 1953-54 | 470          | .69           | 322.30       |
| 1954-55 | 229          | .66           | 151.14       |
| TOTAL   | 40,448       | \$.96         | \$ 35,030.99 |

## COYOTE

| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value  |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1939-40 | 183          | \$ 2.60       | \$ 475.00    |
| 1940-41 | 259          | 2.75          | 712.25       |
| 1941-42 | 202          | 3.25          | 656.50       |
| 1942-43 | 209          | 4.25          | 886.25       |
| 1943-44 | 926          | 10.00         | 9,260.00     |
| 1944-45 | 388          | 4.87          | 1,889.56     |
| 1945-46 | 388          | 3.10          | 1,202.80     |
| 1946-47 | 915          | 1.35          | 1,235.25     |
| 1947-48 | 259          | 1.13          | 292.67       |
| 1948-49 | 265          | .87 1/2       | 231.87       |
| 1949-50 | 57           | .65           | 37.05        |
| 1950-51 | 131          | .75           | 98.25        |
| 1951-52 | 34           | .79           | 26.86        |
| 1952-53 | 34           | .67           | 22.78        |
| 1953-54 | 17           | .66           | 11.22        |
| 1954-55 | 45           | .55           | 24.75        |
| TOTAL   | 4,312        | \$.220        | \$ 17,063.06 |

## BADGER

| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value |
|---------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1939-40 | 486          | \$ 1.60       | \$ 777.60   |
| 1940-41 | 470          | 2.50          | 1,175.00    |
| 1941-42 | 586          | 3.00          | 1,758.00    |
| 1942-43 | 257          | 1.35          | 346.95      |
| 1943-44 | 538          | 4.00          | 2,152.00    |
| 1944-45 | 354          | 1.35          | 477.90      |
| 1945-46 | 314          | 2.07          | 649.98      |
| 1946-47 | 553          | 1.10          | 608.30      |
| 1947-48 | 210          | .84           | 176.40      |
| 1948-49 | 182          | .75           | 136.50      |
| 1949-50 | 136          | .75           | 102.00      |
| 1950-51 | 90           | .75           | 67.50       |
| 1951-52 | 81           | .52           | 42.12       |
| 1952-53 | 67           | .50           | 33.50       |
| 1953-54 | 82           | .44           | 36.08       |
| 1954-55 | 63           | .48           | 30.24       |
| TOTAL   | 4,469        | \$.138        | \$ 8,570.07 |

## BEAVER

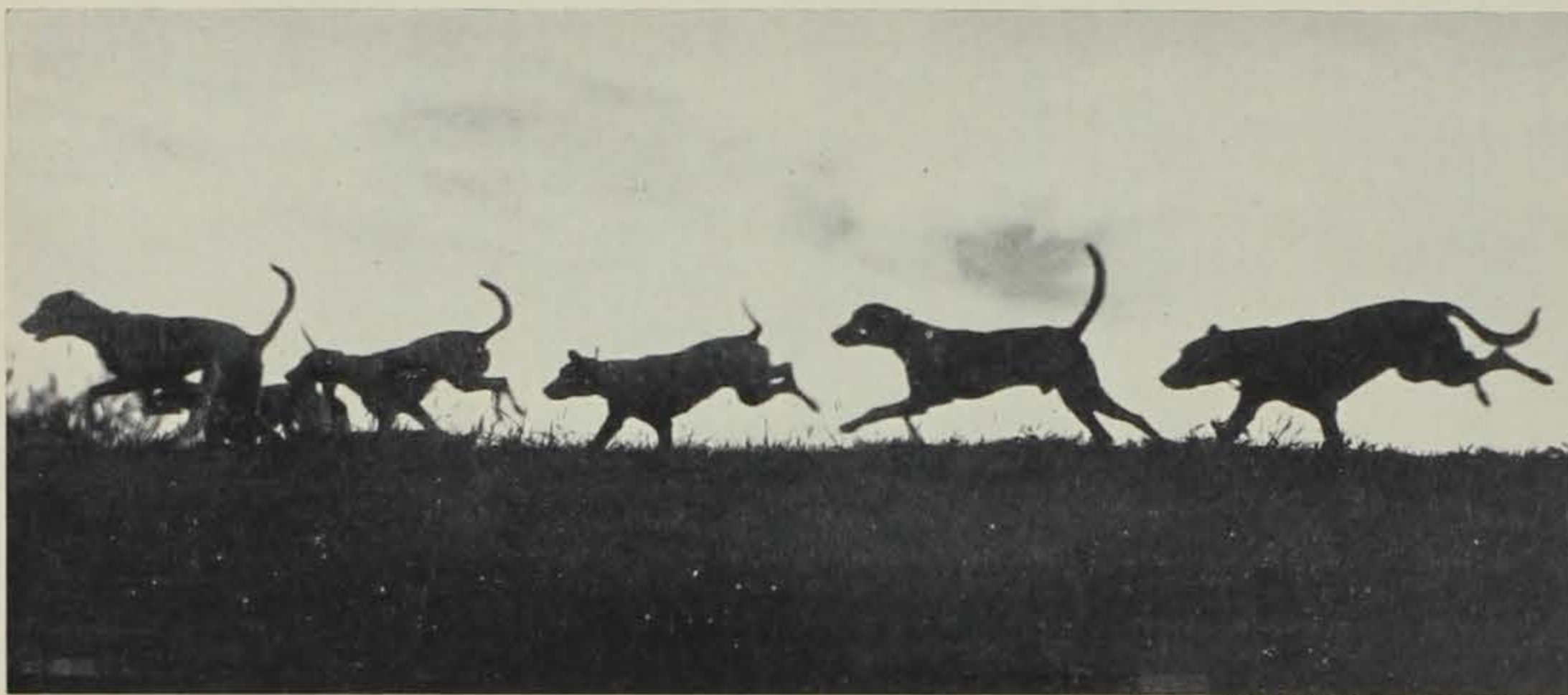
| Date    | Number Taken | Average Value | Total Value   |
|---------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1939-40 |              |               |               |
| 1940-41 |              |               |               |
| 1941-42 |              |               |               |
| 1942-43 |              |               |               |
| 1943-44 | 235          | \$24.00       | \$ 5,640.00   |
| 1944-45 | 259          | 22.50         | 5,827.50      |
| 1945-46 | 623          | 35.73         | 22,259.79     |
| 1946-47 | 494          | 18.24         | 9,010.56      |
| 1947-48 | 210          | 32.23         | 6,768.30      |
| 1948-49 | 670          | 13.87         | 9,292.90      |
| 1949-50 | 2,449        | 12.20         | 29,877.80     |
| 1950-51 | 3,103        | 12.50         | 38,787.50     |
| 1951-52 | 2,465        | 7.42          | 18,290.30     |
| 1952-53 | 3,790        | 5.85          | 22,171.50     |
| 1953-54 | 6,565        | 4.49          | 29,476.85     |
| 1954-55 | 3,635        | 4.89          | 17,775.15     |
| TOTAL   | 24,498       | \$16.16       | \$ 215,178.15 |



The mainstay of Iowa's traplines, muskrats have accounted for most of our fur revenue. Prolific, easy to trap and valuable, 'rats' are prized by old-timers and beginners alike.

Jim Sherman Photo.





Fox hounds, and their owners, live only for the colorful night hunts of late fall. Packs of hounds are loosed while hunters sit on nearby hilltops and listen to the music of their dogs. Some old hunters claim that the foxes also enjoy these hunts.

## Red Fox . . .

(Continued from page 161)

cubs were found within 200 acres; 25 foxes were caught in traps within 100 acres in this vicinity in June before the cubs had dispersed.

Such evidence of reproductive success shows that the red fox is adapted to existence in our modern world. Whether viewed with favor or otherwise, this ability to survive with such success in a hostile environment is of considerable economic significance.

### Some Hunters Want Them

The demand for red foxes depends in part upon the degree of human understanding and tolerance. Many people who live in areas regularly occupied by red foxes tend to accept them as an interesting part of the environment. The number of sportsmen who enjoy running foxes with hounds is usually highest among these people. When foxes become overabundant, there seems to be a tendency for more of them to appear outside of the habitat to which they are best suited. At such times the foxes come into more frequent contact with people who are not well acquainted with them. These people are unaccustomed to living with red foxes, and for example, after a few poultry losses occur, their fox neighbors generally become highly unpopular. In such instances, the demand for foxes quickly goes into reverse, and, interestingly enough, frequently remains so long after foxes have disappeared from the neighborhood. The demand for foxes also goes into reverse when their population is swept by rabies. Rabies epidemics usually take place among foxes that are in a state of oversupply.

The demand for foxes is usually in reverse among hunters who are primarily interested in small game. Poor hunting is often charged to foxes whether there are many, few or none of them in the area in question.

At present, chief support for the red fox comes from among those who enjoy fox hunting as a sport and from those for whom this col-

orful fox imparts a special charm of wildness to the countryside. In active opposition to this fox are the small game gunners who feel that foxes make important inroads on game populations, farmers who hope to eliminate them as a cause for poultry losses, and those who are periodically alarmed about the role of this fox in the dissemination of rabies.

### The Red Fox As A Predator

The diet of the red fox is largely a product of responses of the fox to its environment. Within the limits of its food preferences, familiarity with the habitat, and physical capabilities, this fox tends to take the foods which are most readily available. Foods may occur in the diet in an almost endless number of combinations, which differ with emergencies, season, year, and the general character of the specific area. At one extreme is the situation in which the feeding fox may pay little or no attention to mice, rabbits, and other vertebrate prey animals when it finds an abundance of insects and fleshy fruits. At the other extreme, and of much less frequent occurrence, is the situation in which the fox may exert very severe pressure on vulnerably situated prey animals, as was witnessed in the case of muskrats when a marsh went dry. Thus, environment plays an important part in establishing the pattern of the diet of the red fox.

The diet of the red fox does not reflect automatic adjustments to changes in population levels of specific prey. For example, during the spring and summer, when prey such as rabbits, mice and birds are found in increasing numbers, the frequency of occurrence of these items in the fox's diet declines where acceptable fleshy fruits and insects are available. Thus, it seems apparent that the relative availability of foods is important. It seems obvious, too, from the fact that prey populations frequently show strong year-to-year trends that do not coincide with or follow population trends of red foxes, that these foxes surely do not normally

limit prey numbers to an important degree.

### Foxes and Pheasants

It is a mistake to claim or expect an increase in numbers of prey species in response solely to the reduction or elimination of red foxes. A large scale experiment with reduction of foxes as a means of increasing pheasants in New York resulted in the conclusion that "despite reducing the fox population to a very low level, fox control on the Seneca County area did not increase pheasant abundance appreciably and certainly not to a degree commensurate with the cost."

Prey animals show differences in vulnerability to predation by red foxes. Mice, especially meadow mice, appear to be taken by red foxes with considerable ease, and, while foxes do not control them, they constitute a force for mouse reduction. Perhaps fox-caused losses to such destructive forms of prey may be thought of as a compensation for losses among more desirable forms of prey.

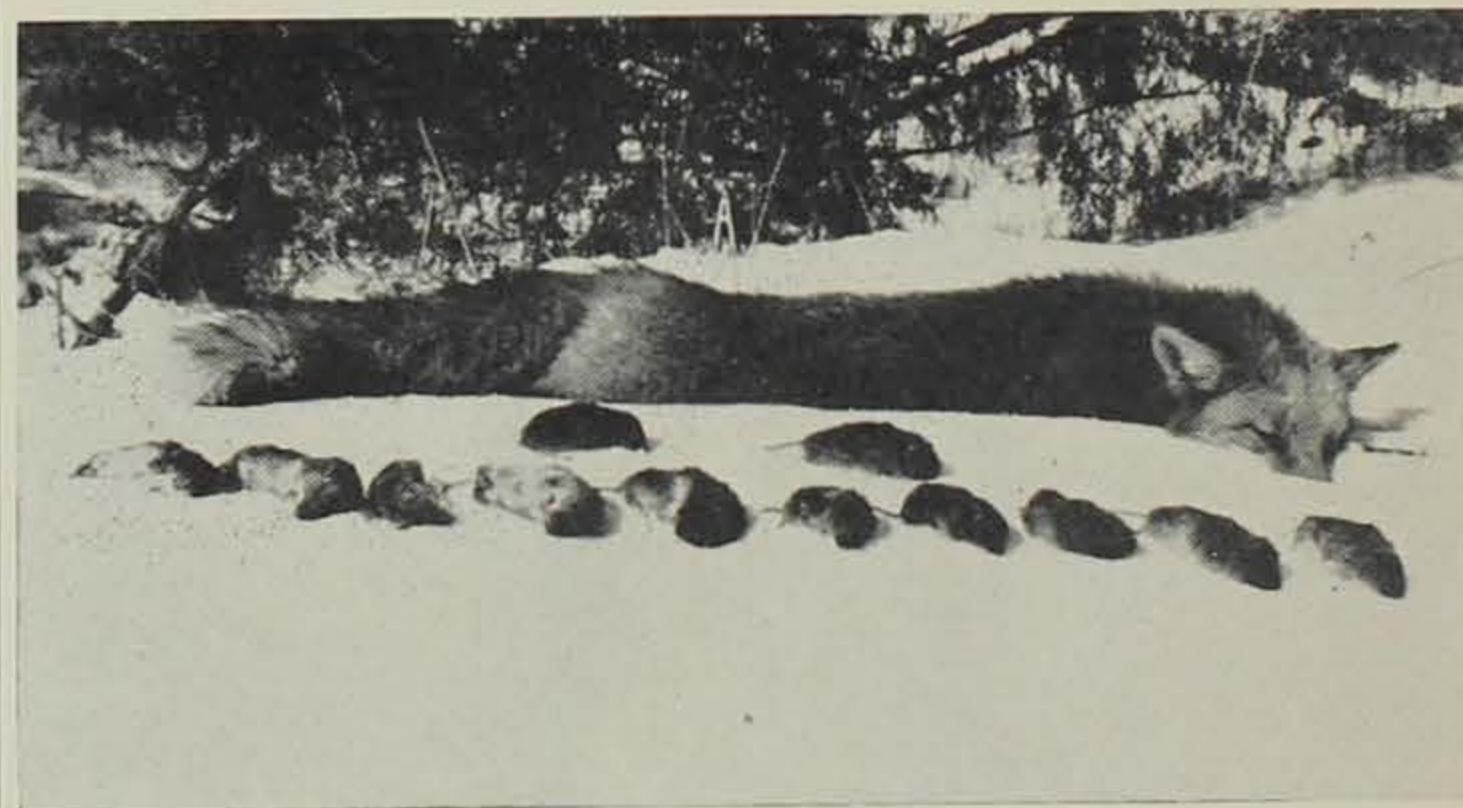
Among the game species, bobwhite quails seem to be relatively secure against fox predation. Ring-necked pheasants appear to be more vulnerable than bobwhites, but pheasant losses do not reach alarming proportions. Arnold failed to find a cause and effect re-

lationship between large numbers of red foxes in Michigan in 1945 and low numbers of pheasant in 1947 and concluded "that foxes have no major influence on pheasant populations and in all likelihood have little or no effect on them." Rabbits are highly vulnerable to capture by red foxes; however, no instance has been observed by the writer where fox predation has become so severe that it might not easily have been replaced by losses of another kind if foxes had been eliminated. It may prove enlightening to think of predation by red foxes as an age-old activity to which nature has adjusted long ago. If prey populations were not well endowed with the means of survival and if red foxes lived up to their reputations as deadly predators, it seems reasonable to believe that foxes would have eliminated their means of subsistence and themselves generations ago.

### Foxes and Poultry

Foxes unquestionably prey upon vulnerably situated poultry, small pigs, and lambs. It seems certain that only the poultry losses reach significant proportions. Losses of poultry to foxes, however, result largely from failure of poultrymen to follow recommended poultry husbandry practices. The restriction of laying flocks and broilers to pens and houses is a method of improving an egg and meat production, and even poultrymen who doubt that production is raised enough to justify the initial cost of this practice must admit that it is an effective means of eliminating losses to foxes and other predators. Important losses occur among pullets at times because leaving them on unfenced range until they reach laying age constitutes approved husbandry. However, even here something may be done to minimize the probability of loss. If such birds are not released from their roosting pens until after the sun is well up and are securely penned by the time the sun goes down, there is little likelihood that foxes will develop the habit of taking them. Foxes do not seem prone to attack flocks which are located

(Continued on page 168)



A favorite fox food is meadow mice, which may be killed for sheer sport. The hunter who shot this fox found a dozen dead mice in the fox's trail. Scott suggests that this may help compensate for fox-caused losses of game birds and animals.





If you're not an early bird, try squirrel hunting in late afternoon. Squirrels usually siesta during the heat of the day, but seek food and water toward early evening.

## Squirrel . . .

(Continued from page 161)

squirrels from hiding on the off-sides of trees. This type of hunting requires great alertness. Don't neglect the ground ahead and as you walk keep an eye on tree shadows. A hunter sometimes sees a squirrel's shadow before he sees the animal.

6. You might try hunting in an area where timber adjoins corn-field. Early in the morning and late in the afternoon some of the best hunting is to be had near corn. Don't overlook two timbers connected by a grove or a "bridge" of trees. Such narrow bands of timber are often used as travel lanes by squirrels.

7. Squirreling early in the fall when there are plenty of leaves calls for careful hunting. Go hunting on mornings of dead calmness. On windy or breezy days when the trees are in leaf squirrel hunting can be extremely difficult.

8. Except for escaping crowds of hunters, there's little reason to hunt squirrels at dawn. From 7 to 9 a.m. are some of the best hunting hours of the day.

9. Don't stretch your shots. A distant squirrel will often work closer and the chances of killing a squirrel at 75 yards with a shotgun are nil, and mightily slim with the average rifle. Pass up a long shot rather than risk crippling the squirrel. There'll be other shots a lot closer. Many good riflemen prefer to kill squirrels at no more than 20 yards.

10. Be careful of shooting squirrels on the ground. There are probably some other hunters sitting beneath trees just ahead of you.

11. Field-dress your squirrels shortly after shooting them. This is important in warm fall weather. Don't stuff the squirrels into a heavy bag or hunting coat. They should be allowed to cool rapidly, hung from the belt or carried in the hand. Cleaned carcasses can be carried in a thin, clean muslin sugar sack hung from the belt.



An expert hunter can clean a squirrel in less than a minute. When head and front feet are severed, the loop formed by skin and hind legs can be thrown over a fencepost for opening up the carcass.



## THEY CLEANED UP THE PARK

Expert hunters prefer to completely clean squirrels while they're warm, rather than waiting until they get home.

12. Squirrels are tough and take a lot of killing. Shotgunners prefer the heavier gauges with number 6 shot. Riflemen usually stick to long-rifle ammo either in hi-speed or regular. Some veteran riflemen believe that head-shots are not the best, and think that clean chest shots are more deadly and effective.

13. Hunt quietly, patiently and keeping constantly alert. REMEMBER: no squirrel in the world is worth a dead hunting buddy.—J.M.

A group of Edgewood business men turned out this summer in a volunteer campaign to clean up Bixby State Park in Clayton County. The little park, three miles north of Edgewood, does not have a resident custodian, and local men have been keeping it in shape for about 10 years—trimming trees, cutting grass, repairing roads and ditches and picking up clutter.

The men take part in the program at least one day each summer, either closing down their stores for the occasion or letting their women take over while they are gone.

Taking a well-earned break, left to right are: John Smith, Dick Chapman, Glen Forbes, Fred Fisher, Chuck Chapman and LaVerne Gremmels. Other volunteers not pictured were George Perrinjaquet and Herman Lewis.

Similar groups have been active in other small state parks such as Preparation Canyon in western Iowa, where local citizens donate considerable time and effort in keeping the areas attractive.

Ray Mitchell, Superintendent of Parks for the Conservation Commission, commented "Such cleanup programs in small state parks are greatly appreciated by the Commission and park visitors from all over the state. The people taking part in these projects are to be highly commended and their communities should be proud of them".

Returns from big brown bats banded in Wisconsin and Minnesota indicate that this species does not travel great distances. Maximum movements of 61 miles for winter and 33 miles for summer were found. Most movements for both summer and winter were within 10 miles of the point of banding. Big brown bats are common in Iowa.—G.S.



## Fishing Fundamentals . . .

(Continued from page 163)

the fly rod. We have even observed trolling for walleyes with it, but certainly it is not recommended, since the fly rod is just too limber.

The fly rod is not a universal piece of equipment. You shouldn't use it to catch 10 pound catfish in a stream full of stumps and snags, since you can't horse your fish in as though you had a derrick. The rod was designed to provide the utmost enjoyment by angling with the artificial fly. Just as the casting rod, surf rod, and spinning tackle were designed for certain types of fishing, the fly rod is in its own particular class as an effective angling tool. *After all, you can buy your meat in the butcher shop but you can't buy your recreation there.*

The best advice we can give is (1) buy the best fly fishing equipment you can afford, (2) learn to use it with an instructor and practice—practice—and practice until you know how to use it, and (3) fish with it. Many of you casting and spinning guys are in a rut and are overlooking some real sport in some of our lakes that are loaded with scrapping panfish. Of fly-fishing, it can be said, like the old reference to the strawberry—"God could have made it better, but didn't".

## OWL HAD PECULIAR TASTES

A Pennsylvania game warden recently reported: "A Man in my district took a great horned owl from a nest as a fledgling in March, 1955. Through hand feeding, the bird developed into quite a pet."

"The owl is allowed to go out for exercise during the day. It failed to return on only one occasion. That time he stayed out all night, but was sitting on the back steps in the morning waiting to get into the house. Its owner swears the bird is very fond of television, and will sit on his knee by the hour watching TV, especially if boxing programs are on."—*Pennsylvania Game Commission.*

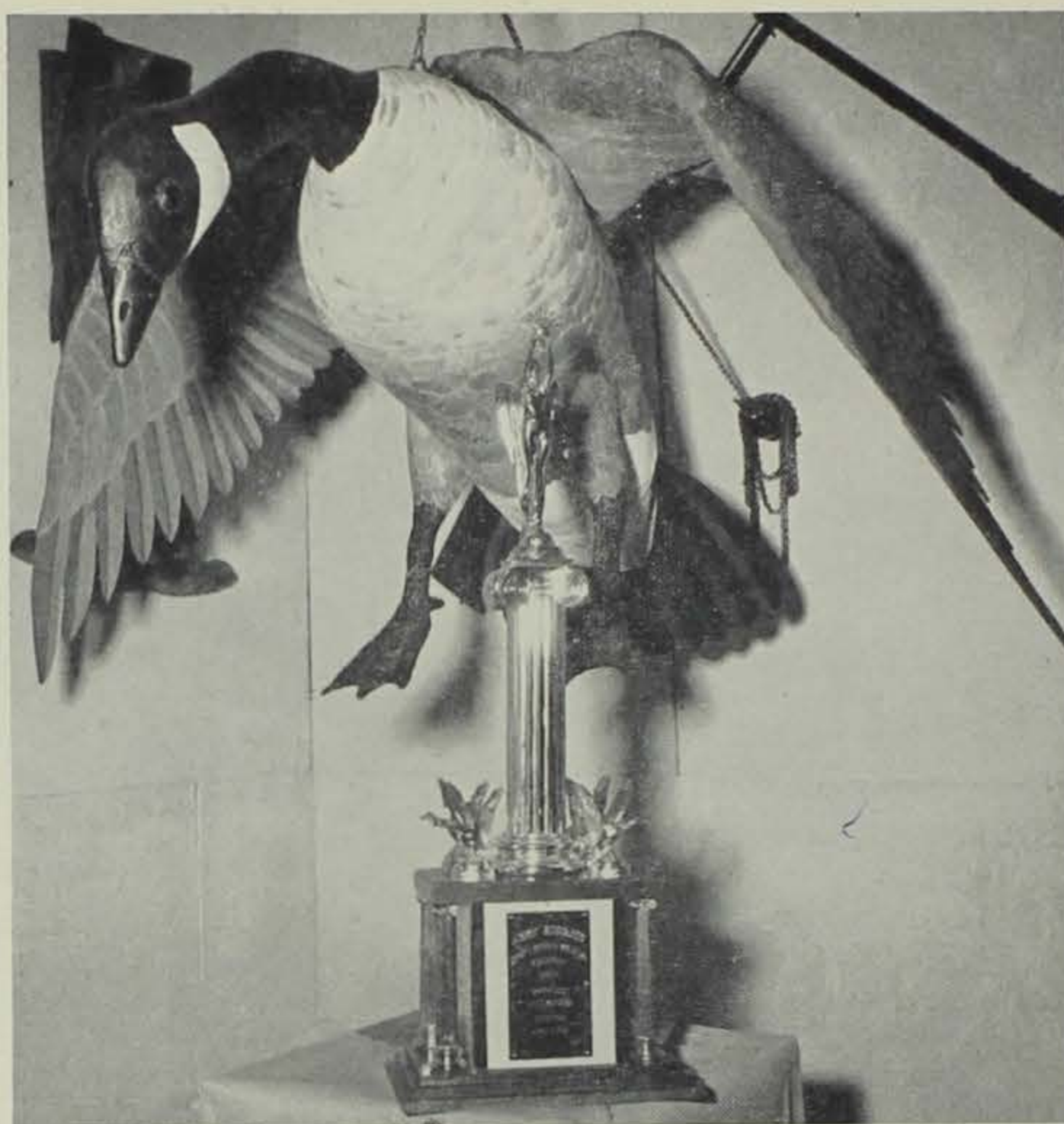
## THE WORM TURNS

Albert Adams, superintendent of the Conservation Commission's Drury refuge near Mincy, was witness to a wildlife reversal recently.

Adams was sitting on the front porch of his home the other evening when he was aroused by a scuffle in some bushes nearby. Then a sixfoot blacksnake came gliding out with a cottontail rabbit virtually nipping at its heels. The rabbit pursued the snake out of sight.

Adams discovered a nest of young bunnies in the grass under the bushes. Apparently Mama Cottontail wasn't going to stand for any foolishness from Br'er Snake. —*Missouri Conservation Bulletin.*

There are 900 known kinds of bats.—*H.H.*



The biggest Canada goose in Iowa would be poor eating—it's made of papier mache and wood. This bird, mascot of the World's Championship Goose Calling Contest, has an 8-foot wingspan. Trophy was donated by Jimmy Robinson of SPORTS AFIELD.

## WORLD'S CHAMPION GOOSE CALLER TO BE CHOSEN ON OCTOBER 2

One of Iowa's biggest and newest sporting events is slated for October 2nd in Missouri Valley, a small Missouri River town that is being made famous by wild geese and the men who hunt them.

The World's Championship Goose Calling Contest is being held for the 5th consecutive year to choose the finest goose caller in the country. The contest has been growing each year, and the 1955 event promises to be a good one.

Veteran Iowa goose hunters have been almost unchallenged in previous contests, but reports indicate that hunters from far-away states plan to pick up the gauntlet. Contest officials say that Louisiana hunters took a dim view of Iowans claiming the world championship and are sending up several Cajun hunters for the contest. Maryland has also thrown its hat in the ring, officials say, and may send a couple of callers from the Chesapeake Bay area, home of some of the best waterfowl hunters in the country. Other callers are expected from the Dakotas, all with chips on their shoulders and eyes on the champion's crown.

The 1953-54 winner, Frank Heidebauer of Ankeny, takes a fatalistic view of this, saying "there's nothing I can do but spit on my call, whistle my best, and hope. But man, that's rough competition".

First prize for this year's contest will be a \$1,000 government bond and a \$300 trophy. Second prize will be a 14-foot aluminum boat and third prize is an autoloading

shotgun. Many other prizes will be given, including duck and goose decoys and calls. In a drawing open to any contestant except the first 3 winners, a goose painting by Les Kouba of Minneapolis will be given. It is a close copy of the original that Kouba painted for *Life Magazine*.

The idea of a world's goose calling contest in western Iowa stemmed from Conservation Officer Jerry Jauron, who helped organize meetings of waterfowl hunters in the Missouri Valley area about 6 years ago. These meetings, held for better relations and understanding between hunters, consisted of gatherings in which waterfowlers got together and talked over their hunting methods and problems. At the 1950 meeting several local goose hunters were asked to demonstrate their calling methods. This met with great interest and the following year the first goose calling contest was held.

This year's contest will be held on Sunday, October 2, at the Harrison County Fairgrounds on the west edge of Missouri Valley on Highway 30. There will be no charge for anyone wishing to compete or attend.

The program will begin at 1 p.m. with a trapshooting exhibition consisting of 50 singles and 50 doubles. The champion shooters include Ray Shea and Ralph Kohler of Nebraska, and Merle Stockdale, Bob Allen and Marvin Driver of Iowa.

Two representatives of the Remington Arms Company, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Beegle, will demonstrate

## Red Fox . . .

(Continued from page 166)

on range that cannot be approached unobserved. Poultrymen who dispose of dead chickens by dumping them in the fields surrounding the poultry houses may bait neighboring foxes to their areas. Some observers report that a good watchdog discourages the attentions of foxes in the vicinity of poultry yards.

### Fox Diet Fruit

Because red fox predation is strongly influenced by environment, it seems reasonable to believe that such predation may be modified through habitat management. Where fleshy fruits of kinds acceptable to foxes (kinds such as wild blackberry, serviceberry, wild black cherry, wild plum, and mulberry) are readily available, these foods comprise about one-fourth of the annual diet. Environmental alterations which provide such fruits may partially divert predation from upland game birds and other small animals. Perhaps it is significant that such foods, together with insects, are particularly available during the season of reproduction among prey species.

Increased numbers of small game seem certain if predation pressures are buffered extensively not only by the provision of fruit for fox food but especially of adequate protective cover for these birds and other animals close to their nesting places and sources of food. The use of wild blackberry to cover plantings serves the dual purposes of providing excellent escape cover for prey and fruit for foxes. Habitat management, such as is described above, is obviously so generally beneficial to wildlife that no amount of fox extermination can substitute for it.

trick and fancy shooting, followed by an exhibition of retriever dogs.

The final part of the program will be the goose calling contest. Judges will be separated from each other but in plain view of the grandstand so that they may not consult each other. Contestants will be seen by no one, and no public address system will be used, one of the contest points being the volume of the goose caller. All entrants must use non-mechanical calls, and calling by mouth will be permitted.

The high sand bars and the broad bottomlands of the Missouri River have been a regular stopoff for ducks and geese for many years. Until recent years, however, blue and snow geese have not stopped there in the fall, but made an almost non-stop migration to their wintering grounds down the Mississippi. It is believed that changes in agricultural methods may have changed the autumn migration habits of the geese. Whatever the reason, the flocks work down the Missouri during the hunting season and the Big Muddy has become a mecca for midwestern waterfowlers.