

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST



MISS BLANCH SMITH  
IA LIBRARY COM  
DES MOINES 19 1A

Volume 15

February, 1956

Number 2

## WINTER ROUGH FISH CONTROL

### TCHIN' FOR FISHIN'

In this zero period, when the fishing season is no more than a glimmer of hope and the hunting season has come to its end, and the trapping season is a closed chapter, now are the days when the fisherman, especially, can relax and begin the fond dreams of the season to come.

For my selfish self I have great hopes and ardent plans for 1956. The Good Lord smiles on my purposes, I'll try to do many things I have never yet accomplished. That's natural and normal with most fishermen, isn't it?

#### March Chubs

I hope to have the fortitude and strength to really do a lot of intensive chub and sucker fishing along about the middle of March, whenever the heavy ice leaves the creeks, and the spawning of chubs and suckers starts. After 10 years hereabouts, I've actually discovered where big chubs and big black suckers "hole up" for the winter—really, I anticipate much of my best 1956 sport with these two lowly species of fish.

And I hope to get done with that in the early season of 1956, something I've not as yet accomplished. In past years I've taken only a few big trout, and these were releases from the federal and state hatcheries on the opening dates, or near thereto. Last season I learned of no less than five places where big trout have remained quite unmolested for 10 or 15 years. Few people have so much as wet a hook in these waters. I mean to tempt those big trout—already I'm tempted.

#### Ah, That Mississippi!

I mean to do more intensive bass fishing on the wing dams of the Mississippi. For too many seasons I've been content to "fish for anything that will strike." During 1956 I mean to specialize on bass—both big mouth and small mouth. Between Buena Vista and Lynxville is the cream of the "big water" bass fishing, and I am hep to some of the best areas. I hope to take a lot of bass I can truly brag about.

(Continued on page 13)



Emptying the bag of a 2,000-foot seine is always a thrill—and always draws a crowd. Most Storm Lake seining is for gizzard shad, the shining mass of fish in the foreground.

### Organized Confusion In Our Sportsmen's Clubs

By F. L. Waugh

From *Colorado Conservationist*

"All the sportsmen in the nation, collected into one group, couldn't so much as influence the election of a dogcatcher."

Those were the approximate words of Ding Darling, noted conservationist-cartoonist who, as one-time director of the Fish and Wildlife Service back in the thirties, learned the hard way that sportsmen were a disorganized, dormant, disheveled group that "won lots of

battles but have never been known to win a war."

As the source of revenue and support for wildlife agencies, where do the nimrods fall down when it comes to backing and encouraging efficient wildlife resource management?

#### Jekyll and Hyde

Basically, the fault would seem to rest in the makeup of each individual sportsman. Study him, analyze his thinking, enumerate his failings and you come up with

(Continued on page 15)

By John Madson  
Education Assistant

Chuck O'Farrell, burly supervisor of Iowa's rough fish control crews, stood on 20 inches of Storm Lake ice and happily regarded the frozen world around him.

"A beautiful day for seining," he said. (It was 16 degrees and getting colder.)

"No snow on the ice to pack in the net when we pull out." (The naked ice was nearly impossible to walk safely on.)

"And it's a fine, sunny day with no wind," he finished. (The early sun, slanting over the frozen lake, was blinding.)

The men working nearby with freezing, dripping seine reflected this tough optimism. Seldom talking, they worked steadily, bringing 2,000 feet of heavy net up through the "pull-out" hole. Somewhere back in the lake, in the bag of the seine, were many fish.

"When it's bad is on a warm, thawing day," Chuck explained. "The net comes out wet, packed with slush, and doesn't freeze dry. It's stacked on the truck and freezes together during the night. Next morning we have to bust it apart."

They didn't have to that morning. It was a clear day in early January, and the crew had been out on Storm Lake since 8 o'clock. They had driven out in heavy trucks, confident that the 20-inch ice would support them, but ready to kick open doors in case it didn't.

The day before a tractor and auger had drilled dozens of 20-inch holes in a symmetrical pattern about 1,000 feet square.

On one side of this pattern, far out on the ice, a larger hole had been cut. This was the "put-in" hole. A thousand feet to the north on the other side of the pattern of auger holes was a similar cutting: the "pull-out" hole through which net and fish would be lifted.

#### Threading the Needle

One truck carried the 2,000-foot seine, neatly folded. To each end of the seine was attached a long, heavy rope. To the end of each

(Continued on page 14)



## Iowa Conservationist

Published Monthly by the  
IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
East 7th and Court—Des Moines, Iowa  
(No Rights Reserved)

LEO A. HOEGH, Governor of Iowa

BRUCE STILES, Director

JOHN MADSON, Editor

EVELYN BOUCHER, Associate Editor

### MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

GEORGE M. FOSTER, Chairman...Ottumwa  
JOE STANTON, Vice Chairman...Des Moines  
MRS. JOHN CRABB...Jamaica  
GEORGE V. JECK...Spirit Lake  
FLOYD S. PEARSON...Decorah  
J. D. REYNOLDS...Creston  
E. G. TROST...Fort Dodge

CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE.....50,500  
Subscription rate.....40c per 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 and Court  
Avenue, Des Moines 9, Iowa. Send cash,  
check or money order.

## THE COLYN AREA: FROM POOR LAND TO RICH COUNTRY

By John Madson  
Education Assistant

One of the biggest new develop-  
ments in Hawkeye hunting and  
fishing areas is being completed in  
Lucas County.

It is the Colyn Game Area about  
10 miles southeast of Chariton, an  
800-acre tract of rugged scenery  
that holds a rosy promise for cen-  
tral and southern Iowa sportsmen.

Developed for the hunter and  
fisherman, the Colyn area will con-  
sist of upland fields, several hun-  
dred acres of timber, and two wa-



Horses have a place in modern game management. Unit Manager Bill Aspelmeier, surveying the new channel of the Chariton River, "rides range" each day on his rugged, 800-acre Colyn Area.

ter areas of 99 and 200 acres. The  
construction of dikes and final fin-  
ishing is nearly done, and Conser-  
vation Commission engineers ex-  
pect the area to be filled with  
water by early summer—if spring  
rains come.

Although we may refer to the  
Colyn water areas as "lakes", they  
are not artificial lakes in exact  
definition. Iowa's artificial lakes  
are constructed for general recre-  
ation: boating, fishing, swimming  
and picnicking. The two Colyn  
ponds will have no beaches or

swimming facilities and power  
boating will probably be barred.  
No picnic grounds will be provided,  
although picnicking and camping  
will be allowed. The ponds—and  
the entire Colyn area—will be  
managed for fishing and hunting.

### Will Flood Timber

The basins of the Colyn area  
are in timbered lowlands and ex-  
cept for some clearing, much tim-  
ber will remain. Flooded timber  
offers some interesting prospects  
to duck hunters. Bass and bluegill  
fishermen will also share the bene-  
fits of flooded timber, which  
will present conditions similar to  
stumpy Mississippi back waters  
and some southern lakes.

The two small lakes will be  
stocked with bass and bluegills  
and if stocking is as successful as  
in Brown's Slough—Colyn's sister  
area, three miles east and south—  
fishing in the Colyn area should be  
good in 1957. Although Brown's  
Slough is primarily a hunting area,  
it was stocked with fingerling bass  
early in 1954. On opening day of  
bass season, 1955, some of these

fish were already 10 inches long.  
By August, most of the bass were  
keepers. Many Brown's Slough  
hunters took advantage of the  
bluebird days of early duck season  
and took casting rods into their  
duck blinds. One pair of hunters,  
just after opening day, came in  
with one duck and 10 bass.

The average depth of the Colyn  
ponds will be about five feet; how-  
ever, there's an element of danger.  
Old creek and river channels in  
both lakes may have depths of 15  
feet or more. The banks of these  
old channels are almost vertical  
and wading fishermen should use  
great caution.

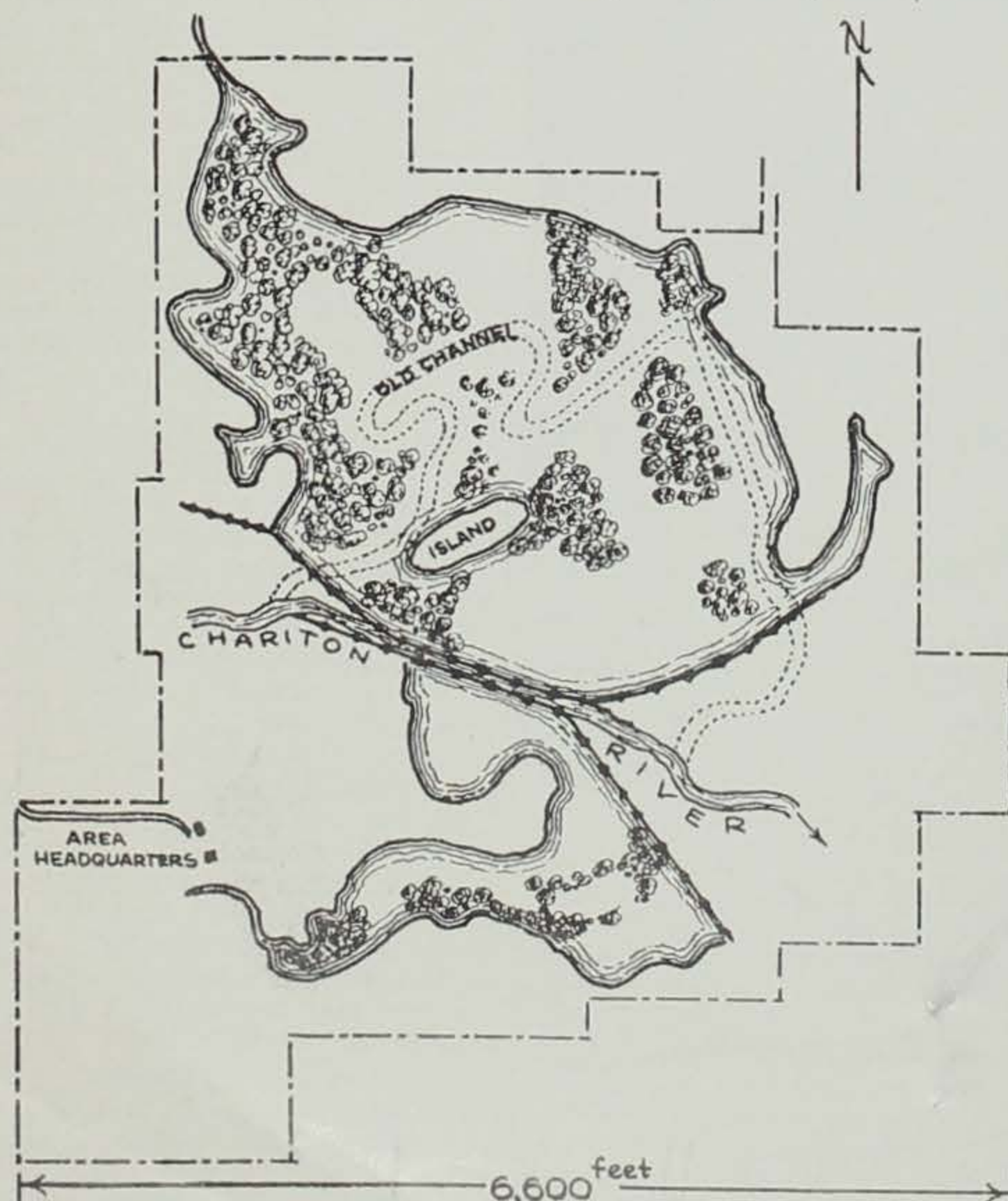
Game managers plan to hold the  
99-acre pond as a game refuge,  
but the larger pond will be open  
to hunting. On the uplands several  
small cultivated fields will be held  
as food patches for game. Last  
fall there were at least three co-  
veys of quail on the west edge of  
the area. Squirrels abound in the  
oak and hickory timbers, and  
there is good rabbit cover on the  
bottoms. There are also "good  
numbers" of pheasants on the area.

### Little Flood Danger

Filling the pond basins at Colyn's  
won't be difficult; each has a huge  
watershed. The 200-acre pond has  
a total watershed of over 4,000  
acres, while the smaller pond has  
a watershed of 7,300 acres. En-  
gineers say that a ratio of 10 acres  
of watershed to each acre of water  
is sufficient to maintain a water  
impoundment. The small "pond"  
has a ratio of 73 acres of water-  
shed to one of water, and the  
larger one has a 20 to 1 ratio. Bill  
Aspelmeier, Unit Game Manager  
of the Colyn area, recently said:  
"Some spring night we're going to  
have a heavy dew on those water-  
sheds. The next morning I'm go-  
ing to put in my boat." However  
water control structures in each  
water area can be used to draw  
off excess water.

Both pools are fed by creeks.  
The Chariton River, which for-  
merly ran through the basin of  
the larger pool, has been re-routed

(Continued on page 15)



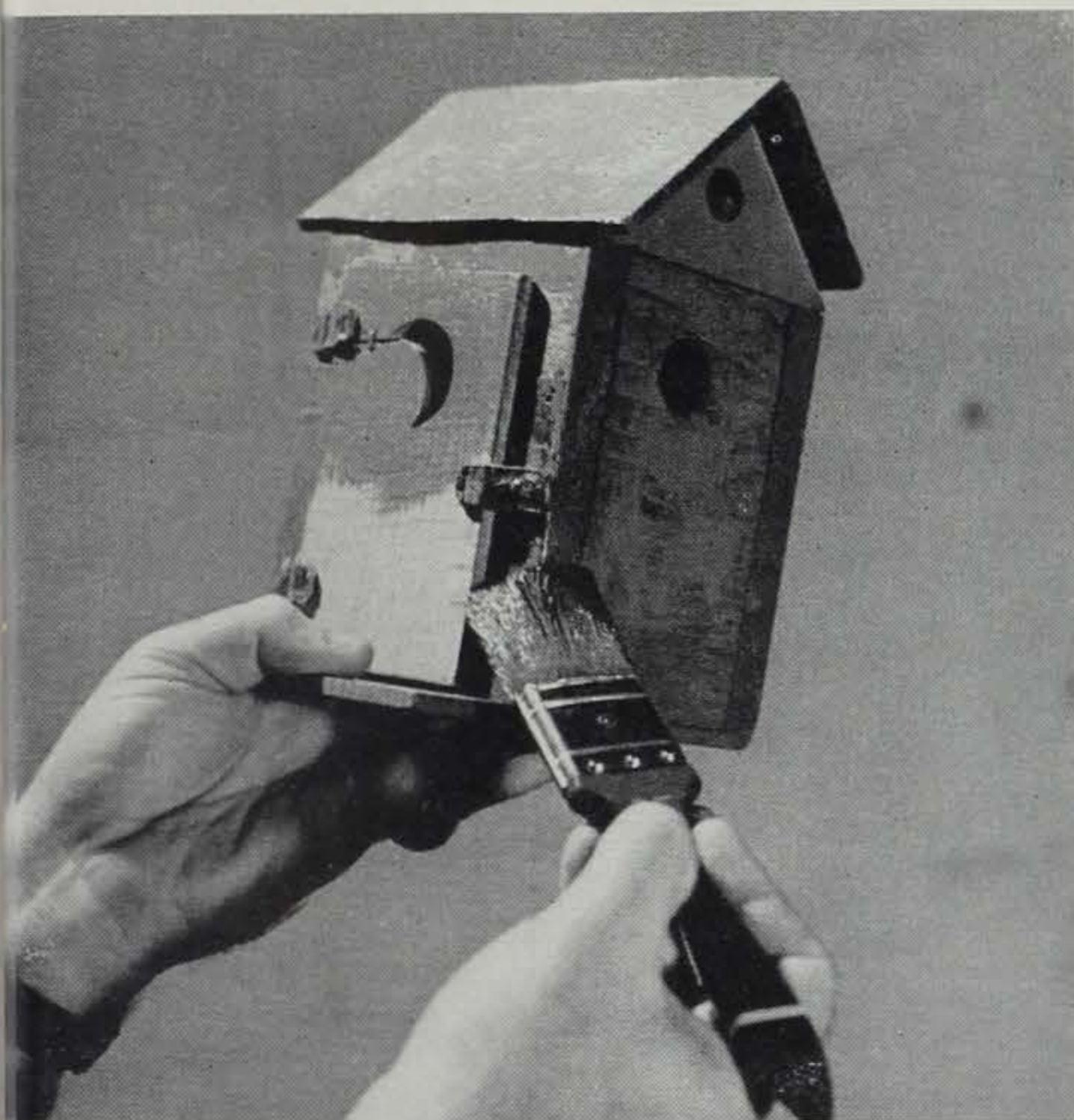
The two Colyn "lakes" will be 200 and 99 acres in size. Five miles straight south of Russell, they should offer good fishing and waterfowling.



Spillways on both Colyn pools are completed, and are awaiting spring rains. Such water control structures protect dikes from overflow.



## TAILOR-MADE BIRD HOUSES



Jim Sherman Photo.

and houses should be built to certain dimensions for certain birds. This "Chic Sale" wren house was made by John Gilchrist of Cherokee.

Ken Morrison of the National Audubon Society recently sent us a colorful little book, "The Picture Primer of Attracting Birds." Although published in 1952 by the Riverside Press of Cambridge, Massachusetts, we hadn't seen it before.

Written by C. Russell Mason and illustrated in color by Bob Jones, the little book is an excellent source of information for win-

ter and summer bird feeding, and for attracting birds in all seasons. It also includes a brief section on birdhouse building specifications.

Many hobby-built birdhouses are not designed for any specific bird, and dimensions of such shelters can be quite critical. A house intended for songbirds may be taken over by sparrows or other species if not built to certain specifications:

Species	Floor In Inches	Depth In Inches	Entrance Diameter In Inches	Center of Entrance Above Floor In Inches	Height Above Ground In Feet
house wren	4x4	5 to 7	1*	3½ to 5½	5 to 10
Carolina wren,					
twick's wren	4x4	5 to 7	1½ to 1¾	3½ to 5½	5 to 10
prothonotary warbler	4x4	8 to 10	1½	6 to 8	3 to 5
tickadee	4x4	8 to 10	1½	6 to 8	5 to 15
thrush,					
downy woodpecker,					
tmice	4x4	8 to 10	1¼	6 to 8	5 to 15
uebird,					
ee swallow,					
olet-green swallow	4x5	7 to 9	1½	5½ to 7¼	4 to 15
ested flycatcher,					
h-throated flycatcher	6x6	8 to 10	2	6 to 8	8 to 20
airy woodpecker,					
lden-fronted					
woodpecker	6x6	13 to 15	1¾ to 2	9 to 12	8 to 20
ed-headed woodpecker	7x7	16 to 18	2 to 2½	12 to 14	12 to 20
ickers,					
w-whet owl	7x7	16 to 18	3	12 to 14	12 to 20
reech owl,					
arrow hawk	8x10	13 to 15	3¼	9 to 12	12 to 20
ooded merganser	10x10	15 to 18	5	10 to 13	4 to 6
ood duck	10x10	15 to 18	5	10 to 13	4 to 20
olden-eye	10x10	15 to 18	7	10 to 13	4 to 20
artin	6x6	6	2½	2¼	15 to 25

Or may use rectangular slot one inch high, three inches long.

l houses for woodpeckers, owls, sparrow hawks and ducks should have two inches of wood chips or sawdust on the floor.

## TEXAS CATFISH BAITS

Back in December we had a letter from Mr. Floyd Jones of Lubbock, Texas, who wished to swap some recipes for carp and catfish baits.

The Iowa recipes were duly sent, but no word came from Mr. Jones. Then, about a month later, came a letter with an apologetic beginning:

"Dear John: Well, I brung your saddle home. . ."

And so he had, sending two of his favorite catfish bait recipes from his collection. Floyd termed both baits as "good", and although we haven't tried them out, what works on Texas catfish should work on our variety.

Number 20: Ingredients:  
2 or 3 gallons of beef blood  
1 pound box of salt  
2 pounds of brown sugar

Refrigerate the beef blood until it is well congealed. Place the congealed blood on a flat surface and cut into 2-inch squares. Salt the top of each blood-square thoroughly. Let stand for 5 minutes, turn blood over, and salt the bottom side thoroughly. A pound of salt should be used in the process.

Then apply 2 pounds of brown sugar to the congealed blood in the same manner as the salt was applied.

Place the bait in feed sacks and hang in a tree to drain overnight. The bait should be ready for use the next morning. Place excess bait in cold storage until needed. If the bait begins to ferment, add more salt. Jones uses such blood bait on number 4 or 6 treble hooks. "But," he adds, "after about 3 days you'll need a clothes pin for your nose."

Number 19: Ingredients  
¾ cup of cottonseed meal  
⅓ cup of tankage  
1 cup of powdered wallpaper paste  
1 cup of flour

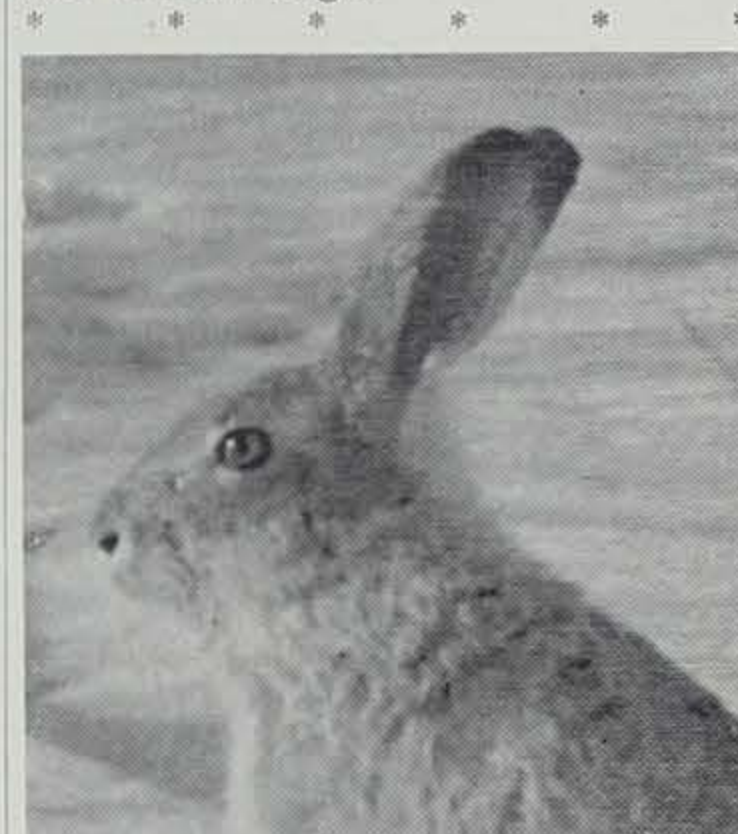
Mix these ingredients thoroughly. Add blood or water a little at a time until a very stiff dough re-

## Wardens Tales

## Shop Talk from the Field

From over along the broad Missouri, there comes a warden's tale from that broad Missouri River officer, Jerry Jauron of Harrison and Shelby counties.

Jerry writes: "Because of some illegal duck shooting I was at the river at daybreak and cautiously moving through the willow bats to the water's edge.



Jim Sherman Photo.

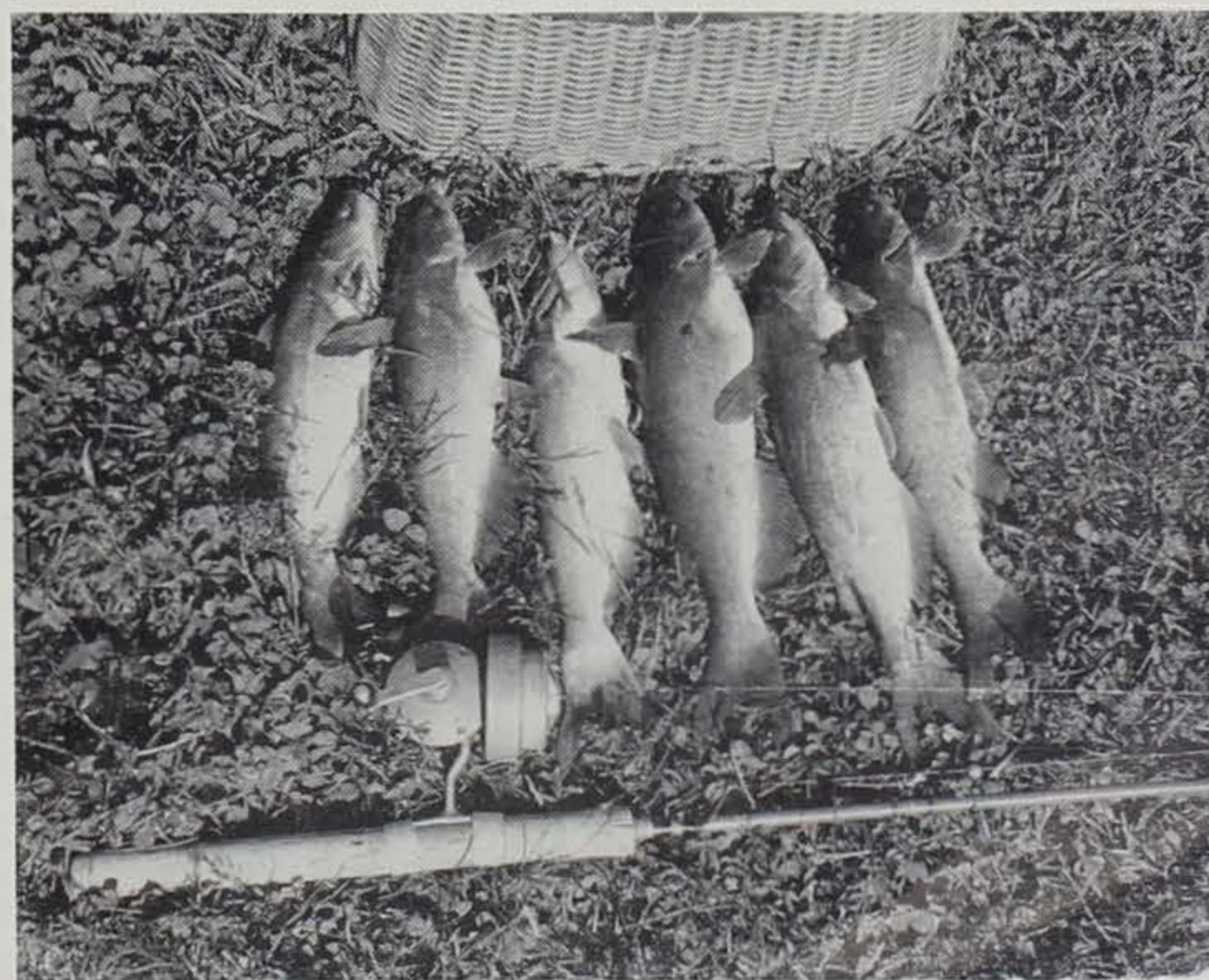
Did Jack Rabbit's battery need charging?

"As I crawled along slowly I heard a struggle going on ahead of me. Being even more cautious now, I moved more carefully than ever. As the day began to brighten, I saw ahead of me two cottontails struggling with a jack-rabbit.

"I remained very quiet, trying to figure out what was going on. Because of my inactivity I grew very cold, but my getting cold helped me solve the phenomenon that was taking place before my eyes.

(Continued on page 16)

sults. Knead well. This bait is also excellent for carp and buffalo if black syrup is used in place of the water or blood.—J.M.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Delicate dough baits for catfish can be easily cast with spinning gear without being torn from the hook.





Trout fishing in shallow pools is touchy business; minnows are effective bait in such waters but the angler must be cautious. Jim Sherman Photo.

## MINNOWS FOR BIG TROUT

By Robert Daubendiek  
State Conservation Officer

During the years I fished for trout in northeastern Iowa exclusively with minnows, I was cussed, laughed at, cajoled and threatened. But I sure had fun, and I caught trout.

Minnows are one of the most tantalizing and productive of all trout baits. You might ask "How about those trout lying placidly in a pool surrounded by every size and kind of minnow? If they're so good, why doesn't an old granddad trout open his mouth and get his fill? And why would he be interested in my minnow?"

The answers are: he does get his fill of minnows, and he is interested in yours.

An unfrightened trout will go for either worms or minnows in short order. However, a fisherman using worms may have to wait out a scared fish, but when a minnow is tossed in the fish will usually lose his fright and nail it.

Sometimes, in fly-fishing, long casts are necessary and the strike will be at the far end of the cast—a faint flash of color and a slight boil of water. When using minnows, these rises and their darts and flashes will be almost at your feet.

### The Old White Bucket

For minnows I carry a 5-gallon bucket in the trunk of the car, and it's a small wonder that I smell like the 7th Street wharf at the end of the season. I use that bucket as a supply tank and while obtaining minnows at the stream. I transfer some minnows into a 10-quart white enameled pail with about 3 inches of water in it. This white bucket became a familiar sight on about a dozen trout streams. The sight of it a mile from the nearest road sent many fishermen running for cover—until they saw how productive it was.

### Small Shiners

I use bright shiner minnows 1½ inches to 2 inches long and take special care to sort out just the ones I want while seining them from my favorite spots in several small streams. Not trout streams, however. Minnows other than these are discarded—a secret in keeping the ones I want alive. I keep only the size and kind of minnows I plan to use. All others are returned to the stream.

I use a 9-foot fly rod with 4 feet of 3-pound leader and a number 12 hook. The sinker is a BB size split shot about a foot above the hook. The minnows are hooked through the back just below the dorsal fin; the shallower the better. However, if they're hooked just under the skin and not in muscle, they may be thrown off if swung out against a stiff breeze.

### Quick Strikes

My favorite spots are long, flat pools 18 inches deep to 2 feet deep. Working slowly along the bank I swing the bait out 10 or 15 feet and drop it quietly in the water. The minnow immediately struggles frantically as the split shot takes it to the bottom. A strike may come immediately, and if none is felt by the time the minnow has sunk halfway to the bottom, the bait can be taken up and swung out again 10 feet further up or down the stream.

If there wasn't a strike, there probably wasn't a trout there. However, in taking the minnow back out of the water, be prepared for a show. As often as not your fish is still on his way or is a foot from the minnow. As the minnow is lifted out, bank! Many times trout will come entirely out of the water as the minnow is raised up. Dropping the bait in again about 2 feet from that spot will often hook the fish. But if your line doesn't straighten out in two or three seconds from the time the bait has hit the water, it probably won't ever be snapped taut

by a big trout, even if you wait an hour.

### Losing Fish

Many times the trout will take the minnow before it is hardly in the water, and is only a couple of inches below the surface. One fast nip will completely cut off the head of the minnow without removing it from the hook. Trout have sharp teeth, and know how to use them. You will lose more fish than you catch and usually those caught will be liphooked, and extreme caution should be used in landing the fish. Giving the fish just an extra second before striking him will often mean a deeper-hooked trout.

Seen directly from above, a trout does not just take a minnow and run. He first darts to it at terrific speed and makes a fast, almost instantaneous half-turn, with the minnow across his mouth. As in fly-fishing, striking such a fish at the correct time is critical.

If your minnow is dead or bitten, discard it and put on another. Those in your bucket can be kept lively and ready for action by frequent changes of properly tempered water.

Once you master minnow fishing for trout, your minnow bucket will cover lots of miles—until you're too old to carry it or until you are lynched by fly-fishermen for stealing their show.

## ROTTING LOGS

By Roberts Mann and  
David Thompson

Trees are like people. They die from disease, injuries, infections, burns, drownings and sometimes just plain old age. Walking through the woods we see, here and there, dead or dying trees of various kinds. For example: a big white oak, with its bark ripped from crown to root, was literally cooked by a bolt of lightning during a

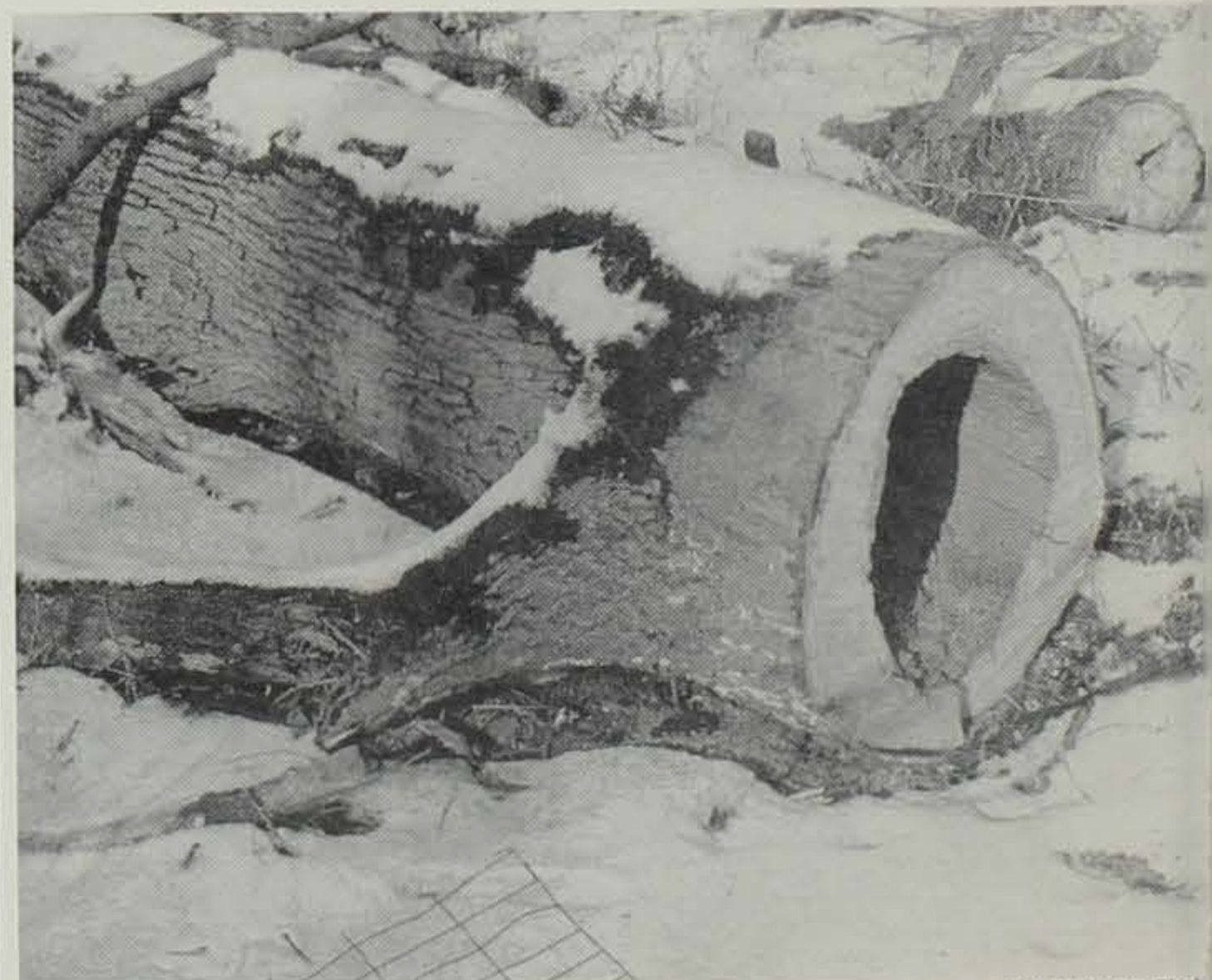
summer thunderstorm. In a grove of black oaks, many are dying lingering deaths from infected wounds started years ago when an autumn fire swept through the fallen leaves and scorched the living wood. In a dense forest there are many that have lost the battle for space and sunlight. In some places we see trees that are slowly starving because dashing rains have carried away the fertile topsoil and the trampling feet of picnickers have injured the shallow roots that bring them food.

In our forest preserve picnic areas, for public safety, we remove dead trees but elsewhere let them stand until they fall and then rot where they lie. A lot of people think that is both untidy and wasteful but there is an important reason for it. In order to restore or maintain a healthy natural woodland and all of the wheels within wheels of the living machinery that makes it tick, those slowly decaying trunks, branches and twigs are vitally necessary. It would be a strange forest without them.

A forest is more than trees. The trees are the framework but around them is woven an unbelievably complex fabric of life: squirrels, mice, birds, bees, beetles, worms, wildflowers, weeds, mushrooms and many more. Over a period of years a slowly enlarging hole in a standing dead snag, for instance, may be occupied in turn by a fungus, a boring beetle, a colony of carpenter ants, a woodpecker, a deer mouse, a squirrel, a screech owl and a raccoon. The dead roots, the loosening of bark and the softening trunk also shelter or feed a host of other wood colonists. The roots gradually weaken until one day, in a gust of wind, the snag crashes to the ground where the final act of the drama takes place.

Some fallen trees rot much more rapidly than others, depending upon the kind of tree and whether

(Continued on page 16)



Dying, hollow trees may be used in order by woodpeckers, bees, squirrels, possums and raccoons. When they've fallen, they are dens for skunks, foxes and rabbits. Jim Sherman Photo.



## LITTERBUGS REALLY GET AROUND!



Nothing these days is safe from the litterbug.

A recent *National Geographic Magazine* article tells of further under-sea exploration by the French diver, Jacques Costeau and United States scientist Harold Edgerton. Experiments were being made with Dr. Edgerton's new deep-sea camera, a device that can withstand great pressures and photograph ocean bottom at tremendous depths.

One of the first photographs the scientists made in the Mediterranean was at a depth of over 13,000 feet. And what did this clear photograph of the ocean floor—nearly three miles down and in eternal darkness—reveal?

An old, rusty tin can.

### MORE WONDERFUL WIVES

Dear Sirs:

I read in the November IOWA CONSERVATIONIST the article entitled "Greater Love Hath No Woman" by Warren Red, about how everyone is surprised that a man's wife would get up at 3:30 or 4:00 a.m. to fix her husband's breakfast before he goes fishing or hunting.

I have been married eleven years and have a ten year-old daughter who owns her own rifle and knows how to use it. In fishing season we operate a fish bait business in which I do all the selling and also help seine for minnows and pick up nightcrawlers which I just love to do.

When I can't go fishing or hunting with my husband, which is very seldom, I always get up first and get his breakfast and get him ready to go. We also do some coon-hunting with hounds and if I can't go long, which also is very seldom, I always fix a lunch for my husband and his buddies when they come whether at 11:00 p.m. or 4:00 a.m. or 7:00 a.m. or any other time.

Our hounds are black and tans and their names are Davy Crockett and Belle Starr, and I feed and handle them when we are not hunt-

ing. Also, in partnership with my husband, I handle them when hunting.

Did you girls who are reading this ever get out on a cold, damp night and hear a hound bawl; and have the pleasure of shining a light on the coon so your husband can shoot it out of the tree? Also of cooking the coon and having a meal fit for a king? If you haven't you haven't lived.

If anyone wants a recipe for cooking coon just let me know and I'll send you directions on how to clean and cook it and you'll never find anything better to eat.

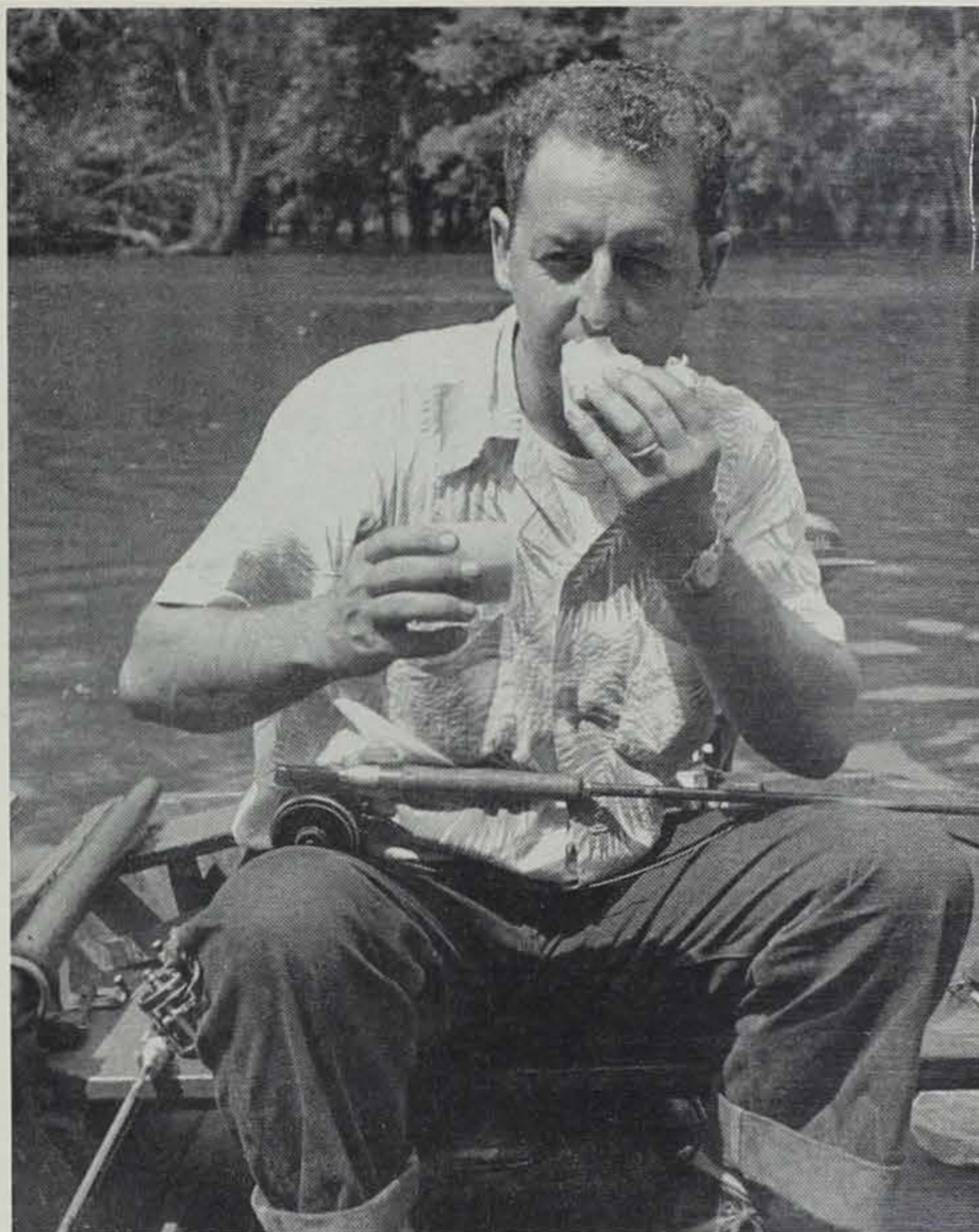
Yours truly,  
Mrs. Gordon Erlewine  
Osceola, Iowa

\* \* \*

Dear Sir:

In the November issue of IOWA CONSERVATIONIST I was very happy to read of Mrs. Jim Bleakly of Cherokee being such a true wife of a sportsman. I too have such a wonderful sport for my wife. She gets my breakfast, fixes a lunch, and packs things in the car so I can have a good hunting or fishing trip. On several occasions she has driven me to my brother's house in the wee morning hours so she could have the car. She helps to dress

(Continued on page 16)



Jim Sherman Photo.  
In raw, cold February, fishing is still in the dream stage. But the long, drowsy days of summer are coming, when you can eat your lunch in the sun and watch for rising fish.

### Itchin' for Fishin' . . .

(Continued from page 9)

Then, there are certain spots in the Mississippi where the old lunker flatheads make their abodes. Already I have the reels and rods to handle these huge fish, but I lack lines. So I'm ordering some 300 yards of 30-pound test monofilament and the right size hooks—I mean to devote quite a bit of time in an effort to bring in flatheads worthy of a news picture.

#### A Change of Heart

During the past four years I have laid aside my fly rods. A change of heart has come over me. Once again I mean to pit my skill with a 3-ounce dryfly rod against the brawling savagery of small mouths in northeast Iowa streams. A fish hooked on spinning gear is quite surely a fish on the stringer, but not so when a 3-ounce dryfly rod is the in-between tool. I mean to do sport fishing instead of meat fishing.

Another thing I've been doing is to put in most of my efforts with live bait. In 1956 I mean to employ most of my time on game fish with flies and lures. Have I lost my touch? Well, this coming season I'm meaning to rediscover myself.

#### Good Tackle

Certain of my gear must be overhauled and some of it must be replaced. As I replace I'll get the very best tackle procurable. Cheap rods, cheap reels, cheap lines and

cheap lures are always a snare and a delusion. Low-quality tackle invariably fails the fisherman in the crucial moments. To do good fishing requires good tackle.

I need a couple of new tapered fly lines. I need one 6-pound spinning line and one 4-pound test spinner. I need a new landing net and I need new boots.

This spring I must re-dope my boat on the outside and re-varnish it on the inside. Both motors must be entirely overhauled to be ready for heavy usage. The old "fishin' Ford" ran perfect when I put it in cold storage in October, but just to be sure next season, it too must have some expert attention. The boat trailer seems ready for everything ahead.

Of course, all this is just now in the dream stage. Iowa winters are long, cold and dreary. Whether or not our dreams come true, it helps lessen the blue days until open waters come again, and we can bend a rod and wet a line.—*Fins, Furs and Feathers, Manchester Democrat.*

All snakes hatch from eggs. However, some snakes retain the eggs within the body until after hatching, thus leaving the impression that the young of these are given birth like that of the higher mammals.—*H.H.*

About 90 kinds of squirrels inhabit the United States and Canada.—*H.H.*





Two thousand feet of seine were fed into the put-in hole. The job is easy when the seine is dry and pliable; after a thaw the net may be a frozen mass.

## Rough Fish Control . . .

(Continued from page 9)

rope was connected a "bat": long, light flexible boards nailed together to form a hundred-foot needle.

The job was to stretch the long seine underneath the ice in preparation for the haul. First the "bats" were threaded into the put-in hole, and started under the ice in opposite directions.

The previously-drilled auger holes were about 75 feet apart; the bats were 100 feet long. The bats were run under this line of holes, and as the end of the bat appeared at a hole a crewman guided it with a pike pole to the next hole. This requires judgment, and the bat-man is a specialist. He then moves on to the next auger hole, locates the end of the bat, and pushes it on. Meanwhile, crewmen at the seine truck feed net into the put-in hole.

Working along behind the bat-man is another crewman with a winch mounted on a heavy sled. A loop of heavy seine rope is pulled up out of an auger hole and connected to the winch. This does the heavy pulling—the bat-man is the navigator.

Rapidly, the seine is stretched out beneath the ice and is finally in position. When the bats "turn the corners" of the rectangle, the seine haul really begins. Down the home legs of the auger-hole pattern the bat-men guide the great net, followed by the power winch which alternately hauls the ends of the net. Finally, the bats on each end of the seine converge on the pull-out hole. They are lifted up on the ice and the seine ropes are attached to a winch for the final pull of the seine haul.

### Crowds Gather

By this time most of the crew is at the pull-out hole, and as the wings of the net are drawn up on the ice they are neatly folded by crewmen. Far out in the lake—

winched out of the pull-out hole. They were kicked out on the ice by watching crewmen, who continued to fold the net neatly a few yards away.

"Once you start pulling a seine under ice, you can't stop," O'Farrell said. "Sometimes you get a sharp weather drop and wind, but even if it gets to 20 below, you finish. It's a job you don't postpone." A seine, left overnight under ice during a severe cold snap, may have its entire cork line frozen to the under-surface of the ice. Then the net—sometimes nearly 6,000 feet long—must be chiseled out by hand.

More gizzard shad began to appear; mainly fish that had recently died under the ice. A 5-pound carp emerged, a crewman shouted "First fish!" and dipped the carp into a waiting fish box.

The bag of the seine was approaching the pull-out hole now, and the wings of the net began to show more fish. Now and then a small crappie emerged, was quickly freed, and released through a nearby hole in the ice.

A couple of crewmen with dip nets began giving their full attention to the seine as more and more struggling carp were hauled out on the ice. A 100-pound fish box was filled, and another drawn up to take its place. The crowd grew, and so did the catch. Carp became more frequent, and a 15-inch walleye appeared in the webbing, was quickly picked up and released in the nearby hole in the ice. Once game fish emerge in a net, they must be quickly returned to water. The shock of 10-degree air after

40-degree water can easily kill a sensitive walleye.

### The Jackpot

The edge of the bag appeared—the huge pocket which traps the majority of the fish. The "wings" of the seine are simply fences that drive fish toward the bag and into it. The big pocket of netting was drawn up into the pull-out hole and suspended there, almost solid with fish. Crewmen surrounded the hole and went to work with their dip nets. Shining, metallic gizzard shad—beautiful little fish that can ruin a lake—were scooped out on the ice. Carp were put into fish boxes, which were filled almost as soon as they were drawn up. A dozen spectators crowded in closely.

"Every now and then somebody steps into a hole," Chuck reflected. "We usually just fish them out with a dip net. Last summer at Lake Manawa, hundreds of people came down to watch us seine. At the end of the haul people were wading out in deep water in good business suits, just to see those fish and buy them."

A farmer had driven a pickup truck near the pull-out hole, and began scooping up gizzard shad. These are given away for feed and fertilizer; carp and buffalo are sold for human use. Other men crowded around the fish boxes and looked over the day's take. An excited hubbub rose from the crowd at the pull-out hole as a 12-pound walleye was carefully dipped up and released. This shook up the anglers in the crowd, and they began happily lying to each other about last summer's fishing. . .

O'Farrell was disgusted. Only about 3,000 pounds of fish had been taken. On other days, Chuck had taken 100,000 pounds of rough fish—50 tons or more of carp, buffalo and shad in a single sweep.

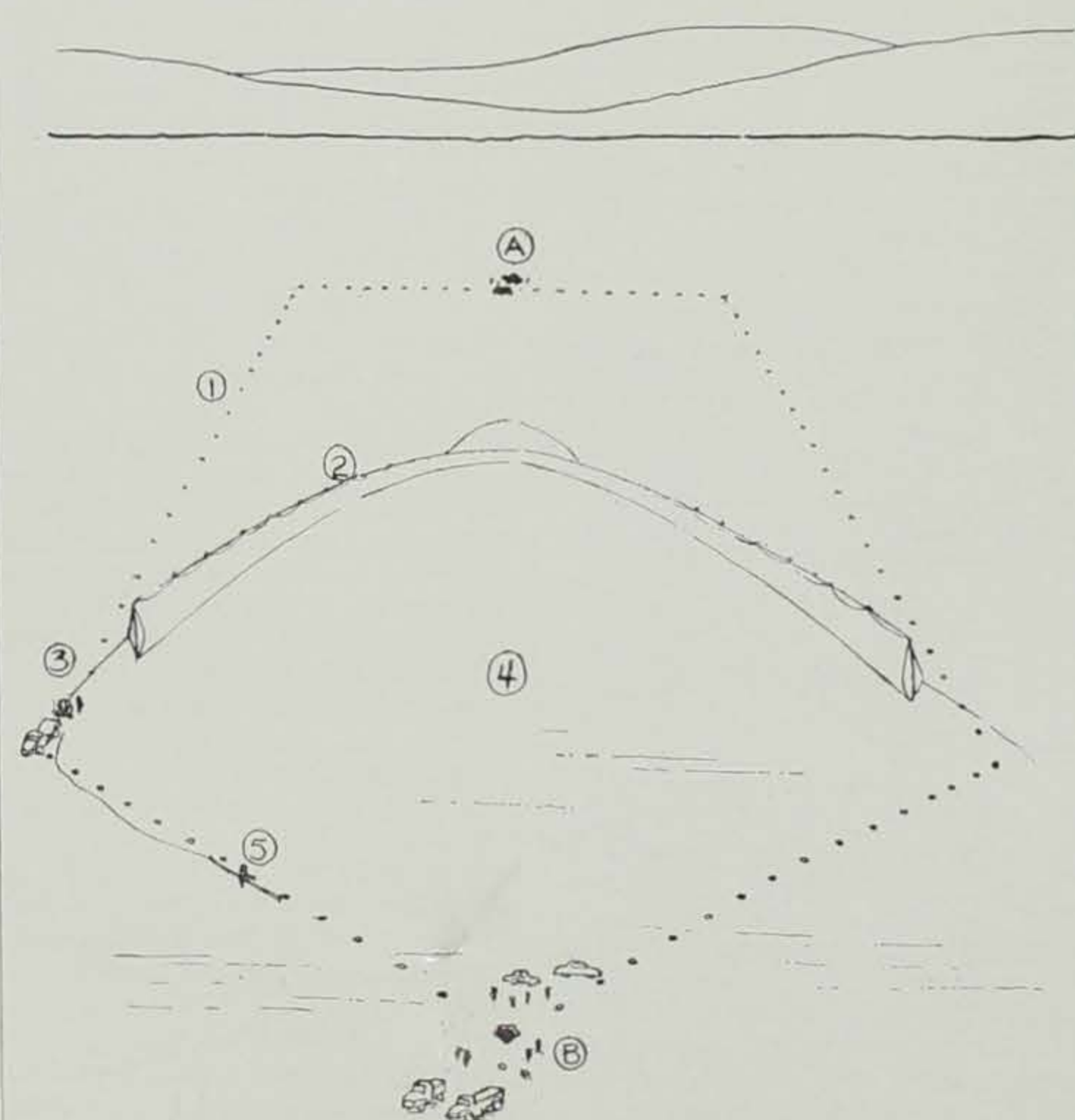
The boxes of carp were loaded on truck and driven to shore, where they were weighed and sold.

### Cripples Population

The rough fish program isn't self-supporting, and sales of carp and buffalo seldom pay more than half the bill. But the main dividend isn't revenue, but the benefit to game fish. For every rough fish removed from our lakes, a game fish is given a better chance. Weed fish, filling and choking a lake, may offer more competition than a game fish can take. There's room for just so many pounds of fish in an acre of lake, and the job of the rough fish crews is to tip the balance in favor of the game species.

Intensive seining in winter and summer can't eliminate a rough fish population, but it can cripple it. During 1954, 276,135 pounds of rough fish were removed from Storm Lake. In the first 6 months of 1955, 68,510 pounds were removed. In 1940, when Storm Lake was filled with stunted buffalo,

(Continued on page 16)



The "net field" of a seine haul is rectangular in shape—here shown in perspective. A. The put-in hole. B. The pull-out hole. 1. Holes drilled for steering bats and pulling seine. 2. The seine and bag. 3. Truck and winch pulling seine. 4. The "net field"—the water area being seined. 5. The bat-man, steering wooden bat under the ice.





## Confusion . . .

(Continued from page 9)

A few facts that should curl the hair of any conscientious wildlife worker: the average adult sportsman of today is not the forthright, erect, clear-eyed champion of our furred, finned and feathered tribes. He is actually the Jekyll and Hyde of the rod and gun world.

On one side he is the guy who rills to the sound of the wind in the trees, the smell of wood smoke and the tang of food cooked over the open fire. But on the other side is the fella who could shoot ticks on the water and louse up a farmer's friendship by cutting corners so Ferdinand can call on his side over in the next county.

Maybe that's pouring it on a little heavy. But at least the average modern sportsman is sure of himself, practicing what he preaches. Think not? Let's look in on a fairly typical meeting and see how it goes:

### Typical?

The scene opens on a small gathering of adult males huddled on the hard benches of a rural school's combination assembly hall and basketball court. A meeting of the Wildlife Willie Rod and Gun Club is in full session, attended by seven sportsmen and eight fish and game department employees. Everyone else is home watching TV.

Before a movie is shown we must have the minutes of the last meeting, old business, new business, election of officers and every member's personal play-by-play rehash of how he landed Old Sockeye.

Under new business, Si Smithers gets up and wonders out loud if the local warden can pull a few rings and get some deer meat from the department for the annual eat, burp, and go home meeting next month.

Next up is the chairman of the farm water fish committee. He wants to know, could the department scoop out the club's fish ponds, seine out the carp and suckers and throw in a load of 18-inch trout?

The head of the pollution com-

mittee stands. He's opposed to the department's threat to sue the Fermented Fertilizer Company for polluting Trout Creek. It seems he owns some stock in the company.

Doc Pritchert gets up next. He's considered an authority on hunting and fishing and newspapers piously refer to him as the "noted local sportsman". Well, Doc objects to the duck season. It was too early for late ducks and too late for early ducks, with the result that he only got his limit eight or ten times all season. They oughta close the pheasant season 'cause there ain't no birds. (There's no cover for birds, either but he doesn't mention that.)

The other four sportsmen are asleep by now, so we won't bother them. Finally a show of hands results in the secretary being told to write a letter to the department asking for a longer duck season, a closed pheasant season, a load of fish and some deer meat. Another poll shows what the assembled think of those silly laws the department wants, and the secretary promises to write the legislature.

This accomplished, one of the several sleepers arouses momentarily and shouts for adjournment.

### What To Do?

Call the above satire or sarcasm if you wish. But it's a fairly accurate picture of some of our sportsmen's meetings. Thank heaven a goodly number of clubs are not like the worse ones, or the future of wildlife would look even bleaker than it does.

How to correct the situation?

First of all, a sportsman's club should follow a golden, 4-point rule. From the day of organization these four objectives should be forever in their sights.

1. Adequate and qualified personnel in the fish and game agency.
2. Good laws and regulations based on sound research findings for these employees to work with.
3. A policy of protecting the agency from political meddling and unwarranted interference by the uninformed.
4. Education of club members and the general public in the fundamentals of sound resource management, through local and statewide conservation and information programs.

It's as simple as that. The sportsman's first move should be to demand a professionally staffed game and fish department, and a game and fish commission composed of men with a demonstrated interest in wildlife conservation in addition to political eligibility.

Once he has a department and a commission willing and able to establish and carry out sound programs, he should fight to see that the laws of the state are conducive to good management. He should then stand ready to protect the people and laws governing wildlife from any kind of political compromise. And perhaps the most important, he should support sound management himself by educating others and by actually practicing conservation in his local area.

For too many years now, sportsmen and game departments in many states have followed a defeatist, shallow, negative approach in trying to effect progress. Needed legislation fails to pass; greedy clubs and individuals vie for petty backyard patronage projects regardless of cost or feasibility; seasons and bag limits may be manipulated by public pressure in spite of biological fact; outside pressure groups aggressively defeat every attempt to enact even the most trivial laws needed for better management.

The 4-point program of sound sportsman support for sound conservation is one answer. Good organizations, working vigorously and intelligently, can accomplish more than all the discordant yelling of a hundred thousand "experts".

## Colyn Area . . .

(Continued from page 10)

It now runs in a diked channel between the two water bodies.

Construction on the area and changes in the Chariton's channel pose no flood problems to farmers. The Chariton itself will not be impounded and there will be no danger of it backing up under flood conditions. The straightened chan-

nel can handle even more water than certain parts of the present channel above the Colyn area. On the other hand, downstream flood threats have been reduced since over 11,000 acres of watershed that formerly fed the Chariton have been diverted to feed the two Colyn water areas.

Commission engineers are optimistic about the future of the two pools and the problems of silting. They point out that the Colyn watersheds are fairly well established and aren't eroding badly. Much of the watershed is in timber and pasture. Silting will occur, but is believed to be less serious than in other areas.

### Marginal Acres

Acquisition of the Colyn area began in February, 1953, and about 800 acres of land were bought for an average of \$42 per acre. These were submarginal acres; of greater value as conservation and recreation areas than as croplands. Construction and development cost \$102,000. Since the area is administered under the Federal Aid Program, the federal government pays 75 per cent of the bill and the state pays 25 per cent. The government funds accrued from federal excise taxes on sporting goods.

Lucas County has become a land of lakes. There will be two water areas in the Colyn area. A few miles east is Brown's Slough. Near Chariton, 10 miles north of Colyn, are three reservoirs and Red Haw Hill Lake, which held thousands of ducks last fall. Running north of Brown's Slough is the Honey Creek pilot watershed, one of three such developments in Iowa. It consists of a strict watershed management program that includes a long chain of farm ponds extending north.

Considering these areas—and the many farm ponds scattered through the country—the sports picture in central and southern Iowa is brightening. The lake regions of northern Iowa are as important as ever, but they no longer have the market cornered.



Old river channels will be about 15 feet deep when the pools are filled, and dangerous to wading anglers. Some timber was cleared from the basins; much will remain.



## Rotting Logs . . .

(Continued from page 12)

or not it lies in contact with the damp soil. Bacteria and the root-like threads of fungi—whose fruits are mushrooms—spread inward through pores and crevices in the dead wood, eating away some of it and leaving the remainder soft. The mushroom growths on the outside of the rotting log may include several sizes, shapes and colors: bracket types, puffballs, parasols, and some resembling a turkey gobbler's tail, oyster shells, or crusts.

There is little hint of the wealth of small animal life within until you pull off a big piece of loose bark. Ants, centipedes, millipedes, daddy-longlegs and beetles scurry away. On the exposed wood are artistic patterns made by the engraver beetle. A fiery red mite may creep under a shred of bark. Soon there is left no visible sign of life except tunnels into the softened wood and perhaps a silk-covered ball of spider eggs hidden in a crack.

Now roll the log over. On the moist underside there are likely to be sow bugs, slugs, snails, earthworms, spiders, crickets, firefly larvae and various beetles. There may be a salamander or two, a toad, a harmless snake, and a mouse's nest with her store of seeds. At this season all of these creatures are in their winter sleep, so be sure and roll the log back in place. Living and dying, generation after generation of them convert that wood back into soil, food and humus which a healthy forest must have.

There is drama and treasure in a rotting log.—*Forest Preserve District Bulletin.*

Several antlerless male mule deer, both fawns and adults, have been found in Utah in recent years. These animals were apparently fertile and capable of breeding. It is theorized that this anomaly could have been genetically caused.—*G.S.*

Wolves often weigh as much as 100 pounds. Coyotes are much smaller, seldom exceeding a maximum of 35 pounds.—*H.H.*

## "CONSERVATIONIST" INDEX

Two years have passed since an index has been compiled for the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST. We are working on one now covering 1954-55 and expect to have it completed about March 1. Many of our readers are planning to bind their CONSERVATIONISTS, and an index will be valuable. If you will mail us a card requesting the new index, it will be sent to you without cost when completed.



"Bats" are long, flexible boards that guide the net into seining position. Near the end of the seine haul, the bats are drawn out of the pull-out hole.

## Rough Fish Control . . .

(Continued from page 14)

seine hauls of 100,000 pounds were common.

Seining under ice is carried on in only a few lakes; Storm Lake, Black Hawk and North Twin. These lakes, with clean, even bottoms, are easily seined under winter conditions. Most of our other major lakes present reefs, snags or ice conditions that hamper seining in winter. A snagged net isn't too serious during the summer, but under two feet of ice the problem

is compounded. So the rough fish crews fish a few lakes heavily during the winter, and redouble their efforts on other big lakes during the spring, summer and fall. In the spring the efforts of the crews are reinforced by fish traps that take carp and buffalo as they run into shallows to spawn.

That's the job of the rough fish crews: culling the weed fish from our lakes during all seasons. In late winter it's a harsh, bitter job but one that has to be done. In our opinion, it takes good men to do it.

## CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS, ANGLERS!

When a 3-sided argument between bait caster, spin caster and spear fisherman threatened to break out into open warfare, a California publisher arranged a contest to see which method came out on top.

Each side picked ten men and they fished from the same boat, in the same California waters, and on the same day. A scoring system was worked out and four judges were named to supervise. The contest was held in the prolific waters off Catalina Island.

The spin fishermen scored the most points; the conventional tackle boys caught the most fish; the spectacular skin-divers brought up the biggest catches. So under the system agreed upon, the three groups finished in the above order. The margin of victory, based on the per-pound system, was a mere seven pounds, provided by a pair of log barracuda decked by the spinners. The conventional tackle team led the divers by an even smaller margin. So the contest proved little as far as the best fishing method is concerned. But it proved a number of things of far greater import.

The spinners proved that their light gear and thread lines caused no more tangles and troubles than

the bait casters' heavier tackle; the bait casters proved that they could land more fish per hookup than the spinners' light gear; and the divers proved that their activities in the water had not the slightest effect on line fishing.—*The Fisherman.*

## THE SUPREME PURISTS

Carp fishermen in England and Europe go at their sport with craftsman's care and preparation. In fact, they make many of our best trout fishermen appear to be superb blunderheads.

They take careful account of the weather before going out. They never touch their bait with their bare hands, often scenting them with an aromatic such as anise to kill carp-scaring human odor. They wear rubber-soled shoes and may also wear heavy stockings over these, and they cover their faces—for they are certain a carp spooks quickly at the sight of a white face—with bee veils or daub them with mud. When they sight a school of carp, they creep along the bank on all fours, stalking the fish until they begin to feed.—*Matt Thomas, Pennsylvania Angler.*

There are approximately 5,500 kinds of reptiles in the world. About 300 kinds live in the United States. The animals known as reptiles include alligators, crocodiles, lizards, snakes and turtles.—*H.H.*

## Wardens' Tales . . .

(Continued from page 11)

"If I was cold, the jackrabbit and the cottontails were also cold. The jack wasn't moving, and it finally dawned on me what was going on. The cottontails were pushing the jackrabbit, trying to get him started.

"I'm sure that any sportsman can witness the same thing if he will get up at daylight, crawl very slowly through some willow bats along a river on a very, very cold morning."

From Officer West Ashby of Fayette County, a note on the pileated woodpecker article in the January CONSERVATIONIST:

"You can add Fayette County to the list of counties in Iowa Bird-life as having pileated woodpeckers. They have not been at all uncommon here for at least 40 years.

"I don't believe, though, that they are as plentiful here as 20 or 30 years ago due without doubt to heavy timber cutting."

Thanks, Wes. Our omission of Fayette County in the list of "pileated counties" was an error.

Bob Daubendiek, officer in charge of Benton County, met a fisherman on the Cedar last summer who wasn't doing too well.

"He'd tried everything," Bob writes, "and disgustedly asserted that the fish just weren't hitting. I told him (just between buddies) of a boggy spot downriver that had lots of frogs—which would probably take bass in the very hole he'd had little success in.

"He said he had nothing to carry frogs in, anyway, even if he did catch some. I didn't have any containers with me, so I went on.

"Two hours later I passed him on my way downstream, and he happily swung up two lunker bass in one hand, and a small bag of kicking frogs in the other. He kicked one bare foot in the air and I realized that he had used one of his socks for a bait container."

## Wives . . .

(Continued from page 13)

the game I bring home as well as prepare it in the finest manner and for this I am very thankful.

I believe if more women would stop and think of these so called "little things", our divorce courts would do less business. My wife and I have been married sixteen wonderful years, and we have one daughter twelve who is growing up to be a sportswoman too and someday be the wife of a sportsman who like Mr. Bleakly and myself will give them our own special awards they so richly deserve.

God grant there are more wives like ours to make sports realize some of the best sports are home

Sincerely yours,  
Ralph Rothlauf  
Middletown, Iowa