

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

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Number 9

## BREAKDOWN AT THE DUCK FACTORY

### IOWA DEER OUTLOOK —1961

Eldie W. Mustard  
Game Biologist

More deer, more permits, more happy Iowans—this is the thumbnail sketch of the Iowa deer situation this year. In keeping with its policy of allowing maximum recreation opportunity wherever possible the Conservation Commission decided that 8,000 shotgun permits would be issued for a three-year season commencing December 16. This is an increase of 1,000 permits over 1960 and is greater than the 6,000 issued in 1959. In essence, more Iowans will be allowed to participate in game hunting in their home state this year.

Not forgotten were the Iowa bowhunters, a group which makes excellent recreational use of one of our most splendid game species—the white-tailed deer. Bowhunting gained a few days extension over last year's season for a period running from October 1 to November 30.

The longer bow season can easily be justified if one considers the number of hunting hours required for each deer bagged, the number of deer harvested, and the low hunter success ratio compared to that of the gun hunter.

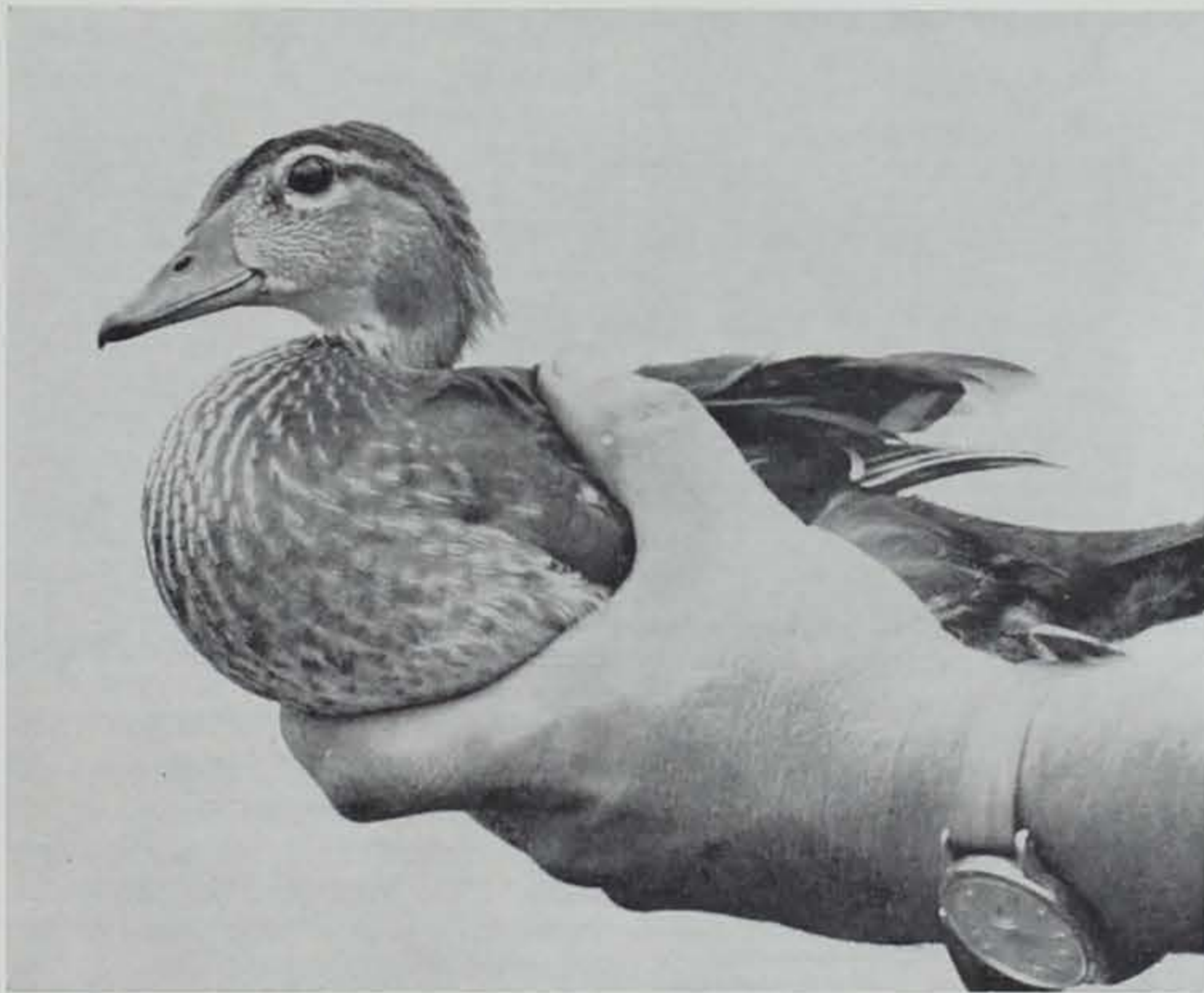
A more detailed summary of regulations applying to deer hunting are found elsewhere in this issue and in leaflets available from county recorders, Conservators, and license depositors (see them.)

#### Deer Population Estimates

Deer population estimates were at their lowest winter after most of the state due to hunting, accidents, and other decimating factors. The Iowa deer population had reduced to its lowest point of its annual population cycle. They indicated that about 14,155 deer were present in the state.

Data from our deer population stations indicate that 13 fawns are produced for every 100 adult deer, which means that deer hunters will have at least 13 deer for every 100 deer they kill.

(Continued on page 166)



Jim Sherman Photo.

Among our most beautiful waterfowl, wood ducks are making a tremendous come-back. Though found mainly along the Mississippi, this one was banded on a central Iowa lake.

### 1961 HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASON

**PHEASANT**—Open season: November 11-December 15, 1961, both dates inclusive. Shooting hours 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Bag limit three cock birds, possession limit six cock birds. All counties open EXCEPT: Davis, Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, Lee, Van Buren, and Wapello.

**QUAIL**—Open Season: November 4-December 15, 1961, both dates inclusive. Shooting hours 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Bag limit five birds, possession limit ten birds. Open counties: Adair, Adams, Allamakee, Appanoose, Audubon, Black Hawk, Benton, Boone, Bremer, Buchanan, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Chickasaw, Clarke, Clayton, Clinton, Crawford, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Delaware, Des Moines, Dubuque, Fayette, Fremont, Greene, Guthrie, Harrison, Henry, Howard, Iowa, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Lee, Linn, Louisa, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Marshall, Mills, Monona, Monroe, Montgomery, Muscatine, Page, Polk, Pottawattamie, Poweshiek, Ringgold, Scott, Shelby, Story,

Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Winneshiek, Woodbury.

**HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE**—Open season: November 11-December 15, 1961, both dates inclusive. Shooting hours 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Bag limit two birds, possession limit four birds. Open counties: Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Hancock, Kossuth, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Plymouth, Sioux, Winnebago.

**SQUIRREL**—Open season for gray and fox squirrels: September 16-December 15, 1961, both dates inclusive. Bag limit six per day, possession limit twelve.

**RABBIT**—Open season for cottontail and jack: September 16, 1961 to February 18, 1962, both dates inclusive. Shooting hours 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Bag limit ten per day, no possession limit.

**RACCOON**—Open season (hunting only): 12:00 noon, October 21, 1961 to midnight, February 28, 1962. No daily bag limit or possession limit.

**WEASEL, RED FOX, GRAY**

(Continued on page 165)

Jim Sieh

Waterfowl Biologist

Among the troubles of our time is a difficulty overshadowed by various economic and political developments. As in the "thirties," our waterfowl may be in an acute position, although fringe benefits could help a great deal.

Crisis to the wild duck means drought-scorched prairies. In the Canadian pothole country of southern Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, late summer water levels have been at an extreme low. This area is called the "duck factory" of North America by waterfowl experts because most of the Central and Mississippi Flyway ducks are hatched there. In wet years the Fish and Wildlife Service tallies about five million water areas in this region by aerial surveys. This summer the number was reduced to 900,000 and part of these were outside the pothole country.

With their nesting grounds turned to dust, ducks have had to range into the fringe areas to satisfy the nesting urge. These alternate nesting sites extend northward into bush and tundra and south to a belt of glacially-built ponds in the Nebraska sand hills through northwest Iowa, southeast South Dakota, southern Minnesota and parts of Wisconsin and Michigan. During normal times the production in fringe areas is very small compared to the potholes, but with ducks driven from the primary sites the fringes can help the situation—help, but not cure.

Fortunately, Iowa's first statewide duck banding attempt coincided with the extensive nesting in the fringe areas. Never before could we assay the value of our wetlands to duck production. And though total numbers of ducks are always estimates, our guesses will be much more accurate this year.

Up and down every creek suitable for nesting, and in Iowa's limited marshes and potholes, blue-winged teal were nesting this summer. From a few thousand blue-wings in our poorest years to

(Continued on page 164)



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George Tovey Photo.

This is what's called using the head. If  
squirrels found all of the nuts they bury  
we would have fewer trees in the forests.

**SQUIRREL PROSPECTS**

Paul D. Kline  
Game Biologist

Iowa hunters can expect above average squirrel hunting for the 1961 season. Last year's mast crop (nuts and acorns) was near normal and the winter was not especially severe. This appears to have contributed to good production during the current breeding season. Young squirrels are abundant. From past experience we know that hunting success fluctuates directly with annual squirrel production.

Squirrels are most abundant in those counties which have the greatest amount of woodland. Traditionally, our most heavily wooded areas lie in northeastern and southern Iowa. Counties like Allamakee, Clayton, and Jackson in the northeast are loaded with squirrel timbers. But if you wish to travel outside familiar territory you might try Lee, Monroe, and Van Buren counties in southern Iowa. In the western parts of the state, Monona, Harrison, Pottawattamie, and Fremont counties have considerable amounts of woodland.

The elusive gray squirrel is found in the deep woods of eastern and southern Iowa. If you want to see how you rate as a hunter, go after some grays; they are a good test. Hunting either fox or gray squirrels will sharpen your sight and reflexes for the coming bird seasons. So go—but remember—Ask the farmer first!

**COMMISSION MINUTES**

August 2, 1961

**General**

Travel was authorized to the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissions and the American Fisheries Society meeting at Memphis, Tennessee, September 10-15, for four commissioners and six staff members.

Permission was also given for travel to the National Conference on State Parks at Texoma, Oklahoma, on September 24-28 for two staff members.

One staff member was given permission to attend the National Conservation Education Association Conference at Missoula, Montana.

A delegation of seven people from Storm Lake asked the Commission to consider using dredge fill to fill a slough area located on the shore of Storm Lake adjacent to Buena Vista College.

Governor Norman A. Erbe met with the Commission and discussed ways and means of promoting tourism in Iowa.

A statement as to the duties and responsibilities of the Planning Coordinator was approved by the Commission.

A resolution was passed requesting the State Health Department to do all possible to correct the pollution problem of the Cedar River.

**Fish and Game**

Approval was given for preliminary planning for a 38.8 acre artificial lake in Ringgold County and also a 50 acre artificial lake in Monroe County.

Hunting and trapping seasons were discussed and set for the 1961 season.

Approval was given for acquisition of 36.3 acres of land in the Tama Bottoms for \$9,425 for use as part of the Otter Creek Marsh Area.

**Forestry**

A report was given by the State Forester on the progress of acquisition of Federal Forest Lands in Iowa.

**Parks**

A gift of \$25 from the Daughters of Colonial Wars was accepted by the Commission for use in restoration of the Fort Atkinson State Preserve.

A request was granted to the State Archaeologist for scientific excavations in Dolliver Memorial State Park and Woodman Hollow.

Permission was given to the Kiwanis Club of Algona to restore the log cabin at Ambrose A. Call State Park.

A delegation of three people from Storm Lake met with the Commission, requesting that Storm Lake State Park be transferred to the city of Storm Lake.

Beaver Meadows State Park was transferred to the town of Parkersburg subject to the Executive Council's approval.

Walnut Woods State Park Man-

agement Agreement with the city of West Des Moines was terminated.

Standard fees for use of equipment on rental boats, such as lights and fire extinguishers, were approved.

New rules for Boat Inspection for artificial lakes were approved.

A report was given on the State Park Roads Program for 1961-62 fiscal year by the Superintendent of Engineering.

A request was authorized to the Highway Commission for the extension of a permit for the camping area road at Lake Darling.

Approval was given to Hardin County for the widening of a road at Pine Lake State Park to 18 feet to allow surfacing.

**Waters**

Construction permits for two bathhouses on North Twin Lake were approved.

Approval was given to the Highway Commission for a stream crossing on the North Skunk River in Jasper County.

Approval was given to the procedural policy governing hearings concerning water damages as proposed by the Natural Resources Council.

The city of Paullina was given approval for construction of an air strip on a portion of Mill Creek State Park.

A delegation of four people met with the Commission to protest a new regulation concerning fire extinguishers in open boats.

**County Conservation**

The following land acquisition items were approved by the commission. Black Hawk County, the 80 acre Beaver Creek Fishing Access Area northwest of Cedar Falls for a price of \$3,800, and also, the 300 acre Ford property access on the Cedar River for \$90 per acre. This area covers about a mile of river frontage northwest of Cedar Falls and will be purchased over the next five years. Bremer County, a five acre addition to North Woods Park in the northeast corner of the county for \$250. Chickasaw County, 157 acre Hall Wildlife Area on the Wapsi River southwest of New Hampton for \$9,500 to be used for wildlife and school-county forest. Delaware County, 20 acre Dundee Fishing Access on the Maquoketa River for \$300. Poweshiek County, purchase of 170 to 200 acres adjacent to Diamond Lake at Montezuma. Marshall County, 198 acre Iowa River Area northwest of Marshalltown, as a multiple-use area for \$15,840. Tama County, lease of the one-half acre Duffus Boat Launching Area west of Chelsea for 20 years for one dollar. Winnebago County, 30 acre marsh addition to the Hogsback Area northwest of Lake Mills as a wildlife cover and public shooting area.

Development plans approved: Grundy County, roadside park development of the Ida Miller Memorial Park on highway 57. Linn

**DO ANIMALS TALK**

Roberts Mann and  
David H. Thompson

Amateur bird fans are not all bird watchers. Some of us are bird listeners. In the forest preserves and rural regions the big black noisy crow is a continual challenge. At first light of dawn an evenly spaced "caw, caw, caw" seems to say "Hello! Is anybody awake?" Soon it is answered by sleepy crow voices. They have food calls, assembly calls, courtship calls, alarm calls, and a lot of squabbling over roosting spots as they settle down for the night. The adults are very quiet near the nest but the fledglings make low gargling sounds as they are fed. The discovery of an owl or cat sets off a sort of mob hysteria. By hiding a microphone among a flock of crows it has been found that they also talk in whispers.

Animals do not have a true language even though they communicate with one another by sounds and gestures. Each kind has a certain number of inherited signals for expressing its feelings but these are not words. All human infants laugh or cry to express their emotions without being taught. Their language must be laboriously learned, one word at a time. A baby chick hatched in an incubator and reared away from all other chickens makes the same calls and behaves the same as chicks hatched and reared by a hen. The only noticeable difference is that young cockerels learn to crow sooner and better when they can hear an old rooster.

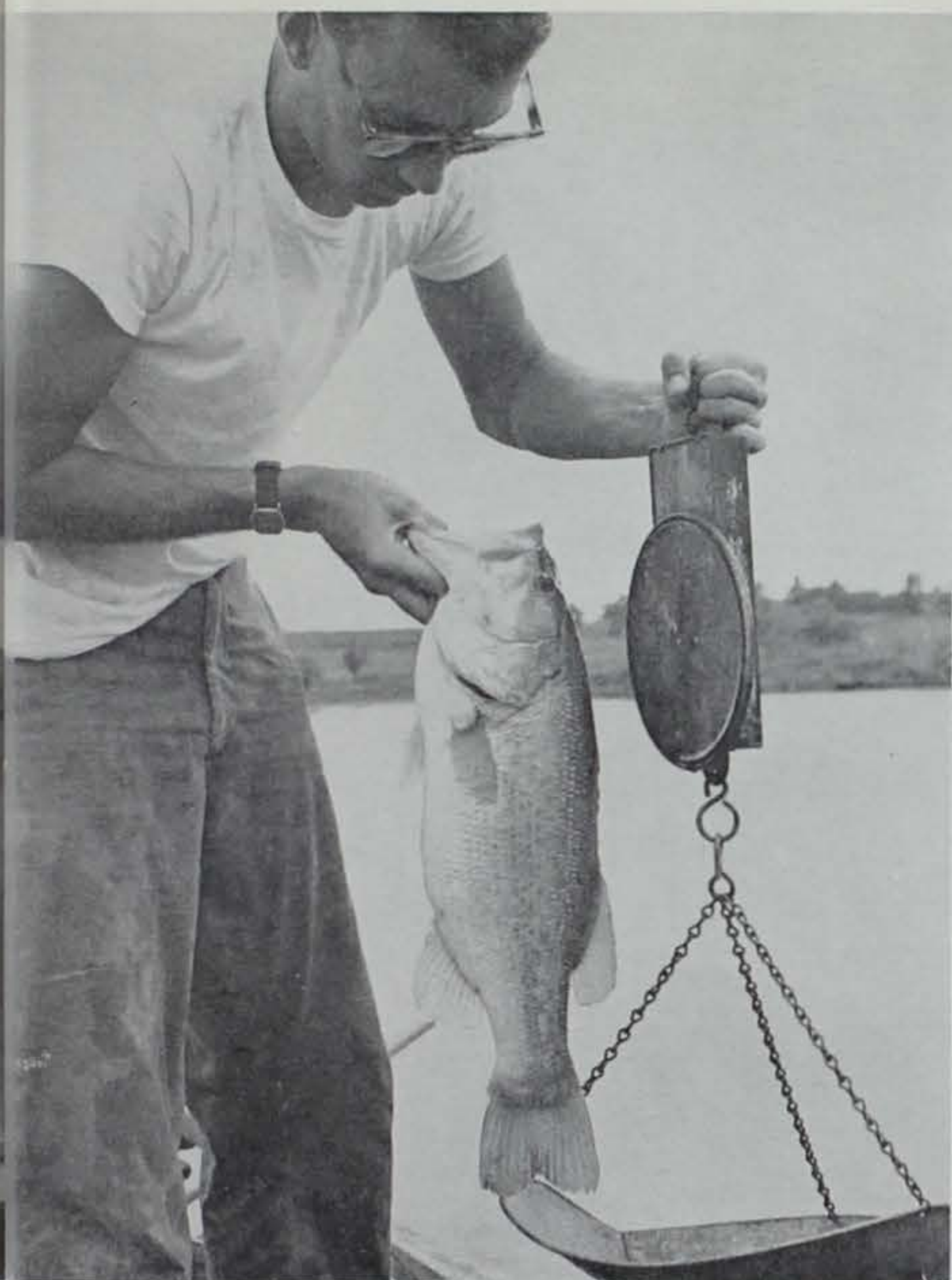
Some apes can utter as many as thirty different sounds which a patient trainer can learn to understand. They seem to be on the verge of true speech. They also use many different facial expressions, postures and movements much as we smile, shrug our shoulders or point a finger. Still these are instinctive actions—no learned. An ape reared alone from birth to the age of five years was able to express itself in ape language just as well as any other.

Wild ducks and geese have a variety of special calls. The mallard hen, for example, gives a rapid "tuckata-tuckata-tuckata" in the presence of feed. A series of loud descending quacks—termed the "hail call"—is given by undisturbed groups when loafing safe. A low single "whank" puts a flock to flight. The feeding hail calls are imitated by hunters.

—Cook County Forest Preserve

County, picnicking and fishing access facilities at Buffalo Township Access on the Wapsi River. Marshall County, boat launching, picnicking and wildlife cover at Three Bridges Area. Franklin County, picnic and recreation facilities at the Latimer Park. Clinton County, lease and development of a one-fourth acre boat launching site at Marquette on the Mississippi River.





Jim Sherman Photo.

Scale at six pounds this largemouth bass is just one of many at Allerton Reservoir.

## BIGMOUTH GALORE

Malcolm K. Johnson

Allerton Reservoir has the best big bass I've ever seen in one place, even though it is biologically a sick lake.

The sight of five pound bass sets your heart to thumping, puts a frown on your brow, tightens the stomach, and dries out your mouth like a wind on the Sahara, you might just be interested in what follows.

Ever since a midnight frog gigging expedition last year the word "fishing" makes me think of one thing—big bass at Allerton—a state lake in south central Iowa. Finally got an opportunity to go back in the light of day and see the spot where a jumping bass practically scared me out of the boat. The occasion was a biology survey of the fish in the lake.

It was about two in the afternoon when the survey boat set out complete with a high-powered motor. Within a few minutes we were rolling. Working not more than 20 feet away from the line, the stunning force of the electric current raised fish after fish. Some would belly up on the net and offer no resistance to be netted. Checked and weighed, they would allow themselves to be returned to water a few moments of inactivity would be followed by a violent splash and away went—none the worse for a

brief spell in the hands of man.

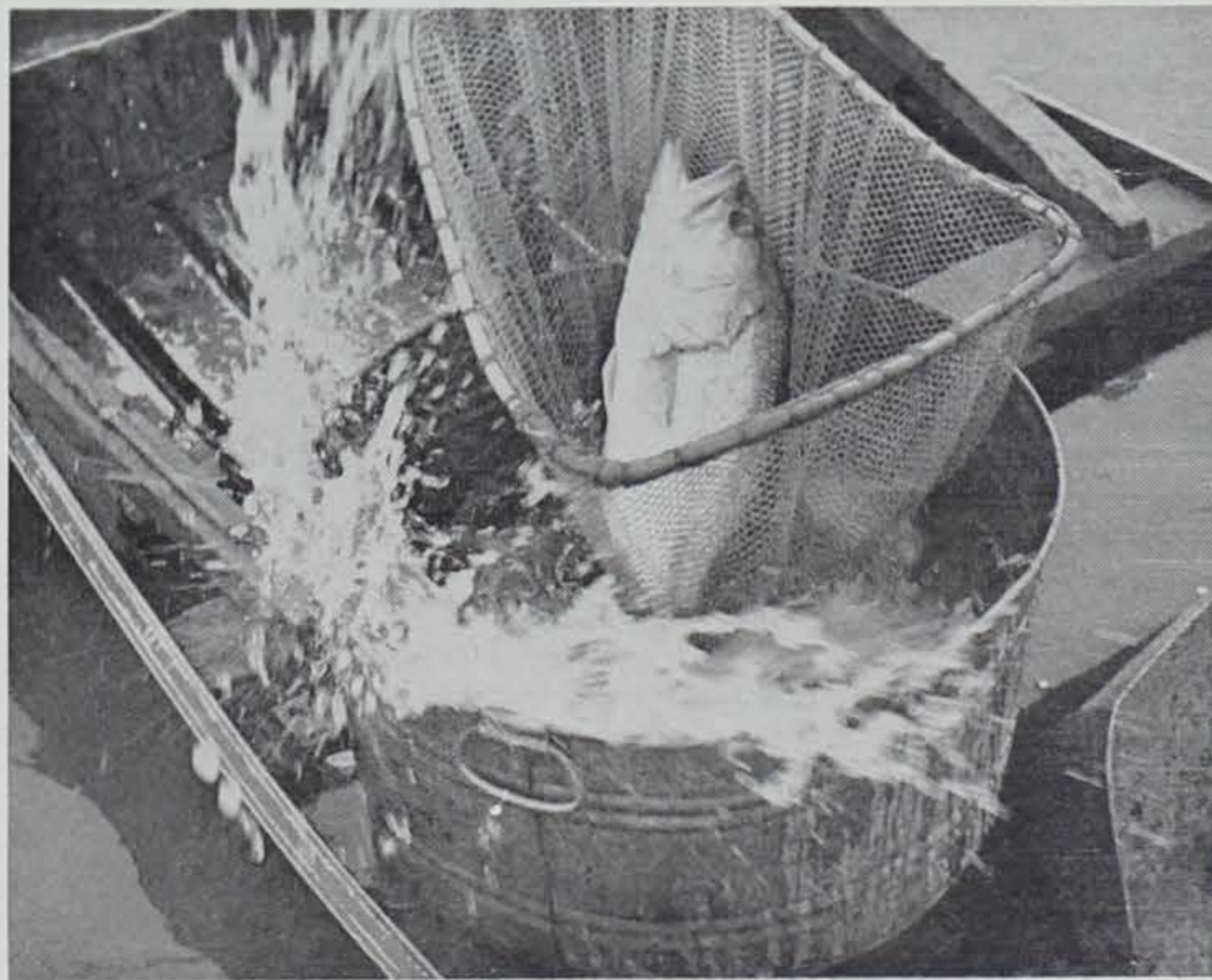
In a little over an hour we covered a mile and a half weaving back and forth around stumps and trees and always close to the bank. Sixty largemouth bass were accounted for that ranged between three and six pounds. Those big ones must have averaged four-and-a-half pounds. Many more responded to the shocking; bluegills, crappies and some carp so big they nearly sprained my wrist lifting the dip net into the boat. In all these fish there was one point that belied the appearance of a healthy population. There were very few young fish. The crappies were small and stunted, bluegills undersized also. Less than a dozen bass in the pound class were spotted when they should have outnumbered the lunkers by a great deal. These conditions plus the enormous carp were what made the biologist remark that it is a sick lake.

Allerton is one of the turbid water bodies that is best suited for catfish and bullheads. The other game fish were stocked as a means of supplying varied sport for the fishermen. Something that might change this opinion is the recent acquisition of some Kentucky Bass, a species whose characteristics lie somewhere between the smallmouth and largemouth bass. When sufficient numbers are hatched and reared from the 200 young Kentucky Bass now in Commission rearing ponds, Allerton



Jim Sherman Photo.

The gas powered generator in the middle of the boat provides current for the bars hanging from the bow. The long handled dip net helps catch those only lightly stunned.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Not the least bit eager to cooperate, a bass gives his tail a frantic wag.

will be one of the areas experimentally stocked. In other states to the south and east they do better than largemouth in silty water.

Ranking all of the game fish by weight, bullheads come first, bass, crappies, and catfish follow in that order. Carp account for about one-half of the total weight of the fish there.

Local anglers may scratch their heads in doubt, but Allerton really needs to be fished. The numbers of fishermen using the lake are insignificant compared to those using the lake for picnicking and swimming. Those big bass and carp need a little thinning out. (And where was my fly rod? Home—where else?)



**DEER OUTLOOK—**

(Continued from page 161)

perhaps 100,000 this year represents the range of fringe area production. Overall, just a drop in the bucket, but a big drop in a small bucket during crisis years.

The recoveries of these Iowa banded birds will be a great help in determining our contribution to the waterfowl production effort in time of emergency. Drive trapping was the method used to capture flightless young and moulting adults which have shed their primary wing feathers and are also temporarily incapable of flight. The ducks and coots are slowly herded into V-shaped enclosures constructed of chicken wire netting staked into the marsh. At the point of the V, a hoop or trap net is attached and the birds are driven into it. These flightless waterfowl are then aged, sexed, banded and released in the area from which they came. Reports of these birds killed or captured on down the flyways provide information to determine migratory routes, efforts of hunting pressure on the harvest, and may indicate nesting areas used during succeeding years.

Some 1,450 waterfowl were banded in the statewide program, most from the western counties because the topography permitted easier driving and trapping. Present in high numbers and easiest to trap were the blue-winged teal, who accounted for 80 percent of the ducks. Woodies, mallards and red heads ranked in that order. Coot too are abundant and made up a quarter of all birds banded. Both wood ducks and pin tails have shown a great increase from previous years.

All waterfowl banding records in North America are housed at the Bird Banding Office at the Patuxent Research Center, Laurel, Maryland. Recently, all waterfowl banding and recovery data have been coded and placed upon I.B.M. cards and upon magnetic tape for rapid data analysis. Waterfowl banding in Iowa is a part of a continental banding effort. Anyone seriously engaged in the study of birds may use the banding records at Patuxent.

Recent emphasis has been placed upon the banding of wood ducks within the 14 Mississippi Flyway states. Iowa produces many of these birds, and harvests a considerable number of them, especially along the Mississippi River. Recent band recoveries indicate a considerable kill of this species in Texas from the Mississippi Flyway banding.

Recoveries of blue-winged teal banded in Iowa some day may lead to justification of a special season on blue-wings during years of peak abundance. Framework dates allocated to the states do not allow for such special seasons at the present time, but as we progress toward species management in waterfowl, banding and recovery data become more and more important.



Chicken wire "leads" are strung out to guide the ducks into traps. The driving is done while the majority of birds are flightless. Jim Sherman Photo



The banding crew slowly works their way across the marsh unable to see the birds swimming and walking in weeds far ahead. Jim Sherman Photo

Iowa and the other Mississippi Flyway states in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service are gathering this information on a cooperative basis via the Mississippi Flyway Council.

The old mallard is still king and the most important duck to the hunter. Over 50 per cent of all ducks taken in Iowa are mallards. This species has been hit hard by the drought and this fall the flyway population is expected to be somewhat below the 1959 level. Population wise, mallards made a slight comeback during the 1960 breeding season, but not nearly enough to bring them back to the peak numbers of the mid-fifties. Waterfowl experts tell us the situation is serious, but not critical. However, we strongly advise that all duck hunters beat the drum for snow and rain in the prairies of Canada and apply pressure for the purchase of what's left of our wetlands.



A Woodie and his mate arrive at the lead and are soon trapped, banded and released. Jim Sherman Photo





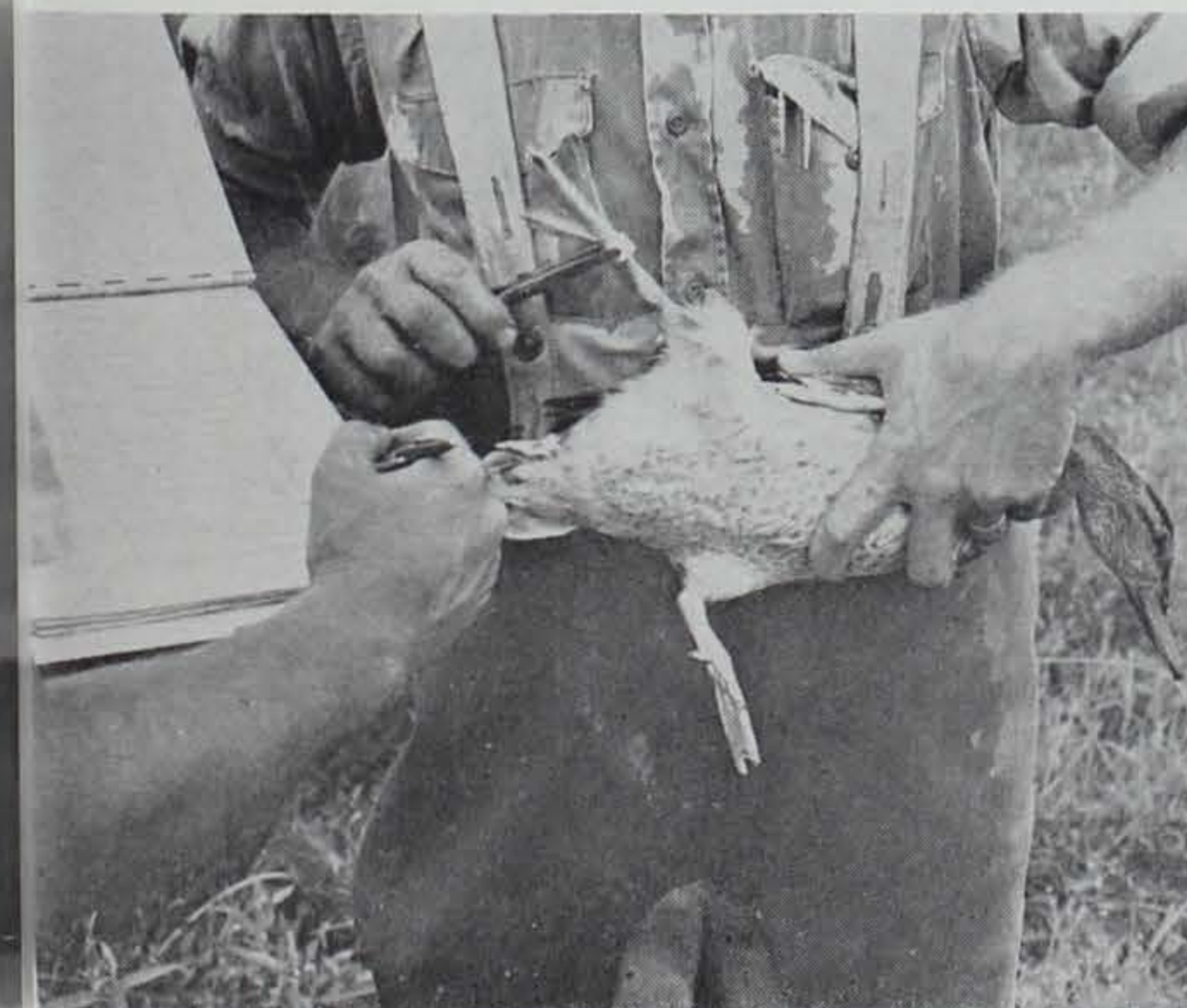
Jim Sherman Photo.

The top net full of bewildered birds is retrieved to dry ground where the banding operation can be performed much easier than while knee-deep in water.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Handling a live mallard gently takes time to learn, but these men handle more ducks in a job than many hunters ever see in years of hunting the intelligent birds.



Jim Sherman Photo.

Not all sure that he likes it, a mallard is sexed, banded and the details recorded so much as a "by your leave." Data will be used to determine Iowa's contribution to the waterfowl population. This is important in drought years such as this.

## HUNTING SEASONS—

(Continued from page 161)

**FOX, GROUND HOG, WOLF-COYOTE**—Continuous open season, entire state.

### DEER HUNTING

**DEER**—Open season for bow and arrow only from October 14-November 30, 1961, both dates inclusive. Entire state open.

Open season for shotgun only from December 16-December 18, 1961, both dates inclusive. Entire state open.

Daily bag limit one deer, possession limit one deer, season limit one deer.

Shooting hours each open day for bow and arrow 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Shooting hours for shotgun season, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### LICENSE APPLICATIONS —

All applications for deer hunting licenses for the 1961 deer hunting season must be made on forms provided by the State Conservation Commission and returned to the State Conservation Commission office in Des Moines, Iowa, accompanied by check or money order in the amount of ten dollars. Applications for shotgun deer hunting licenses must be made not later than October 14, 1961. There is no deadline for bow and arrow deer hunting applications. No more than 8,000 shotgun deer hunting licenses will be issued. These will be issued to the first 8,000 persons making application.

There is no limit on the number of bow and arrow deer licenses that will be issued.

### WATERFOWL

**DUCK, COOT or MUDHEN**—Open season: October 21-November 19, 1961, both dates inclusive. Entire state open. Shooting is allowed each day from sunrise to sunset except opening day when the shooting hours will be from 12:00 noon to sunset. All times Central Standard Time.

**DUCKS**—Bag limit two in the aggregate of all kinds except not more than one Hooded Merganser and one Wood Duck shall be included in such limit.

Possession limit four after first day.

Five American and Red-breasted Mergansers may be taken daily with ten in possession singly or in aggregate of both kinds. This is in addition to the bag limit and possession limits of other ducks.

Season is closed on Canvasback and Red Head ducks.

**GEESE**—Open season: October 7-December 5, 1961, both dates inclusive. Shooting allowed from sunrise to sunset except opening day when shooting will commence at 12:00 noon, Central Standard Time. Bag limit and possession limit five. Not more than two of the limit may be Canada geese or subspecies, or White-fronted Geese. Only two of any of the above may be included in the limit. The entire bag may be made up of either Blue or Snow Geese or any combination

of them.

**COOT or MUDHEN**—Bag limit six, possession limit six.

**WILSON'S SNIPE or JACK-SNIPE**—Bag and possession limit eight. Open season: October 15-November 19, 1961, both dates inclusive. Shooting allowed from sunrise to sunset except opening day when the shooting hours will be from 12:00 noon to sunset.

**ROSS' GEESE, GREBES, RAILS (Except Coot) and GALLINULES, MOURNING DOVES, WOODCOCK, SWAN** — No open season.

### TRAPPING

#### OPEN TRAPPING SEASONS

Special regulations shall be enforced on all Game Management Areas in the state. Trapping on all Game Management Areas will be by permit only including a harvest quota on fur species to be determined by the Commission. Permits are available from the Commission. On Game Management Areas and that portion of the Mississippi River east of Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad tracks from Minnesota state line to south city limits of Davenport will open at noon day following close of duck season or noon November 11, 1961, whichever is the later and extending to midnight, December 31, 1961.

**Mink-Muskrat** — Entire state open from noon November 11, 1961, to midnight, December 15, 1961.

**Beaver**—Open entire state from noon, November 11, 1961, until midnight, February 28, 1962.

**Badger, Skunk, Opossum, Civet Cat**—Open entire state from noon, November 11, 1961, until midnight, February 28, 1962.

**Raccoon**—Open entire state from noon, November 11, 1961, until midnight, February 28, 1962. Water sets permitted only during the open season on mink and muskrat.

**Weasel, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Ground Hog, Wolf-Coyote**—Continuous open season, entire state.

**Otter**—Continuous closed season, entire state.

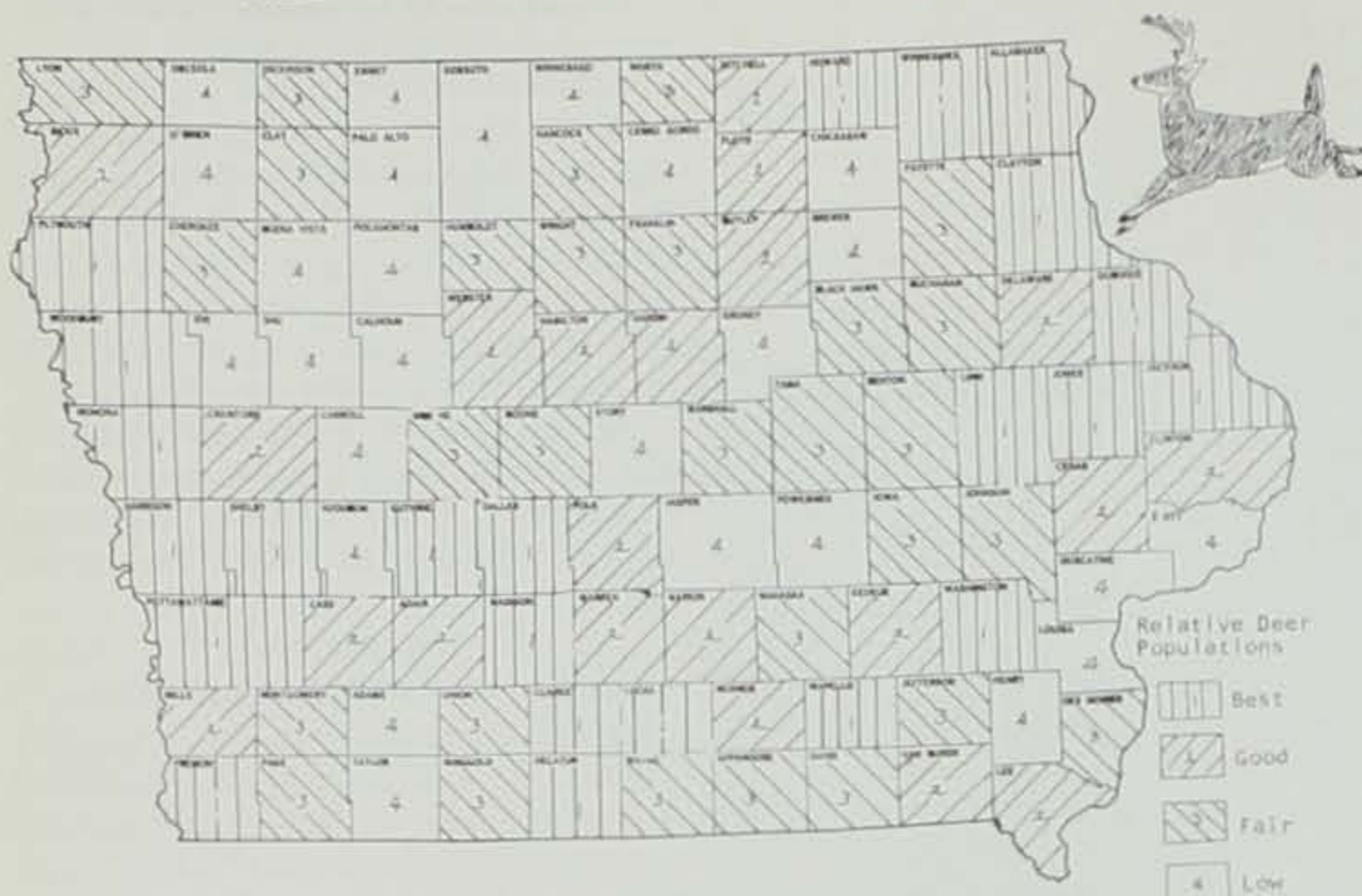
## PEAR PARABLE

The beaver, as most anyone will agree, is an engineering genius. A lady from near McCausland on the lower Wapsi River in eastern Iowa reports that beavers use their skill for other than dam building.

It seems the beavers in her vicinity developed a taste for the pears that fell from her tree in the backyard. One evening as she watched from her window, a big old beaver sniffed around for fallen fruit and finding none turned his attention upward to the pears in the tree. After a quick survey he solved the problem in typically beaver fashion by gnawing around the trunk until the laden tree crashed to the ground. Probably ten bushels of pears were strewn across the lawn and in no time the yard was alive with other beavers.



### RELATIVE DEER POPULATION—1961



#### DUCK FACTORY—

(Continued from page 161)

least 23,000 elusive targets when the deer seasons open. This is the largest deer population we have had since the beginning of our modern deer seasons in 1953.

The Iowa deer population has increased about 25 percent in the past five years, even though sportsmen have harvested at least 25,436 deer since the first open season. One of the major factors in this growth is the high productivity of the Iowa deer herd which, in turn, is largely attributable to the abundant supply of good food.

The future size of the Iowa deer herd will be governed to a large degree by the attitude of the farmers. As long as we can harvest the annual surplus and prevent large concentrations of deer from forming, the farmers will probably not complain, for most of them enjoy seeing a few deer on their farms. When one looks out, however, and sees a herd of 40 or more deer mowing his alfalfa he will probably be concerned. It should, then, be apparent that our annual deer season, while providing sport for thousands, is a necessity for the successful management of the Iowa deer herd. Deer are a renewable natural resource which must be harvested.

#### Results of Past Seasons

As stated previously, Iowa hunters have harvested a known 25,436 deer during the eight open seasons for an average of about 3,180 per season. The best season Iowa hunters have enjoyed was the 1960 season when 4,269 deer were taken. During the 1960 season, gun hunters had a hunter success ratio of 45.9 per cent. Bowhunters had a hunter success ratio of 16 per cent and, while this may not seem high, it is far above the national hunter success ratio for bow hunting of five to ten per cent. During the 1960 season gunhunters spent 37.9 hours for each deer bagged, with bow hunters taking 311 hours for each deer they harvested.

The number of deer harvested in 1960 was well above the number taken in the several preceding seasons. The total kill was 56

per cent greater in 1960 than in 1959 which caused some to think we had perhaps over-harvested our herd. This was not the case, even though the harvest was much greater than for the preceding year.

Fawns and one and one-half year old deer comprised about two-thirds of the deer harvested both years. This is as it should be, with the younger animals furnishing the bulk of those taken. Had the herd been overharvested in 1960, more older animals would have been taken which would indicate we had cut into the base herd and removed more than the annual surplus. We did not overharvest in 1960.

This is only one case where data from deer checking stations are used in the management of the Iowa deer herd. All deer hunters are urged to cooperate with us in the management of your deer herd by having the deer you take checked by game technicians wherever possible. The information gained makes better management possible and likewise, wiser use of this natural resource.

#### Prospects for the 1961 Season

Prospects for a very successful deer season in 1961 are excellent. We have a good supply of deer, more hunters in the field to keep deer moving, and a long enough season to assure reasonable success. Only severe weather conditions will keep this from being one of Iowa's best seasons, and maybe we can talk the weatherman into giving us some weather ideally suited for deer hunting.

A map is included in this article to advise our hunters as to the relative deer population picture in each county. I'm advising, as I did last year, that hunters take a long look at their home county before deciding to go elsewhere to hunt. Check along streams or in cornfields near timber for deer signs—most hunters who travel several hundred miles to hunt will probably be surprised at what they find in their own back yards.

Hunters in the southern Iowa counties, especially, should do their hunting at home. Some of

### PRAIRIE LANDS

Raymond Mitchell

Standing motionless among the prairie plants in one of Iowa's state-owned prairies is always an awe inspiring experience. It is one of man's few opportunities to be completely at rest with the world.

You can almost see a "prairie schooner" as it left a trail into the sunset amid all this grandeur a century or so ago. Certainly the pioneer folks must have been struck by the beauty of the lavender fields of prairie phlox in June, the bright orange of the wild lilies in July, and the brilliant red of the blazing star in August or the dozens of other colorful flowers and foliage that make up the prairie in spring, summer, and fall.

Like a wilderness, its enjoyment stems from communion with the senses. A view from some distant road cannot reward the visitor with any rich experience. Walking among the prairie plants you see the dainty hues of color, smell the spicy odors, hear the rustle of the plant community and touch each delicate flower. Iowa, once a vast prairie nearly from border to border, has all but lost this great heritage. Only through a program of prairie land acquisition by the

State Conservation Commission has it been possible to preserve all time a few outstanding prairie areas for future generations as well as the present to enjoy.

The 1961 legislature wisely chose to add another prairie to Iowa's growing list of state-owned prairie preserves. A 25 acre native prairie in Guthrie County, seven miles northwest of Guthrie Center known as the Cheeder Prairie, being purchased by the State Conservation Commission with funds appropriated by the legislature. It is a wonderfully rich area of prairie plants representing the prairie flora of west central Iowa.

The Conservation Commission has three other prairies for the public to enjoy. These are Kalsbe Prairie, in Pocahontas County near Rockwell City; Caylor Prairie in Dickinson County near Wea Okoboji, and the Ada Haydock Prairie near Lime Springs in Howard County.

This fine collection of unplowed fields is a part of the Conservation Commission program to preserve natural features of outstanding significance so that the people of Iowa may catch and hold a bit of the past; important for the social well-being of all great nations throughout recorded history.



Exploring Cheeder Prairie near Guthrie Center, students at the Teacher's Conservation camp find many wildflowers blooming that they never knew existed in this state.

### YOU CAN'T GET ALONG WITHOUT INSECTS

One of the popular myths about nature is that mankind inherits the earth, and that unless man can produce a constant supply of new and more deadly chemicals, traps and swatters—he is doomed! The next age on earth, so goes this theory, will be the "Age of Insects."

these counties simply haven't been hunted heavily enough and should be producing more deer.

Wherever you may decide to hunt, conduct yourself as a good sportsman. Secure permission before you hunt on another man's property and your hunt will be many more times enjoyable.

The science of ecology — study of the relationships of plants and animals to each other and their environment—has completely exploded the man vs. insect theory, according to the National Geographic Society.

Without the six-legged insect and related small fry of the animal kingdom, many farm and orchard crops could not be grown. Millions of birds and many kinds of fish would disappear. Some whole industries would have to shut down for lack of raw materials produced only by insects. These include the shellac industry and its by-products, the silk industry, and others.





George Tovey Photo.

find the cotton tail among the brush. They look like this in early fall.

## RABBITS BACK TO NORMAL

Paul D. Kline  
Game Biologist

Many hunters, who outnumber other type of gun-toting men except pheasant followers, look forward to an average season 1961-62. July roadside counts, just completed, indicate the cottontail population on a statewide basis is near or just slightly below the average of the eleven years. This is an increase over last year's population. Hunting should be found in southern two or three tiers of counties, providing we leave out those counties bordering the Mississippi River. Of course, every cottontail hunter has his favorite "hot spots." These may be found in all parts of the state. Generally speaking, it is normal to find the higher cottontail population in southern counties; and our surveys indicate this coming season will be no exception. Lowest populations occur in the northeast counties. And the further north one goes, the poorer it gets. Fluctuations of cottontails are known to fluctuate. Most of us can compare rabbit abundance of the present season with the previous one. Back in 1957, and '59 we had very high populations in much of southern Iowa, which have dropped, but are still high. Our research efforts are bent on explaining why these fluctuations occur. So far we have pretty definite indications that the result from differences in productivity—no conclusive proof yet, but clues. In other words, rabbits are more apt to be numerous following a breeding season when litters are large and abundant and when weather, disease and other factors permit high survival. Just how to insure such conditions every season is a little hazardous.

Productivity for the past two breeding seasons has been below average. Consequently, our cottontail populations are down from the "high" of three and four years ago, particularly in the best rabbit areas of southern Iowa. These areas, however, will provide hunting of average quality when viewed from the standpoint of long hunting experience.

## BEEDS LAKE

A Where to Go and What to Do Feature.

Stan Widney

Beeds Lake, just north of Hampton, in Franklin County, has everything anyone could wish for in a state park, and then some. The "then some" is a wonderful dike that bisects the lake from southeast to northwest with 650 yards of the best bank fishing anywhere. In fact, the distance can be doubled because it's possible to fish both sides at once without leaving a line untended. Bridges at either end allow easy boating access to the west end of the lake.

Another extra is the dam's unusual spillway, so beautiful with its vari-colored stone in horizontal layers that slope abruptly for 40 feet to the rock foundation. The spillway is 170 feet long.

The bathing beach is on the west side of the tree-covered dike. It is well sanded and supervised and the bathhouse is one of the finest.

Concessionaires rent boats and motors, and sell refreshments and fishing supplies to the thousands who come by car or plane to enjoy this most rewarding of state parks. A pair of concrete boat ramps lead down to a sheltered bay with adequate docking at its entrance.

There are several clean, level picnic areas, shady and provided with adequate parking, tables, fireplaces and wood. There is a rustic shelter for family reunions that offers a splendid view of the lake.

Two camping areas are provided, both near the park officer's home and are well stocked with fireplaces and tables.

Spring Creek that feeds the lake is from 12 to 14 miles long and is fed by numerous cold water springs that have continued to flow regularly, summer and winter, since

long before the white men penetrated this country. Evidence that Indian tribes used the lake site for recreational purposes was found by the early settlers who held their own picnics and reunions there. They found a perfect paradise in this basin surrounded by a dense growth of trees of every variety native to this part of the continent. Nuts, berries and fruit were there in abundance.

In 1857, T. K. Hansbury built the first dam and grist mill, but William Beed put in the long dike and made many improvements when he bought the property in 1864.

Mr. Beed always gave visitors free access to his picnic ground and to the lake where he encouraged fishing and trapping. He also provided sand for a bathing beach and built docks at his own expense.

After being drained in 1917 to provide rich land for wartime farming, the new dam was built in 1936 by CCC Labor to form the present 130 acre lake.

Fishing is a year round sport at Beeds Lake where bass, walleyes, cat, bullheads, northerns and panfish are abundant and hungry. The residents on the north shore, and many others, own ice shanties for winter angling.

The trees are mostly second growth now, but are plentiful and of many varieties. Flora of every kind native to the area flourishes, providing excellent cover for birds and wildlife. There is a refuge at the west end of the lake where many species of waterfowl and shore birds may be studied.

Whether you come for a day's outing or two weeks of camping, your stay at Beeds Lake State Park will be well worth-while, anytime.

Fish with forked tails are the fastest swimmers.

## HISTORICALLY SPEAKING



By Stan Widney

## JACKSON COUNTY DEER

We ran across a deer story from Jackson County recently that will bear repeating in this column. Not that Jackson or any other county on the Mississippi need any unusual stories to become a part of Iowa's history. Places like St. Donatus, Bellevue, Green Valley and Sabula on the river; Springbrook, where the state's first governor is buried, and Maquoketa Caves are rich in legend and folklore.

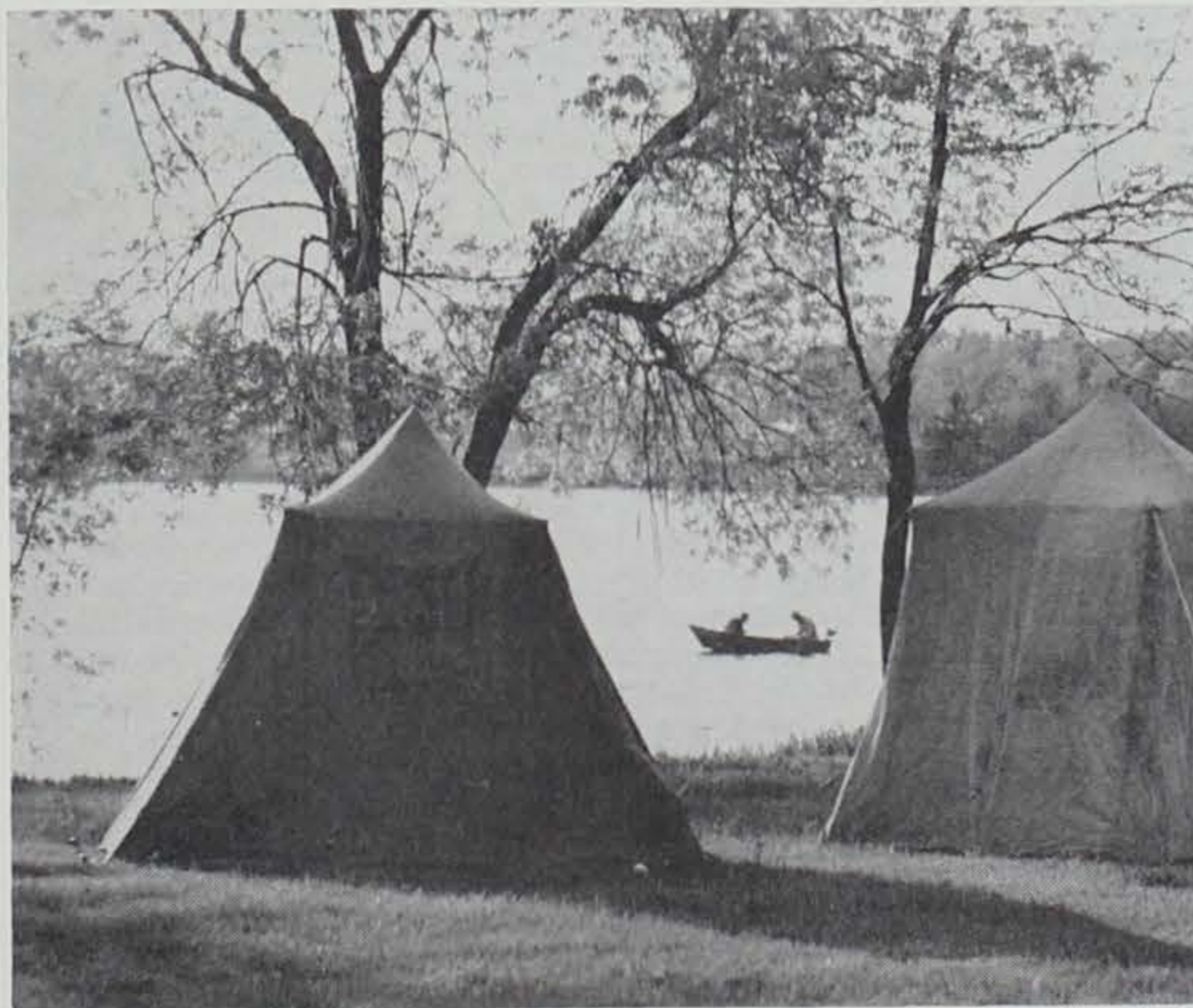
Right now we are concerned with a herd of deer that led to the discovery of what is Maquoketa Caves State Park. Early Jackson County history labels David Scott and Joshua Bear as the discoverers of the caves. Here is, in part, Bear's account of the incident that took place 120 years ago:

"In the hunting season we would get together for a ten day hunt. This time we started from the heavy timber on the forks of the Maquoketa River (about a mile below where the city of Maquoketa is now located) knowing that deer would take shelter there from the heavy snow storm prevailing at that time. We hunted until sundown, having hung up five or six deer during the day.

"Concluding to select a camping ground, we started up a ravine and had not proceeded very far when we struck the trail of ten or a dozen deer. We were able to take two of the herd, the bluffs on either side being so steep the deer could not ascend them. We pursued them up the gorge as rapidly as possible.

"Looking up ahead we saw that the ravine terminated in what appeared to be a bridge of rock, and there seemed to be no chance of their escaping other than turning around and running past us. We were congratulating ourselves on securing them when to our surprise, they all disappeared as if the ground had opened up and swallowed them. Upon investigation we found that our prey had taken refuge in a cave.

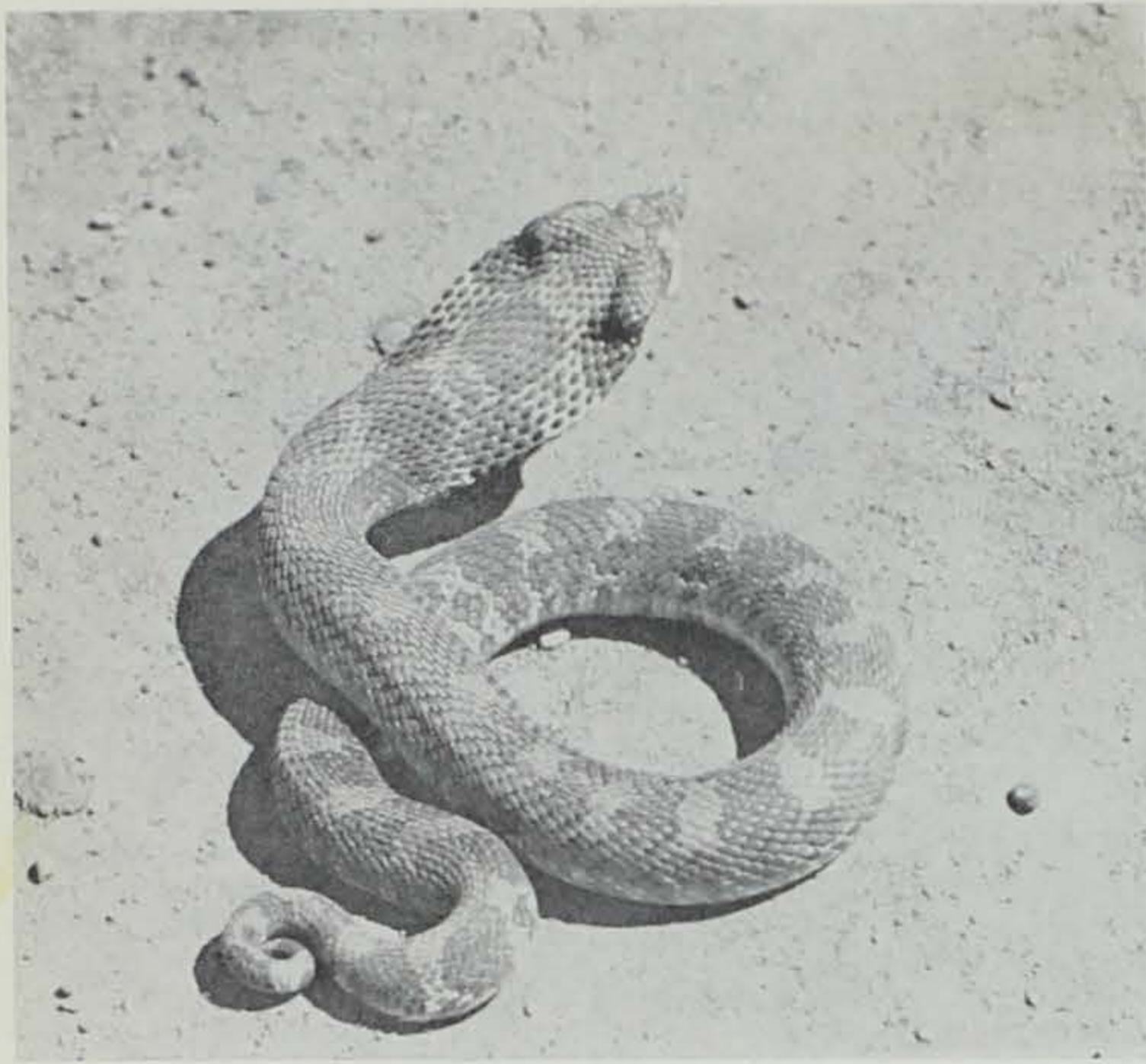
"We made our campfire in the mouth of the cave in order to prevent the deer from escaping. When daylight came, our hopes of capturing the deer were blasted by the discovery that there was an outlet to the cave through which the deer had escaped."



George Tovey Photo.

Beeds Lake is one of our most versatile state parks. Tree shaded campgrounds adjoin the water where a double ramp provides easy access for boats. Shore fishing is also excellent from a dike that bisects the 130-acre lake near Hampton.





Jim Sherman Photo.

The harmless, ham acting hog-nosed snake with its stubby body and flat head is often confused with the cobra of the old world. Its total length seldom exceeds 39 inches.

## SNAKES—SOURCE OF MANY FABLES

Carol Buckmann

Tensing its muscles, the hoop snake rolled into a tight circle and sailed down the hill.

The snake stopped abruptly, its tail thrust into a large oak tree. Within three minutes, the leaves had withered and the mighty oak was dead. Then the hoop snake released its tail-hold and rolled off in another direction.

Sound fantastic? It is. The myth of the hoop snake is one of many stories reported by "reliable" witnesses.

Another tale involves the snow snake which, as the story goes, comes out only in the winter when the snow is on the ground making the snake almost impossible to see. In order to get a glimpse of this anti-social introvert, he must be tricked into revealing himself, according to the informant.

To do this, buy some black cough drops and lay them in a likely place. Then plant yourself inconspicuously and wait. When a hungry snow snake, searching for hard-to-find winter food, takes the cough drop, move like a flash and grab where the cough drop isn't. Result—you have an elusive snow snake.

And so another snake story, along with many others, is passed from generation to generation as the "complete and absolute truth." Just as true is the story of the rabbit hunter who caught his rabbits alive by sitting behind a rock and making noises like a carrot. He caught the hungry rabbits when they came around the rock to eat the delicious sounding carrots.

Some folks believe the glass snake breaks apart when disturbed. When the intruder leaves,

it rejoins its two parts and scurries off. People once believed that hairs from the mane or tail of a horse placed in stagnant water would turn into slender snakes. It was once believed, and is yet today, that a certain snake would steal milk from cows. Oil from the fat of snakes was supposed to be good for rheumatism. This is still believed by some people; and other unfounded superstitions about animals live on.

The truth about snakes is often far more interesting than the fictitious stories.

In reality there is no "hoop" snake in the snake family. There is, however, a southern boa snake so timid that when approached, it rolls into a rigid ball and can be rolled or tossed into the air.

The glass snake is not a real snake, but rather is a member of the lizard family. It can lose its tail when in danger; but the severed tail does not grow back on the body. A new and somewhat smaller appendage grows again in a short time.

The mythical shattered "glass" snake reacts like Humpty Dumpty in that all the king's horses and all the king's men can't put him together again.

Larger enemies, such as the king snake, eat the less agile glass snake. This is where the tail, comprising two-thirds of the body, comes in handy. When overtaken, the reptile struggles violently so the tail occupies all of the assailant's attention. At a crucial moment the lizard abandons its tail in the enemy's jaws. While the enemy is stunned and confused, the lizard escapes by burrowing underground.

A snake with an undue reputation as a poisonous villain is the harmless, master actor, the hog-

nose snake, common in Iowa.

Although lacking fangs, poison or a constricting capacity, when its privacy is infringed upon, the hog-nose can flatten its head and neck, and hissing, appear as ferocious as the dreaded cobra. Then with tail coiled and head raised, it takes a deep breath and spreads its hood to almost three times normal size. Hissing loudly, it strikes at the intruder even though unable to bite.

If this act doesn't ward off danger, it resorts to another course. With mouth open, it goes into convulsions until exhausted. To climax the act, the hog-nose rolls over on its back, hangs its tongue out and plays dead. If picked up, he is limp and lifeless.

But there's one flaw in the act which shows him up as a faker. If rolled over on his stomach, he promptly rolls on his back again as though this were the only position suitable to the act of playing dead.

Leave the hog-nose alone for awhile and it tires of being an actor, rolls right-side-up and slides away. These antics have given him the pen-names of spreading or puff adder, blow snake and blowing viper.

Another non-poisonous fellow much misunderstood is the gentle though easily irritated bull snake, also common in Iowa.

Even though the bull snake has a mild "Ferdinand the Bull" disposition, it puts up a good front when first approached. When angered, this six foot reptile rhythmically swings its tail, opens its mouth wide and whips its head forward. Then it produces a hiss that alarms the intruder and can be heard more than 50 feet.

When approached, the bull's switching tail movement in the leaves often makes it mistaken for a rattler. If this display doesn't send the enemy scurrying, the bull strikes boldly disregarding the consequences.

Its constricting capacity makes it possible to do away with larger forms of food than most Iowa snakes. It takes squirrels, rabbits and other similar size rodents.

Despite the tales of horror regarding snakes, they all play their part in the balance of nature.

An example of this is the king snake. It's not a sworn enemy of poisonous or non-poisonous snakes, but when hunger besets it, it becomes the terror of the reptile world. Preferring neither poisonous nor non-poisonous, it fears and respects no snake. It will attack any of them regardless of size.

Being immune to snake poison, venom injected from a bite only irritates the king, making his attack more vicious.

Despite the hostility toward its kind, this constrictor is generally good natured and gentle, showing no desire to attack man.

The antics of many snakes give people the idea there is a "natural

## IOWA TREE FARMERS SELL MANAGEMENT

Certified tree farms in 21 Iowa counties are part of a silent dramatic sales force for good woodland management in the state.

The Iowa Tree Farm Committee of private and government foresters recently approved four new tree farms ranging in size from 10 to 157 acres. Additional acreage was added to two existing tree farms.

Iowa now has 112 tree farms with 8,405 acres of well-managed woodlands.

Latest county to add a privately owned, taxpaying tree farm to the Iowa program is Delaware, according to the chairman of the Iowa committee.

"The forest industry-sponsored tree farm program objective is clear," Chairman Robert Gray said. "It is to have better forestry practiced on all forest land since much of the future supplies of wood raw materials must come from the lands of 4.5 million woodland owners in the nation."

Recent Iowa figures indicate tree farmers are selling other owners on tree farming. Lee County leads with 50 tree farms; Des Moines has 13; Van Buren and Clayton have 10 each; and Jefferson and Henry have nine each. — *Tree Farm News*.

## BIRDS AND BUGS

In any reckoning of animal values, songbirds score high for their tireless warfare on insects. But game birds deserve a little credit too.

Most game species feed largely on vegetative matter in adult life. But during the first few months of existence their diet is almost exclusively insects.

Up to the age of 10 or 12 weeks the young of quail, pheasants and grouse spend most of their waking hours in pursuit of bugs. It could be more than accidental that some of the densest pheasant populations occur in areas offering bountiful supplies of grasshoppers, Mormon crickets or some other equally available insect.

Ducks, also, start life as insectivores and continue to feed heavily if not exclusively, on insects and related materials until they are half grown. Rapid growth requires a high level of protein which animal tissues provide. It is doubtful that our common game birds could survive and multiply in the absence of insects.—*Remington News*.

horror of snakes" that is present from birth. These natural horrors are not found in children and can only be taught by parents or older children. Although rattlesnakes and copperheads are found in Iowa, they are poisonous snakes seldom seen. Snakes by nature are timid and gentle, not vicious trouble-seekers. That attitude is of man's invention.