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December, 1969

Volume 28

Number 12

'Fly-in' Pheasant Hunt



"Prop clear," called our pilot as the whir and roar of the small engine sputteringly turned over. Our guns and gear were carefully stored in the baggage compartment; our seat belts were fastened, and we were all ready for a great new hunting experience.

It all started when my annual hunting companion found himself very pressed for time to the point where it seemed we would be forced to cancel our hunt.

But, then I heard the whir of a plane's engine overhead and knew that we could go anyway—covering a lot of ground fast, and with a lot of fun!

I contacted a local air field office and had a plane and pilot scheduled for the opening of ringneck season. Then the real ground work began.

Getting permission to hunt on a farmer's land was rule one for us. This year we would need permission not only to hunt but to use a few landing strips suitable for our Cessna 172.

My first route was through the nearest Federal Aviation Administration office who approves landing strips which are designated emergency fields. From them I got the names of six farmers in the area where we wanted to hunt. I began typing letter requests to each of them.

Since I had plenty of time before the season opened, I personally visited the farms after permission was granted from two of the farmers. Paving the way for opening day hunts whether you go by land, or air, certainly makes for a good relationship and really enhances the hunt.

We were all set, and I was so excited at the thought of this unusual hunting trip that it seemed like years before opening day rolled around.

But now we were airborne and off toward our first destination some seventy-five miles away. The flight was beautiful; the morning was chilled and crisp and promised a perfect day for pursuit of the gaudy ringneck.

Our pilot sighted the strip and pointed

(Continued on page 95)

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CIRCULATION70,000

COMMISSION MINUTES**State Conservation Commission**

Held in Des Moines

October 15, 1969

Accepted the following land purchase options: Volga River Lake Project, Fayette County, 115 acres; Walters Creek Watershed, Adams County, 197 acres.

Approved the following projects for submission to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation for immediate action: State Conservation Commission, Red Haw State Park, development; Lake Manawa State Park, Development; Jasper County Conservation Board, Mariposa Recreation Area, acquisition 111 acres; Hancock County Conservation Board, Eldred Sherwood Park, development; City of Carroll, Municipal Recreation Area, acquisition 30 acres.

Approved for submission to B. O. R. for qualification only: State Conservation Commission, Big Creek Recreation Area, acquisition 1,471 acres.

The following County Conservation Board Land Acquisition Projects were approved: Adair County, Greenfield Reservoir Recreation Area, 97.50 acres; Carroll County, Middle Raccoon River Access and Forest Area Addition, 50 acres; Delaware County, Twin Bridges Park, 29 acres; Guthrie County, Nation's Bridge Park, 38 acres; Hamilton County, Little Wall Lake Recreation Area Addition, 12.89 acres; Jasper County, Mariposa Recreation Area, 111 acres; Marshall County, Leise Forest and Wildlife Area, 80 acres.

The following County Conservation Board Development Plan Revision was approved: Buena Vista County, Development Plan, County Park Revision.

The following Fish and Game items were approved: Option to purchase additional 14 acres of marsh land in the Spring Run Area of Dickinson County.

Approved a 25-year cost-free license to use and occupy 375 acres below Rath-

Our Readers Write . . .

Dear Sir:

My husband and I both enjoy your magazine—although from slightly different angles. He is the hunter and I am the cook, so I most look forward to "Campfire Cookery".

Have you ever compiled a booklet of game recipes? Since he saves your copies, my husband doesn't appreciate finding a missing section where I have taken a recipe out. Please advise if there is such a booklet.

Again, thanks for an interesting magazine.

EDITORS NOTE: Our recipes come from many different sources and, to my knowledge, no particular book includes them all. We will be happy to send special copies of particular issues upon request.

Sincerely,
Mrs. John J. Popson
Knoxville, Iowa

Dear Sir:

We enjoy your paper very much and a lot of our new friends here do also as I pass it on to them.

This is a great hunting and sports state, and they are interested in what the other states are doing.

V. L. Gilbert,
Verdi, Nevada

Dear Sir:

I enjoy reading the IOWA CONSERVATIONIST and look forward to each months issue.

I was born and reared in Waterloo and while a boy spend many happy years swimming, fishing, boating and trapping along the Cedar River—before pollution.

We hunted in the northern section of Waterloo which is now inside the City limits. We were quite accurate with our 22 rifles while hunting along the fences and few rabbits made it to the corn stalks.

There were few pheasants in Black Hawk County so we drove to the Iowa Falls area for good hunting. Trapping was good and in one season I trapped over one hundred muskrats in the Riverview Park vicinity. Trapping in the city was unlawful but the Park Employees never seemd to bother me.

I guess you could say, "Those were the good old days."

Sincerely, Norval C. Armstrong

Gentlemen:

I would like to comment on the article in the November IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

about the Reservoir now under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Corps of Engineers. This land is to be used primarily by the Fisheries Section for fish production purposes starting in 1971 or 1972, with a secondary use as a game management area for those portions not utilized by fisheries. Sportsmen in the Okoboji Area are proposing formation of an organization called the Iowa Great Lakes Muskie Club.

Through membership sales, funds would be available to purchase fingerling muskellunge from commercial sources for stocking in West Okoboji. The Club proposes to work closely with the Fisheries Section in maintaining records of stocked and caught muskies. Those stocked by the Club would be distinctively marked by an experienced fisheries employee.

by Mr. Satre concerning the field dressing of game.

I agree with him wholeheartedly concerning the necessity of caring for game properly. I have always been a proponent of field dressing, but something happened this fall that really brought me up short.

When leaving my favorite woods I came upon the scene where some hunters had field dressed their game some hours before. On a nice grassy spot was a pile of guts, heads and hides, covered with blood and flies, that was already beginning to stink to high heaven.

It was also right where the farmer would have to walk to open the gate. I were the farmer and found this mess in my woods would be posted in just the time it took me to get to town and buy the signs.

If one can't carry a shovel in the car to bury such offal, he at least can carry an extra plastic bag and take his leavings to a disposal area. Our woods are just too crowded by all of us to tolerate such thoughtless behavior.

Very truly yours,
Robert C. Hickie

Went on record as opposing the closing of the road by the town of Ventura and the subsequent loss of that area to the public.

Accept an option for nine acres of land adjacent to Lake MacBride State Park.

Approved the projected five-year State Park Board Construction Program.

Fish and Game and Lands and Water Officer personnel are recognized as Peace Officers by resolution and as far as the Commission is concerned.

The Iowa-Nebraska boundary enforcement policy covering sport and commercial fishing and navigation was accepted.

Authorized the Division of Fish and Game to carry out a preliminary engineering feasibility study on a small lake site in Mahaska County near Barne City.

EDITORIAL

If you were to ask a hunter shivering in the numbing cold of a deer stand to figure the number of man-hours he spends to bag a deer, he'd be likely to tell you to find your own tree.

And the duck hunter who just spent a day in bone-chilling drizzle, squatting in a duck blind, wouldn't take a minute out of his story-telling to estimate the cost per pound of meat he brought back.

The sportsman is as unconcerned with these aspects of the hunt as the beagle is with brambles when he's chopping along the trail of a cottontail.

The return that hunters get for their contributions to wildlife and the outdoors cannot be expressed in dollars and cents. The rewards of hunting are physical, emotional and in many cases spiritual. Just ask any hunter.

The U. S. Department of the Interior estimates nearly 200 million recreation-days spent hunting. But no one can put a price tag on a day or even an hour spent at a pleasant pastime.

Whatever the reward to hunters, they have continued to show their willingness to support their sport, with time, effort and money.

Their contribution to the outdoor scene is there for everyone to see. The woods and fields of America are alive with the evidence of their concern. And the same open spaces that hunters use and the wildlife that thrives there are just as available to the non-hunting public for its enjoyment and recreation.

Hunters have earned their place in outdoor America.

They have paid millions in excise taxes, and more millions on licenses and permits. It is also estimated that hunters spend more than \$100 million each year developing wildlife habitat on privately-owned land.

Surveys show that hunters alone pour about \$1.5 billion into the economy of the nation every year. And a great deal of this money finds its way into far-reaching conservation programs.

But the real measure of the sportsman's contribution to the nation will come in years ahead.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates that nine out of ten Americans—roughly 175 million people periodically take to the outdoors in search of recreation. This number will pyramid rapidly according to all population and recreation projections.

These future generations will need a refuge of peace and quiet in the outdoors. They will want clean streams and lakes full of fish, and open spaces where they can spread a picnic lunch and watch their children run.

They will be looking for hushed woodlands with free-roaming wildlife and sunlit meadows alive with songbirds.

This is the future that hunters are shooting for—a future that only wise conservation can provide. This should be the concern of all Americans—hunters and non-hunters alike.

—National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.

'Iowa Fish and Fishing' Available

The popular book "Iowa Fish and Fishing" is available again. The 365-page book sells for \$4.00 per copy to Iowa residents and \$4.50 per copy to non-residents.

This is the fourth edition of the book which is co-authored by James R. Harlan, and Everett B. Speaker. Sixty-three colored portraits of Iowa's fish are illustrated by the award winning artist, Maynard Reece.

Basically the book depicts where to fish in Iowa, identification of fish caught and how to catch them.

This book would be a valuable addition to the fishermen's library and also with the holiday season soon upon us, a great gift idea.

All orders for the book must include the proper remittance, no billings will be accepted. Orders should be sent to Iowa Fish and Fishing, State Conservation Commission, 300 Fourth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.



Fish Chip Fillets

Winter is here and most fishermen have retired their fishing gear for the duration. But for you die hards who cut holes in the ice and freeze your feet to catch mostly panfish, this recipe may be a bonus you haven't yet discovered.

The great majority of fish caught during the winter months through the ice in Iowa are bluegills, sunfish, and crappies. Their small size enhances this dish; in fact, the smaller the better. The abundance of panfish in Iowa's lakes and farm ponds, as well as their size, often causes them to be scorned as "bait stealers," or to be tossed out on the bank because of over-population. Still they are generally considered at least among the top table-fare game fish in Iowa. If you have doubts, try this: Catch a big mess of 25 or more (there is no catch limit, size limit, or closed season on bluegills, crappies, or sunfish). This is easy to do if you aren't too particular about their size. When you find a "school," the action is fast and two or three dozen are easily caught if you save "four-inchers." Next, use the sharpest, finest knife you own and fillet them (sides of fish are cut off lengthwise along the backbone). This may seem difficult, but I assure you it can be done with amazing speed. The end product from each fish will be two "silver dollar" sized fillets about 1/4 inch thick. Deep fat fry these just as though they were french fries. The small, thin, pieces crisp, leaving just a pinch of tasty, white meat inside, and look much like a thick potato chip.

These tasty tidbits make great main course meal dishes and hors d'oeuvres. As TV snacks or party treats, the crispier you fry them the better. Then, the thin crisp "chips" can handle tartar sauce, or any other dip, with ease. Remember to allow to drip dry over paper towels to remove grease before serving.

20-25 panfish (any size) 40-50 fillets

Deep fat fryer

Shortening—enough to cover fillets

Salt and pepper

Hint for Cooks and Hunters

Interesting suggestions for cooking and cleaning game often reach the CONSERVATIONIST. Here's one tip for removing feathers from wild ducks.

A hunter came up with the idea of putting liquid dishwashing soap in water, bringing it to a rolling boil and then scalding the ducks. Even pin feathers came out easily. He used about 1/4 to 1/2 cup detergent to enough water to submerge ducks.

Trapping Report: 1969

By T. L. Berkley
District Game Manager

The price tag attached to completed fur garments makes it very difficult for the person with an average income to consider giving, shall we say, a mink coat to a relative or friend as a Christmas gift.

However, Iowa furbearers can be of great help to a farm boy, to a young fellow living in a small town or to one that has access to a marsh, stream or other area that provides habitat for some of the furbearers of our state.

The help that these furbearers can give is the income from the sale of their pelts, which can be used to offset the costs of Christmas gifts for the young trappers' family and friends, for although the gifts might not be mink, it is indeed the thought behind the gift, and not the cash value that really makes the gift worthwhile.

Perhaps the first questions that might enter the mind of a young trapper would be what kinds of animals might be trapped and when, what the values of each species might be, and where each species might be found.

He might also wonder which kind of furbearer is the most common, and which is the easiest to trap. In answer, the following animals are considered to be furbearing animals in Iowa:

Badger, mink, raccoon, skunk, opossum, civit cat (spotted skunk), muskrat, beaver, red and grey fox, weasel, groundhog, coyote and otter. Of these furbearers, the otter is protected at all times, and may be trapped at any time.

There is a continuous open season on

both species of fox, on coyote, weasel and groundhog. The rest of the furbearing animals are protected by a closed season during part of the year, with open season during fall and winter months to permit trappers to harvest the surplus of each species during the period when furs are prime and worth the most money.

While there is a continuous open season on fox, weasel, groundhog and coyote, it is well to remember that these species are of value as fur producers only during late fall and winter months when their fur is prime. Those taken during summer and early fall months are worthless.

The seasons on furbearing animals are designed to permit the harvest of surplus animals, but also to protect adequate numbers of each species for a seed stock to reproduce and replenish populations during the year to come.

As to when the furbearers may be trapped, the 1969 Iowa trapping seasons are included:

Mink, Muskrat—12:00 noon, November 15, 1969, to midnight, January 11, 1970.

Raccoon, Badger, Skunk, Civit Cat, Opossum—12:00 noon, November 15, 1969, to midnight, February 15, 1970.

Beaver—12:00 noon, December 13, 1969, to midnight, February 15, 1970.

Red and Gray Fox, Coyote, Weasel, Woodchuck—Continuous open season.

Where? Iowa furbearers may be found state-wide, and seasons are all set on a state-wide basis. Populations of

each species will be higher or lower in various areas, depending upon habitat and other conditions.

Careful scouting will show signs of the presence or absence of furbearers and some of the things to look for would be muskrat houses on marshes and ponds, beaver slides along streams, animal tracks and droppings, corn cut along streams, spots where animals have been digging out smaller animals for food and dens used by the wild creatures.

Some of the furbearers are only to be found in and near water, and all trapping for these animals is done in such location. Muskrat and beaver are included in this category. Raccoon and mink spend a considerable amount of time in and near streams and marshes and these areas are excellent location to scout for signs left by these furbearers, and afford fine locations for trapping.

Raccoons spend some time on upland areas and in cornfields, quite often will den in abandoned buildings and timbered areas quite some distance from water. They can be successfully trapped in these areas.

The balance of the furbearers are most commonly trapped in sets made on upland areas, although all species spend some time along streams and around marsh areas as such areas which produce food desired by the furbearer—small rodents, muskrats, rabbits, fish and other aquatic forms of life.

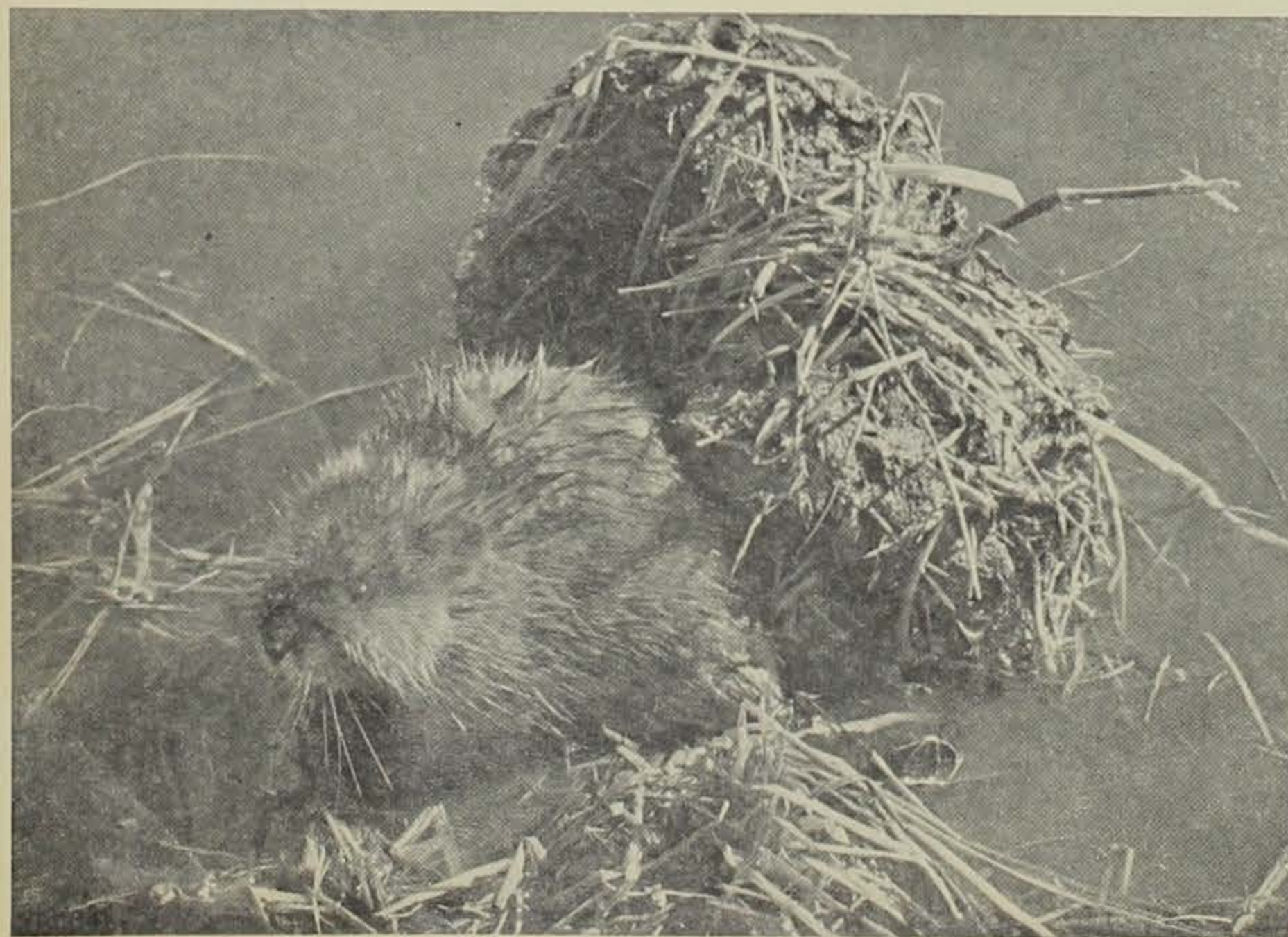
The most common of the Iowa furbearers is the muskrat, which may be found on marshes, ponds, streams and drainage ditches throughout the state. Next in abundance is the raccoon, present in extremely high numbers during the past several years.

The other furbearers are present in lesser numbers, with total populations controlled by the amount of and the condition of the habitat required by each species. Overpopulations are sometimes controlled and reduced through the spread of disease, as evidenced by the decline of the fox population in southern Iowa in recent years. This reduction was caused from a serious plague of mange, often fatal to infected animals.

As for values of the various species of furbearers on an individual basis, the most valuable will be extra large beaver, followed by mink. During the last several years the muskrat has been worth the most in total value, due to the great numbers taken.

Last year, for the first time in a long time, the raccoon was highest in value, due to the harvest of large numbers of raccoon sold at a much higher price than that paid for many years.

To give an idea of prices that are an-





anticipated at the time of this writing for furs sold during the coming season our new trapper might expect from \$1.50-\$6.00 for raccoon, from 60 cents to \$1.50 for muskrat, and perhaps a top of \$12.00 for mink.

These prices are based on the size, primeness and condition of each pelt. Top prices are paid only on pelts that have been properly skinned and stretched by the trapper.

Often it is better for an inexperienced trapper to sell the whole animal to the local furbuyer, rather than for him to damage the hides when skinning and stretching them.

Probably the species that our young trapper should concentrate upon during his first winter of trapping should be the raccoon and muskrat. Populations of both are at normal levels or above, they are well distributed throughout the state, neither is extremely difficult to trap, prices are good, and special trapping equipment is not required to trap them successfully.

Obviously the key part of the equipment required is the trap itself. For muskrats, a rather small trap will do the job provided that sets are made that will drown the animal. Number 1½ traps are adequate, those with a stoploss device are usually the most effective as fewer animals are lost when they are used.

The Conibear trap is most effective, as it kills the animal instantly. As the raccoon is much larger than the muskrat, it is necessary to use a larger trap to hold him, especially to hold the extra large specimen that will bring the top price.

At least No. 2 double spring traps should be used, and the No. 2 Victor Fox Trap has proven itself to be a fine trap for raccoon, as it has a wide jawspread, is compact which assists in carrying numerous traps, and it is easy to conceal at the trap set.

Additional equipment required will include trap stakes and a hatchet for digging and for pounding trap stakes. Bait and scent will improve the trapper's success when properly used.

The location of a trap set is the key to successful trapping, any set must be made near where an animal will be. Bait will only attract a furbearer for short distances.

Some of the best sets for muskrats are to be made in runs used by the muskrats for travel lanes through marshes, quite often the "rats" will have easy to find trails leaving a water area to feeding areas in cornfields or other areas.

Traps are placed in these runs, and where possible are staked in deep enough water so that the muskrat will drown when he tries to escape the trap.

In marsh areas the muskrat builds many houses, those in which he lives, and feed houses, which are simply piles of marsh vegetation piled and stored for winter food supplies. Sets are made just outside the entrance to the lodges, and are made at the "slides" used at the feeder houses by the muskrats when they climb from the water into the house.

Traps should be placed under about two inches of water, and again staked in deeper water to drown the muskrat. Sometimes sets can be improved by the use of bait such as a carrot or part of an ear of corn.

Excellent sets may be found along stream banks where muskrats dig dens into the banks. Traps are placed under water at the entrances to these dens.

Our new trapper should look first for locations for raccoon trapping along streams, where he can locate many fine places to make sets. He will find that "B'r'er Coon" will travel on the sandbars adjacent to creeks and rivers, on mud bars and that the raccoon spends much time around water, as this is a source of much of his food.

Water sets may be used with a bait of fish

to attract the raccoon to the trap site. Blind trail sets without bait are effective, the traps are buried under one-half inch of sand or fine dirt under trails used by raccoon along the edges of streams.

Dirt hole bait sets may be made on sandbars or in other areas frequented by the raccoon. This set is baited with fish or other meat bait, and may be made more attractive by the use of lures, which may be obtained from trapping supply houses.

In the bait hole set, bait such as sardines or other fish is placed at the bottom of a 2-inch diameter hole dug at an angle into a bank, with the trap being buried under ½-inch of fine sand or dirt, with the trap located about 4 inches in front of the bait hole.

In this set and the blind trail set waxed paper must be placed over the pans and under the jaws of each to prevent dirt or sand used in covering traps from getting under the trap pans where it would prevent the traps from being tripped. This dirt hole bait set may be used in cornfields, timbered areas frequented by raccoons, and around old buildings that are being used by raccoons.

As only practice makes perfect, only practice in trapping will provide the experience necessary to become an expert trapper. Much information can be found in the many books that are available from commercial sources on trapping methods for each of the various species, and it would be of value for the new trapper to study books of this nature.

It is suggested that a copy of the trapping magazine "Fur, Fish and Game" be purchased, and it will be found that many first class trapping books are advertised in this magazine.

It is sometimes possible to obtain information on trapping methods from local successful trappers that are willing to assist a new trapper get started.

So, to conclude this article, Here's to Luck on Your Trapping

Equation For Iowa's Bobwhite Hunting

Quality + Quantity = Quail

By David Evans

Exploding from cover with a nerve-shattering roar and darting swiftly through the air, Iowa's bobwhite quail offers hunters some of the sportiest shooting in the world.

You have a chance to match wits and train a shotgun on these bite-size bombshells during Iowa's 99-day quail season. For the fourth year in a row quail populations are high in the major range and hunting prospects are excellent. The highest concentrations will be found in the southern tier of counties.

King of birds in many other states, the bobwhite presents a real challenge to the scattergunner's skill. It requires smooth gun handling and cool nerves to bring down the speedy little birds. Quail burst suddenly from cover with a whirring noise that startles even veteran hunters.

The rolling countryside and smaller crop fields of southern Iowa provides some prime quail range. Brushy cover close to row crops, heavy fencerows, ravines and unpastured woodlots are available for the birds. With all this good cover, it's possible some coveys are never flushed.

Favorable habitat and the mild winters have been the main factors in boosting Iowa's quail populations.

Corn and beans near brushy cover provide food in the best areas. During the winter the grain diet is supplemented with seed of foxtail, lespedeza, sumac and acorns. In spring, summer and fall their meals include greens, assorted bugs and the common grasshopper and ant.

Quail will generally roost in short grass. But when not roosting or feeding, the birds like to loaf around woodlands where they can find ready sanctuary in the tangled vegetation. Quail generally move in coveys ranging from six to 16 birds.

After a covey is flushed and marked down, the birds can be hunted one at a time. Something of homebodies, they do stick close to their home range.

As cold weather invades the area, quail become more nervous, feeding irregularly and moving constantly. As a result they don't always hold for the hunting dogs and often flush far beyond gun range.

Small, but swift, quail are from 8½ to 10½ inches long and can fly from 30 to 40 miles per hour. A variety of methods can be used to hunt quail. Some hunters will simply pick a likely

draw or fence row and try to "kick them up."

Many are taken as a "bonus" by men after pheasants. Quail hunting is a sport where a good dog can really be appreciated. It's a joy to watch a pointer, setter, Brittany spaniel or other dog work quail.

When flushed a quail will sometimes take the shortest route to new cover, even if it brings him right over the hunter. This presents one of the most difficult shots as the gunner tries to train his weapon on the swift target zooming directly at him and passing overhead.

Going away or quartering shots on quail are usually easier. Quail seem to have an instinct for twisting, tricky changes of flight plane that tend to confuse the hopeful nimrod.

Quail hunters generally prefer 12- or 16-gauge shotguns with cylinder or fairly open bores. Most quail are taken at close range and a full choked gun gives too tight a pattern and results in mangled birds.

Number 7½ or 8 shot is considered satisfactory. Probably most quail are shot at less than 25 yards. Since fast gun handling is a necessity, shorter barrel scatterguns are good.

Iowa hunters take about 15 percent of the total fall and winter quail population. Less than 20 percent of Iowa hunters go after quail. Actually, it would be possible to have a much heavier harvest of these quick birds and still not hurt the total population.

The novice quail hunter may imagine that it's a simple matter to pick up a double when the covey first takes to the air. Usually, he will miss everything when trying to shoot the whole flock. It just doesn't pay to fire blindly into a covey on the wing.

An added incentive for quail hunting is the bird's qualifications at the table. Although an average bobwhite provides only about four ounces of meat, it is claimed by many to be the best-tasting of upland game birds. All in all, quail hunting is an exciting sport.



Bud Grant, coach of the Minnesota Vikings professional football team (center), enjoys Iowa quail hunting with Virgil Amendt, Melbourne (left), and David Hickenlooper, Bloomfield.

(Continued from page 89)

it out to us. On final approach we noticed our farmer-friend waiting near the field. We hardly felt the "landing" and quickly "deplaned", gathering our gear.

The farmer's teenage son was happy to go with us to point out the best areas. With him and the pilot our hunting group numbered four.

So off we went to the section closest to the house. Our hunt began about 8:30.

Walking and working slowly through the field of picked corn two roosters and three hens suddenly flushed before us. My friend downed the first rooster, and the pilot landed the second; the boy and I were determined that we would be next.

The farmer's son had spotted several nests near some brushy areas and he suggested we try that area. We walked until we were about parallel with the plane across the cornfield.

Just as we approached the first of the smaller areas a pheasant ran across the path about 20 yards ahead. The boy decided this one was his and in two shots downed our third bird.

The shots scattered a large flock and my friend and I took aim. This time we both were lucky and bagged numbers four and five. We couldn't believe this incredible success . . . and at the first farm!

Nearing lunchtime we decided to head back for the plane and our pre-packed dinners. The boy suggested we cut across the field directly to the plane while he would retrace steps back to the farmhouse.

We thanked him and invited him to hunt with us next season, to which he quickly agreed, asking us back to his father's farm. We were so certain of our luck, and so thankful to the farmer, that we sent three of the birds with him to gar-



nish their table.

Outdoor lunches are always good but this one seemed especially refreshing. Right after lunch we loaded our gear and taxied for take-off.

Heading southwest for the second farm our thoughts were filled with visions of so many pheasants that we would need to pass up shots so as not to exceed the three bird limit. We arrived about one-thirty and greeted an equally friendly and hospitable farmer.

After determining the places to hunt, we set out for a small fence row, agreeing to meet our farmer-friend for coffee later in the afternoon.

Mid-afternoon hunting was bad . . . spotting few birds, and getting off only poor shots. We had walked to two of the areas the farmer suggested with no success. It was nearing three o'clock when we sighted a small creek with a fence row nearby.

The three of us headed for the area hoping that our luck would change. And, it did. On a grassy patch bathing in the

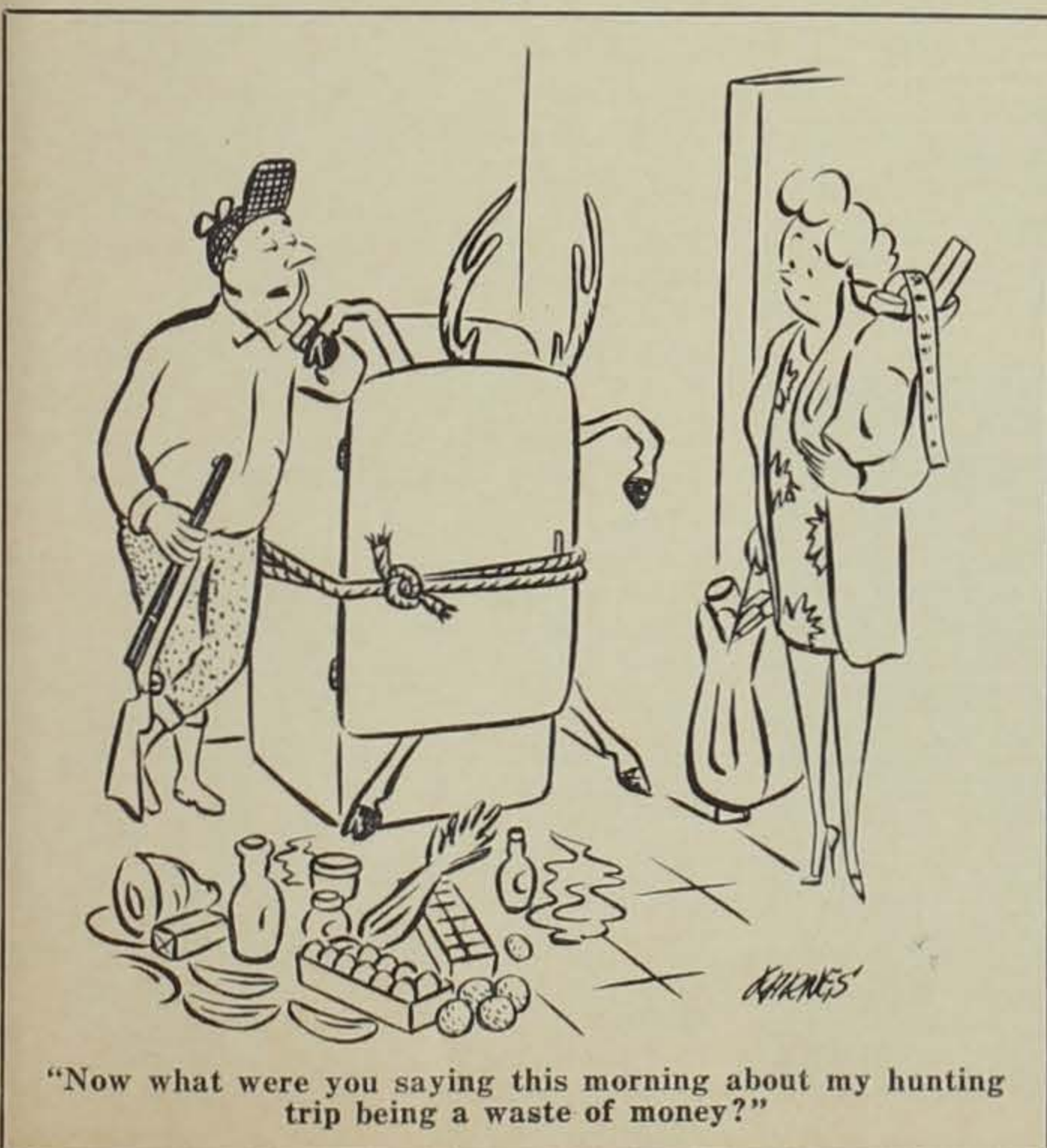
afternoon sun was a small flock of pheasants—three roosters and five hens.

Suddenly they took to flight heading just the proper angle for us to each bag one. Our spirits were heightened and we were satisfied. Since the sun was just about ready to change to its evening chill we decided to head back for the plane and the farmer's kind offer for coffee.

A fence row by a cornfield yielded two more birds bringing our total number to seven—not quite the limit but really good success.

What a day this had been . . . and what a hunt! Not only was it a new experience for us, a new type of hunting, but it was **good** hunting, and that's what we liked most.

The trip home was smooth and restful, and for two tired but pleased hunters, rather long. We wanted to tell our good fortune to everyone — especially our wives. As we landed the pilot expressed his thanks for being able to join us on a great hunting trip.



Feeding Feathered Friends

By Kenneth Formanek

That time of year is upon us when fall yard work is nearly complete, storm windows are in place and final outdoor preparations for the winter season are just about done.

Blustery north winds whirl fallen leaves. Squalls of snow flurries roll across Iowa's plains as nature settles down for a much deserved rest.

By now most migrating birds have reached their destinations with a hardy few lingering along the way. Common winter residents already are staking claim to the choicest feeders.

The birding enthusiast usually has feeding stations in place and food supplies abundant by the time winter weather sets in. Feeding sites must be chosen with care.

Out of the wind places near house shrubbery or close to trees where feathered visitors will find protection and shelter are excellent spots.

A variety of commercially built bird feeders are available in all sizes and styles for those who haven't time for building one. Feeding stations do not have to be fancy or elaborate.

A small log section bored with holes, packed with suet and hung from a tree branch will host a variety of bird life. Hardware cloth formed into a box like container and tied to a tree trunk is also a good suet holder.

Platforms of some sort are best for holding grains which seed eating birds seek during these cold winter days. Such feeders, suspended by wire from tree branches or secured atop metal posts, will discourage forgetful squirrels that

have lost track of their winter storehouses.

Window feeders provide close observation and plenty of entertainment for even the casual bird watcher. The writers favorite is a small log section placed on top a window platform—the log having a variety of depressions for holding seed and suet.

A small trimmed branch is attached to the log serving as a perch for incoming birds to light upon. At first birdlife seem timid to this set up but eventually shyness gives way to hunger.

With a little imagination and a few discarded odds and ends one can come up with all sorts of enticing feeding stations. A one page illustrated leaflet entitled "Operation Tid-bits" is available from the State Conservation Commission, 300-4th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. The leaflet shows different types of feeders one may build and where to locate them for best results.

The success of attracting and holding small birds at a feeding station depends mainly upon keeping a good food supply available at all times. Feeders require frequent attention during periods of heavy snow and ice.

Once a winter bird feeding program is started it should be continued until natural food is again available. Birdlife becomes dependent upon such feeders once they are found.

Sudden loss of food at a shelter will force these feathered creatures to seek new feeding places. A great deal of harm to birds may result, as they come to depend on this regular supply of food.

Wintering birdlife may be attracted



Chickadee sampling suet.

by a variety of feed. Certain grains and seeds are relished by different seed eaters while insect eaters tend towards animal fat. Different commercial mixtures of seeds are often available at garden centers and grocery stores.

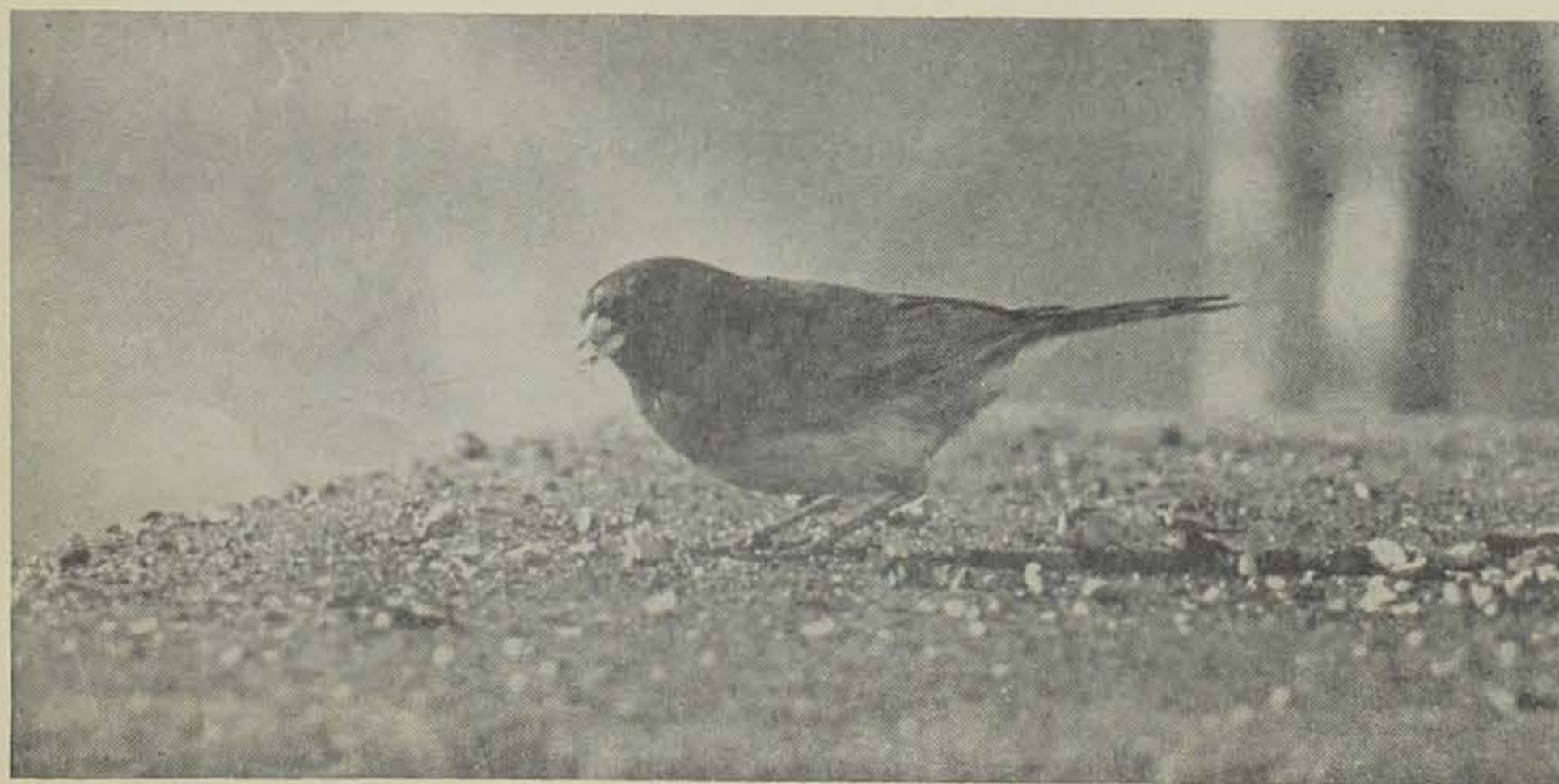
Sunflower seeds are a delicacy for many. Cardinals, chickadees, nuthatches and tufted titmice thoroughly enjoy cracking the hulls of this plump seed. Millet is a great food for juncos, tree sparrows and purple finches along with a mourning dove or two that has decided to stay north for the winter.

Bluejays and cardinals are attracted to cracked corn and milo. Chopped peanuts, walnuts or pecans are also favored by these seed eaters. A mixture of peanut butter and screen chopped nuts is known to be a favorite of wintering goldfinches. Waxwings enjoy well-placed chopped apples.

Insect eaters such as brown creepers and various woodpeckers find suet to their liking. Some birds, such as nuthatches and chickadees, will eat both suet and seeds. Best suet for birds is that from beef.

Those who have enjoyed watching bird activity during warmer days past are perhaps scorning the wintery weeks ahead. With a little planning, some scraps of material, plus grain and suet well-placed, may bring about a variety of birdlife never realized before.

There can be enjoyment in seeing a brilliant male cardinal flying about snow covered trees branches or having chickadees chattering back and forth. There may be amazement at the clinging and climbing habits of nuthatches and brown creepers. Winter does not have to be a time of bleakness when outdoor activity subsides.



Junco hulling the husk from a millet seed.