

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Number 2

PRISON LABOR IN PARKS: A NEW PLAN WORKS

WATER NEEDS FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND RECREATION

By Lester F. Faber

Superintendent of Federal Aid
State Conservation Commission

Water is essential for the maintenance of human life. Without water, it is also essential to all forms of mammals, birds and fish. We wish to produce for the benefit of the people.

It is available to fish, wildlife and man in various ways, but only three classifications of surface water are of general interest. These are marshes, streams and lakes—each producing its own life forms and contributing to its own unique creation.

I purposely avoided the word "swamp" that so many people use to describe marsh areas. The word seems to carry a bad connotation, suggesting a source of unwholesome creatures and disease-carrying insects. To the uninitiated, scary tales about swamps are easily believed, because acre for acre a greater variety of creatures can be found there than anywhere else. Anyone bent on nature study can find more to interest him in a marsh, in any unit of time, than in any other water or land area.

Most Productive

Shallow ponds and marshes are the most productive of all aquatic habitats. The water depth varies from a few inches to several feet, and many desirable aquatic plants grow there and provide life requirements of many birds, mammals and fish.

When we think of marshes, we think of ducks. Marshes and shallow potholes are particularly attractive to Iowa waterfowl, especially the puddle ducks such as mallards, pintails and teal. Ducks are produced on or near water. They feed and rest in aquatic habitats and are usually harvested from blinds in marshes. Without such shallow potholes and marshes there would be few or no ducks. Another trademark of marshes and shallow lakes is the muskrat and his hay-mound home. Musk-

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State park roads, hammered by record traffic, must be constantly maintained. Here honor camp workers provide drainage for a roadway in Geode State Park. The new prison labor program has been hailed by prisoners and prison officials alike, and there have been no disciplinary problems.

By Norman A. Carlson
Sociologist
Iowa State Penitentiary
Fort Madison

In 1954, the Iowa General Assembly made a unique and important amendment to the State Code, providing for prison honor camps in state parks.

The act was entitled "An act to provide for the use of prisoners in the penitentiary or reformatory to perform services in the state parks." The Assembly set aside \$150,000 for the 1954-56 biennium so that the State Conservation Commission could establish, in cooperation with the Board of Control, a work program of rehabilitation in state parks.

To accomplish this program, state penal institutions would provide prison labor and certain expenses. The Conservation Commission would furnish a prison labor supervisor, housing and maintenance for the prisoners, and other expenses.

Such prison camps are not a new idea at penal institutions. For a number of years progressive penologists have realized that our maximum security institutions leave much to be desired in rehabilitating prisoners. While rehabilitation programs are now in effect in most institutions, their effectiveness is often questioned. It is difficult to accomplish desirable results in high-walled, security-minded prisons and reformatories.

Two Motives

Establishment of the Iowa honor camps was designed to serve a multiple purpose. The primary job was to rehabilitate prisoners assigned to the various outdoor projects.

A second reason is the rundown condition of many of our state parks. The Conservation Commission wants to improve and maintain the state parks and forests, but cannot do so for lack of funds. With prison labor, many projects can be completed at a nominal cost.

The first prison crew work on a park project began October 3, 1955, at Wapsipinicon State Park. Prisoners for this initial program were furnished from the Anamosa

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MORE ON IOWA MOUNTAIN LIONS

By John Madson

During early January, Iowa's famed panthers again prowled through the columns of Hawkeye newspapers.

A Des Moines resident had sighted a "black panther" in his back yard that had frightened his tabby out of eight of its nine lives.

A few weeks earlier in the soft earth of a cornfield near Lamoni, hunters found a giant pawprint of what they believed to be a moun-

tain lion, and even made a plaster cast of the big pug mark.

The plaster cast of the Lamoni Lion's spoor was sent to the Conservation Commission in Des Moines, and another colorful report perished.

It was a big print, roughly the size of the coffee can lid on which it was mounted. About five inches wide and almost that long, the cast plainly showed clawmarks. It was obviously the print of a large dog.

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ARE YOU A SPORTSMAN?

Someone estimated once that only about 5 per cent of the so-called "sportsmen" of this nation are deserving of the term in its true meaning. What would you have done in a situation similar to the following?

State Game Ranger L. E. Crawford, while checking dove hunting areas near Lawton, Oklahoma, recently came upon Attorney Charles Bledsoe, and his 16-year-old son, Charles, Jr., of Lawton, repairing a damaged farm fence through which they had seen other hunters driving their automobile a few moments before.

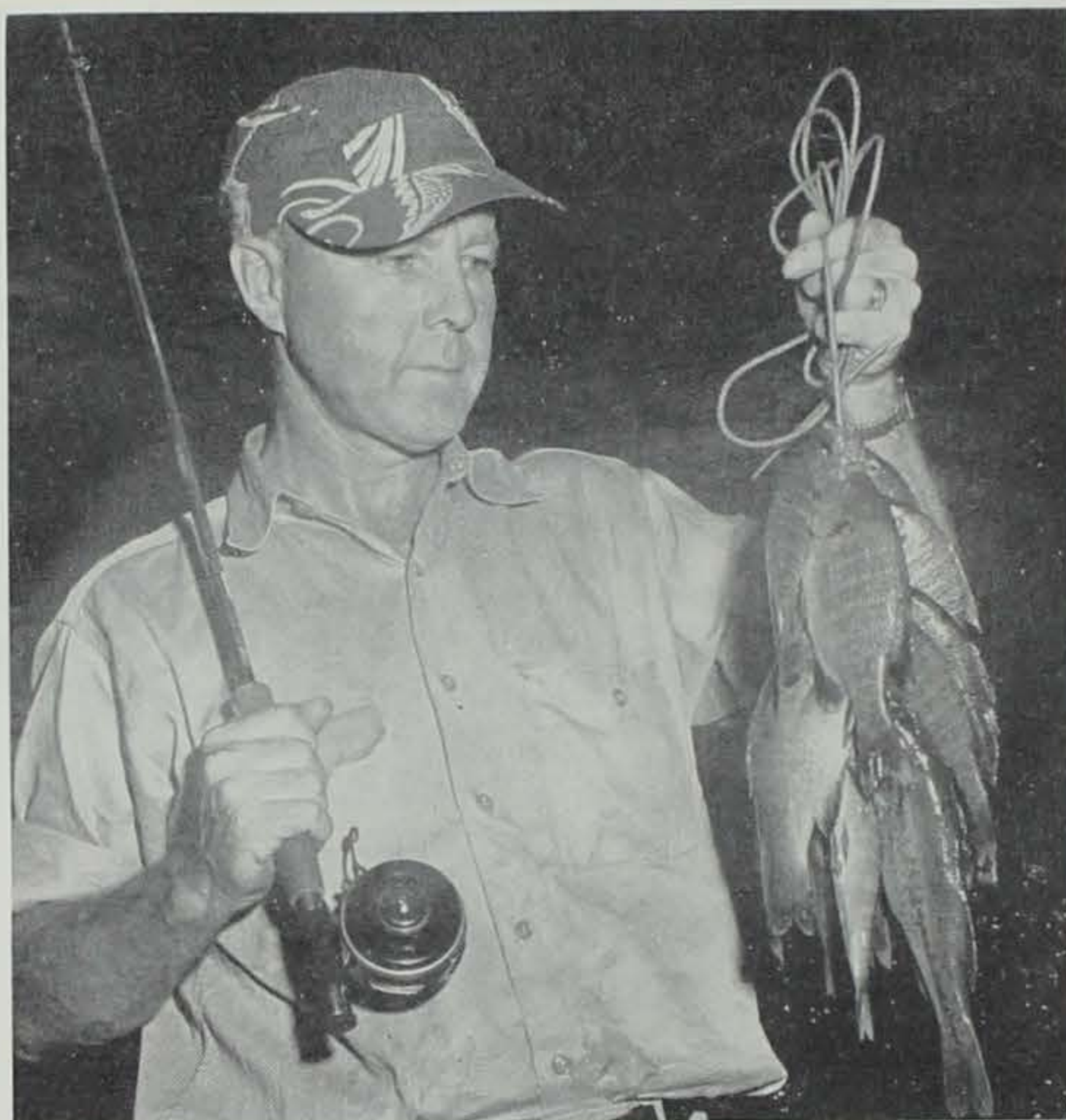
Crawford learned that the attorney and his son had permission of the farmer to hunt on his land, while the other hunters did not. The ranger also learned that Bledsoe always carries a hammer, pliers, and staples to repair fences when he finds them damaged.

"I didn't want the farmer to think we cut his fence," Bledsoe said, "and thereby probably gain his condemnation of all hunters. Besides, I want my son to learn good sportsmanship and courtesy in the field."

This act of good sportsmanship cost them their hunting that evening," Crawford commented, "because it took them an hour to repair the damage the other hunters had done. But the Bledsoes will probably be welcome on that farm, and anywhere else they ask permission to hunt in the future."

Are you a real sportsman?—
Outdoor Notes.

Excellent crappie and bluegill fishing may sometimes be had in crowded dock areas. While other anglers explore for fish far and wide in boats, some veteran fishermen simply walk along long docks, trailing a small fly or minnow near the pilings where crappies and other panfish may congregate.



The lid's been lifted from bluegill fishing, and there will be no catch limits during the coming season. Bluegills and sunfish benefit from heavy angling that thins populations; provides bigger, less-crowded fish.

NEW FISHING REGULATIONS SET

The 1957-58 Iowa fishing laws have been set by the State Conservation Commission, with few changes from last year. The new laws are effective from March 1, 1957, to March 1, 1958.

The only important change in the regulations was the removal of all catch limits from bluegills and sunfish, on which there will be no daily catch or possession limits for the coming fishing year.

Commission biologists said that the restrictions on bluegills and sunfish were lifted in an effort to control these prolific little game fish in all Iowa waters, particularly in artificial lakes and reservoirs. Many Iowa lakes and ponds are

overstocked with panfish, and it is believed that fish populations and anglers would benefit by a lack of restrictions on bluegills and sunfish.

Other fishing regulations remained virtually unchanged, except for slight variations in the opening dates which follow the policy of opening all hunting and fishing seasons on Saturdays.

No daily catch and possession limit on bullheads in West Okoboji, East Okoboji, Spirit, Hottes, Marble, Upper Gar, Lower Gar and Minnewashta lakes in Dickinson County; High and Ingham lakes and Cunningham Slough in Emmet County; Lost Island Lake in

INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE

Kind of Fish	Open Season	Daily Catch Limit	Possession Limit*	Minimum Length or Weight	Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and inland waters of Lee County
Sheepshead, Redhorse, Suckers, Gizzard Shad, Carp, Buffalo, Quillback, Gar, Dogfish, Chub, Sunfish, Bluegill	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Rock Sturgeon, Pad-dlefish	Continuous	15	30	5 lb	Same as inland waters
Sand Sturgeon	Continuous	15	30	1 lb	Same as inland waters
Bullheads	Continuous	25	50	None	Same as inland waters except no catch or possession limit
Crappie, Yellow Bass, Silver Bass, Warmouth Bass, Rock Bass, Perch	Continuous	15	30	None	Same as inland waters
Trout—All species	Continuous	8	8	None	Same as inland waters
Minnows	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters
Frogs—(except bullfrogs)	May 11—Nov. 30	4 doz	8 doz	None	Same as inland waters
Bullfrogs—(Rana catesbeiana)	May 11—Nov. 30	1 doz	1 doz	None	Same as inland waters
Catfish—(except bullheads)	Continuous	8	16	None	Continuous open season with no catch or possession limit
Walleye, Sauger	May 11—Feb. 15	5	10	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Northern Pike	May 11—Feb. 15	3	6	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season
Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass	May 25—Feb. 15	5	10	None	Same as inland waters except continuous open season

*Not to exceed more than fifty (50) fish of all kinds in the aggregate except that this aggregate possession limit shall not apply to fish in this table on which there is no daily catch limit.

BOUNDARY WATERS

Palo Alto County and Crystal Lake in Hancock County.

Where waters are located within the confines of state, city, municipal parks, etc., fishing will be permitted only when such areas are open to the public.

This order shall not apply to commercial fishing.

A LETTER FROM DENMARK

The Iowa Conservationist
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Sirs:

The following small manuscript which I received from Mr. Carl Jensen, Dragor, Denmark, might be of interest to you.

The original is in Danish, and I translated it at his request. As you may be aware, the Danes are very conservation-minded and are great lovers of nature and most of them observe things rather closely.

I remember that my grandfather put up nest boxes for starlings in Denmark and they were not a pest—at least at that time. Somehow natural enemies kept them in check.

I believe there was a law passed in Denmark in 1818 that required all who cut an acre of timber to plant another acre. Many people planted more than they were required to, and the result is that Denmark has more timber now than 150 years ago.

If you wish to print this, do not give me any credit. I only translated it.

Thank you,
Paul S. Nielsen
Missouri Valley, Iowa

Mr. Jensen's narrative:

For a person who has an eye open for the wild nature and animal life, there are many things to make one feel happy.

It was a fall day some years ago that I saw something that made me wonder. The starlings were leaving for the south over the east coast of Amager, a small island south of our capital. Here I saw a flock of starlings that were acting rather peculiar.

About four or five hundred starlings were flying in close formation like a ball about twenty or thirty meters up in the air. They would dive up and down almost to the turf over and over again. But the peculiar thing was that this doing was in absolute silence, quite contrary to the otherwise noisy behavior of this kind of bird.

Then I noticed something brown on the sea meadow and that was what the starlings were trying to hit. I thought that it might be a hare that the starlings were teasing or perhaps playing with.

I got somewhat closer without the starlings seeming to take any offense. Great was my astonishment when I saw that the brown object was a hawk that had a starling in one of its talons. Every time the bird flock dived at the hawk it had to duck and could not get to eat the starling. And it happened very fast with only a few seconds between the strikes. Evidently the starlings were trying to get their fellow bird free from the hawk's talons.

Then the hawk saw me and let the starling free and it flew out towards the shore followed by the whole mass of starlings.

But the most curious thing was that the starling that had been so close to death had not been hurt at all, and after it had straightened its feathers it soon joined its fellow starlings.

I could not help but think how wonderful nature was.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Jack Musgrove compares a common Iowa crow (left) with the great northern raven. The crow is a large bird, but the raven shown is the biggest member of the crow family, with a wingspan of over fifty inches.

THE FIRST RAVEN

John Madson

A huge northern raven, a bird which there is no previous authentic Iowa record, has been positively identified and added to the state's collection of birds.

The raven—which appeared to be a giant crow—was shot during duck season by Art Weik, a Spirit Lake hunter, who killed the bird on Potter's Slough in Dickinson County.

"I was in my duck blind when the raven sailed in over the tree-tops," Weik said. "I thought it was a big crow and shot it. As soon as I examined it, I knew that wasn't a crow. Not only were the beak and feet different, but it was a very big bird."

Later measurements of the raven showed a body length of nearly 20 inches and a wingspan of 51 inches—just nine inches shy of the feet.

Kept Bird

Luckily for the records, Weik realized that he had taken an unusual bird and placed it in his home freezer. He called Billy Bass, Conservation Officer for Dickinson County. Bill sent the raven to Jack Musgrove of the State Historical Building, who positively identified it as a northern raven, *Corvus corax principalis*. The bird was skinned, mounted, and added to the museum's Iowa bird collection.

It is the first northern raven ever positively known to occur in Iowa. In 1952, waterfowl biologist James Weik identified the remains of a raven found along Spirit Lake by

the late Frank Marnette as a raven. The identification hinged on a beak, skull and some feathers, and it was not possible to determine the species.

Old Records

Years ago, a few ravens were reported in the state. It is thought that they may have been western or American ravens (*Corvus corax sinuatus*).

Audubon once recorded "a fine, large raven that passed us at about 100 yards" at the mouth of the Little Sioux River in western Iowa.

Thomas Say, in 1820, observed a raven at the Engineer Cantonment with young that were nearly able to fly.

In 1833, Prince Maximillian recorded an observation of a raven near the Nishnabotna River in southwestern Iowa.

In 1872, T. M. Trippe stated: "A resident of Decatur County who had become familiar with the raven in the northwest assures me that he has occasionally seen it in this county."

In 1900, George Berry reported that a correspondent had observed a raven near Rockford, Iowa, feeding with crows.

But until 1952, no other reports. Until last fall, the collections were empty of the big, gloomy birds.

Smaller Ravens

The ravens cited above were probably all western species, which are smaller than the great northern raven—the largest living member of the crow family. This raven is now found in wild northern forests and the inaccessible wastes of Canada and Labrador. They have been reported in northern Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, but have

never been common anywhere in their range.

This is a big, blue-black bird which does not "caw," but has a deep, hoarse croak. It is a powerful flier that may fight mock battles in the air with other large birds, and sometimes—for no apparent reason—may tumble and roll in flight. It eats anything edible. It can be domesticated and even taught a few simple words. It is a stern, wary bird that mates for life and has been recorded as living for nearly 70 years. Yet, in its own grave, macabre sort of way, the raven may even be playful.

"Coyote Tag"

Murie tells of a coyote and western raven that "fought" over a morsel of food. The coyote repeatedly charged the raven which easily eluded the wild dog but stayed in the game. He writes: "It appeared that both animals evidently enjoyed the fun, for the raven could easily have flown away to escape if it were annoyed, and . . . the coyote . . . was well fed by abundant carrion, and would not have been so persistent unless he were enjoying the play."

Unlike his little cousin, the crow, the raven evidently causes no crop damage anywhere in his range. Ravens are simply wilderness birds, and have little truck with man or his interests.

For that reason, there's little possibility that ravens will ever be seen in Iowa in any numbers. The recent specimen that drifted into northwestern Iowa was ultra-rare, driven into the state for reasons we'll never know.

Wardens Tales

Shop Talk from the Field

Bob Daubendiek, Conservation Officer of Winneshiek and Howard Counties, has come up with another of his mouth-watering dishes.

It's smoked venison link sausage, and—take it from us—it's as good as it sounds.

Bob writes: "From my deer I have the butcher save out several choice steaks, and put the rest of the meat into sausages. Most locker plants, for a small fee, will be glad to trim out the deer, add the required portions of pork and seasoning, and stuff and smoke the links."

"The deer sausages are then wrapped in one or two-pound packages and frozen. They will keep



well for six or eight months, provided you haven't told too many friends about them. People seem to drop in for breakfast when the word gets around."

"Three or four of these venison sausages, nestled up against a couple of eggs or a stack of buckwheat cakes, gives a person a pretty good start on a frosty morning."

Ward Garrett, Conservation Officer of Pottawattamie County, notes that most officers have gray hair, and sends in a news clipping that helps explain why.

Voice on the phone: "Are you the game warden?"

Game Warden: "Yes, I am."

Voice on the phone: "Thank goodness I have the right person at last. Would you please give me some suggestions for a child's birthday party?"

Bob Daubendiek, former conservation officer at Vinton and now assigned to Winneshiek County, came up with this one recently:

"It was opening day of the squirrel season, and I heard a fellow banging away in the dark, damp Cedar River bottoms early in the morning. I thought he must either be having very good luck or was in trouble, so I went over."

"As the fog lifted, I saw about a dozen redbirds circling the hunter, who was shooting at them. As the cardinal is a protected bird, I told him that he'd best hold his fire."

"'Cardinals, heck,' he answered. 'Those are mosquitoes full of my blood, and I want it back!'"

Fisheries biologist Jim Mayhew recently got a taste of his own medicine in southern Iowa, and survived a shocking experience.

Jim and his helpers were shocking Lake of Three Fires on a test survey of fish when Jim lost his footing in the boat and toppled into the water between the two electrodes of the 110 volt shocking unit.

He took a good jolt of waterborne electricity before he escaped from the electrical field, but it didn't take him long to get out of the water. You might say that he was galvanized into action.

TIME AND DIRECTION

To find directions with your watch, point the hour or little hand in the direction of the sun. Halfway between the hour hand and 12 is south. If the sky is overcast and no sun is visible, hold a splinter of wood vertical from the center of your thumbnail. It is almost always possible to see a shadow cast by the splinter, and thus determine the location of the sun.—Outdoor Notes.

The larvae of dragonflies are fully aquatic, and are highly predacious. These little creatures have been known to attack and steal bait from fish hooks.



A cold February means easy fish cleaning. Once walleyes are solidly frozen, they can be quickly "shucked." Make a cut (left) down the back of the fish just through the skin.



Then peel the frozen skin off the sides (right). The thin belly flesh will tear loose, taking the innards with it. No muss, no fuss.

ICEFISHING THE MISSISSIPPI

John Carlton
Outdoor Editor
Dubuque Telegraph Herald

Editor's Note: Much of our good icefishing comes fairly late in the winter, and the Mississippi River often produces good walleye, sauger and panfish angling in February. Such fishing calls for caution, however, and ice should be carefully checked. The Iowa walleye and sauger season is now closed in all waters but the Mississippi, Missouri, and inland waters of Lee County.

There is fast growing today an element in our society which is completely content to stand in defiance of the bitter northern winters and do nothing more than fish through a hole in the ice.

To this man, the experience in the most cruel period of winter is just as rich and meaningful as that of the trout fisherman whose line sings through the air in the chill of early spring; or of the deep sea angler who fights the giants of the deep with the salt spray in his face.

A fisherman is a fisherman the world over, and the man who drops his line into a hole he has patiently chiseled through the ice is certainly no exception.

Sometimes it's enough for the uninitiated to merely look on while strings of crappies or sunfish come swinging out of the hole in the ice. For the more hardy objector, the tug of a big bass, walleye or northern on the end of his line and the subsequent thrill as his catch emerges from the hole is enough to convert any man. If not, then he can not be considered a worthy member of the fishin' fraternity.

Despite quite a few obstacles confronting icefishing in various parts of the midwest, an ever-increasing number of sportsmen are becoming avid disciples of the sport. Those in the Upper Mississippi federal refuge area, which embraces parts of Iowa, Illinois,

Minnesota and Wisconsin, are no different. But last year in Minnesota 200,000 residents fished through the ice, and the number of ice-fishermen in the other states of the refuge has grown in similar fashion.

Among the problems to be overcome are a general lack of access roads to many productive fishing areas of the Mississippi, keeping warm in late winter, and learning the many tricks of icefishing which produce consistent success.

The whole of the Upper Mississippi Refuge is open to fishing with two exceptions: one at Guttenberg, Iowa, and one at Genoa, Wisconsin. On the Iowa side of the Mississippi, much of the best icefishing may be found at Zollkoffer's Lake and Mud Lake, both near Dubuque; with good fishing at Lynxville, North Buena Vista, Specht's Ferry and Waupeton. The popular catches are sunfish, crappies, bass, north-erns and walleyes.

Obviously, much depends on the condition of the ice in many regions. Fishing is good on the river, especially along the wingdams for walleyes if it has been cold enough

to build thick ice. The Mississippi will freeze completely over in extremely cold weather, with the ice reaching a thickness up to 30 inches. But the river can be treacherous, and snow and springs may prevent adequate freezing.

On the Wisconsin side of the tri-state area the most popular and productive area is Bertram Lake south of Cassville. There is now an access road to it and bait is available from dealers. The region north of McCartney is also good with much success reported at Lynn Hollow to the south. Roads are open to each area. Quite a bit of icefishing is done on the 12-mile slough north of Cassville but the road to the slough, though passable, is rough.

It's interesting to note the probable procedure of an Upper Mississippi ice fisherman. He knows that what he wears is of prime importance and probably chooses heavy sheeplined boots and down-filled clothing. He wants to be comfortable on the ice, for it is usually the coldest weather he must face. He will no doubt don the old standby—long underwear—

and two pairs of heavy socks and heavy gloves or mittens.

Icefishing on the Mississippi is no different from other types of angling in many respects. First, the fishermen won't hesitate to go where the fish seem to be biting. You may find yourself surrounded by busy ice-chippers after you've pulled in a good string of panfish or a big walleye. And, as in all forms of fishing, there arises the ancient question: "What do you do if they're not biting?" There are several answers to this question and the ice angler with the savvy doesn't often go home disappointed.

Of prime importance is the variation in depth at which to set the hook. Moving the bait up or down experimentally can often produce the desired results. Harley Lawrence, refuge manager for the Dubuque-Guttenberg district, says the most successful depth is about two feet from the bottom.

It is also important to have lively, moving baits. A minnow should be hooked through the back, not the spine, so that it will remain in motion in the water. It is best to keep the bait moving unless the current does this itself.

Morning and evening fishing seem to be the best although some anglers fish for different species at different times.

And, of course, keep your eye on the bobber. For most of you, such advice is not necessary. Much of the fascination of icefishing is watching as the bobber plunges down into the icy water, and everything else is forgotten in the thrill of one of our fastest growing winter sports.

NEW IOWA SHINER IDENTIFIED

A state fisheries biologist recently reported a shiner minnow that represents the first valid record of the species in Iowa.

Biologist Tom Moen took eight of the small fish last fall in West of Okoboji during routine fisheries survey work. He sent some of the specimens to Dr. Reeve Bailey at the University of Michigan for positive identification.

Bailey said that the shiners were pugnose shiners, *Notropis anogenus* Forbes, and that the fish represented the valid record of that species in Iowa. He wrote: "Thus it is very nice to have a substantial definite record that is not only the first from Iowa, but the first verified locality for the species for the entire Missouri drainage."

Moen said that the shiner was formerly listed as being found in Iowa, largely because it was thought that the fish should occur in the state.

Iowa's "newest fish" is a typical small shiner minnow about four and one-half inches long, with black nose and checkered pattern along the back and sides.



The open water below the Mississippi channel dams often produces good walleyes and saugers in February. Such water is extremely dangerous, and "inlanders" should be accompanied by local experts.

JACKRABBIT JACKPOT

Although milady might not care to know it, there's more rabbit in her mink coat than she realizes.

In fact, northern Iowa jackrabbits have had quite a bit to do with mink coats lately. And now that the season is over and there's no danger of starting a rabbit-rush to northwestern Iowa, a yarn can be spun.

For the past two winters at least, northwestern and northern Iowa hunters have had a pretty good thing in supplying jackrabbits to mink ranches. With rising feed prices and a possible decrease in available horseflesh, many mink owners have turned to jackrabbits for mink food.

Under Iowa law, rabbits may be legally sold if they are legally reduced to the hunter's possession. They are the only species of protected Iowa game that may still be market hunted.

The jackrabbit market in northwestern Iowa has evidently become fairly well organized. Although hunters may sell the carcasses directly to mink breeders or commercial feed houses, they usually sell them to middlemen who may be farmers, furbuyers, or almost anyone. According to Jack Meggers, Conservation Officer for Lyon and Osceola Counties, the jackrabbits may bring 70 cents when sold to a middleman, who may sell them to a mink breeder or produce house for 90 cents or more. Commercial feed houses usually mix the rabbit flesh with other products for mink feeds.

This winter, "jackrabbit jobbers" were buying all the carcasses that hunters brought them. One Sioux

Falls, South Dakota, fur buyer is said to have purchased 4,000 Iowa jackrabbits.

Bill Basler, Conservation Officer for Dickinson County, said that he has seen "pickup trucks filled with jackrabbits being taken to South Dakota and southern Minnesota." In some parts of northwestern Iowa, unlawful night hunting became a serious problem as hunters sought to cash in on the bunny boom.

Meggers tells of seeing pickup trucks so full of jackrabbit carcasses that rabbits bounced out when the trucks hit bumps. Over 200 jackrabbits can be loaded in a standard pickup truck.

Meggers also contends that Iowa jackrabbits command premium prices on the mink-chow market. Big, heavy and well-fleshed, they make better mink feed than their scrawnier cousins on the great plains. The fur of Iowa whitetail jackrabbits is also more valuable, since its winter color is quite light and is easily dyed.

Rabbit fur has evidently become a money-maker. Meggers reports that some prime Iowa jackrabbit fur has been sold on the New York market for prices ranging up to \$1.45. For the 1955-56 North Dakota trapping season, for example, the total fur take was valued at \$845,042. More than half of this total accrued from jackrabbit pelts!

Some buyers think that the boost in American rabbit fur values may reflect a decreased world supply of rabbit fur. Australia, long plagued with a vast rabbit population, has introduced myxomatosis in an effort to control its rabbit scourge.

(Continued on page 112)



North Iowa whitetail jackrabbits produce excellent fur and meat. The fur is thick, light-colored, and easily dyed. In good flesh, the big hares may weigh seven pounds.



Official lakes and other major developments entail careful planning. A new commissioner soon learns that these projects represent many persons, their recommendations, and long study sessions.

POINT OF VIEW

Arthur R. MacArthur

Secretary
Wisconsin Conservation Commission

Before I was appointed to the Conservation Commission about a year and a half ago, my point of view was not unlike that of many other citizens deeply interested in conservation.

When an open season or some particular wildlife management practice didn't seem to make sense, I was ready to question the wisdom of the commission's actions. Sometimes I asked questions and learned some of the reasons behind the decision, but often I just wondered why things were done as they were.

Now, from a commissioner's point of view, I can see the fallacy of trying to criticize with only limited background knowledge. I find that such things as the setting of the fish and game seasons are the result of study sessions by a number of committees and boards and the recommendations of many individuals.

Also, management plans generally are a part of larger Conservation Department projects and plans which are usually based on commission policies. These Commission policies often are founded on actions by the Legislature, inter-agency agreements or court decisions. From my new point of view I can see the complicated detail of these actions and find that most decisions are the result of careful deliberations and consideration.

Not Infallible

I do not mean to imply that the Conservation Commission or department are infallible in all they do. That isn't the case, for mistakes have been made and will be made in the future. There is ample

room for argument and differences of opinion on these subjects so dependent on the knowledge of biology and human relations. It must be admitted that many of the tools with which we work are still not in the category of indisputable facts, but often are only half-truths or opinions based on limited experience. This constant potential for error is what breeds controversy and makes the conservation field so interesting.

In full recognition of these limitations and problems, I am happy to report that from my new point of view it seems evident that much progress is being made. We are constantly searching for new scientific facts through our research projects so these new truths will assure better resource management. We are endeavoring to find new methods of mutual cooperation with other agencies, institutions, organizations, and any group interested in the restoration and intelligent management of soils, waters, forests and cover as well as fish and other wildlife.

For instance, in a single national effort such as the Soil Bank Program we are very much involved in cooperative relations with other groups as well as individual farmers.

Impressed

Since becoming a commissioner I have been particularly impressed by the large volume of action materials produced by the department in the form of plans, progress reports, routine statistics, orders and policy recommendations. It takes a considerable amount of time even to read and analyze these items which already have been selected as most vital. To say that conservation in Wisconsin is "big business" may be trite, but it is something we should not forget.

The administration of an annual

(Continued on page 112)



Prison labor crews have spent much effort in widening park roads and providing additional picnic, parking and recreational areas. Jacks of all trades, they are doing an excellent job.

Prison Labor . . .

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Reformatory about two miles away from the park. The work crew consisted of 10 men and one guard, and the crew returned to the reformatory for all meals.

While on this project, the men have improved fencing, road drainage and trails, repaired and rebuilt latrines, tables and benches, cleared up fallen trees and created additional picnic areas, and have built prefabricated latrines and paint sheds for other parks. They have made entrance signs for many other parks and areas.

A second honor camp was begun on January 10, 1955, at Shimek State Forest near Farmington, about ten miles south of the Fort Madison Penitentiary. Fifteen men and one guard from Fort Madison were assigned to the project. The men are transported to the forest each day, leaving the prison at 6:30 a.m. and returning at 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Noon meals are eaten in the forest.

The first step of the Shimek project was a mess hall where the men could eat their noon meals. Work roads and latrines were also constructed before forestry work was commenced.

This work is general forestry; clearing brush, pruning trees, and cutting surplus timber. It is thought that the project at Shimek will furnish eight or 10 years' work.

Docks and Beaches

The third project was set up at Geode State Park near Danville, about 20 miles northwest of Fort Madison. There are now 20 prisoners and three guards in this camp.

The first job at Geode was to complete a new home for the park custodian, construction that was begun by the C.C.C. With this completed, the men began rebuilding

the custodian's former home, and the prisoners moved into the camp on May 1, 1956.

In the first six months of the Geode Project, the men completed the park officer's home, finished their camp, built a large picnic area and two parking lots, and completed a boat dock. A swimming beach and bath house were constructed in time for summer use.

There is another five years' work to be done in the park. Road work is being done, and more picnic areas and parking facilities are being constructed. During the winter the men overhaul and paint state equipment in the shop which has been built at the camp. Work plans call for the men being busy the year around.

Restricted Weekends

During the day the Geode work crew may be anywhere within the 1500-acre park, but at night and on weekends they are restricted to the area of the camp itself. This restricted area runs down to the lake, so the men have access to swimming and fishing. Recreational facilities include basketball, croquet, softball, horseshoe pitching, radio and television.

The State Conservation Commission supplies a supervisor for the prison work crews. This officer di-



Joe Brill, prison labor manager for the Conservation Commission, outlines and supervises all work done by prisoners. A former park conservation officer, Brill has long experience with park problems.

rects the work program carried on at the camps. He plans the work to be done, instructs the prisoners, and supervises the work during the job assignment.

Guards are drawn from the regular guard complements at the reformatory and penitentiary. The quality of guards in such honor camps is a vital factor, for a poor officer could have disastrous effects in an honor camp. Guards and prisoners are so closely associated in the camps that the officers must be of the highest caliber. The guards now assigned to the Iowa honor camps are very competent, and get along well with the prisoners.

Screening Inmates

For such a program, institution officials must consider several factors: the projects should last at least five years, there should be no transportation problems to or from the projects, and the jobs should be located away from local population centers such as towns and resorts.

Prisoners assigned to such camps must be well chosen. At the penitentiary, all job assignments are made by the Deputy Warden. All assignments outside the walls must be approved by the warden. Names of men considered for outside assignment are submitted to the Classification Committee that makes recommendations for or against outside placement. So all men sent to the honor camps are approved by three separate offices, and poor risks are eliminated.

Factors considered before making an outside work assignment include:

1. General institutional adjustment as shown by the prisoner's work and conduct records.
2. Records of the prisoner from other institutions or previous sentences.
3. Emotional and mental stability, based on tests and interviews.
4. Outside reports from committing judge, county attorney, sheriff and police, welfare departments and employers.
5. Nature of the charge. Men serving time for drunken driving, for example, have proven to be good security risks. Men on charges of car theft and similar offenses are poorer risks.
6. Escape record.
7. Length of time yet to serve. Men whose time is growing short are generally given favorable consideration unless they appear grossly unstable. Men who might otherwise be good risks may not be considered simply because they have a long sentence to serve.
8. Men with a poor family situation at home which might cause them anxiety are not considered good risks.
9. Men with detainees—imprisoned in Iowa but also wanted for crimes in other states—are never considered.
10. Mature men are generally

given preference over younger men.

A Good Record

In the time the projects have been in operation, no disciplinary problems have arisen. None of the men have escaped, attempted to escape, or caused any difficulty although they range from "short-timers" to "lifers."

One of the greatest values, we think, of such a program is to the men who are nearing the ends of their sentences. Prisoners accustomed to the highly regimented life of a penal institution may face serious problems upon their release. If such men can be placed in an honor camp atmosphere before their release, they will be given a controlled taste of eventual freedom, providing a gradual preparation for the complete freedom soon to be granted.

When the Iowa program of honor camps and state park labor crews was begun, many people questioned it. But the entire program has succeeded beyond the most optimistic estimates. Many plans have been drawn up to extend this program in the future. Other state parks near the prison and reformatory will be used for honor camps. There has been talk of building trailers so that mobile camps can travel from area to area as work exists.

Whatever the plan, a program such as this should be extended wherever possible. The program is a credit to the administration of Iowa penal institutions, and indicates modern, progressive penal methods in our state.

WINDIES FROM THE OZARKS

There are three tall ones I especially like in Vance Randolph's book, "We Always Lie to Strangers." One is about the boys who threw bags of starch into crooked Ozark streams: Big fish swallowed the bags while our fishermen walked down to the first river bend. When the starched fish came along they were so stiff they couldn't make the turn and were easily harpooned.

And then there is Clarence Sharp, the resourceful duck hunter, who has a gun that kills so far up he has to put salt on the pellets to keep the birds from spoiling before they hit the ground. But my favorite is the one about the old hunter who was asked what gauge shotgun he used. "Well," he reflected, "I can't exactly call the number of it, but she's a pretty big gun. Whenever it needs cleaning we just grease a roundhog and run him through the barrel!"

—Outdoor Notes

Fish of the trout family lay large eggs in comparatively small numbers. Other fish, such as the minnow family which includes the carp, may lay tremendous numbers of very small eggs.



Jim Sherman Photo.

When Iowa river use is considered, we shouldn't forget the kids. A canoe trip down a clean, forest-rimmed Iowa stream is a landmark in a boy's life.

Water Needs . . .

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Like ducks, may live their entire lives in this type of habitat. From the day the animal is born in the mud and reed house until it dies from strife, disease or predation, the water area provides living quarters for this valuable bearer.

Within the marsh are also the snails, herons, bitterns, grebes, otters, and a number of reptiles, amphibians and teeming smaller life. Normally the marsh borders contain the grasses and plant communities that provide food and cover for pheasants, rabbits, muskrats, mink, and a host of other creatures. Some of our Iowa marshes provide excellent habitat for many fishes. If the water is deep enough to support fish life through the winter, the marshes also provide recreation in fishing for northern pike, bass, yellow perch, bluegills, bullheads and carp.

Few Remain

Much has been said on theorny subject of drainage of marshes as opposed to preservation and restoration of shallow lands and marshes. It should be early understood that our position has been against unwise and practical drainage and that where drainage is considered, recreational values should be weighed. We believe the major effort of potential drainage has ended in Iowa—partly because most of the potential are already gone, and partly because the modern technician is aware of the recreational value of aquatic communities. Few of the original thousands of potholes and shallow lakes now remain in Iowa. The Conservation Commission is attempting to acquire what is left and to obtain, develop and restore marshes where early drainage efforts were not successful. Such efforts are also being extended on lands more suited to their purpose than for agriculture.

Abused Arteries

Streams and rivers are immensely important production centers of fish, game and outdoor recreation. They range from the fast, rock-channelled streams of northeastern Iowa to the prairie streams of central and northern Iowa, and to the broad flood plains and wide, sluggish rivers of the south and southeast. All flow to the Missouri or Mississippi, the great border rivers. Each has its own beauty, value and productive capacity.

Fish, wildlife and recreation potential varies with the conditions produced by the various types of streams. Temperature of water, turbidity, depth and rate of flow can all affect the fish and game produced. Low fish production is usually caused by abuse of the streams' watersheds. Everyone now seems to realize the need for measures to prevent soil erosion. As protective practices are applied to the watersheds the streams will gradually improve, since the occurrence of damaging floods will be reduced and the run-off supplying streams and rivers will be cleaner.

Erosion silt affects fish directly by covering the bottom of the stream with a blanket of material which kills bottom organisms, reduces available food, and covers spawning and nesting grounds. The abrasive action of silt may injure the gills of various aquatic animals, including fish and mollusks.

Many Creatures

Each type of stream produces a different fisheries resource, as well as food and cover for many mammals and birds. Here again is the muskrat—a burrowing animal this time. Streams, rivers and nearby plant communities are activity centers for mink, coon, deer and many other mammals. To the trained observer, a walk along the river reveals that many mammals and birds have used the river for some of their requirements. Cer-

tain waterfowl make extensive use of streams and rivers. Larger open areas are attractive to ducks and geese, providing both food and rest. If these birds and mammals are to live here, their food, cover and other requirements must be available. Streams and rivers are of the greatest importance in the production of fish and game resources, and must be given every consideration when water use problems are being discussed.

Lakes and ponds are the third major category of surface water classified as "use areas" in the production of fish, game and outdoor enjoyment.

These are the natural lakes of north-central and northwestern Iowa, the oxbow lakes of western Iowa, the artificial lakes of central and southern Iowa, and the many reservoirs and farm ponds in the southern half of the state.

Fish are the main animal product of lakes, but other species of wildlife may also abound there. Many of the factors affecting streams and marshes operate in lakes and reservoirs. Good water supply is essential, or lakes may enter the winter with dwindling water levels and suffer heavy fish kills.

Soaring Demand

The use of lakes for swimming, boating and related activities is well known and obvious. Wherever there is water, people are attracted to it. The demand for the products of aquatic communities is measured by "who"—not "what." In this case the "who" is the people of Iowa who hunt, fish, swim and enjoy boating, nature study, outdoor photography and other activities related to water and the outdoors.

There are approximately 2½ million people in Iowa, and in 1955 almost 600,000 of them were licensed to hunt, fish and trap. They were direct users of the fish and game crops produced or sustained by water areas. Add to these the farmers, women, and young people

who hunt, fish and trap without being required to hold a license and who are unrecorded. A rather high percentage of the total population is indicated.

In 1955, state park attendance was recorded at 5,740,000 visitors, shattering all previous records. As usual, the 10 parks with the highest attendance records were all "lake parks."

Combining all Iowa fishing waters, we can scratch together only about 300,000 acres—about one per cent of the state's total land area. Yet we find that over 20 per cent of the state's population is directly interested in using this fraction of state area. The problem to provide hunting, fishing, and more outdoor recreation becomes apparent.

We used to think that whenever we built a new wildlife area or park we could help reduce the overload somewhere else. Actually, we have not been able to meet the increase in demand for such recreational areas. To those of us in the field of fish and game management and park development, this ever-increasing demand is staggering.

It is predicted that by 1960 the demand for recreation will be 35 per cent greater than in 1953. Collections from taxes on sporting equipment continues to rise each year. Where are these people going to hunt, fish and boat in the future? We should be developing a program scaled to this future demand before people begin wearing out the recreational resources that are inadequate for the pressure of increased use.

"High in Importance"

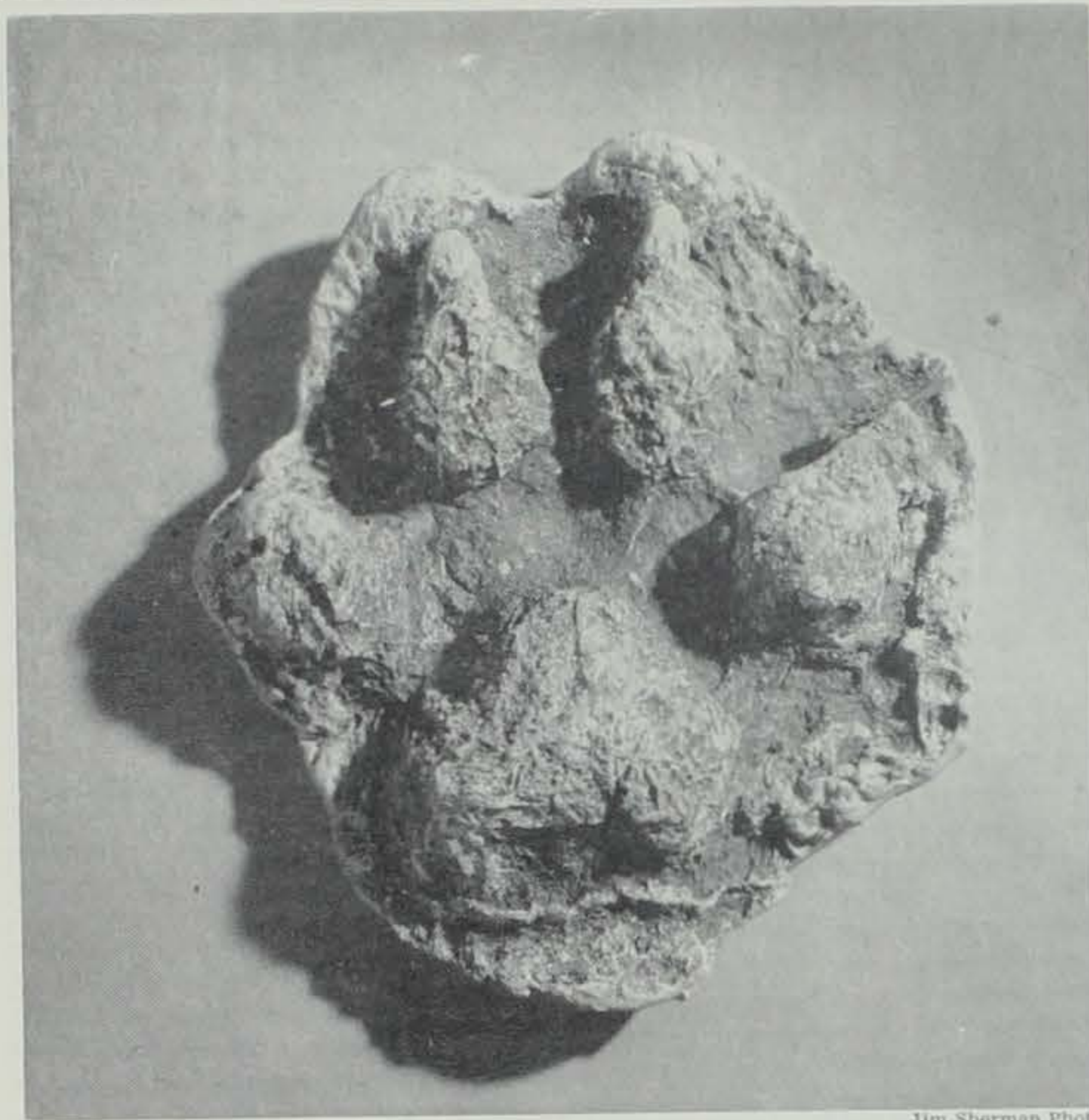
There is an insatiable demand by Iowans for sources of outdoor recreation. We must be certain that fish, game and water recreation are placed high in importance when water use is being planned. Any plans and regulations that are prepared without recognition of this fact will not be

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Jim Sherman Photo.

Canada geese, like other life forms, are closely linked to abundant water and wise water use. When the last link is broken by drainage, pollution or indifference, our waterfowl will cease to exist.



The plaster cast of the "Lamoni Lion's" track shows clawmarks, indicating a member of the dog family. This cast was over five inches long; probably made by a huge farm dog or hound.

Mountain Lions . . .

(Continued from page 105)

Stanley Young, an authority on the great cats, states that: "no claw marks are in evidence unless the animal slips and extends them in regaining its balance. The front claws, an inch in length, are encased in a sheath and seldom show in a track. While walking, the hind foot is often placed in the imprint made by the forepaw, which aids in silent stalking."

What Was It?

The size of the Lamoni pawprint is not too large for a cougar's. Young comments that adult cougar prints he has measured has averaged four and one-half inches in width and four inches long. One big male cougar left a pawprint six and three-fourths inches wide! The plaster cast recently examined indicates a member of the dog family, but what a dog it must have been!

There has never been a record of a mountain lion being collected and identified in Iowa. There are no authentic records of the cougar's Iowa occurrence in modern times.

Iowa Panthers

It's possible, however, that mountain lions have occurred in the state. In *The Puma, Mysterious American Cat*, Stanley Young indicates that Iowa was included in the range of a cougar, *Felis concolor hippolestes*. He also comments that: "In this state (Iowa) there is no evidence which would lead one to the conclusion that the animal was ever common. Allen, in 1869, noted in a paper 'On the Mammals of Iowa' (from *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History*), that Dr. C. A. White, then Director of the Geo-

logical Survey of Iowa, said 'The panther in Iowa has been known within our limits, but very rarely'."

Other authorities report that the Iowa cougar was "formerly very common over the state, but is now extinct." (Van Hynning and Pellett, 1910, *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*.) On this subject, Stanley Young comments that "it is impossible to determine upon what basis this statement was made."

Wilderness Creature

The present range of the American mountain lion is believed to include southern Florida and northern Louisiana, where the animals occur in sparse numbers. The primary range of these big cats is in wilderness areas west of the 100th Meridian, a north-south line running down through central Dakota and central Nebraska.

Most cougars are in the Rocky Mountain states; southward to the desert ranges of Arizona, New



Right front footprint of a cougar, made in snow. The big cat track may be six inches wide.

Mexico and Texas. They are rather abundant locally in the coastal ranges of California, Oregon and Washington. The species is generally regarded as extinct east of the Mississippi, except in Florida.

In 1942, a total of 5,800 cougars was estimated in western national forests. Young and other authorities believe that the mountain lion will long exist in rugged western highlands where their inaccessibility precludes any serious bounty hunting.

The cats are undoubtedly extinct in Iowa. Nowhere does the cougar's range impinge on Iowa and permit a straggler to drift out of the wilderness country and into the Hawkeye State.

Too Big

Besides, cougars are big animals, and their presence would probably cause more than just suspicion. The average adult mountain lion of the subspecies *hippolestes* will probably weigh about 150 pounds. A big male of this subspecies killed by Teddy Roosevelt measured eight feet in length and weighed 227 pounds. A cougar of the *azteca* subspecies, killed in Arizona by a government hunter, weighed over 276 pounds and measured eight feet, seven and three-fourths inches from nose to tip of tail. A cat even approaching these sizes—in spite of great stealth—could not exist long in an Iowa woodlot. Probably, too, its presence would be reflected in a sharp decline of local livestock.

Cougar Foods

The American cougar will take small game, but seems to prefer meat in wholesale quantities. In a study of 394 cougar stomachs by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 188 contained deer, 144 contained beef, and 20 held horse-meat. Few of the stomachs held evidence of rabbits, ground squirrels and other small animals. Some authorities believe that of all domestic meats, cougars prefer horseflesh. Even today, Iowa ranks high nationally in the number of horses it supports, and every section of the state has some horses. Yet, have there been any reports of horses mysteriously killed and eaten?

Rarest of All

The "black panthers" of recent years are even less probable. Melanistic—or black—phases of mountain lions evidently do not occur in North America. Reports of extreme white or black cougars have been made from South America, but there are no authoritative records for the northern hemisphere.

But in spite of this volley of logic, we feel a twinge about debunking Iowa panthers. As someone wrote: "O Science . . . who alterest all things with thy prying eye! Why preyest thou upon the poet's heart . . . vulture, with wings of drab reality?"

For one thing about Iowa panthers is real enough. When they are reported, even when scoffed at,

they instill a happy dread in kids and mothers and a vast longing in local hunters. Uncle Ed's back timber has taken on a note of mystery and stealth that it didn't have last week, and the cattle seem to bawl more and grow restive for no apparent reason.

So if you want to believe in Iowa panthers, more power to you.

Jackrabbit Jackpot . . .

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Myxomatosis is a virus disease that is particularly deadly to rabbits. It is thought that this virological warfare has reduced Australia's rabbits and that country's place on the world fur market.

Central Europe isn't producing many rabbits these days, either. A French doctor recently used the deadly virus to rid his estate of pest rabbits. Got rid of them, all right. He also killed most of the rabbits in large areas of France, Belgium and Germany. That isn't a laughing matter in Europe, where rabbit meat and fur is an important slice of the rural economy. At last reports, the good doctor was paying off half the peasants in his part of France.

Maybe all this had some effect on the Iowa jackrabbit market. Something has, and there was money made in the northwest this winter.—J. M.

Water Needs . . .

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accepted by a people with such a large direct interest.

The *Iowa Twenty-Five Year Conservation Plan* crystallizes this idea of wise use of Iowa's water resources: "Let every citizen of Iowa catch and hold that vision of the economy and the enrichment of human living to be achieved only through statewide, farsighted development plans. Not for too visionary, but for too meagre-minded planning shall we be held to account."

Point of View

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budget of over 10 million dollars involving thousands of employees, buildings and machines and hundreds of thousands of land and water acres—that is a major public service responsibility.

When I was appointed to the Conservation Commission I didn't know quite what to expect and was more than a little concerned about the pitfalls which might be awaiting me. I am pleased to report that instead of pitfalls, I found an excellent staff of men whom I am proud to call my fellow workers in this important conservation field.

For obvious reasons, this challenging opportunity grows greater each day and the need for action becomes even more urgent. I, for one, wish to see this program succeed and call on all the state's good conservationists to join with us in this worthy cause.