

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

Volume 17

November, 1958

Number 11

## IOWA'S NEW WATERFOWL AREAS

### PROSPECTS GOOD FOR PHEASANTS

Iowa's pheasant hunters will have plenty of gaudy targets in the field on November 8, but the weatherman may hold the key to just how good the 1958 season will be. If dry weather permits the harvest of crops early in the season, ringneck hunters could have one of the best seasons in years.

Hunters need no reminder that high, dense cover and standing crops were the nemesis of the pheasant hunter last year. However, a high percentage of the cocks that evaded the hunter were around last spring, with crow counts pointing to an excess of cock birds. Sight counts of hens showed that they had wintered well and began the nesting season with about the same number as former years.

Weather conditions favored pheasant production when birds began nesting activity in early April. With this early start, nesting continued in May under variable, but not bothersome, weather conditions. The mean temperature during the months of April and May was 56 degrees F., slightly higher than normal for this time of year.

With early indications of a good pheasant hatch on the way, hens entered the critical hay mowing period in June. A weekly weather and crop bulletin reported that about 60 per cent of Iowa's hay crop had undergone first cutting

(Continued on page 83)



The end of a perfect day—fine shooting afield and the anticipation of a goose dinner with all the trimmings. You could be in a similar picture on any of Iowa's new waterfowl areas described in this issue.

### The Art of Keeping Warm

If there is a situation in outdoor activity more annoying than being uncomfortably dressed for the weather, the writer has never encountered it!

During fall months when we start thinking about squirrels and early waterfowl shooting, clothing must fortify against early morning chill, but is often too much an hour or two after sun-up. As the mercury soars, as it often does on Indian summer days, the hunter must either shed some clothes or change to lighter weight clothing to maintain comfort. In November when attention is turned to the upland game seasons, long hours in the deer stand or raw days in the duck blind or cornfield, the heaviest clothing we can muster is none too adequate.

While all outdoorsmen are pretty much in agreement that we can't do much about the weather, the fellow with concern for his comfort has always tried to do the next best thing—try to dress for

it. Also by carting along a few extras to take care of any rise or fall in the mercury.

Until recent years, outdoor clothing has been so bulky, hard to maintain and short of life that it was hardly worth a little comfort to drag it along. What was more perplexing was that by the time the nimrod added enough layers of clothing to keep warm, he could scarcely lug the weight of it, let alone swing a gun with much speed or finesse.

Today's outdoor clothing is a long-awaited answer to the problem of maximum comfort without bulk. Even more than this, clothing for the outdoorsman now on the market emphasizes an entirely different philosophy of the best way to get maximum warmth. Insulation is the charmed word for today's sportsman. The new stress is in insulating against the outside cold while trapping and holding a maximum amount of normal

(Continued on page 88)

What's new for Iowa duck hunters this fall?

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST answers this question with presentation on succeeding pages of nearly a half dozen new waterfowl areas. Actually we introduce you to a total of eight areas—the Riverton Area, Forneys Lake, Walnut Creek, Bays Branch, Big Marsh, Weise Slough, Troy Mills and the Princeton Area.

The first two named are not new but have either gained such prominence or have made such a change in their character in the last couple of years, it would be a misnomer to exclude them.

The Riverton Area has, in the space of a couple of years, won the hearts of the duck fraternity, particularly the mallard hunter. The area offered tremendous hunting last fall. Riverton's mallard population was estimated at 50,000 at the peak of the 1957 build-up on the area. The areas may well pull a similar number this season and seasons to come.

Forneys Lake is again returning to its former holding potential after a period of ups and down. Silted almost entirely shut by Missouri River floodwaters in 1952, heavy rains this spring and summer have brought more than 400 acres of new water to the area. This is particularly good news for goose hunters since Forneys Lake has been a favorite gathering place for nearly all species of geese.

Some of the remaining six areas are under development at the present time and, although they may not offer the kind of hunting this fall that they will in future seasons, they will offer good (excellent in some instances) hunting for ducks and geese this year. Improvements will continue between this writing and the end of the waterfowl season on December 12, of course. In this period of time, its probable that some areas will reach their maximum water levels as dams are completed and water is impounded.

The reader will find a map and description of each area on other pages of this issue. In every case,

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## Iowa Conservationist

Published Monthly by the  
IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
East 7th and Court—Des Moines, Iowa  
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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE.....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 Iowa Conser-  
vation Commission, East Seventh Street  
and Court Avenue, Des Moines 9, Iowa.  
Send cash, check or money order.

## SMALL WATER —BIG DUCKS

Duck hunters who pass up riv-  
ers, creeks, farm ponds and pot-  
holes because they think these  
areas are too small to attract  
ducks, are missing a good bet!

Dabbler or puddle ducks like  
mallards, pintails, bluewing and  
greenwing teal favor small bodies  
of water at times during their mi-  
gration and stop-over periods.  
Hunters who keep in mind that  
these species get their name dab-  
bler or puddle ducks from this  
characteristic are in a good posi-  
tion to have shooting when others  
go home empty-handed.

There are factors, of course,  
which bring ducks to small water  
areas. Food is one important con-  
sideration and, where it is plenti-  
ful in small shallow pond or pot-  
hole, ducks are inclined to favor  
these areas over big lakes with  
shorter food supplies.

If the pond or pothole is located  
near corn where ducks are feeding,

An ideal hatching season for  
Iowa quail points to more birds in  
the field, but hunters may have to  
exert a little more effort to move  
them from abundant cover. This  
pretty much summarizes prospects  
for Iowa's 1958 quail season.

Of the factors involved in quail  
production, spring "whistle" counts  
of calling males and the weather  
during the hatching and brooding  
months are, perhaps, the most im-  
portant.

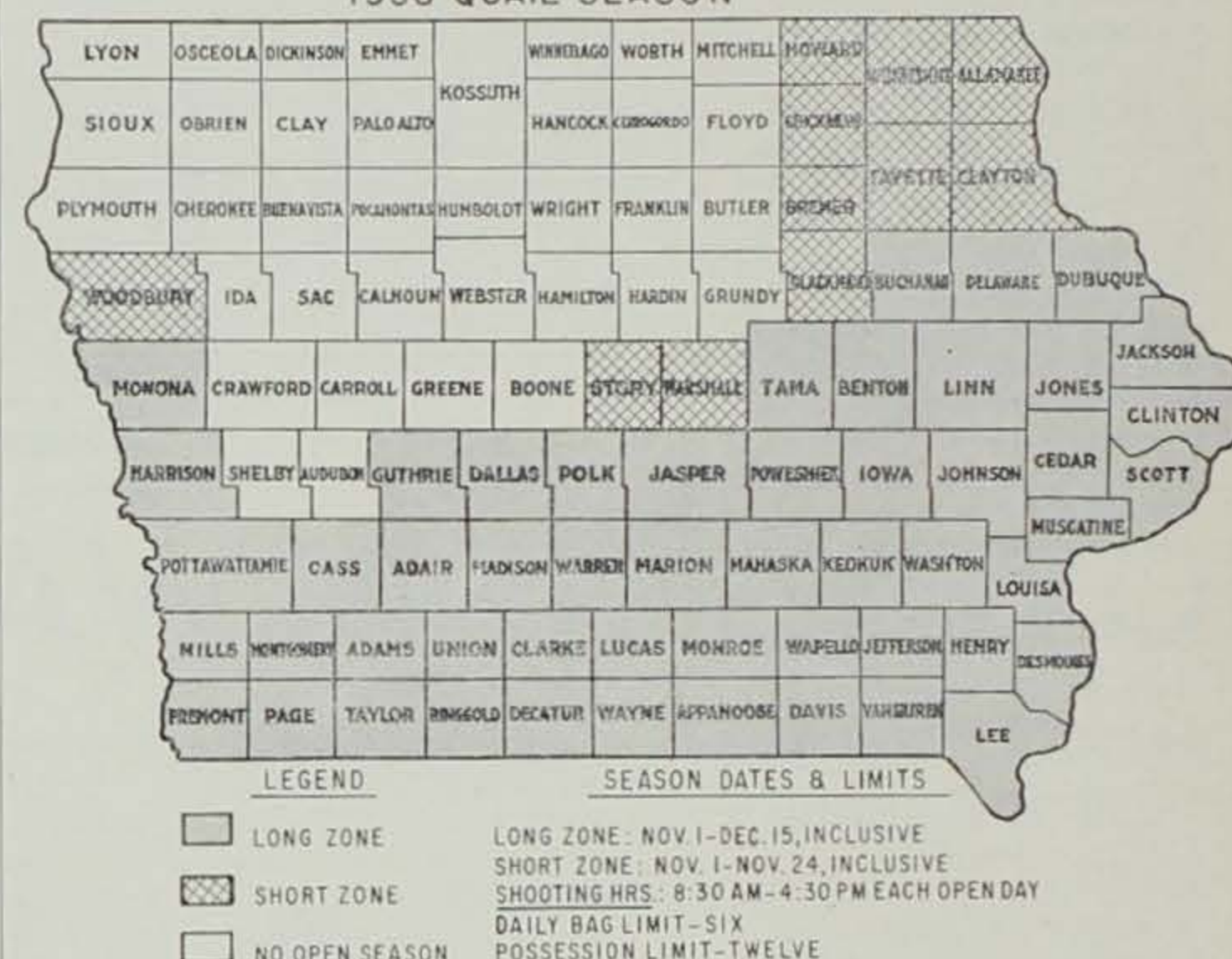
Both of these indices were good  
in 1958. The spring "call" counts,  
which indicate the number of car-  
ryover birds at the beginning of  
the production season, showed a  
good population on hand at the  
start of the nesting cycle. A hatch-  
ing and brooding season that re-  
mained warm and was punctuated  
with just the right amount of rain-  
fall at the right time was also  
considered ideal. The peak of quail  
production at mid-summer was de-  
scribed as good because of the car-  
ryover population and a long  
hatching season under ideal weath-  
er conditions.

Since mid-summer, additional in-  
vestigations and studies have  
pointed the way to an increase in  
the number of quail that will be  
available for the fall hunter. Ob-  
servers are continuing to see many  
young or "just hatched" birds  
afield, indicating that reneeting  
has been successful and that hunt-  
ing quality of coveys is improved  
by numbers of young birds in each  
family circle. Birds that are from  
one-half to two-thirds grown at  
season-time will not take wing as  
quickly as older birds, and thus  
will "hold" better for quail dogs.

there is always the possibility  
they'll be dropping into such areas  
for a drink and a little exercise.  
During the time ducks are migrat-

# Bright Outlook for '58 Quail Season

## 1958 QUAIL SEASON



Since sight counts of quail coveys  
continue to disclose a good per-  
centage of young birds, 1958 quail  
hunting should be nearly ideal for  
shooting over dogs.

If summer and fall observations  
continue to point to a good quail  
season quality-wise, an important  
gain "quantity-wise" also is in-  
dicated. Large coveys are being  
seen, substantiated by high sum-  
mer "call" counts. Counts of call-  
ing males that are an indication of  
the number of carryovers in spring  
take on a different but just as sig-  
nificant a meaning in summer.  
"Call" counts during summer are  
watched and recorded closely as an  
indication of the number of coveys.  
The summer count is considered a

valid index since each calling male  
indicates an active covey, in near-  
ly every instance. This index and  
additional tabulations gives game  
biologists and researchers an idea  
of quail numbers and of trends in  
their population.

A wet spring and summer in the  
primary quail range of south and  
southeast Iowa has resulted in  
abundant cover for quail. It may  
be a factor in hunting success dur-  
ing the 1958 season, but the indi-  
vidual hunter has it in his power  
to minimize it. It will probably  
mean that hunters may have to  
work the cover a little harder and  
be sharper-of-eye for cripples —  
marking them down accurately  
when they fall, and keeping a close  
watch in cover where they may  
fall or be in hiding.

A large amount of cover this  
year also puts new emphasis on  
the importance of a good quail  
dog. They add much to the fun  
and companionship of every hunt,  
as well as save you birds that  
would be lost without their keen  
noses and persistence for finding  
birds that have fallen to the gun.

Summarizing a bit, all indica-  
tions point to a good quail popula-  
tion for the 1958 quail season. The  
spring hatch got off well with  
near-ideal weather conditions dur-  
ing the hatching and brooding sea-  
sons. Fall sight counts continue  
to show good populations with  
large coveys and a good percent-  
age of young birds. The male  
"call" count has been high, indi-  
cating good numbers of coveys,  
and individual coveys are large. It  
has been a banner year in southern  
Iowa for cover, but the quail hunt-  
er willing to work it a little harder  
and do his shooting over a good  
dog may also find this to be a ban-  
ner year for quail!

The deer is the most plentiful  
big game animal in America.



Duck hunters are passing up a good thing if they overlook small water areas such as this farm pond. Geese in addition to ducks are often taken from such areas.

ing, they are often easily decoyed  
to ponds and potholes for a little  
rest from the long, tiring rigors of  
travel. When hunting pressure is  
on larger waterfowl areas, ducks  
will often seek quiet on the near-  
est small, secluded water areas.

Some of the above reasons also  
account for the presence of ducks  
on rivers and streams. Another  
reason is that only rivers and  
streams afford the sand so essen-  
tial to the duck's digestion of food.  
Waterfowl also supplement their  
regular diets with leeches and other  
organisms found only along rivers  
and streams. Many ducks and  
geese keep rivers and streams in  
sight during migration, so even  
the smallest streams are often fly-  
ways of sorts. This means the pos-  
sibility of seeing and decoying  
waterfowl along these courses is  
good.

If you live close by or know of  
small bodies of water, keep an eye  
on them during the duck season.  
These areas may be small, but  
don't underestimate them—they  
may bring you big rewards and  
big ducks during the season!—  
K.C.S.



## AREAS—

(Continued from page 81)

District Game Managers and Unit Game Managers have provided descriptions, including size of the area, location, how to reach it, and such pertinent hunting information as types of waterfowl common to the area in addition to hunting methods.

Since regulations may differ from area to area, make a point to become acquainted with the

regulations on the area you hunt. Any special regulations are posted on each area, or you are welcome to inquire of Commission personnel for regulations before you hunt. All decoys, and boats must be removed from all public waterfowl areas between one-half hour after shooting time and midnight each day of the waterfowl season.

## PHEASANTS—

(Continued from page 81)

by the middle of June, about normal for this time of year. A period of wet weather during this time in the growing season curtailed some hay cutting operations and was undoubtedly instrumental in more successful hatches of pheasant young. Farmers, co-operating in sight studies of pheasant populations, reported seeing more broods than at first cutting time a year ago.

Conservation officers' summer brood counts disclosed more broods and above normal reproduction. Officers reported reproduction not quite as good as 1955, but second only to 1955. Rural mail carrier tallies supplemented and verified conservation officers' findings—reporting a pheasant population better than the years 1956 and 1957, but slightly under 1955 counts. Sportsmen will recall that 1955 was the best pheasant production year of any recent year. Summer population surveys, then, indicated a significant increase in over-all pheasant populations for the 1958 season.

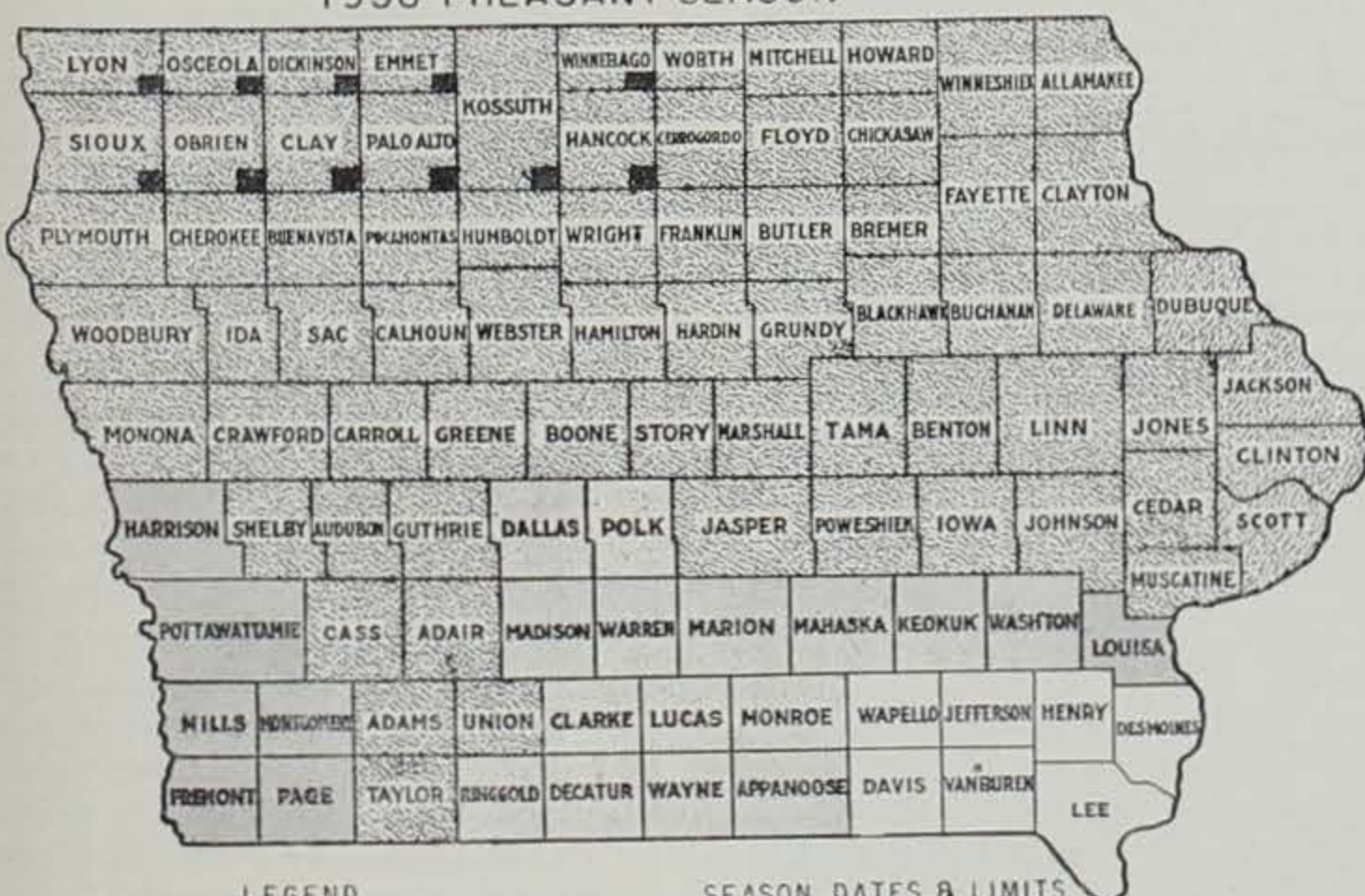
The 1958 Soil Bank program undoubtedly had some role in pheasant production, but the exact contribution it made is difficult to gauge accurately. In re-nesting—one important phase of pheasant reproduction—it is possible Soil

Bank land at the time of first nesting was considered too thin to be very appealing to nesting birds. It's believed most hens by-passed these thin seedings for hay fields which afforded thicker nesting cover.

Weather continues to be a big factor, particularly in what it contributes to the growing season and how it affects harvest of crops in the fall. Heavy rainfall during the growing season means abundant cover, and southern Iowa faces this situation this fall. The cover picture is just the opposite in northern Iowa which has had a dry summer. Heavy cover will pose little or no obstacle to hunters in this section of the state. If weather remains dry, crops should be out of the field by opening day, November 8, giving the Iowa nimrod's luck an additional boost.

New regulations for the 1958 pheasant season include a new 10 a.m. starting hour each day of the open season and an increase to six cocks in the possession limit after the first day. Perhaps the new liberalized regulations will help hunters harvest more roosters—something they have not done in large enough numbers to be considered ideal, either for the pheasant population or the sportsman!

## 1958 PHEASANT SEASON



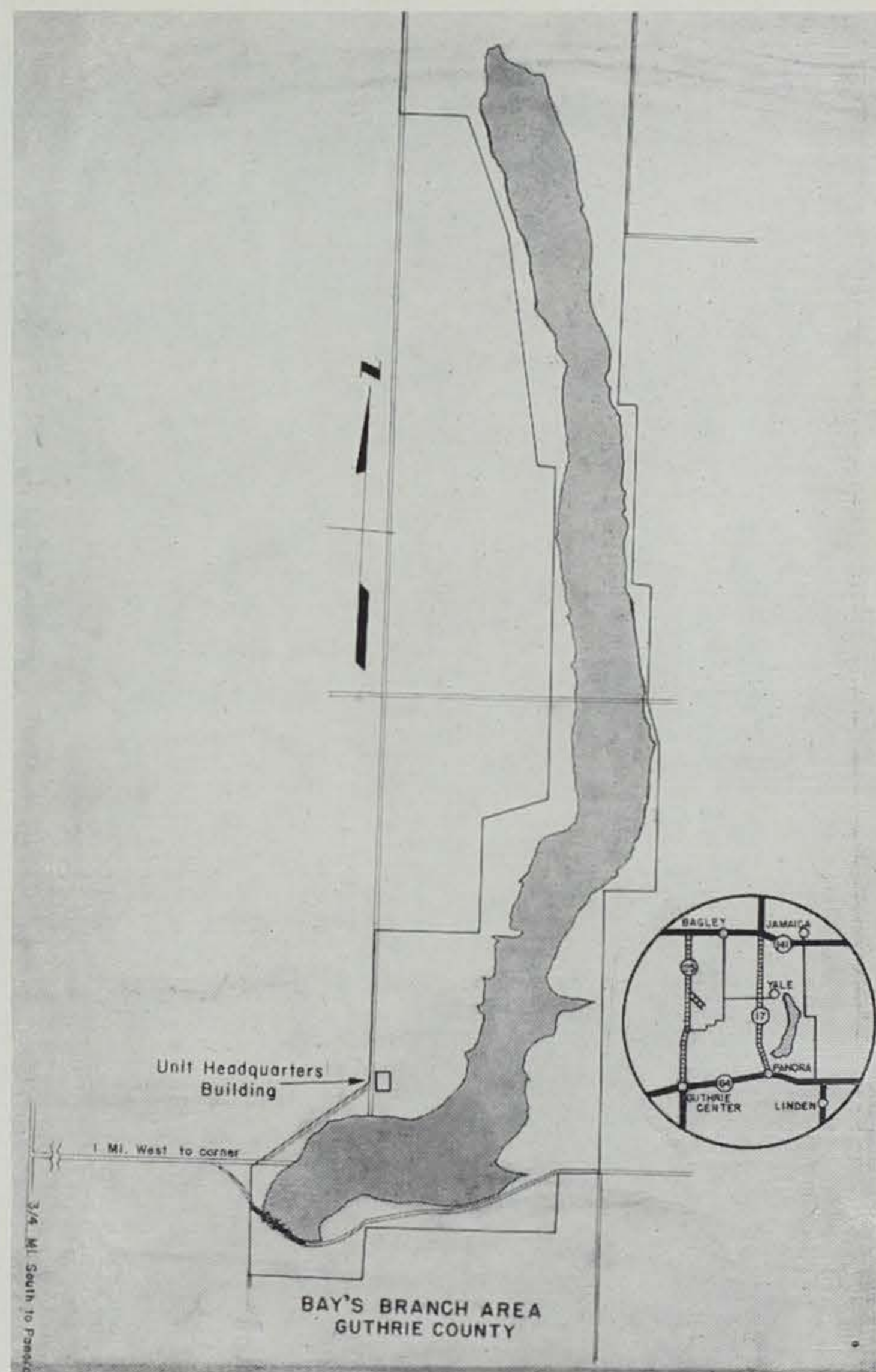
## LEGEND

- LONG ZONE
- SHORT ZONE
- HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE
- NO OPEN SEASON

## SEASON DATES &amp; LIMITS

**PHEASANTS**  
 LONG ZONE: NOV. 8-DEC. 1, INCLUSIVE  
 SHORT ZONE: NOV. 8-NOV. 23, INCLUSIVE  
 SHOOTING HRS.: 10:00AM-4:30PM EACH OPEN DAY  
 BAG LIMIT: THREE COCKS  
 POSSESSION LIMIT: SIX COCKS

**HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE**  
 NOV. 8-NOV. 17, INCLUSIVE  
 SHOOTING HRS.: 10:00AM-4:30PM EACH OPEN DAY  
 BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS: TWO BIRDS



## BAYS BRANCH

Les Fleming  
 Unit Game Manager  
 Bays Branch Game Management Unit

Bays Branch is located approximately two and one-half miles northeast of Panorama in Guthrie county and is headquarters for the Bays Branch Game Management Unit.

The area is under development at the present time and, while water has not reached its expected level, Bays Branch has offered some waterfowl hunting this fall and should get better with more water and the big push of ducks. When construction work on the dam is completed and water is impounded, Bays Branch will contain a water area of approximately 275 acres. Total acreage of the area, including water and upland game areas, is 590 acres.

Construction work on the area began this year and included construction of a residence for the unit manager, service building, a dam at the south end of the impoundment, access and service roads. It is anticipated that the dam and roads will be completed before freeze-up this fall.

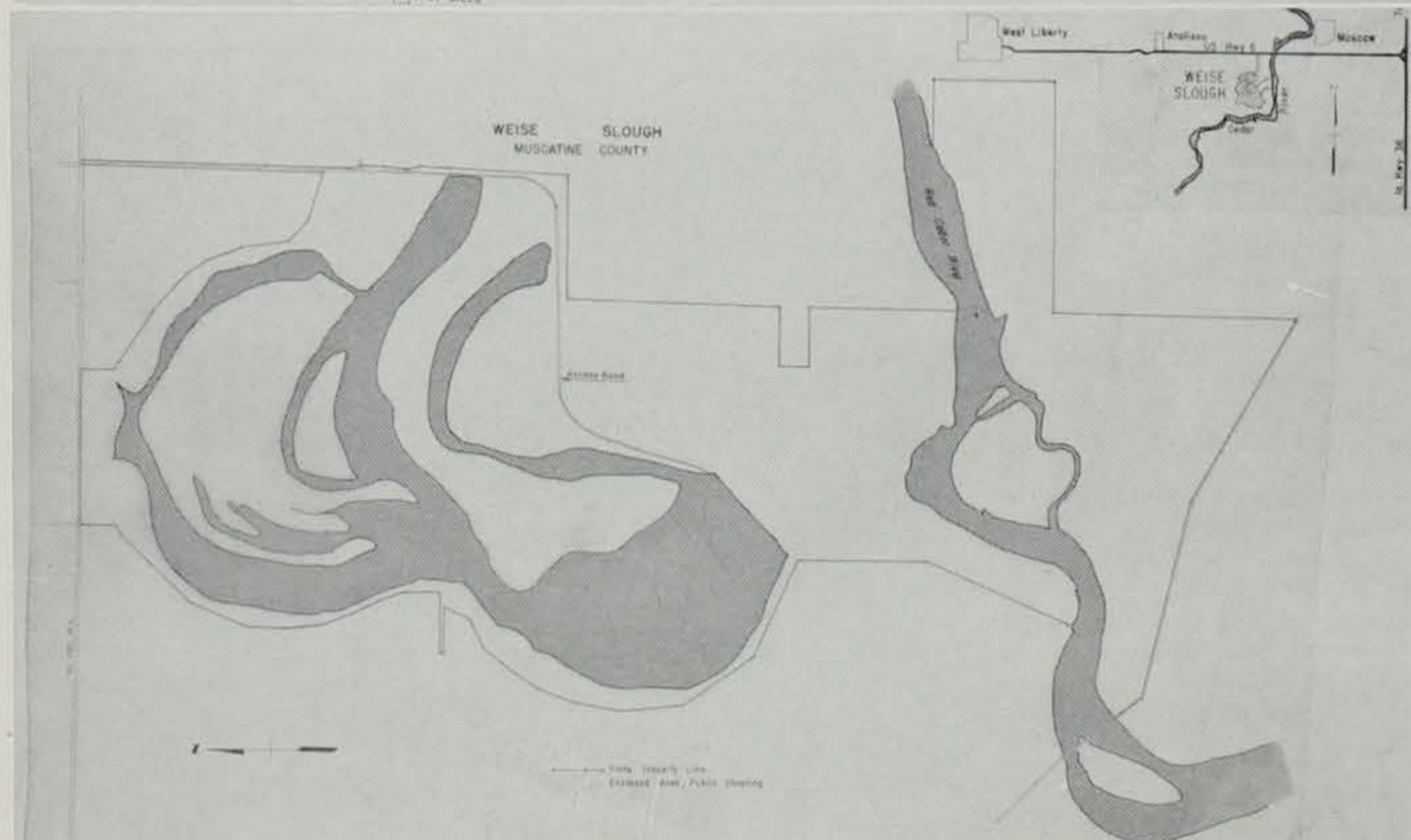
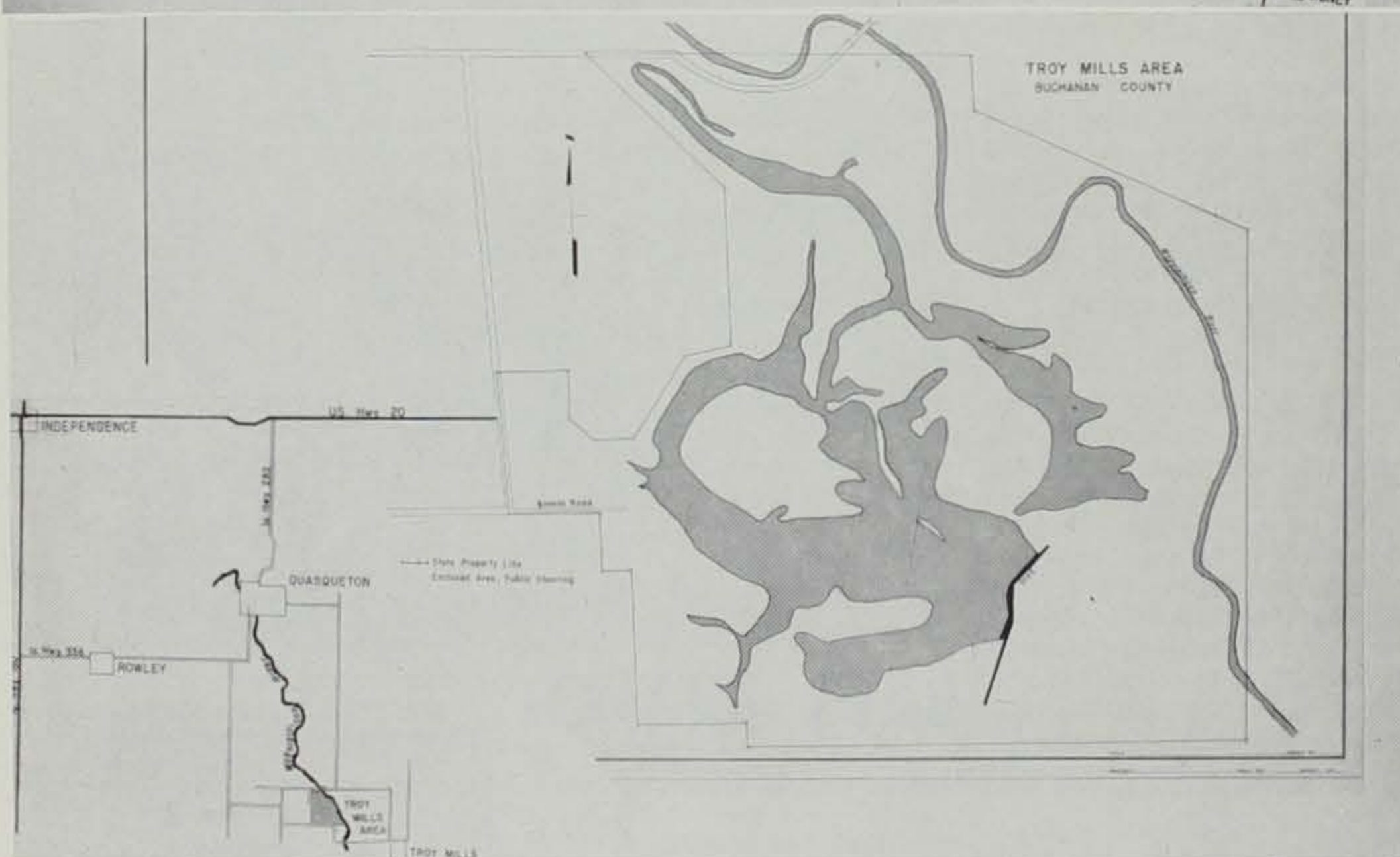
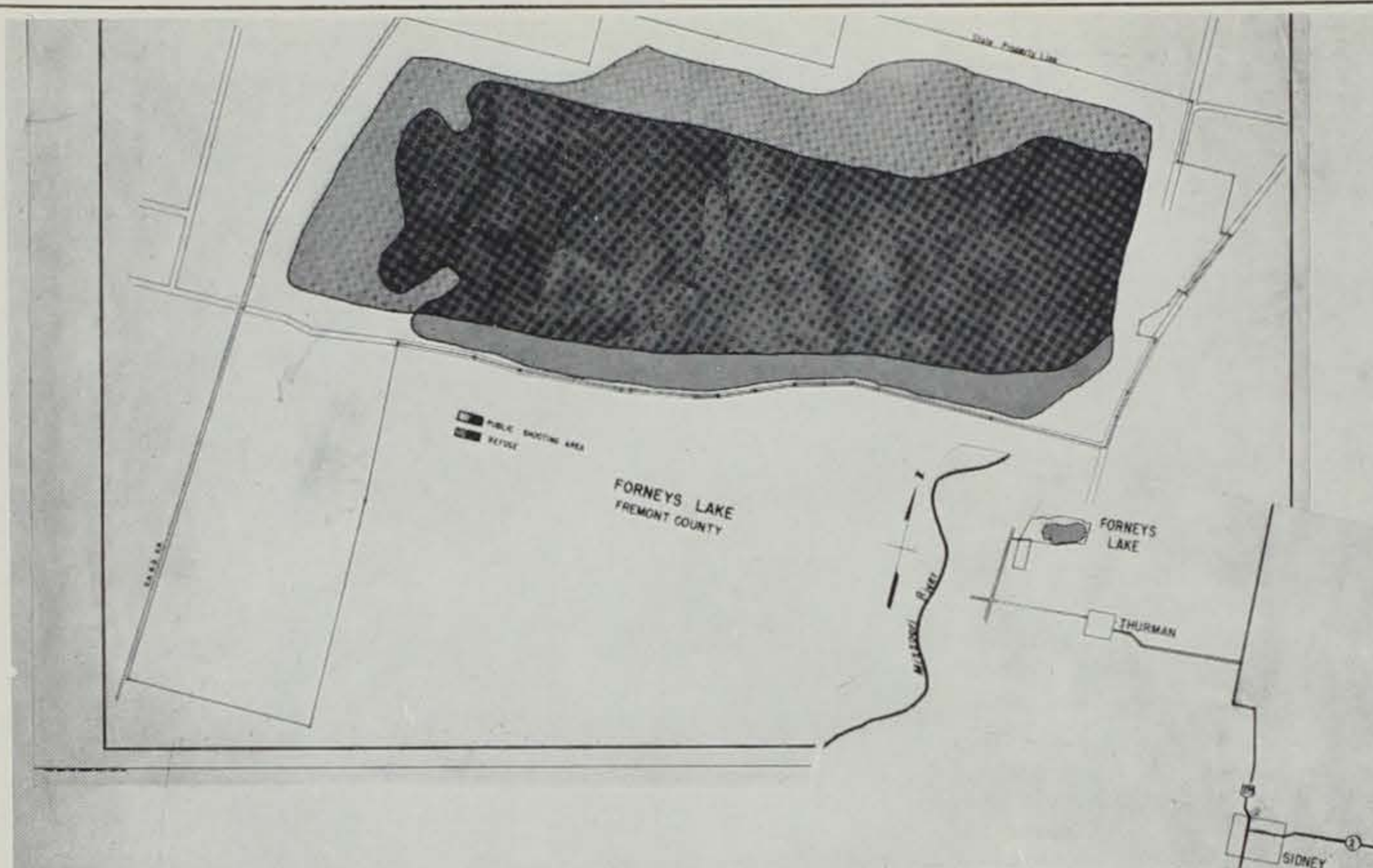
Bays Branch was a natural

marsh area even before acquisition and development by the State Conservation Commission. Because of this feature, the area has an abundance of natural vegetation for waterfowl food and cover.

Although a multi-purpose area, including fishing, Bays Branch is essentially a waterfowl area and management practices will be directed to making the water area as attractive to waterfowl as possible. Some manipulation of the water level may be necessary to produce the aquatic vegetation which is essential for good waterfowl habitat.

Upland areas around the marsh have provided excellent pheasant hunting and will continue to offer ringneck shooting since these lands will be managed for upland game hunting. There is considerable agricultural land on the area and this land will be cropped on a share-crop basis by adjacent farmers. Much of this land has been terraced and will be strip cropped—a farming practice which greatly increases upland game habitat.





## FORNEYS LAKE

Forneys Lake is a name that rings in the ears of waterfowl enthusiasts throughout the state for years for the outstanding waterfowl hunting.

It has gained its greatest reputation for the concentrations of blue and snow geese during the spring migration. Ornithologists from all parts of the country formerly considered it one of the greatest spectacles, when upward of 100,000 geese could be heard for miles and miles and from the lake is one which has always been witnessed it.

Forneys Lake is a natural lake created by a shift of the channel of the Missouri River many times by the muddy water which has filled with silt until it became a shallow lake. Lakes of this type, once abundant on the plain of the Missouri River and its drainage, have largely given way to farming.

Forneys Lake was once fed by the Missouri River. Extensive drainage programs in the 1930's and at one time the surrounding farmlands with a good lake dependent upon rain and snow for water. Floods once again inundated the lake and some surrounding farmlands. The Conservation Commission for the state of Iowa has set aside a place for waterfowl.

Hunting pressure became so great that it became necessary to regulate the number of hunters at any given time and a program was instituted in 1950.

During the great Missouri River flood in 1937, the area around it were inundated, and a great deal of silt was deposited in the lake bed by the floodwater. The capacity of the lake and the surrounding area resulted in the lake once again being filled with water. Work on the Missouri River has been going on for many years and it is believed that the lake will again fill with water.

In an attempt to salvage the area, the Conservation Commission has created a refuge by ditching, and future management plans will be used primarily as a waterfowl refuge with a strip around the perimeter of the area.

Extremely wet weather during the summer of 1950 has caused the area having about 350 to 400 acres of water. But management plans will remain the same. The center of the area will be a refuge. No trespassing will be allowed on this remaining 450 acres of the area. It is hoped that the refuge will be open to ducks and geese.

Forneys Lake is in Fremont County, Iowa, about 10 miles west of the town of Thurman. It can be reached by a gravel road run by man and a good gravel road runs along the lake.

Good numbers of blue-winged teal and mallards are usually present. Snow geese ordinarily begin arriving in the area in the October while the great mallards arrive in the same month or in early November.

Those hunters who will make the most of the area should find excellent hunting in the area. Make sure, of course, that you are with your friends. Watch to see which flocks are waiting for the flocks to come on. Give hunters outstanding shooting that will compare with the shooting in the refuge and coming towards the refuge.

Hunters using the perimeter should remember to shoot only at high birds will only result in the refuge, only to die later. Kills and birds in the bag; those who are hunting in the area.



**Bob Barratt**  
District Game Manager

ring familiar to thousands of  
state. It has been widely known  
hunting to be found there.

however, for the tremendous  
to be found here during the peak  
s and wildlife enthusiasts from  
here to witness one of nature's  
0,000 geese concentrated in this  
flight. incessant clamoring of the birds  
es and t of the great flocks flying to  
ne which always be remembered by those

reated sometime in the past by  
of the River. Subsequently flooded  
dy water the Missouri, it gradually filled  
a shallow lake with an abundance of  
is type ce abundant on the broad flood-  
iver alms western border but through  
given warming.

ce fed by waters of Waubonsie Creek but  
rams in they resulted in this stream being  
lake. It became only a low-lying basin  
nds with good permanent water supply.  
i snowf lake dried up during the drought  
e time that period was entirely under  
e again ne area with water and in 1943  
ounding ls were purchased by the State  
on for use public hunting area. Portions  
aside as life refuge to provide a resting

uring the ensuing years that it  
er of hunters using the area at  
rogram rolled hunting was initiated in

d in 1952 the lake and all land  
ult, from one to two feet of silt  
odwaters. This greatly reduced  
e and coupled with drought conditions,  
e again up during 1953. Flood control  
ver has attributed to a lower water table  
believed only in wet years will Forneys

waterfowl hunters, the Conser-  
5 acres of water in the old lake-  
ture man plans call for the area to be  
with shooting to be allowed in  
meter of sea.

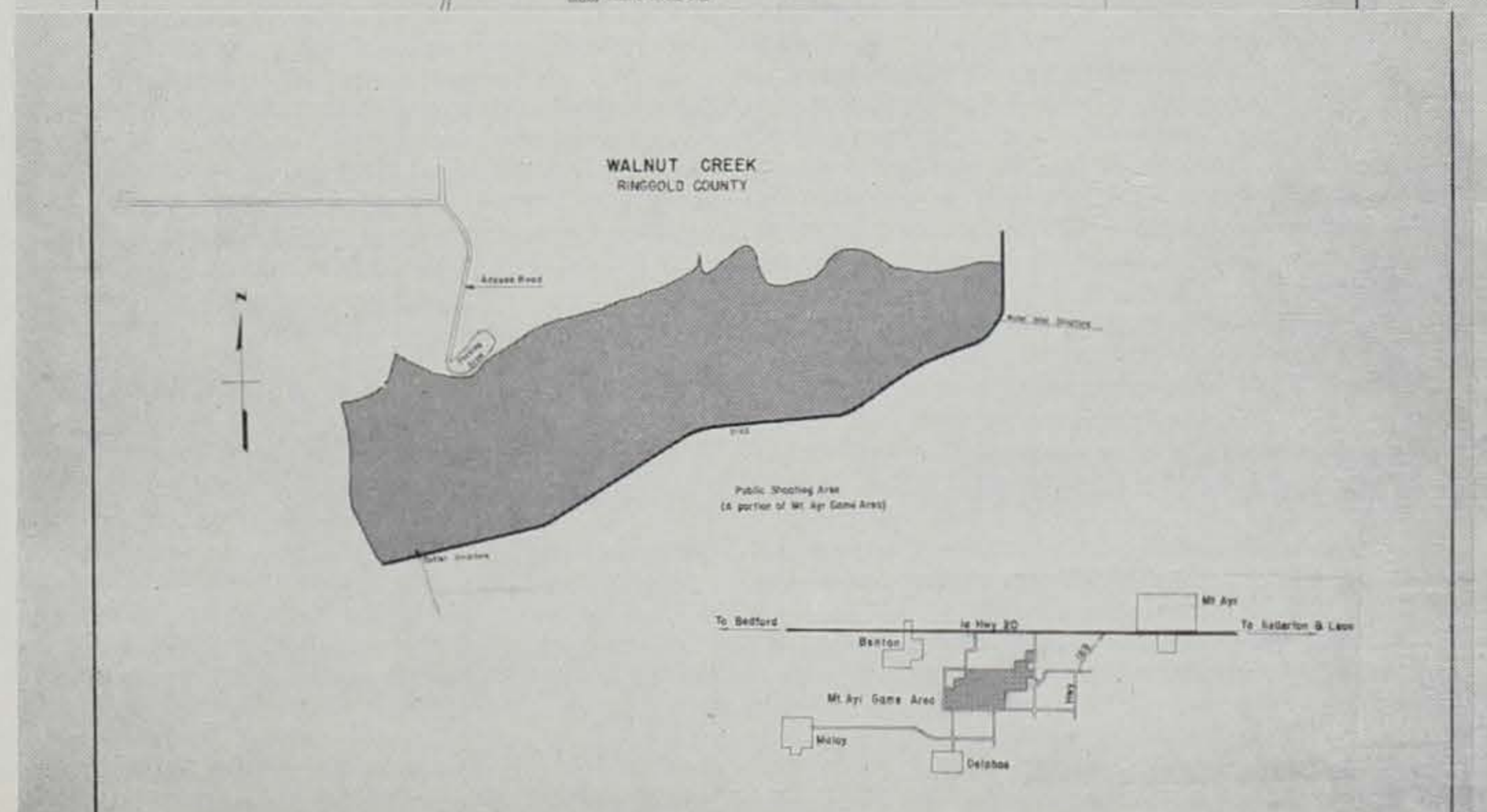
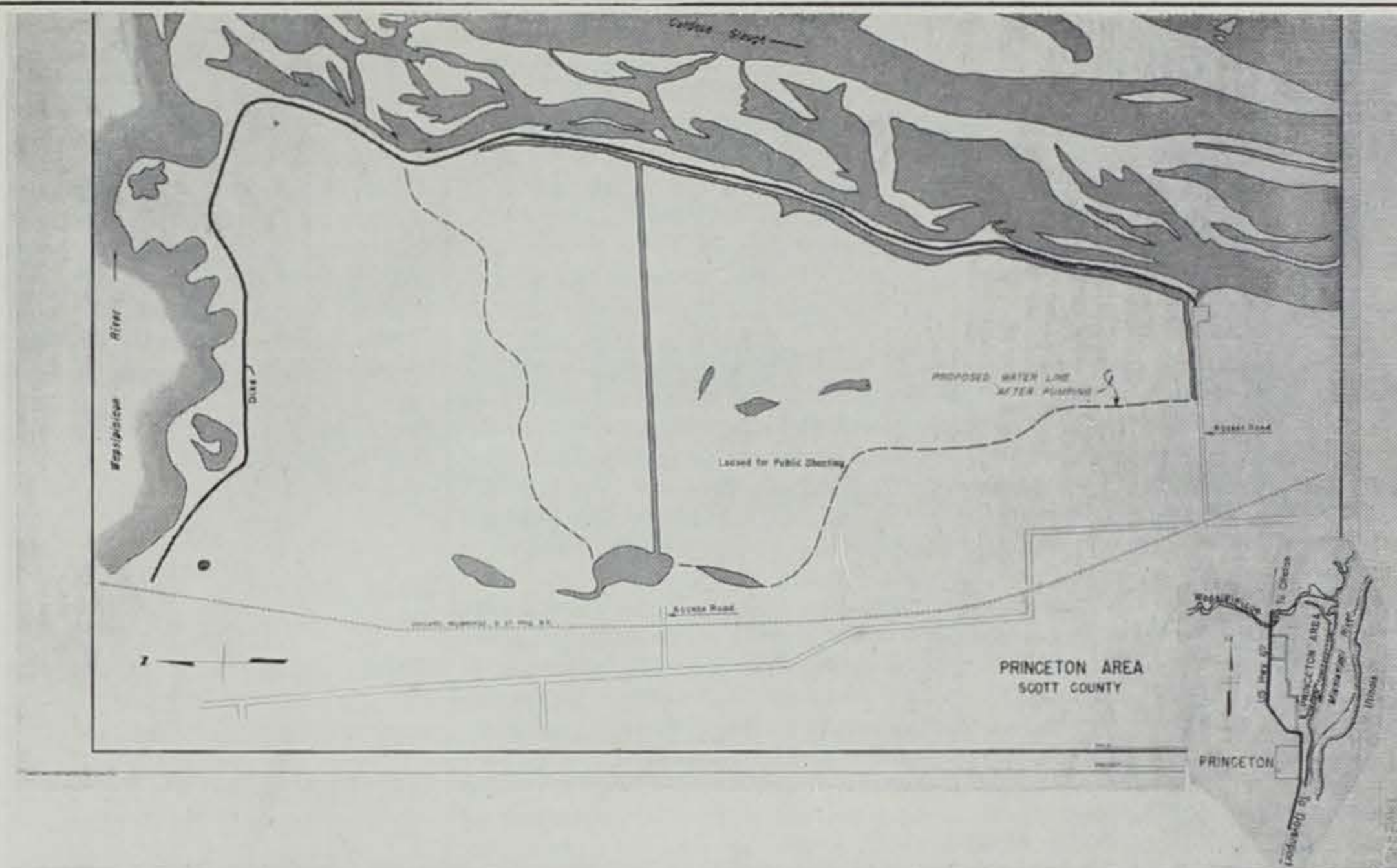
summer of 1958 has resulted in  
s of shallow water at this time  
same. About 600 acres in the  
refuge and clearly marked as  
n this portion of the area. The  
be open to public shooting and  
le an abundant supply of both

about two miles northwest of  
It can be reached by gravel roads from Thur-  
g the south side of the area.

ng with lesser numbers of pin-  
around opening day. Blue and  
n the area about the middle of  
ts can be expected late in the

ds with farmers in the valley  
ked cornfields for both mallards  
ve the permission of your farmer  
ds are using in the evening and  
s before daylight next morning,  
ed. This hunting method should  
ere are few thrills in wildfowl-  
great flocks of birds leaving the  
where you lie hidden.

ound the area for their shooting  
that are within range. Shoot-  
ples that will make it back into  
ds outside the refuge are clean  
ng inside the refuge are lost to





## TROY MILLS

Jack McSweeney  
Unit Game Manager  
Sweet Marsh Game Management Unit

The recently constructed Troy Mills marsh will be open to the public during the 1958 hunting season. This public hunting area is situated in the Wapsipinicon bottoms in southern Buchanan County. It is located two and one-half miles north and three miles east of Walker, or two miles west and one mile north of the town of Troy Mills. The Conservation Commission took possession of 261 acres of land best suited for wildlife production and recreational purposes early in the year.

Development has consisted of levee construction supplemented by rock overflow plugs to impound 60 acres of water at crest elevations with many scattered potholes. Water comes from one creek and the watershed from gently rolling slopes on two sides of the marsh. The river can, during flood times, overflow the plug sections and trap water in the area. Water levels here may vary greatly as does the precipitation and it may be sometime before the area approaches maximum depths.

The recreational values of areas of this type will continue to be great despite the fluctuating water levels. Over one and one-half miles of lineal stream distance of public fishing waters in the Wapsipinicon is provided and already thoroughly tested and enjoyed. Other values of the area will be the production and harvest of deer, rabbits, squirrel, pheasants and quail in an area of heavy hunting pressure. The fur-bearer production of mink, muskrat, beaver and others will form an economic return and recreation for some trappers. Other forms of lawful recreation may be enjoyed here by riding groups, campers, picnickers, and those who just want to enjoy the outdoors.

Initial development has consisted of construction of the impoundment area, access road and parking area construction, fence construction, marking the boundary with signs, dike seeding and vegetation control. Future development plans will include improved access facilities and the improvement of food and cover conditions plus maintenance.

The entire area will be open to public hunting during the year with no plans to set up a refuge on an area of this nature. No permanent blinds may be constructed on this area and new regulations prohibit the hunter from leaving his boat or decoys in the hunting area for waterfowl between the hours of one-half hour after the close of shooting until midnight each day of the waterfowl season.

## WEISE SLOUGH

Tom Berkley  
District Game Manager

Weise Slough is located approximately two miles east of the town of Atalissa, south of U. S. Highway 6. An all-weather road, about three-quarters of a mile in length, connects the area with highway 6 and leads directly to the control structure on the Weise Slough impoundment.

One of the state's newest waterfowl areas, construction of Weise Slough began in the summer of 1957. Construction of necessary dikes and control structures was completed last December. The area is approximately 1,600 acres in size. In addition to duck hunting in the water area, boundary lands are managed for upland game hunting, and contain excellent populations of quail and pheasants. Deer, squirrels, rabbits and fox are also found in abundance on the area.

Because the area is new and depends almost entirely upon its watershed for water, the area has not yet reached its potential water level. There is water on the area now, but is not sufficient for use of boats. Until water fills the area, duck hunting will be pretty much a matter of wading for hunting and retrieving of waterfowl.

A good supply of natural duck food now dots the slough and should be attractive to mallards and teal, the two major species using the area. An excellent growth of marsh vegetation was already established before development work on Weise was started. This has meant there has been no time involved waiting for vegetation to get a foothold in the area. Duck food on the area is considered excellent both quality and quantity-wise at the present time.

A special regulation posted on the area reminds hunters that no permanent blinds are permitted on the area. At the present time, hunters must set out decoys and shoot from available cover areas.

## PRINCETON AREA

Tom Berkley  
District Game Manager

The 728-acre Princeton Area is located along the Mississippi River near the town of Princeton in Scott County. To reach the area, travel two miles north of Princeton, turning at the first gravel road north of Princeton and following this road to the railroad tracks. The Princeton Area access road turns to the right (east) at the railroad crossing.

The Princeton Area was acquired by lease from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of U. S. Army Engineers. The entire area is open to waterfowl hunting.

Development of the area was begun in June and was completed in

July of this year. Completed work includes a control structure, dike improvement, access roads and a parking area. The access road goes to the outlet structure on the south end of the area. From this point boats may be placed on either side of the levee to enable hunters to hunt either the Mississippi River proper or the Princeton bottoms.

The State Conservation Commission recently set pumps in operation to bring water from the Mississippi to the area. Pumping is going on at the present time, dispersing water at the rate of 6,000 gallons per minute. A good supply of water should be on the area before the end of the 1958 waterfowl season.

The area represents excellent habitat for waterfowl. With water added through pumping, indications are for excellent waterfowl hunting. The area lends itself more to use by dabblers or puddle ducks (mallards, pintails, and teal) than the divers—redheads, canvasbacks and bluebills.

Areas marked with signs like this indicate state-owned refuges. They are out-of-bounds to the hunter.



## RIVERTON AREA

Bob Barratt  
District Game Manager

The Riverton Area in Fremont County lies in southwest Iowa in one of the state's major waterfowl concentration areas. It consists of about 935 acres of bayous, potholes and old riverbeds lying between the East and the West Nishnabotna Rivers about three miles above the confluence of these two streams. Only a few miles to the west lies the great Missouri River valley, flyway for countless thousands of waterfowl annually.

Originally purchased in 1941 by the Conservation Commission for use as a public hunting site, the area has a history of fabulous waterfowl hunting dating back to the turn of the century. Prior to the straightening of the Nishnabotna Rivers at about the time of the first World War, the area was a veritable jungle of potholes and willows, subject to overflow from the rivers at every heavy rain. Channel changes on the rivers, both natural and man-made, created a number of water areas of varying depth renowned for hunting and fishing.

The original purchase of this area consisted of slightly over 700 acres and the area was dependent on natural sources of water supply. One small stream fed the old river channels and low-lying potholes of the area but periods of dry weather often found water levels at a critical stage with resultant poor hunting conditions in the fall. In an attempt to raise water levels in the area, a control structure and dike were constructed at the south end across the outlet, and a ditch was dug into the area to provide better access to remote water areas. This work was completed in 1953.

Other problems arose, however, with the loss of water to the north and west across private land. Additional land was purchased in 1956 and dikes were constructed on this portion in conjunction with adjoining landowners.

Drought conditions all but erased the natural flow into the area and in the fall of 1956 artificial flooding was tried experimentally by erecting a temporary dam in the East Nishnabotna River causing it to flow into the area. This project was successfully repeated in 1957. Future plans call for the drainage of the area in the summer months to promote vegetative growth and subsequently reflooding it in the fall.

Extreme flooding on the East river during 1957 and 1958 have caused considerable damage to dikes and resulted in heavy silt deposits in low-lying regions of the area. A project—temporarily halted by high water—is now underway to repair this damage and provide permanent facilities for annually taking water from the river to fill the area in the fall.

Nearly half of the state-owned area is covered by water and except for a small refuge, clearly marked, in the northeast corner, is open to hunting by the public. The area is easily reached by following State



Highway 42 approximately one mile west from the town of Riverton to the outlet of the area where parking and boat launching facilities will be found. Riverton lies about five miles south of Highway 2 between Shenandoah and Sidney.

This slough is attractive to most of our shallow water species of ducks, but does not attract geese in any great numbers due to the presence of too many trees. Opening day usually finds good populations of bluewing teal and pintails. The best shooting, however, usually comes later in the season after the mallard flights arrive from the north. Large concentrations of mallards are ordinarily found here from about November 1 until after the season closes. The best hunting is from boats, although hunters willing to wade into the area can also find plenty of shooting.

Some of the best shooting in the region is found in the picked cornfields within a five mile radius of the marsh. Excellent hunting is often found in these fields but hunters should be sure to obtain permission from the farmer before entering private land.

## WALNUT CREEK

Bob Barratt  
District Game Manager

Walnut Creek marsh in Ringgold County is one of the state's newest waterfowl areas. Construction was finished in late September of 1958 and it is hoped that flooding can be completed in time to provide at least some waterfowl hunting during the 1959 season.

A part of the sprawling Mount Ayr game area, it is one of the artificial marshes created in southern Iowa in recent years. Unlike northern Iowa's prairies, the hills in the southern part of the state are largely devoid of natural marshes and waterfowl habitat must be artificially created by diking river bottom areas and flooding them.

The Mount Ayr area consists largely of timber and rough hill land and has been managed primarily for the production of upland game. Walnut Creek, a stream of intermittent flow but having a large watershed, runs for about 2½ miles through the area. Along the north side of the area it has created a floodplain of low, wet land and it is in this part of the area that the dikes have been built to impound about 60 acres of shallow water for waterfowl hunting.

The marsh is provided with two control structures—one at the upper end to take water into the area from Walnut Creek and one at the lower end to allow water levels to be manipulated to encourage the growth of aquatic vegetation so that the area will be attractive to waterfowl. The lower structure will also provide for overflow of excess water due to heavy rains or other circumstances.

The area to be flooded has an abundant growth of smartweeds and other food plants and if enough water can be impounded this fall should provide excellent duck hunting. There are also about 35 ponds, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to several acres, scattered throughout the Mount Ayr game area and these ponds at times provide waterfowl shooting for the hunters. It should be possible for the hunter on this area to bag a variety of game during the open season since the area provides excellent hunting for most upland species. Rabbits, squirrels and quail are plentiful and there is a fair population of pheasants on the area.

To reach the Mount Ayr area, follow Highway 169 two miles south from the junction with Highway 2 just west of the town of Mount Ayr, then turn right on the gravel road and follow it two miles west to the area headquarters.

The area consists of about 1,200 acres and lies mostly north and west from the headquarters site. The marsh will be found on the north side of the area and can be reached by taking a gravel road turning south at the intersection of Highways 2 and 66 about six miles west of the town of Mount Ayr. Follow this road 1¼ miles at which point it reaches the state-owned area. The marsh lies just to the southeast over a low ridge. Personnel at the headquarters will gladly direct you to the marsh from that side of the area.

Waterfowl hunting on this area should be best during periods of heavy migration and the species most likely to be taken are blue-wing

teal early in the season with mallards later. Don't overlook the ponds during your visit to this area since they often provide some very excellent jump-shooting. Approach them cautiously and look closely for singles and pairs hidden in the vegetation along the edges.

And don't forget the upland game on this area, rabbits in particular. They are abundant and are seldom harvested to the maximum. It is hoped that, with the addition of the marsh to this area, hunters will be able to enjoy more diversified gunning, particularly in this region where waterfowl areas are scarce.

## BIG MARSH

Jack McSweeney  
Unit Game Manager  
Sweet Marsh Game Management Unit

A bright light is glowing in the eyes of hunters who have been visiting the Big Marsh Game Management Area in Butler County, Iowa. The reason is merely the anticipation factor gathered from recent improvements to increase hunting values on one of Iowa's largest wildlife factories and public hunting areas.

Rewards of an improved waterfowl harvest have been made possible here by the diversion of part of the West Fork River flow into an 850 acre impoundment area. This impoundment will be over two miles long and will be at three levels or segments. This vast area is largely marginal bottomland in the West Fork River floodplain surrounded by intensively farmed agricultural land. The original land purchases began here in 1953 and have continued through 1958 and now totals over 2,800 acres in one tract. The construction of four miles of dike, two water level control structures and a 140 foot concrete overflow structure started in the fall of 1953 and continued into the late summer of 1954. The construction was interrupted by a tragic flood in late spring of 1954 of the West Fork River which runs through the area and forms much of the north boundary. This flood damaged the unfinished dikes and structures and increased seepage through the unvegetated strip-ping and borrow area.

Since the repair of the damage and the completion of the dikes and structures in 1954 this area, like much of the Midwest, has received reduced amounts of rainfall and no river overflow. This reduced the water area to pothole proportions but much to the delight of the upland game hunter the production of upland birds and mammals has flourished.

The Conservation Commission diverted the waters of the West Fork River through a two mile ditch during the fall of 1957. This was necessary to complete a detailed study and some fine waterfowl hunting followed while the studies of seepage, water holding capacities and general information was made. An analysis of data collected during this two week period prompted the Commission to purchase an adjoining tract of land, make three impoundment areas instead of two and divert the waters available as early as possible. The water diversion was started the second week in September. At this date water levels are rising through the dense mat of wet grasses and forbs that characterize the marsh areas.

A brief description of this area might better describe its potential to the average hunter. This is one tract of public land totaling 2,800 acres in the heart of the corn belt. This tract during a normal year can supply the food, cover, unmolested nesting area or production area for our upland game species common to northern Iowa plus all common types of hunting area to realize its harvest. Most of the northern half of this area is cropland and farmed with the emphasis on wildlife production. Wheat has been planted close to the marsh area to attract geese, cornfields have been surrounded by sorghum margins which will be left for food and hunting strips—thirty foot strips of grass margins—were left around agricultural areas for unmolested nesting and production areas. No mowing was allowed on the dikes, numerous hayfields and roadsides until after July 1. Tree and shrub travel lanes and shelter areas have been planted yearly and are starting to add much to the agricultural area. The southern half of the area, which will be partially impounded, is basically 1,200 acres of grassland, bogs and mixed forbs dotted with many small areas of trees and shrubs so thick only a beagle can work. This area, of course, provides the browse and security selected by deer throughout the year.

Access is best facilitated to the area by traveling Highway 14 to a point midway between the towns of Allison and Parkersburg. The area is adjacent and west of this point. A good access road from the west divides the area and other roadways dot the different parts of it.

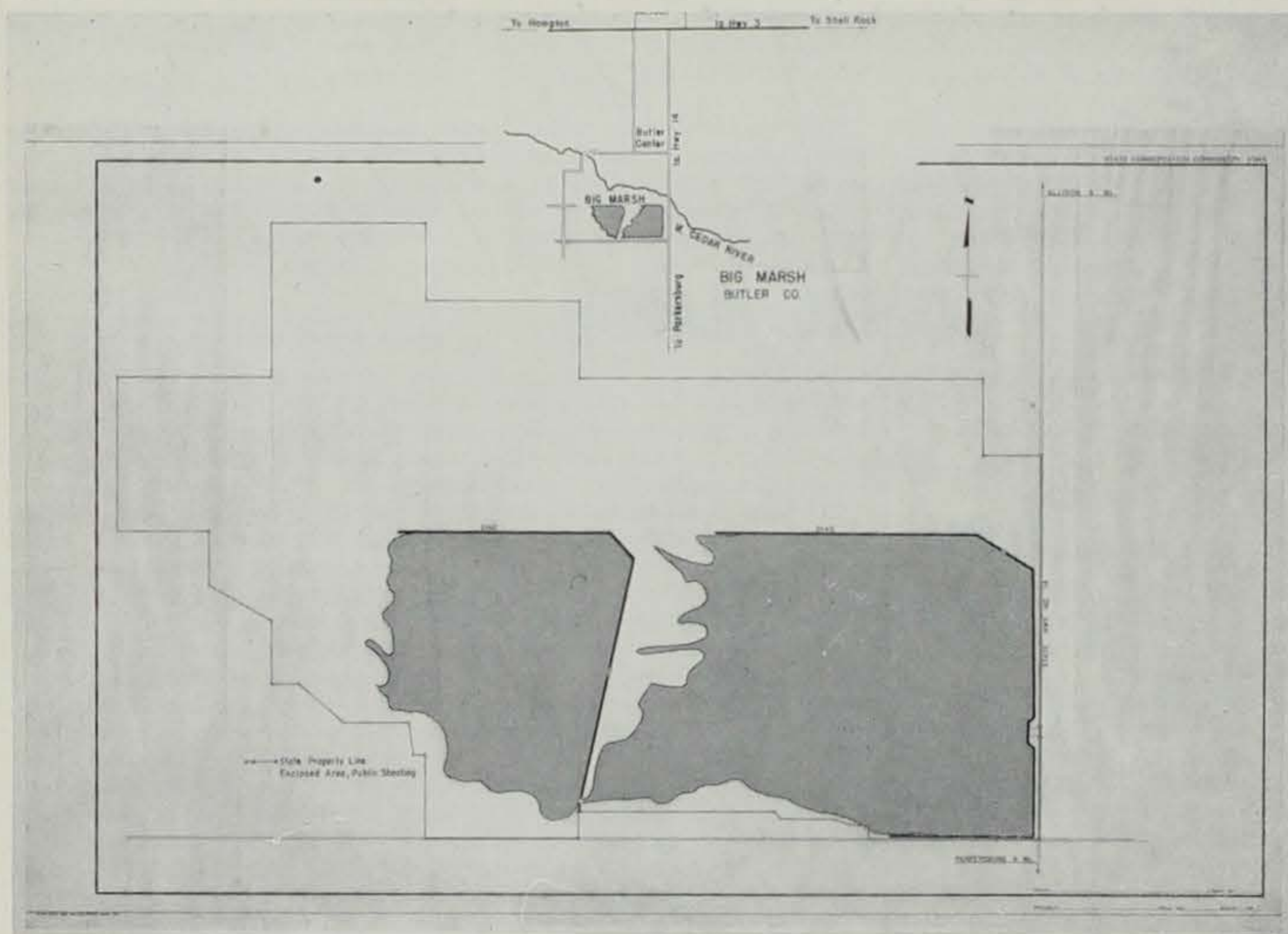
Two things stand out in the evaluation of hunting success on this area. The first is that, like other public hunting areas, Big Marsh is often crowded with hunters from nearby population centers and cooperation with fellow hunters is a must to keep the area safe and productive. Secondly, past records indicate a high crippling loss of both waterfowl and upland game due to the extremely heavy cover which is perfect for good dogs of retrieving types.

A small temporary refuge is enclosed with yellow signs just south of the ending part of the center access road where the power line enters the area. A larger and more permanent refuge plan is contemplated in the future.

## Nature's Notebook

- ... Late migration of ducks and geese. Heavy concentrations of mallards during November.
- ... Arrival of winter birds—tree sparrows, Juncos, etc.
- ... Late fall mushrooms in evidence in November including velvet stems and oyster varieties.
- ... Hibernating period for woodchucks, ground squirrels, etc.
- ... Late fall feeding period for walleyes and bass.
- ... Late fall fruit in evidence in November, including wild crabapple and red haw. Both are excellent for jellies.
- ... Some wintering flocks of prairie chickens move into Iowa during November.





## CLOTHING—

(Continued from page 81)

body heat inside the insulating material. Although it may be designed differently and of different material, this is the principle in today's insulated underwear, thermal underwear, insulated hunting jackets and pants, insulated pacs, hip boots and waders.

Any garment worn next to the skin must allow for the escape of body moisture to be an effective insulator, and the new insulated underwear does away with the old cold and clammy discomfort of regular heavy underwear. Use of man-made fibers as insulating material also makes for simple upkeep and, depending upon quality, will do an effective job of insulating for many seasons. One of the strongest features of it is that it washes easily and dries quickly. Price is dipping all the time but, like everything else, you'll get longer service from better made and better insulated products.

Light or medium-weight garments, such as khaki pants and cotton or part wool shirts, light or medium socks and a light hunting jacket will help you meet most Indian summer day hunting situations in comfort. Lightweight hunting pants meet the rigors of the outdoors better than khaki since they are heavier and tighter woven. This is an important feature particularly if weather is soggy and the going is rough. Canvas hunting pants turn burrs, briars and those sharp sticks and cornstalks that have the habit of stabbing you in the shins at the craziest times. Khaki, because of its soft coarser weave, offers no such protection. Canvas is pretty

effective in repelling rain—another advantage over khaki—and canvas wears like a slab of iron.

On balmy days during the upland game season, the nimrod will perhaps be more comfortable in a lightweight shirt and light shooting vest. Leather hunting boots are standard equipment for field shooting, at least during dry fall months. Frequent dressings with a good "waterproofer" will help them resist water and stay pliable, but they are not waterproof. In snow and when grass and weeds are heavy with dew, rubber pacs will keep your feet dry and therefore a good deal warmer. Hip boots are

standard equipment for the duck hunter.

On days when winter slams out of the north with the bite of umpteenth knife-points, insulated clothing and footwear and pure wool shirts come into their own. The active rabbit or upland game shooter perhaps can get by with less clothing, but for those huddled for long hours in the duck or deer blind, this protection is almost a must. In this day and age, a suit of thermal underwear, insulated underwear, wool shirt, hunting jacket and insulated footwear will see you through the roughest weather with a minimum of bulk.



These examples of outdoor clothing are designed for maximum comfort afield. Insulated underwear at right, insulated mittens and hand warmer in foreground will keep you warm even on the coldest days. Leather boots and pacs are favorites for upland game depending on the weather. Hip boots are favorite footwear for the duck and goose hunter.

George Tovey Photo

Insulated mittens with slit palms will keep hands warm and still allow easy access to the trigger.

While clothing has pretty much dominated this article, it would seem that some aids to warmth, other than clothing, fall in place here. Hand warmers are one such item and one or two will keep your hands nimble for shooting on the coldest days. At least one hand warmer maker manufactures a belt that is worn under clothing and places a couple of handwarmers over the kidneys in specially placed pockets. This item does much to take the chill off the back and shoulders, a pretty susceptible spot for many. As most outdoorsmen have experienced, when the back and shoulders begin to chill it isn't long before we're cold and miserable all over. Blind stoves also help fortify against the cold, and great advances have been made in their construction in recent years. What appears to be the best of these now on the market burn alcohol on non-inflammable fuel. They are smokeless and most are completely safe to a point where they are spill-proof even if they are upset while in operation.

Some evening when you can spare a minute, it might be well to make out a checklist of clothing you'll require for trips into the open—then stow these items in a duffle where they can be latched onto in a hurry. In this day of so-called "miracle" materials and insulators, the number of items can be few and the space required for their transportation held to a small area of your automobile. Take enough of the right kinds of clothes for any weather. Don't skimp on your comfort—it's a poor bargain, and could mean the difference between a perfect and perfectly lousy day of hunting!—K.C.S.

"The development of a National Clean Streams program is a step in the right direction. Water is one of our most critical resources and the pollution of our water is an extravagant waste."—Dwight D. Eisenhower.

When in pursuit of prey, duck hawks may reach a speed of between 170 and 200 miles per hour.

Coyote pups can, if necessary, get along without water until they are several months old.

The common crow normally flies at a speed of about 30 to 40 miles an hour.

The sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chicken are closely related and sometimes hybridize or cross.

"Conservation is everybody's business because it affects everybody. The battle will be almost won when enough of the people realize their own personal stake in sound conservation practices."—Ezra Taft Benson.