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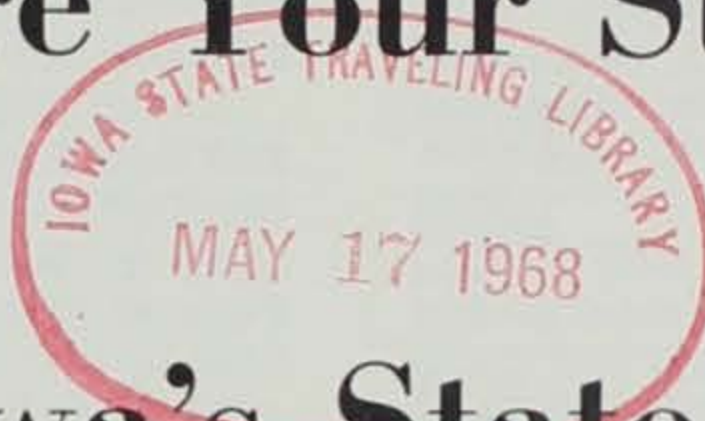
Number 5



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# Picture Your Summer

## At Iowa's State Parks



From picturesque views of the Mighty Mississippi River, to cheerful picnic areas, to the solitude of a forest hiking trail, to a lake-side beach. These are but a few of the attractions at Iowa's state parks that will delight visitors this spring and summer.

The Iowa Conservation Commission has put extensive planning and work into the development of its park system. Every effort has been made to provide outdoor recreation accommodations for Iowa residents and out-of-state visitors to the "Land Between Two Rivers."

There are 91 state parks and recreation areas of which nine are under local management. The parks range from primitive areas awaiting development to highly developed areas with outstanding facilities.

There is something for just about every one at Iowa's parks whether you spend a week's vacation camping or just out for an afternoon drive. Activities that can be enjoyed include boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, camping, scenic drives and bird watching—or just a chance to "get away from it all."

Among the facilities available are picnic tables, fireplaces, shelter houses, lodges, showers and trails. Park officers are in residence at the major park areas.

Iowa's outstanding state park system didn't come about by accident. It has been the result of planning and work since 1919 when the first park was established at Backbone. Each year new facilities are needed to handle the increasing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities.

Joe Brill, Conservation Commission su-

perintendent of parks, discussed some of the new developments that will be awaiting visitors this season.

"Thirteen new shelter houses were constructed at various areas and are ready for use," he said. "Road improvements will be made at Red Haw State Park, Lucas County; Geode State Park, Henry County; Wild Cat Den State Park, Muscatine County; and Wapsipinicon State Park, Jones County. New bathing beach facilities are open at Lake Darling in Washington County and Green Valley State Park in Union County.

"A special blacktop trail was recently completed at Margo Frankel Woods just outside Des Moines for crippled children and other people who must use wheelchairs or similar devices. It was constructed primarily for children at the Easter Seal Center at Camp Sunnyside, but it's available for all to use."

A new hiking trail was laid out at Backbone State Park in Delaware County. Considerable improvement has been made on hiking trails in other parks including grading and placing chipped limestone on the paths for hikers.

Other improvements include a new shower at Lake Anita State Park in Cass County and new water system at Prairie Rose State Park in Shelby County.

Throughout the fall and winter months, park personnel are busy preparing for the heavy summer season. While winter winds blow around park shops, men are building picnic tables, fireplaces, signs and other facilities. Machinery and equipment are

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CIRCULATION .....63,769

**COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Iowa Conservation Commission  
Meeting Held in Des Moines, Iowa  
March 5 and 6, 1968**

Approved a study in depth in coordination with the Commission's Planning and Coordination Section on a long-range dredging program on East Okoboji Lake, and that efforts be coordinated with the East Okoboji Improvement Corporation.

**B. O. R.**

The following projects were approved for submission to the B. O. R. for Federal cost sharing under the Lands and Waters Conservation Fund Program:

The Taylor County Conservation Board to reconstruct an existing abandoned railroad grade to impound an 18-acre lake on its Windmill Lake Park Area one mile south of Iowa Highway 2 and approximately 7 miles northwest of Bedford.

The Monona County Conservation Board to develop its 80-acre Whiting Woods to provide extensive multiple-use activities on this naturalistic area.

**County Conservation**

The request of the Clinton County Conservation Board to acquire 260 acres of land for the purpose of developing a multiple use outdoor recreational area, especially for river access, approximately 5 miles south of Low Moor and located on the north bank of the Wapsipinicon River was approved.

The request of the Clinton County Conservation Board to acquire 8 acres of land by a 25-year lease at a total cost of \$1 approximately 5½ miles southwest of Calamus and located on the north bank of the Wapsipinicon River was approved.

The request of the Clinton County Conservation Board to acquire 4.5 acres of land under a sponsoring agreement with the Iowa Highway Commission for the purpose of establishing a highway safety rest area adjacent to the east side of

# Our Readers Write . . .

Dear Sirs:

I wish to report a change of address, and while I am writing I would like to say that I enjoy the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST very much. It never ceases to amaze me how your editors can get so much information and good reading in so few of pages. Keep up the good work.

A. L. Meyer

Gentlemen:

I am interested and a little perplexed by your cottontail article in the March CONSERVATIONIST. Where are they?

Five years ago I traded for a Browning "Lightning" 20-gauge Over-Under. I have shot ONE cottontail with it. Crows, barn pigeons, starlings, pestiferous tomcats, and one crippled cow; but only ONE rabbit.

I wish your "cottontail numbers by leaps and bounds" would do a little leaping and bounding here in Westfield Township, Fayette County. I still think rabbit hunting is grand sport; but if all there is to it is to walk in the fresh air, and carry my beloved Browning, I'm sure glad I traded for the lightweight 20-gauge. I'm now past 67 years.

Yours,  
Reuben Jones

Gentlemen:

Having been a reader of the CONSERVATIONIST for several years and an Iowa sportsman for a long time, I would like to have you publish this letter in the CONSERVATIONIST so that other Iowans may learn to appreciate the conservation system.

Recently, the town of Wheatland made preparations for a new city park and volunteers were asked to help dig up and transplant several trees from the Wapsi River bottoms near Wheatland. When we entered the timber, we saw two large bald-headed eagles and three smaller eagles leave the timber area. I have been told these eagles make their home in these timbers year around.

I have now seen with my own eyes what a great job the Iowa Conservation Commission is doing to help prevent the extinction and destruction of our birds, animals, and natural resources in Iowa.

Sincerely,  
Donald L. Mills

U. S. Highway 67 and 9 miles north of Clinton was approved.

The request of the Clinton County Conservation Board to acquire 10 acres of land under a sponsoring agreement with the Iowa Highway Commission for the purpose of developing a highway safety rest area for the traveling public using Highway 61 and as a picnic area for the people living in the local vicinity 5 miles north of Welton and located between the old and the new Highway 61 right-of-ways was approved.

The request of the Hardin County Conservation Board to acquire 42.9 acres of additional land as an addition to their Ferris Wilderness Area approximately 9 miles north of Eldora was approved.

The request of the Taylor County Conservation Board for approval of the development plan and report prepared for their Windmill Lake Park 3½ miles east of New Market was approved.

The state park road located at the north end of Lake Cornelia in Wright County will be vacated and closed to through traffic and authorizing the publication notice for the public hearing as required under chapter 306 of the Iowa Code.

**Lands and Waters**

An erosion control agreement between

Carl Shumaker and the Iowa Conservation Commission was approved.

The contract for the design of the Teachers Training Complex at Springbrook State Park was awarded to James Lynch & Associates of Des Moines.

Contracts were awarded for the following:

Access roads and parking areas at Bellevue State Park to Kueter & Son, Bellevue.

A water well at Wildcat Den State Park to L. F. Winslow, Walcott.

Water and sewer lines and sewage ejector station at Springbrook State Park to Christofferson and Christianson, Kimballton.

Water storage tanks at Lake of Three Fires State Park, Nine Eagles State Park and Lake Geode State Park to Cunningham Reis, Des Moines.

A water storage tank at Waubonsie State Park to Jack Brust Company, Nebraska City, Nebraska.

The option offered by Wilbur and Hazel Dyas on 10 acres of land adjacent to Bellevue State Park was accepted.

**Fish and Game**

Authorized that the Attorney General's office settle the claim against Morton Foods for damages (fish kill) in the amount of \$4,000.



# EDITORIAL

How many times have you driven down the road and noticed beer cans strewn in the ditch? And how many times have you dodged paper and trash that was thrown from the car in front of you? The PROBLEM is "Blowing in the Wind"—not the answer. And, undoubtedly, you condemned others for this littering.

But, how many times have *you* thoughtlessly dropped waste and garbage in the park or along the road? Or left "just a few" pieces of picnic left-overs on the table?

It's not right for the other guy nor is it right for YOU!

Not only the scenic aspect is involved. The cost of cleaning up this mess is much greater than one realizes. The time it takes a park officer to pick up trash left by inconsiderate campers could be spent on other park improvements.

And also, the danger of litter on the roads, the glass and metal debris in parks and other public places is certainly a cause for personal anti-litter campaigning. We doubt if accurate figures can be or have been calculated on the tens of thousands of stitches and doctoring that both children and adults have needed for cuts received from broken glass, sharp cans, and other metal pieces left untouched near swimming areas, or in places where barefoot fun need not be pre-empted by fear.

The most alarming and disgusting fact is that none of this is necessary. When a family is driving to an area for fun and recreation, mom and dad don't want to spend the first half-hour picking up trash; the kids don't want to wear shoes half way in the water to avoid being cut by broken glass that has been scattered on the shore.

Nor should they have to!

How much time does it take to pick up ten pieces of paper, or carry garbage to the waste receptacle, or put a bag of trash in the trunk of the car? Time yourself—maybe two minutes have been lost, right? Elementary math will prove that the difference in two minutes and a half-hour is worth the effort.

It will save much time and, in fact, add time for your fun and relaxation.

Lately, Iowa residents have heard countless facts on water and air pollution. But few people stop to realize that non-chemical, non-sewage, and non-gaseous matter can be, and certainly IS, a form of pollution. Land pollution in the form of litter should definitely be added to the growing list of pollution problems.

Countless anti-litter slogans have been coined in the past years to help remind people not to litter, and to try to solve the problem.

Such phrases as "Take it with you," "Keep America beautiful," "Don't be a litterbug," "Every litter bit hurts," "Help keep your city clean," and thousands of others have been used—and, it seems, with little success.

People still throw beer cans in ditches, leave waste in picnic areas, refuse to pick up broken glass, and ignore trash cans.

If you're not one of these people, we praise you; if you are one of these people, we condemn you.

In either case, don't be one of them!

ke



It's mushroom hunting season! Your trip to the field has proved very successful; you've picked pans of the tempting little things. Now . . . what to do with them? Just plain? Soups? Sauces? Here are some suggestions.

Clean by brushing or washing in small amount of water; don't soak. Cut off tip of stem. Don't peel. Cook whole or in slices.

**TO FRY:** Melt 3 tablespoons butter; add ½ pound mushrooms, sliced or quartered, and sprinkle with flour. Cover and cook over low heat until mushrooms are tender, about 8 to 10 minutes.

**TO BROIL:** Remove and chop stems; season with salt, pepper; use to fill hollows. Place in shallow pan; brush with melted butter or salad oil; broil 10 minutes.

## Mushroom Sauce

Brown 1 cup fresh mushrooms in 3 tablespoons butter or margarine; Add 3 tablespoons enriched flour and blend. Add 1½ cups milk or stock, ½ teaspoon salt, dash of nutmeg, and pepper; cook until thick.

Stir slowly into 2 beaten egg yolks and 2 teaspoons lemon juice; cook 2 minutes. Serve at once. Makes 2½ cups.

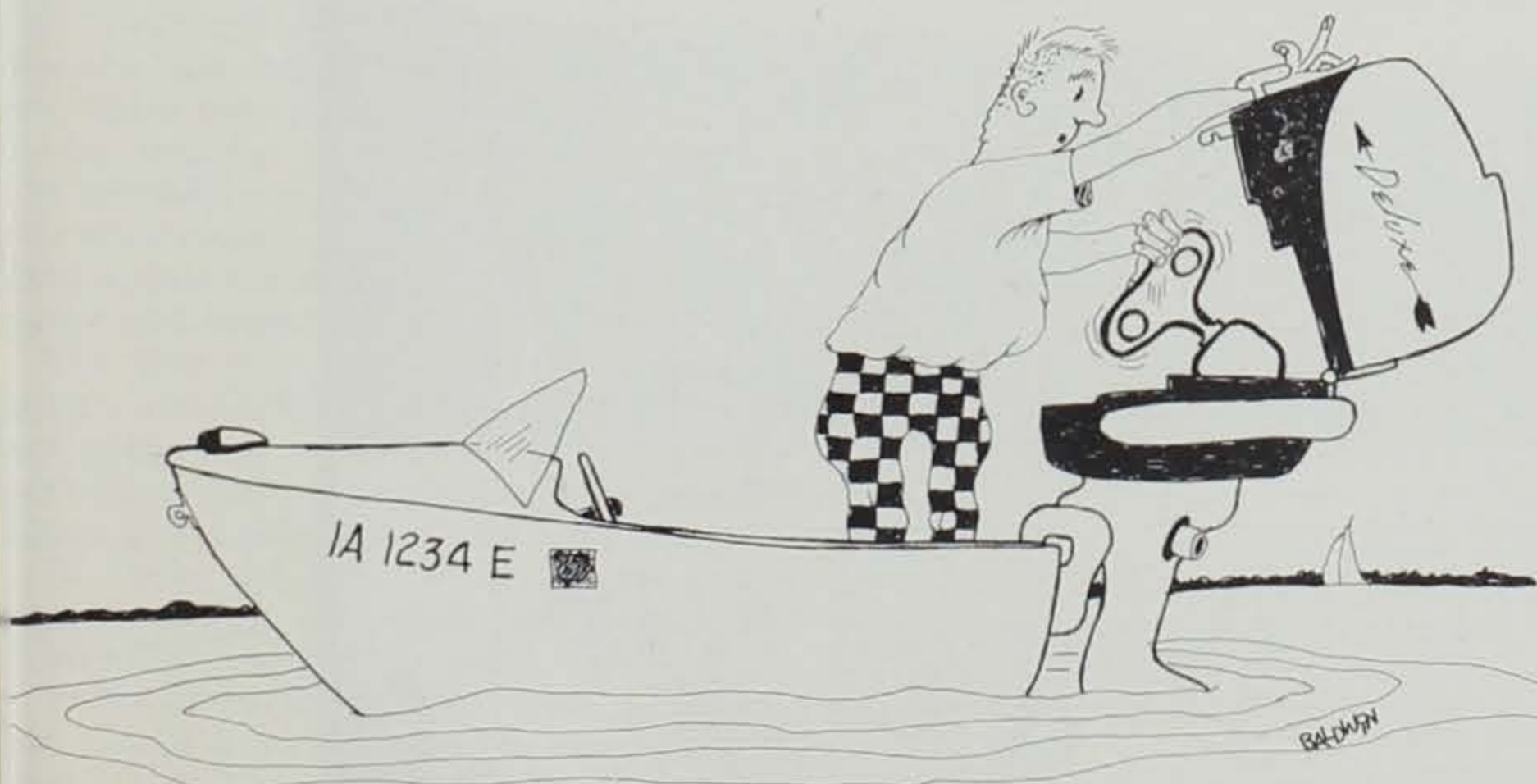
If early camping is what you have in mind, or if you are planning a meal while you're gathering those take-home mushrooms—here's a prepared-in-advance meat dish that makes a substantial meal served either hot or cold.

## Meat Loaf-in-a-Loaf

- 1 loaf French or Italian bread
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 small green pepper, minced
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- ½ tsp. Accent (MSG)\*
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper

\*Monosodium Glutamate marketed under the brand name of Accent or Enhance.

Use a fat, oval loaf of French or Italian bread rather than the long, thin loaf. Cut a thin lengthwise slice from top of loaf. With fingers, scoop out as much of inside of loaf as possible. Measure 2 cups of these crumbs and soak them in evaporated milk about 10 minutes. Add crumbs to remaining ingredients and mix lightly. Fill hollowed-out loaf with meat mixture, packing it in firmly and having it level with top of loaf. Set filled loaf on a baking sheet (or wrap in aluminum foil) and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for 1¾ hours. If you're cooking on an open fire, adjust time accordingly and serve when the meat is well-browned.





# Your Summer At Iowa's Parks

(continued from page 33)



Hiking or nature study can be enjoyed in many of the State Park's prepared trails.

cleaned, repaired and painted when needed.

The heaviest or "rush" period for park use in Iowa is from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend. Many people are taking vacations then or making holiday and weekend trips to parks. Each year more and more people leave the cities and towns and head for recreation areas in the country. The number of people using parks is growing at a tremendous rate.

"Naturally, some of the parks are very crowded during holiday weekends in the summer, but we do our best to accommodate everyone," said Mr. Brill. "We also find that water-oriented parks or areas near the interstate highways are very crowded. Many people from other states passing through Iowa on the interstate use

nearby parks for camping or picnics or just a rest stop. Reports show that camping is becoming more popular all the time."

Mr. Brill suggested that one way to avoid some of the more crowded conditions would be to visit a smaller or less known state or county park that is not as heavily used. Many of these pleasant parks have adequate facilities, are located in attractive surroundings and provide outdoor recreation opportunities.

As with any public use area, certain regulations have been established for the benefit of visitors and protection of the parks. These include:

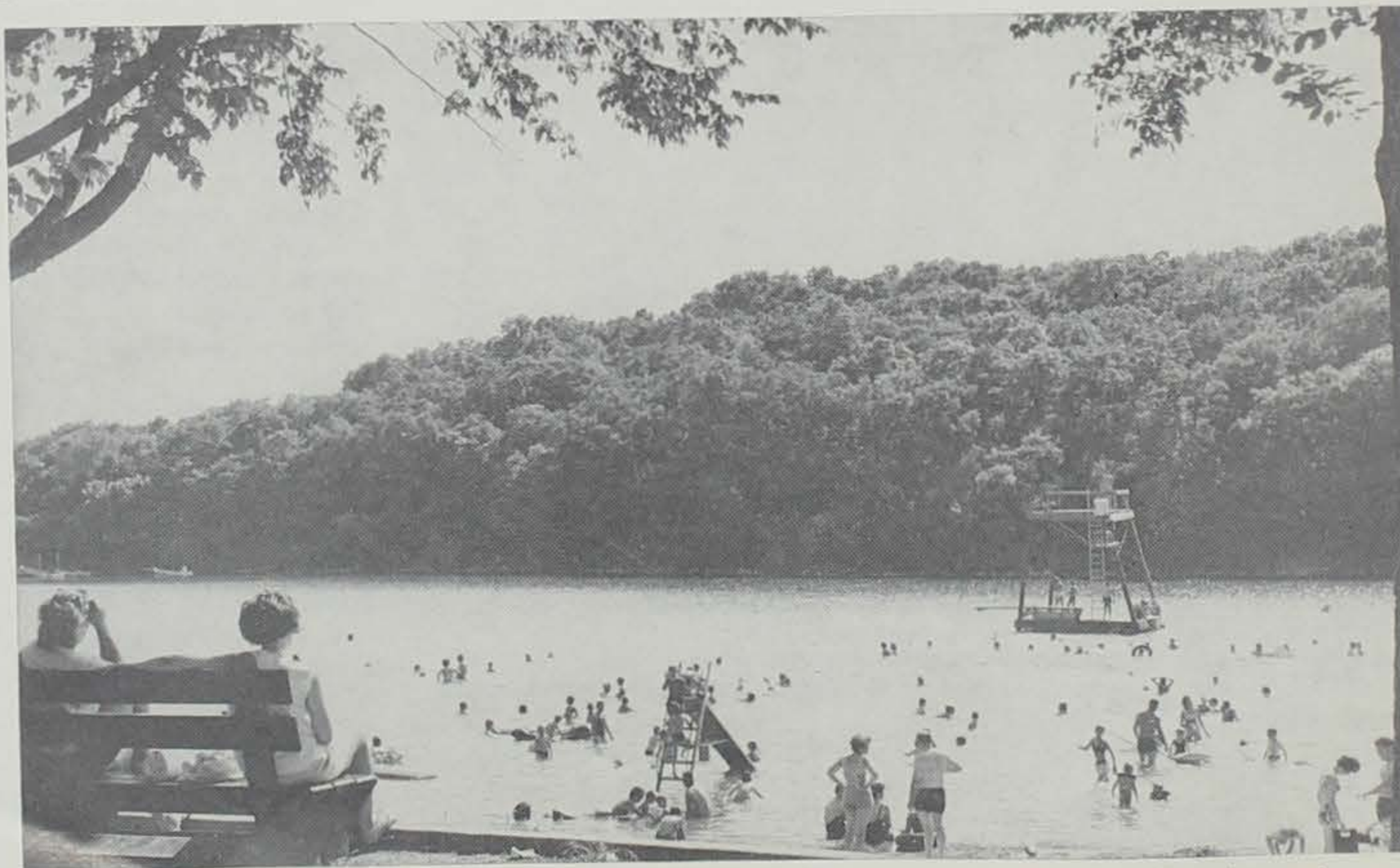
Camp and park only in prepared areas; do not remove, destroy or injure trees,

shrubs, plants, flowers, or any other natural attraction; place refuse in cans provided, keep fires small and build them only in areas provided; make sure all fires are out; keep pets on a leash and observe the closing time and speed limits.

These regulations are simply safety measures for the public and the area and are designed to provide a better park.

"I know it's an old saying, but a good park visitor should leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but pictures and memories," said Brill.

A booklet listing Iowa's state-owned recreation areas can be obtained free of charge by writing to: State Conservation Commission, Public Relations, State Office Building, 300 4th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.



Whether your interest is active participation or spectator relaxation, Iowa's park facilities offer something for everyone's summer fun.



By Joe Elstner  
Staff Writer

It's late April or early May, the air is warm and damp, and you're driving through timberland along an Iowa country road. The countryside seems deserted, but as you round a bend, you do a quick double-take. For there, by the timber's edge, is a group of six parked cars. You know it's not squirrel hunting season, so you wonder what could be such an attraction at this time of year.

Stopping to satisfy your curiosity, you peer into the woods and spot several people carefully examining the ground—looking under leaves, around fallen trees, near the base of live trees. You approach one "hunter" and ask if he might explain what the group is doing. He gives you that "are you kidding?" look.

"Mushrooming," he says. "We're looking for these little babies right here." He bends down, picks a spongy looking thing, and examines it with the look of a prospector eyeing a gold nugget. "Greatest little delicacy in the world," he says.

"Mushroom hunting!" you say to yourself as you walk away. "So that's it."

You bet that's it! You've been introduced to an activity that'll give you two big kinds of pleasure. That's because hunting mushrooms not only has that get-away-from-it-all reward popular with thousands of Iowans; but it also can result in a dish of some of the tastiest outdoor edibles you've ever tried.

All you'll need to start is a plastic or paper bag and a knowledge of the most popular AND SAFE species—some mushrooms may be dangerous if eaten indiscriminately, but more on that later. Armed with these requirements, you'll next have to head for areas most likely to be mushroom territory.

Hardwood timber areas will fill the bill here, as will dry river bottoms, Mississippi River islands, and sparsely timbered pastures. Hill slopes, willowed areas along rivers, and even lawns may also harbor mushrooms.

#### The "Foolproof Four"

Once you've located a fairly productive area, it's best, especially if you're a beginner, to stick with what have been called the "foolproof four" among mushrooms. For the vast majority of mushroom hunters, these four species make an excellent choice because they're easily recognized and less likely to be confused with poisonous mushrooms, they're found state-wide in abundance, and they're all desirable for flavor and texture.

The four are morels or sponge mushrooms, the puffballs, sulphur mushrooms and shaggy manes. To this group is often added the oyster mushroom, a tasty morsel found in abundance on trees and logs.

Of these, the morel is by far the most sought after by Iowans, so let's look at the others first and then examine the morels.

Puffballs range in color from white to tan. They have a somewhat round head that tapers to a narrow stem. Their size can vary widely, going from golf ball size to giants of a foot or more in diameter.



Puffballs make fair to good eating, providing only those with consistent inner texture and whiteness are used for the table. They're more abundant than many mushrooms, being found throughout the growing season, but primarily found in the fall.

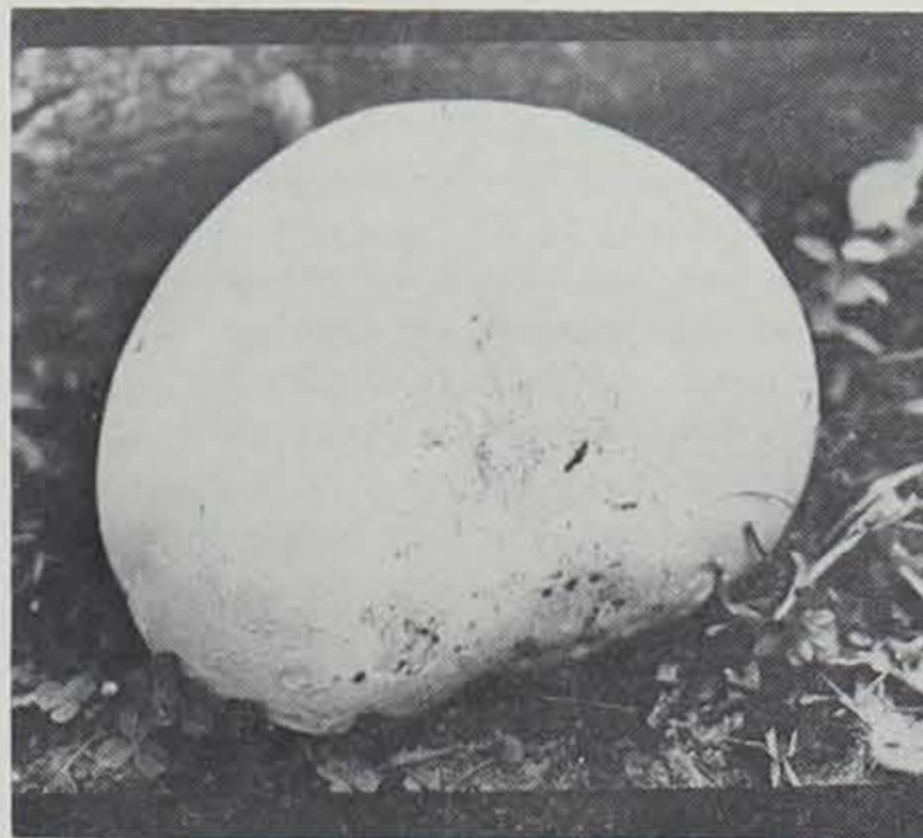
Sulphur mushrooms, the next group, are shelf shaped and yellow to bright orange in color. They're fairly abundant in Iowa and are rated as delicious when properly cooked. You'll have your best luck finding sulphur mushrooms in autumn, when they are found in shelf-like arrangements on dead trees or logs.

The third of our "foolproof four," the shaggy mane mushroom, has been called one of the best of edible fungi. Unfortunately, it's rarer than some of the other genus *Coprinus* ("inky cap") mushrooms.

This mushroom gets its name from the appearance of its nearly cylindrical cap, which is white to light tan in color, with shaggy brown tufts. Shaggy manes are found from spring through fall all over the country. A word of advice about them, though—shaggy manes are delicious if cleaned and cooked almost immediately after picking. But, like the others in its genus, they deteriorate quickly and can't be kept more than four or five hours even in a refrigerator. The color is the key—if the gills have started to darken, deterioration has set in. If you find some shaggy manes, stick with the white ones.

#### Morels—the Mushroom's Mushroom

Let's return now to the morel—the



Next to the morels, the puffball mushroom is most abundant but found primarily in the fall.

## Popular Sport and Dinner Delight

mushroom's mushroom in the opinion of many seekers young and old. The true morels, or sponge mushrooms, consist of a stalk and an enlarged part called a cap or head. The all-important key to remember here is that the morel's head or cap is pitted. Pit shapes may be round to very elongated and vary from deep to shallow, which makes it look like a small sponge.

The prime time for these most-hunted mushrooms is the spring, especially during late April and early May. At this time you might find any number of Iowans combing the countryside for the spongelike, tempting morels.

Most morels are about three to four inches long, although a few may grow to about eight inches. Their color may go from a gray-brown to a yellow-brown. The morel characteristic that mushroom hunters rally around, however, is the delicious taste. And that brings us to an important stop on the field-to-table route—cooking them your favorite way.

#### A Culinary Delight

There seems to be several preferred methods of preparing these outdoor delicacies for the table. One mushroom hunting expert, Charles "Butch" Olofson of the State Conservation Commission, says he has a sure-fire mushroom cooking rule.

"You can prepare them any way you would an oyster," Butch says. "That is,

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The shaggy mane mushroom is considered one of the best of the outdoor edibles.



# Mushrooms...

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you can stew them, fry them or eat them raw, according to your own taste."

The most common way to fix a tasty batch of mushrooms is to begin by soaking them in salt water at least two hours to remove dirt and bugs from the pores. Then dip them in flour or a cracker and egg batter and fry them lightly in butter, oil or shortening until they're lightly browned.

That's all you do, but here's a bonus. Don't consider mushrooms just a spring and summer delicacy. By freezing or drying them, you can serve up tempting platters of mushrooms all winter long.

To prepare them for freezing, put them in a plastic container, fill it with water, and let them cool; then seal the container and place it in your freezer. When you're ready to serve them again, just thaw them and heat until ready.

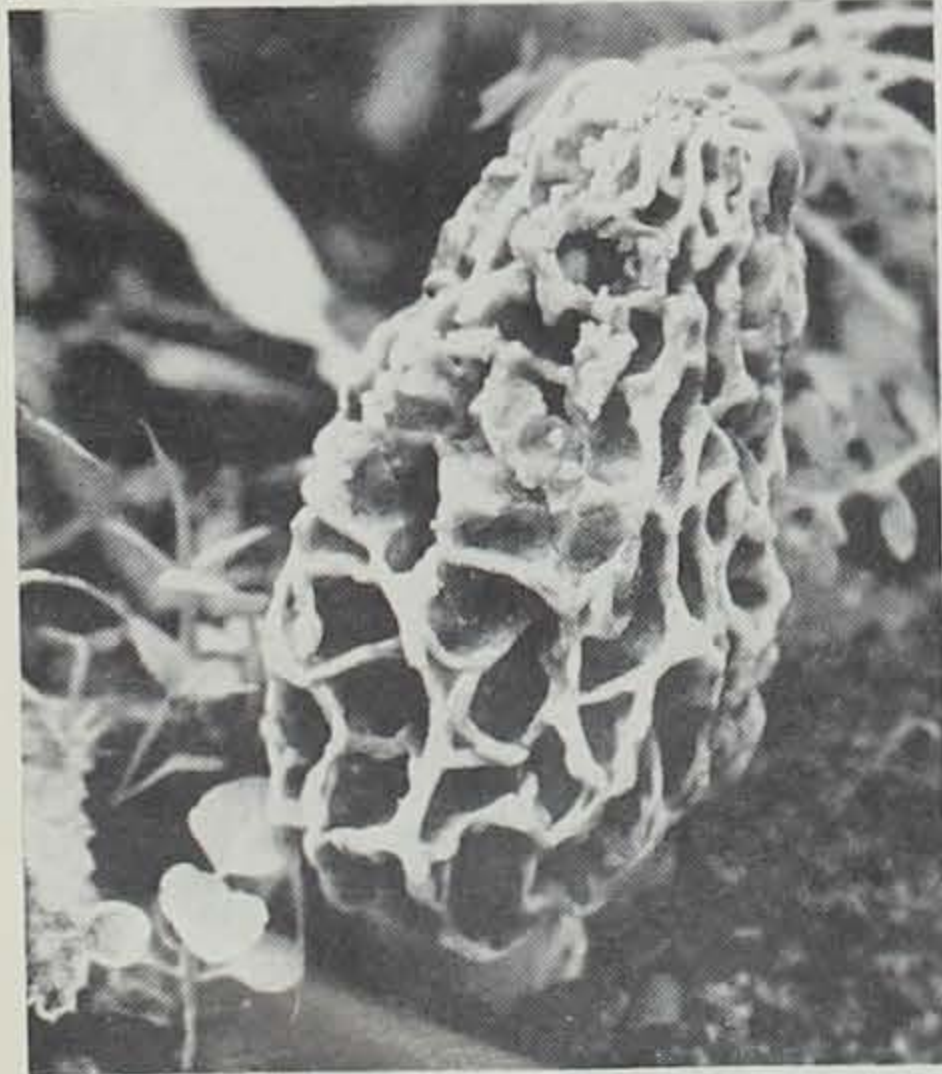
A probably less common way to assure yourself of wintertime mushrooms is to dry them. Your mushrooms should first be washed, drained and cut into pieces. Using a common darning needle and string, put the mushroom pieces on the cord as if you were stringing beads, and hang the strings in a protected dry room.

When dry, the mushrooms can be kept in sealed bags or jars. Or, they can be hung in any room that's dry and insect-free. When you're ready for a mushroom feast, soak the plants in water until their original shape returns, drain them, and cook as when fresh.

You're now all set to join the ranks of the many mushroom hunters roaming the fields and forests each year. But before you begin, a strong word of warning is in order.

## Caution

Some types of mushrooms, if eaten, can produce violent sickness, or even be fatal.



The popular morel, springtime delicacy favored by Iowans of all ages.



A good "catch" of the abundant morel—fun to gather and even more fun to eat.

This means that, in addition to picking only the mushrooms described here, it's a "must" to remember this rule: if you're in doubt, don't pick the mushroom.

To help you further, here is a list of mushroom hunting precautions taken from Alexander H. Smith's *The Mushroom Hunter's Field Guide*: (1) eat only one kind at a time so that if any difficulty should develop the cause is known; (2) eat only young or freshly matured specimens free from insect larvae or worms; (3) cook the specimens well; (4) eat only small amounts when testing a species you haven't tried before; (5) do not over-indulge under any circumstances—there is always a danger of indigestion from eating too much of any food; and (6) have each member of the family test each new kind for himself or herself. The most important element of all, however, is to be critical in identifying the specimens in the first place."

Smith goes on to say that when collecting puffballs for food, for example, it's best to section them lengthwise to be sure you don't have a button stage for an *Amanita* (a genus containing some of the most poisonous mushrooms). He advises mushroomers that the only puffballs worth eating are white and uniformly structured throughout the interior, while *Amanita* buttons show the gills, cap and stalk already differentiated within the envelope of the universal veil.

Remember, then, to stay with the easily identified mushrooms. If you're not sure about a mushroom, leave it alone.

If you keep these precautions in mind and practice them always, you'll be able to safely enjoy the same fun being shared by thousands of Iowans each spring and summer. They'll be searching for morels, puffballs, and other popular mushrooms and enjoying the reward of "Iowa outdoors." After all, when you cannot only enjoy the the out of doors, but also wind up with a tasty addition to the table, how can you lose? Try mushrooming—you'll be glad you did.

## Wild Animals: Nature's Not Yours

If you, like many other Iowans, will be spending a lot of time outdoors this spring and summer, you may encounter several species of wildlife—usually the young.

If you come upon young wild game animals—leave them alone. They are not up for adoption. The worst thing you could do would be to take some "cute, cuddly" young animal home with you.

Some people may have the notion that it would be fun to have a young wild animal for a pet. They fall in love with a helpless looking fawn, young raccoon or baby rabbit they "find" in the outdoors. If the young animal appears to be alone, the finders may decide it's "lost from its mother" or "It'll starve if we leave it here."

Both assumptions are probably incorrect. The mother of the young animal is usually just waiting nearby for the trespassers to leave before coming out of hiding. Even if the mother doesn't show up again, young game animals are well-equipped to fend for themselves in the outdoors.

Tempting as it might be to bring a wild animal home, it's one of the worst mistakes one could make.

In the first place and most important, it's illegal to possess wild game animals during the closed season. Is someone who picks up a young fawn in the field and takes it home for a pet any different than a poacher who kills a deer at night during a closed season? Both are removing the game from the wild.

Trouble usually follows when anyone is foolish enough to bring home a young wild

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# Tom Turkey Tries For Comeback; Hope For Permanent Home In Iowa

By Dennis D. Wigal  
Graduate Assistant  
Iowa State University

Wild turkeys are back in Iowa. After nearly a century of absence, those majestic game birds once again are part of the state's wildlife.

But don't get too excited, sportsmen. Not yet, that is. No one knows if our guests will like their new surroundings. They have found that Iowa isn't what it was 100 years ago.

There was a time when wild turkeys had little to worry about except finding plenty to eat and sturdy trees to roost in. Forests were undisturbed and predators were probably unimportant. Not even Indians threatened the turkeys' existence, although they killed the birds for food and other necessities.

The turkeys' problems began when the gun and axe entered primitive Iowa. The big birds were unable to tolerate the tools of civilization and slowly began to disappear from Iowa's forests. In 1846 J. B. Newhall noted in his book *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846* that "wild turkeys abound" in northeast Iowa. By 1860 they were all but gone in that region and were extinct statewide by about 1910.

For nearly a century there was little to indicate that Tom Turkey had once gobbled in the Iowa wilderness. Only the name Turkey River in northeast Iowa gave any hint of their earlier presence. Indians long before had named the river in honor of turkeys common along its banks.

Then in the winter of 1960-61, with the help of the State Conservation Commission, Tom made his reappearance. Thirty-nine Texas-trapped wild turkeys, commonly known as the Rio Grande variety, were released in the Yellow River State Forest in the northeast corner of Iowa. Several earlier, but unsuccessful, stocking ventures with hand-reared turkeys are reviewed in the January, 1961 issue of the *IOWA CONSERVATIONIST* by Arnold O. Haugen.

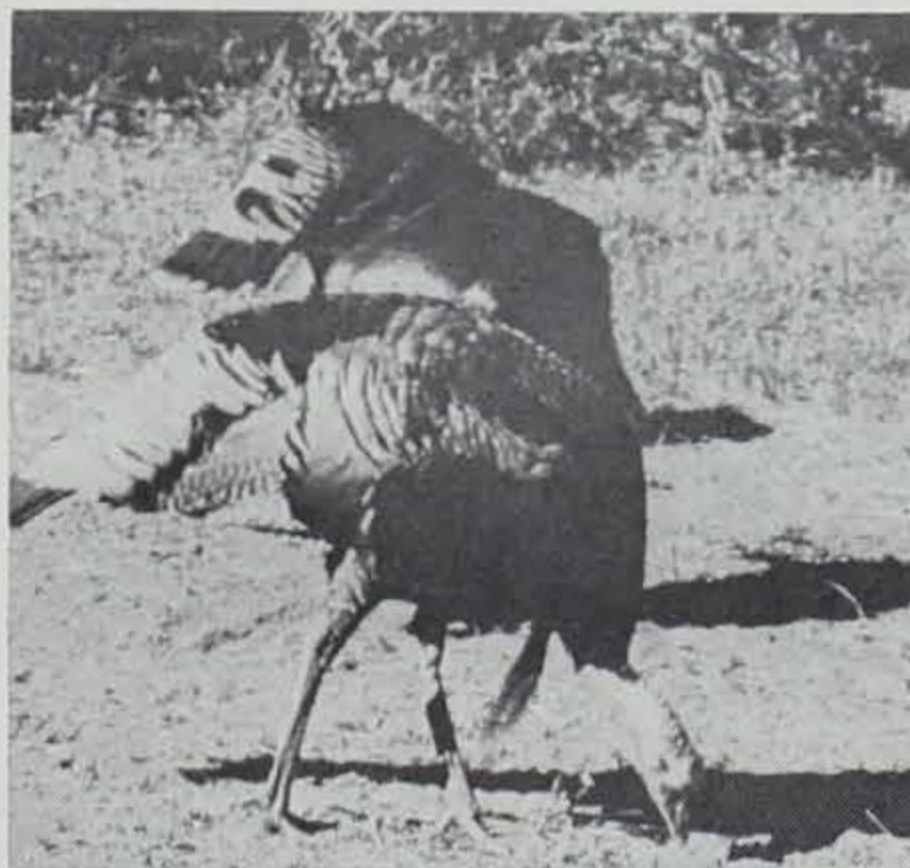
## Problem of Adaptation

It may be too early to determine the fate of the northeast Iowa turkeys, although they have had several years to try to adapt to their new home. Numerous young turkeys have been seen in past years, and reports indicate some of the birds have moved up to 40 miles to new areas. But the population has not "exploded" as it has in other states after

turkeys were stocked. A recent two-year study by the author indicates that no more than 100 turkeys currently inhabit the forests of northeast Iowa.

So far as habitat type is concerned, biologists see no reason why wild turkeys cannot successfully live in northeast Iowa. All of their life requirements appear to be available. Several thousand acres of forests provide excellent cover and food in the form of acorns and other mast. In addition, surrounding farms grow corn and other grain crops that turkeys "gobble up."

There may, however, be some subtle factors working against the northeast Iowa birds. Originally the eastern strain of wild turkey ranged over Iowa. It may be that the Rio Grande turkeys are not quite well enough adapted to Iowa's climate to really take hold. However, eastern and Merriam's turkeys, which



have recently been planted immediately across the Mississippi River in Wisconsin, may provide a boost to the northeast Iowa turkey population. The Iowa turkeys have been known to cross the river; the same can be expected of the Wisconsin turkeys.

Superficially, there is little difference between the several varieties of wild turkeys found throughout the United States. Coloration varies slightly, but more important may be differences in internal body functions. Any animal group functions most efficiently under climatic conditions like those in which it evolved.

Another hindrance may be a lack of truly extensive forest land. A turkey is a curious vagabond, often wandering several miles in a single day. He is also secretive and makes every attempt to avoid the prying eyes of man. For this reason he needs much cover to move

around in, perhaps even more than the Yellow River Forest can provide. Although that forest is big by Iowa standards, it is tiny compared to forests supporting wild turkeys in many other parts of the country.

## Hope For Comeback

If the turkeys do become established in northeast Iowa, they'll probably never approach their pre-settlement abundance. Unlike deer which seem to thrive in the new man-molded environment, wild turkeys have had difficulty in adjusting. Still, they have made remarkable comebacks in certain parts of the country where they once had disappeared and even are found in some places where they formerly were not known to exist.

Iowa conservation officials are hoping that the few Iowa turkeys possess some of this comeback potential. Ultimately, they hope, there may even be the possibility of a hunting season to provide a real treat for Iowa hunters. As any turkey hunter could testify, there's nothing quite like trying to outwit a wary old gobbler.

But even if the turkeys never increase to a huntable level, efforts will be made to maintain a modest population purely for esthetic reasons. The opportunity to hear a gobbling tom on a clear morning is worth the effort to get out at dawn to listen. Add to this the thrill of seeing a strutting gobbler puffed up in all his courtship splendor, or having the luck to observe a hen and her brood run across a woods road, and the effort becomes more worthwhile.

An amateur photographer, interested in capturing Iowa's wildlife on film, might put in his two cents' worth, too. Photographing a wild turkey in its natural surroundings poses a supreme challenge even to the professional. A chance to catch ol' Tom with sunlight glinting on his iridescent feathers will stimulate any photographer to try again for a better shot.

The closest most Iowans come to seeing a wild turkey is its drab and oversized barnyard cousin, a poor substitute at best. With modern techniques of wildlife management at work in Iowa, more outdoors-loving people may yet have the opportunity to view a turkey in the wild. This effort would surely please the likes of Ben Franklin, who once proposed the mighty fowl as our nation's symbol. Let's hope the turkeys are pleased with the effort also.



# It all began one Saturday . . .

*Everyone can remember the happy, hilarious, and sometimes horrendous moments of a new experience and when dealing with Mother Nature and her whims, those many memories are even more unforgettable.*

In spite of nearly freezing to death, eating hot dogs generously seasoned with sand and dirt, breaking eight fingernails, burning my tennis shoes, and sustaining great bodily injury when a tent collapsed, the camping trip was really fun.

I guess I would have been described as slightly INEXPERIENCED, and totally lacking common sense. My cohorts had to admit that I warned them, though. And I did add a great deal to the trip—something that could be termed MASS Hysteria.

It all began one Saturday in early April when the four of us were bemoaning the fact that the gorgeous 70-degree weather was going to waste.

"Wouldn't it be fun to go camping?" one suggested. The remaining two of the three experienced camping-lovers quickly agreed. Glances turned to me, silently sitting there picturing bears and wild animals destroying a peaceful campsite. (As it turned out, it wasn't the bears who destroyed the peaceful scene.)

"Well, gang," I remarked, "I'm willing to try anything once." And with this hesitant approval, ideas, plans, and miscellaneous suggestions multiplied by tens and twenties until THE PLAN was formulated.

We were to leave the following Friday evening, assuring ourselves that the weather would be even better than this weekend. Yeah, right! Good old Iowa weather should always be trusted. . . . On Thursday the temperature was 40 degrees with either rain or snow forecast for the weekend. But who was I to back out?

My preparatory job was to grocery shop. Quizzed before leaving for the store, I quickly ruled out a beef stroganoff dinner (the only thing I really know how to cook) and in its place substituted hot dogs. Surely I could handle hot dogs.

Then it was Friday. After hair rollers, bermuda shorts, sun tan oil and other "unnecessary" items were discarded (much to my disapproval and confusion), the car was packed. We were headed for the park, and then the real fun (?) began.

The camping area was situated on top of a hill; the wind chill reading, I was sure, was about 20 below. With superior insight and astute reasoning on my part, I suggested we build a fire. Excellent idea! We began gathering wood (a job I thought I could handle, too) and five of

the eight fingernails were lost within fifteen minutes. The other three were removed when I was attempting to chop huge logs into fire-sized pieces. The wood I had so carefully gathered was "too green" (although it appeared 'wood color' to me) and was promptly discarded. I was informed that my wood would cause the park officer to frantically summon the county fire fighters due to excessive smoke when it burned.

And after my superb hot dog dinner that went up in tons of billowing clouds, I was surprised the state fire marshal wasn't contacted.

Yes, that supper was a real treat for all of us. Hot dogs, charred beyond recognition, and potato chips both equally seasoned with dirt and sand which was blowing in the tornado-like "breeze."

Camping is great fun! Yes. Putting up the tent was exceptionally educational. Learn anatomy by doctoring wounds should be the subtitle for the course. Six bruises on one leg, four on my arms. I kept forgetting those crazy tent stakes and with grace, charm and finesse, fell over them so many times I quit counting.

By the time nine o'clock rolled around though, my arms and legs were so cold I couldn't feel the bruises (or the arms and legs). My feet were toasty warm however. In fact, the soles of my tennis shoes were so warm they were beginning to smoke. One learns quickly that an open fire must be approached with caution and with body parts at equal distances from the flames.

After the ten-thirty hike, the respective merits of camping were dwindling fast. And by morning with temperatures that even Admiral Bird and group wouldn't tackle, the fascination with this popular spring (Ha!) pastime was even being questioned by the experienced outdoorsmen.

A radio, my only link with humanity, informed us that it was a "comfortable" 31 degrees. They might think it was comfortable, but I've got news for them. It was really cold!

The lovely shade of blue that was adding so much to my complexion was finally noticed by the other three and some benevolent soul suggested that we adjourn to civilization for lunch. (Our breakfast of unfrozen-frozen orange juice, cold eggs and bacon wasn't too palatable.)

"Hooray," thought I, and in remarkable

time I was packed and in the car. Heading back to town, I was re-assured that camping *really* was great and that my first trip was a little unusual.

I fully agreed that it was unusual and, giving my compatriots the benefit of the doubt, I consented to "sometime" give camping a fair chance. I knew that when it was warmer, camping really would be "great fun." We could enjoy hiking, I could attempt fishing (Oh, dear!), and we could meet other campers who were smart enough to wait for real camping weather.

Yesterday my "friends" proposed a second trip since it was "so much warmer" this week. Keeping an attentive ear on the radio for weather predictions, I learned that Iowa weather must be inherently against campers. Predictions for next weekend—rain and much colder temperatures.

"Well, group," I cleverly suggested, "Why not wait 'til July?"

## Animals . . .

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animal. If kept in captivity the animal can become completely dependent on humans. Then when they are released as adults, they can't cope with life in the wilds. In some cases they may even starve. They may become the victim of a predator because they have lost all caution and ability to survive in the outdoors.

Neighbors will complain when you start keeping a wild animal. That "cute, cuddly" young thing you picked up in the woods soon becomes a hungry, growling adult bent on mischief or worse. When kept as a pet, wild animals often lose all fear of humans. And this can be dangerous for both humans and the animal.

Each year one of the most difficult jobs that Fish and Game Conservation Officers are faced with is the reclaiming of wildlife pets held by individuals. In spite of public appeals, some people just won't leave the wildlife alone. Hundreds of animals are taken yearly.

Usually the law enforcement officers are notified by complaining neighbors that a wild animal is being confined nearby. Officers have no choice but to act on the information. It's not an easy task to reclaim these animals, but it must be done.

So if you should encounter or "find" a young wild game animal—Don't touch it. Leave it alone.