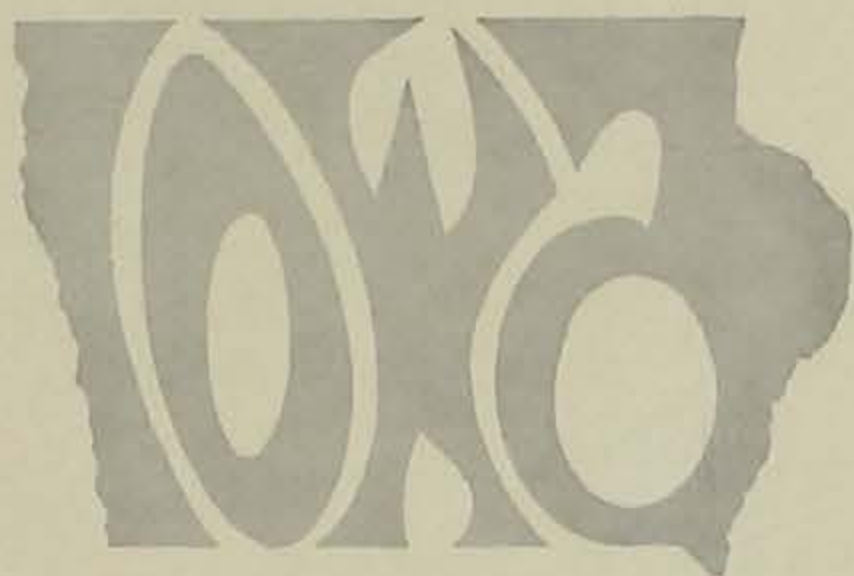


OCTOBER 1970



CONSERVATIONIST



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About the Cover . . .

With Fall comes the hunting season in Iowa

Iowa Conservationist

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COMMISSION MINUTES

July 31, 1970

Clear Lake, Iowa

The following County Conservation Board Projects were approved: Polk County, Land Acquisition, Yeader Creek Lake Park Addition; Dickinson County, Orleans Beach, Maintenance and Management Agreement; Scott County, I-280 Lake Park, Development Plan; Story County, Hickory Grove Park Revision.

Accepted an option for 440 acres in Van Buren County subject to approval of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Awarded a \$40,855.41 contract for boat launching facilities at Red Rock Reservoir.

Accepted a cash contribution of 50 cents from four Des Moines youngsters (Karen, Kevin, Janet and Ann) who have formed the "Wildlife Club."

August 18, 1970

Approved an agreement with the Franklin County Board of Supervisors for the paving of 6,154.54 feet of county road adjacent to and passing through Beeds Lake State Park.

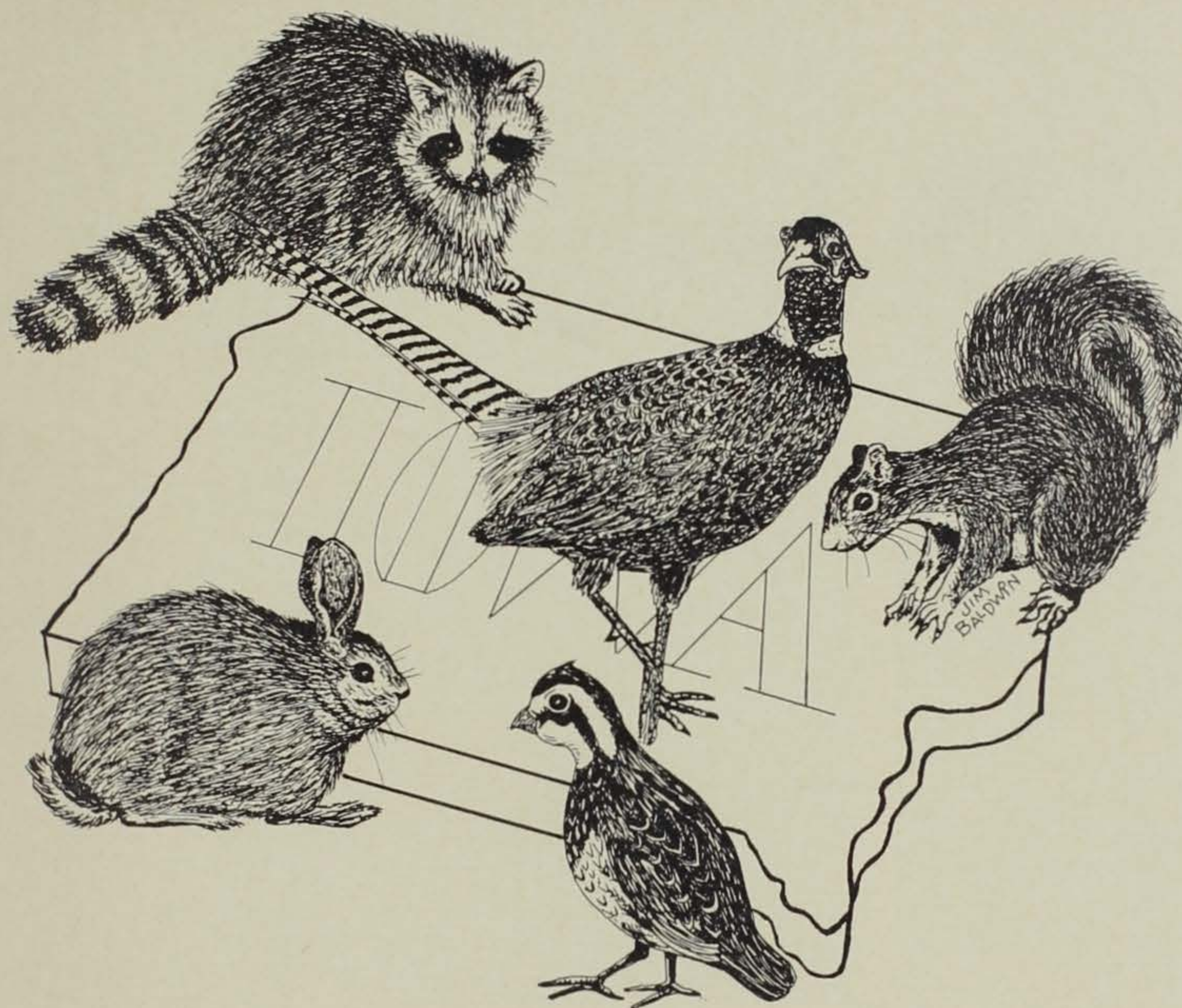
Awarded a contract for the construction of an access road, parking area and boat ramp at Bellevue Waters Station.

Approved a land purchase option for 45 acres of natural marsh area near Rice Lake and Silver Lake.

Adopted a resolution commending Phil Jarnagin of Storm Lake for supporting good conservation measures, youth projects, water safety and anti-pollution programs through his newspaper.



William E. Noble (left), vice chairman of the Iowa Conservation Commission, presented special awards of merit to Blake Kellogg of Waterloo (center) and Keith Kirkpatrick of Des Moines at a recent Commission meeting. The awards were from the American Association for Conservation Information of which the Iowa Commission is a member. Kellogg was cited for "creating greater public interest in conservation and natural resource management through television." He is news director of KWWL-TV, Waterloo. Kirkpatrick, WHO farm news director, received his award for "stimulating awareness in the value of outdoor recreation through his radio and television programs." Of special interest to the public has been his television program "Outdoors With Keith."



SMALL GAME IS "BIG" IN IOWA

by David Evans

Iowa is widely known for many things such as corn and girls' basketball. But, here is much more to this state than that as many sportsmen know.

Iowa is the most underrated small game hunting state in the Union. This fall and winter Iowa will provide the best small game hunting in these United States. It's a hunter's paradise.

The fabulous ringneck pheasant is the number 1 game bird and for good reason. Last season was outstanding for pheasant hunters. An estimated 1,642,000 birds were harvested—tops in the nation. Indications are that Iowa will have an even better season than last year.

Obviously there is more to the "Tall Corn" state than pheasants. Some small game species are less popular, but they provide even better hunting. Quail, squirrel and cottontails are actually under-harvested in many areas. Some quail coveys will never see or hear a man or dog. Even at that nimrods took an estimated 1,144,700 of the swift bobwhites last season.

Rabbit and squirrel hunting provide thousands of hours of recreation for young and old alike. Last season ap-

proximately 1,722,820 cottontails and 1,164,030 squirrels were harvested. The populations of quail, rabbits and squirrel have remained high the past years. Mixed bags are not at all unusual where many species are available for a sportsman with desire and ability.

Ducks and geese are also considered small game. And here again the Iowa hunter is in luck. With a liberal bag and possession limit based on the "point system" scattergunners will be in for a good fall shoot.

While not as numerous and limited to certain areas, ruffed grouse, Hungarian partridge, fox and woodchuck are also available. Often overlooked is raccoon hunting which is excellent. However, to really enjoy it, dogs are necessary. Coon hunting is becoming more popular all the time.

"Small game" is perhaps something of a misnomer. It's small only in size not in hunting excitement and enjoyment. A colorful ringneck rooster exploding under your feet is a real thrill. Or bobwhite quail bursting like a bombshell into whirring flight. Or ducks whistling into a set of decoys in the early morning light. There is a certain contentment

only the hunter knows when he strolls through a wooded area after squirrels.

Iowa hunting is really a bargain. A \$3 resident license or \$5 combination hunting and fishing license allows a man to hunt from September 12 to February 28 for a variety of small game species. A non-resident hunting license costs \$20. Waterfowl hunters must also have a \$3 federal migratory waterfowl stamp.

At a time when many states are cutting back on hunting seasons and limits, Iowa is continuing to provide maximum opportunities for recreation. Hunters in Iowa can harvest a surplus of game and not harm the overall populations.

Sportsmen must remember that a hunting license does not guarantee a full bag. It only provides an opportunity for hunting. Game must be located and reduced to the bag. The man still must put out some effort, make plans and get the good shot. And like the old-timer points out: "He ought to be smarter than the game."

The hunter who would take advantage of Iowa's small game bonanza has some mighty important responsibilities. He must conduct himself as a real sportsman, respect the rights of private property and follow the season regulations.

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

by Charles "Butch" Olofson
Hunter Safety Officer

Late September and October is when the leaves on the oaks and hickories start to color Iowa's hillsides. Corn turns from green to its mature dry brown color. Days are warm, but the nights are cool. There is the lingering smell of burning leaves toward evening.

It is that time of the year when men get glazed looks in their eyes from dreaming about past hunts and planning for the upcoming season. They smell that pungent odor of burnt gun powder and gun oil. They are about to pick up the "trustworthy shootin' iron" and go hunting.

Anyone who sits down and seriously reads the "10 Commandments of Hunting Safety" will realize that if one uses good judgment in the field he will not have any problems.

Let's look at some of 1969's firearm accidents. Here is a newspaper headline: "Thought He Was a Squirrel, Shoots Partner." What happened was one hunter mistook his partner's brown hat for a squirrel in the brush and fired, sprinkling shot all over his friend's head and shoulders. Another newspaper headline: "Squirrel Hunter Shoots Youth." A youth was hit in the neck by another hunter who saw movement in the brush, thought it was a squirrel and fired.

Obviously, both of these shooters did not use good judgment. They violated the 5th Commandment: "Know the game you are hunting and be sure of your target before you shoot."

Here is another headline: "A Shotgun, a Tumble—Iowa Boy Is Wounded." This headline is pretty much self-explanatory. The 4th Commandment of Hunting Safety states: "Carry your gun so that you can control the direction it is pointed,

even if you stumble or fall."

A hunter must think at all times while he is carrying a gun. He should hunt "defensively." Not only should he handle his own gun safely, but he must try to anticipate what his hunting companion is going to do with his gun when a bird gets up. Remember, don't put yourself in a position to get shot.

The general public's idea of a firearm accident is a hunter mistakenly shot for a deer at 200 yards by a stranger's rifle. This is not always true. Let's look at some statistics furnished by the National Rifle Association. A 10-year study conducted on hunting accidents in 26 states and two Canadian provinces came up with the following information:

Over 50 per cent of the accidents are from unintentional discharges.

Over 50 per cent of the accidents are within 10 yards from the muzzle to the victim.

Over 30 per cent of the accidents are self-inflicted wounds.

Nearly 75 percent of the shooters involved have more than three years' hunting experience.

The greater number of accidents occur in the middle of the day, in broad daylight, with clear visibility and light to open cover.

Less than one per cent of the shooters are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

You can see from the statistics, that a pattern begins to form. The man who causes firearm accidents is careless and is not using good judgment. Obviously not every hunter is living up to the "10 Commandments of Hunter Safety." Perhaps one more commandment is needed . . . The Eleventh.

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SHOOTING SAFETY

1. Treat every gun with the respect due a loaded gun.
2. Watch that muzzle! Carry your gun safely; keep the safety on until you are ready to shoot.
3. Unload guns when they are not in use. Take the gun down or have its action open. Guns should be carried in a case to the shooting area.
4. Be sure that the barrel is clear of obstructions, and that you have ammunition only of the proper size for the gun you carry.
5. Be sure of your target before you pull the trigger; know the identifying features of the game you hunt.
6. Never point a gun at anything you do not want to shoot; avoid horseplay.
7. Never climb a tree or fence or jump a ditch with a loaded gun; never pull a gun towards you by the muzzle.
8. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or water; at target practice, be sure your backstop is adequate.
9. Store guns and ammunition separately, beyond the reach of children.
10. Avoid alcoholic beverages before or during shooting.

Hunting is not a particularly dangerous sport. Most hunters are very careful, and their accident record, as a group, is good. The National Shooting Sports Foundation noted recently that hunting accidents have decreased 13 per cent since 1950, despite a 50 per cent increase in the number of hunters. Most of the credit for that must go to hunters themselves. They not only support game management financially, they promote hunter safety.

Today's sportsman-hunter is interested more in recreation and fellowship than in filling his game bag. He looks with scorn on game hogs, trespassers and careless hunters.

An insurance company published a study of accident claims by its policyholders, broken down into different types of activities. It found that while sports and recreation activities are second only to home accidents in claims, hunting accidents rate a low 16th in 24 categories of activity. Hunting is statistically as safe as tennis and squash; safer than going to theaters; only half as dangerous as golf, horseback riding, boating, or park outings. Only 777 of the 24,280 claims surveyed were the results of hunting, and they included non-firearms accidents, such as falls.

In Iowa, only one out of every 7,066 hunters in the field suffered a firearm accident last year.

The "10 Commandments of Hunter Safety" are sound and simple to follow. If everyone followed them, we would not have any accidents. Perhaps we can help cure man's self-destructive nature by adding the Eleventh Commandment . . . "Choose Your Hunting Companions With Care."



State Forests—Both Functional and Fun

Many people see Iowa's state forests through a car window. Some view the rolling carpets of hardwoods and conifers from the air.

The brilliant October hillsides of Iowa's state forests are an attraction in themselves, but many people do not recognize the multiple-use potential of these areas.

The best way to enjoy the solitude and beauty of a forest is on foot. Pick a sunny fall day and take the family or friend for a stroll along one of several marked educational nature trails. These paths lead you through deep woods and long ponds and streams, while varieties of trees are identified by small signs along the way.

The more adventurous and athletic may set out through unmarked timber and hike until legs become weary. Each of the three major areas Shimek, Stephens and Yellow River Forests have over 10,000 acres of timber.

One fact that many overlook is that state forests also are open to public hunting. Squirrels find the hickory trees attractive and provide some excellent hunting. Deer and rabbits are also taken and during waterfowl flights, numerous ponds offer jump shooting in Shimek and Stephens. Yellow River offers some fineuffed grouse hunting.

October still produces forest fishing. Little known to many anglers, ponds in Shimek and Stephens State Forests have been stocked with bass and bluegill. Some ponds have been stocked recently; others long enough to produce some five pounders.

Of course, not all the state forests have untapped fishing. Since 1963 Paint and Little Paint Creeks have been the most popular trout streams in the state. Located in northeast Iowa, they bisect one of Iowa's most scenic and productive woodlands, Yellow River State Forest. Trout are stocked often and by October, crowds of anglers are thin. Campsites are located right by the stream.

Speaking of camping, primitive camp-

grounds are available at Shimek, Stephens and Yellow River State Forests for those who don't mind leaving their electric can openers behind. All five forests have picnic areas.

Of course forests are managed as a timber crop—the trees are thinned and harvested providing a cash return used for other forestry developments and projects. In addition, these areas provide a model which demonstrate to farmers and other land owners the proper forestry management practices.

But a state forest is much more than an area established to preserve and manage trees. For those who know their secrets, these forest lands offer plenty of recreational opportunities.

Iowa State Forest Activities Guide

State Forests	Location	Acres	Hiking	Picnicking	Camping	Hunting	Fishing
Yellow River Forest	Allamakee County	6,000	x	x	x	x	x
Stephens Forest	Lucas, Monroe, Appanoose and Davis Counties	7,500	x	x	x	x	x
Shimek Forest	Les & Van Buren Counties	8,000	x	x	x	x	x
Pilot Mound	Hancock County	33	x	x			
Holst Forest	Boone County	333	Experimental—No Facilities				

What To Do With A Dead Duck

by Dick Ranney



The sight of mallard ducks over decoys with feet outstretched and wings cupped as brakes has inspired many a painter's brush. The picture of a vivid blue October sky with flock after flock of great Canada geese or the wavy lines of blue and snow geese has also been captured on canvas and film. The call of geese in flight has been heard by man from time eternal. Songs are written, pictures are painted, and all of mankind, be he hunter or non-hunter, is stirred by the sight and sound of great flocks of birds in migration.

In the early days of man, the migration of the great flocks might have been the sign of cold weather or the budding of spring. Early man used the meat and

feathers. The meat was used as food and the feathers were used for decoration and warmth. The people of the early west also used the meat of the ducks and geese for food and the feathertick of Grandma's era were as warm as toast and the big, fluffy pillows were standard on most beds. Hunting migratory waterfowl for many years was a necessity.

As time went on, the modern manufacturing methods and agricultural practices made hunting for food unnecessary, but men continued to hunt. Hunting evolved from need to sport and in some areas the sport was forgotten and man hunted for the thrill of the kill. Man's equipment became more sophisticated and the ability to kill in greater numbers

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1. Remove large feathers from body.



2. Cut off wings and legs at first joint.



3. Carefully singe off the down and small feathers.



4. Remove head and scrub with detergent.



5. Remove tail. Then cut along side to wing and clean.



6. Pick remaining pin feathers.

made it necessary to place seasons and limits to assure that he would not cause the great flocks to become extinct.

There is a place in the picture for the hunter and the non-hunter, the camera bug, the bird watcher. All the people who enjoy the outdoors are needed. We all have become keepers of the flock. We must make sure all is not cemented and painted green. The money from the sale of duck stamps for the most part goes directly to help buy and preserve the wetlands and other areas for the nesting and resting of ducks and geese. Hunters and non-hunters alike can join the "Bucks for Ducks Club" by buying a duck stamp. Part of the money from the sale of hunting licenses in the state of

Iowa goes into a program to buy land in the state.

If all goes well, there will be enough birds for all to enjoy, hunt and watch. If you are a hunting sportsman be sure the fish, game, or fowl taken from the wild is not wasted.

Fresh roasted duck properly prepared is delicious. Ducks may be skinned or dry picked. Dry picked ducks should be singed and then scrubbed with hot soapy water. This will remove any oil from the feathers which might get on the meat during the cleaning.

Rinse and put them to soak in salt water. Be sure to freshen the ducks when ready to cook. Cut several apples and onions into quarters. Rub the in-

side of the bird lightly with coarse salt and stuff with apple and onion. Pin three or four slices of thick bacon over the breast and place in a covered baking pan. Set the oven at 475 degrees and bring the meat up to cooking temperature quickly. Lift the lid on the pan frequently and release the steam. Turn the oven back to 300 degrees and cook for about 3 hours. (Don't forget to lift the lid.)

Remove the bird from the pan and clean the apples, onions and bacon. Put the bird back in the oven and bake until lightly brown. Serve with sage dressing, mashed potatoes, giblet gravy, boiled carrots and onions, waldorf salad, dill pickles, home made bread, pumpkin pie and coffee.

a badge to wear



a job to do

By Jim Layton
Staff Writer

The morning sun was several hours from clearing the horizon but its glow was bright enough to reveal through an open window an embraced couple upon a cover strewn bed.

Suddenly a sharp ring from the telephone separated the couple. Minutes later, the replacing of the phone caused a sorry good-bye and the departure of the husband. It was time to go to work.

This fictionalized illustration could be an example showing the devotion of the Iowa fish and game conservation officer toward his duty as guardian of wildlife resources.

In Iowa as in other states, there are only a few people that know what it is like to live and work as a conservation officer. The phone call could of been almost anything from a road-kill deer to a reported case of poaching in the night. The conservation officer is never off duty. Even on assigned days off, many officers

find themselves working part of the day.

Before going deeper into the facts about these men, one might wonder why there are conservation laws?

It could be reasoned that because the natural resources belong to the citizens, we do not need laws for their protection. This statement is not sound reasoning because even with game laws and enforcement today, there is an increase in the number of people caught committing illegal acts pertaining to natural resources. These poachers could be endangering the extinction of the resources. Therefore, it can be said that man has to have protection for his natural resources.

In Iowa, man saw the need for the protection of wildlife as early as 1856. Since then, growth and change in the philosophy of the society has continually changed the reasoning behind the laws.

One of the oldest standing reasons for game laws is that they are a method of game management. Another reason for the laws existence is that today it allows sportsmen an equal opportunity to take game.

"Unless laws are obeyed by the general public, they are meaningless," Ken Kakac, superintendent of enforcement, said. "It is one of the major duties of the conservation officer to bring public acceptance and compliance with the laws. The officers have proven to be the best means for helping the public understand reasons behind certain laws."

Game laws and enforcement have tied together to become the final tool in game management. This is because there is only a small percentage of the total land in Iowa used for hunting that belongs to the public. This land is one of the few areas that can be truly game managed. The majority of the land used for hunting is privately owned farm land. Enforcement of laws protecting the game has been one of the best ways for management of these areas.

While the conservation officer is generally thought of only in connection with law enforcement, in reality the officer functions over a much broader range of activities.

The Iowa Conservation Commission, since its establishment, has changed greatly. In the beginning, the primary purpose of the conservation officer was that of law enforcement. Today the officer's role has changed to that of a public servant.

In his new role, the conservation officer spends time keeping in close contact with the residents of his territory. During this time, the officer promotes conservation and outdoor recreation; presents radio and television programs; attends meetings as guest speaker and does many other services like selling hunting and fishing licenses. Conservation officers also budget time into their schedule for teaching gun safety. It would take too much space to go through all the activities beyond law enforcement of the Iowa conservation officer.

At the present time there are 62 conservation officers in Iowa. Each officer is assigned a one or two county area. Last year, the officers attended 2,935 meetings and taught over 8,000 students gun safety.

One officer in performing his information and education service to the public, showed 147 conservation films to over 36,000 people in his territory. But the officers still have time to perform their major responsibility to the public—that of protection of the wildlife resources. They arrested over 4,000 game law violators during 1969.

Iowa conservation officers are human and they do find time to spend at home with their families. There is only one bachelor in the 62 man force. In fact Ken Kakac receives several cigars every year.

RED ROCK HONKERS

By Julius "Sonny" Satre

Beginning in late September and lasting through December, Iowans will have an opportunity to observe thousands of ducks and geese on the Red Rock Management Area refuge.

The 10,683-acre refuge is located upstream from the Iowa highway 14 bridge on the Red Rock reservoir as indicated in the accompanying map illustration. This area is closed to hunting the entire year and no trespassing is allowed from September 15 to December 15 of each year. Waterfowl enthusiasts may view the ducks and geese from the unit game manager's headquarters on the southeast side of the refuge, which offers an ideal observation point overlook. Recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, skiing and mushroom hunting are allowed on the refuge from December 16 to September 14.

What's the reason for these restrictions? If one knows the habits of Canada geese and most other waterfowl species, the answer is obvious. These restrictions enable the Iowa Conservation Commission to establish an annual stopover for Canada geese. Because of the

natural wildness of geese a large undisturbed refuge area is necessary to attract the birds and afford them reasonable security.

For the past two years the Commission's game technicians have placed a call flock of nearly 200 maximum Canada geese in a large woven wire pen covering almost four acres on the refuge's bottom land. Each year these geese are transferred by truck from the Ingham-High Game Unit in northern Iowa to their temporary home at Red Rock where they reside from mid-September to December. The purpose of the call flock is to attract migrating geese heading south and entice them to stop at the refuge for a rest. Naturally it is hoped that this will become a habit. The call flock works on the same principle as a spread of decoys for the veteran goose hunter. However, the call flock provides its own piped in sound effects.

Besides the call flock, the wild geese are attracted to over 1,000 acres of lush, tender shoots of winter wheat browse plus fields of corn and soybeans conveniently planted near the refuge by Commission game management experts. Due

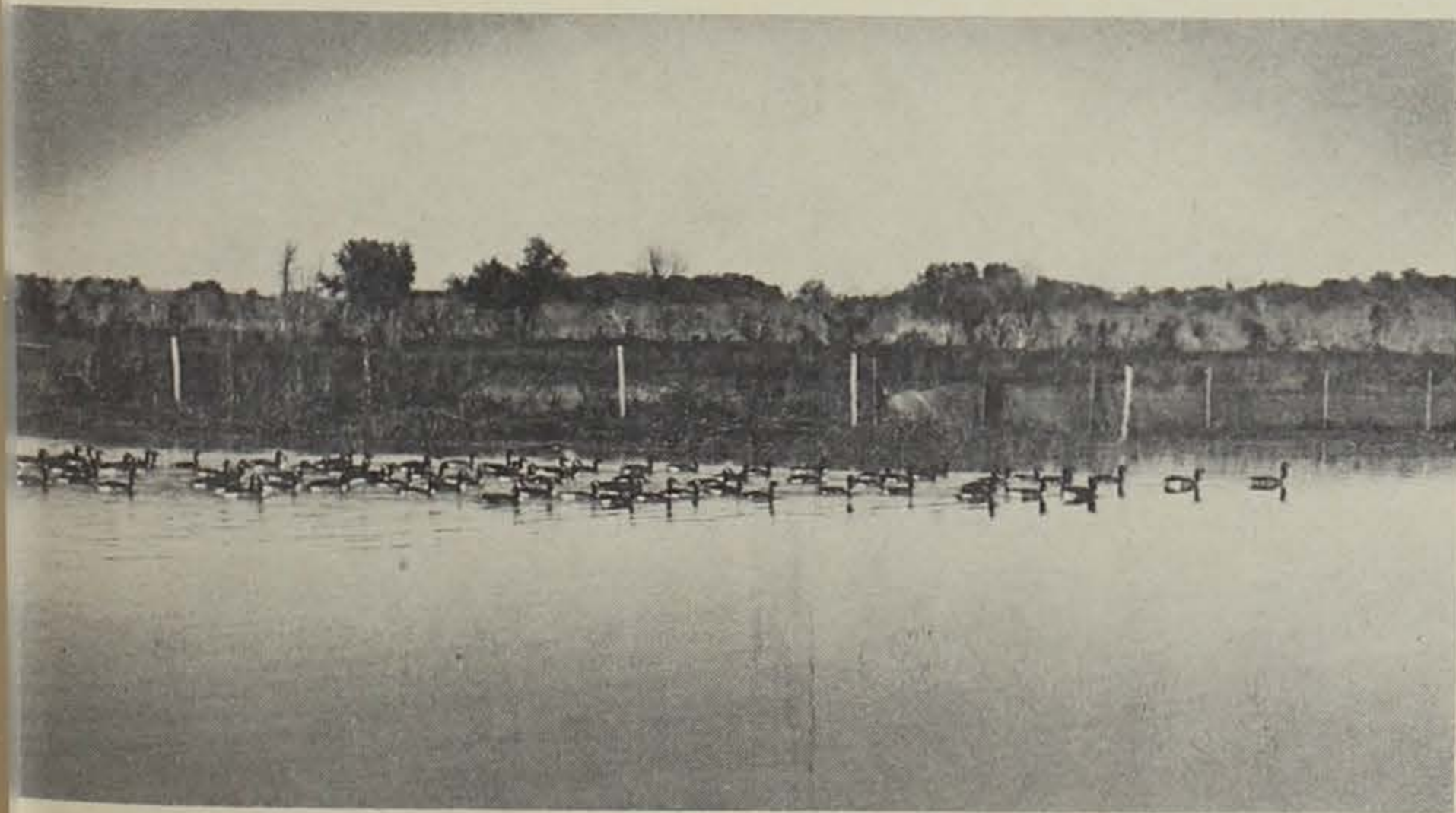
to extreme wet conditions last year, the wheat was sown by aircraft during August. By late September when the first flocks of geese arrived the wheat was several inches high, proving very tasty and succulent to the visiting geese.

The number of geese or ducks on a refuge for a period of time is measured by "goose-use" days or "duck-use" days. For example one goose on an area for two days equals two goose-use days. In the fall of 1968, Red Rock refuge accumulated approximately 35,000 goose-use days and 100,000 duck-use days. Autumn of 1969 showed a dramatic increase in waterfowl with 1,300,000 goose-use-days and over 7,700,000 duck-use days. The goose species were quite evenly distributed among Canada, blue and snow geese. Ducks included most species with the majority being mallards.

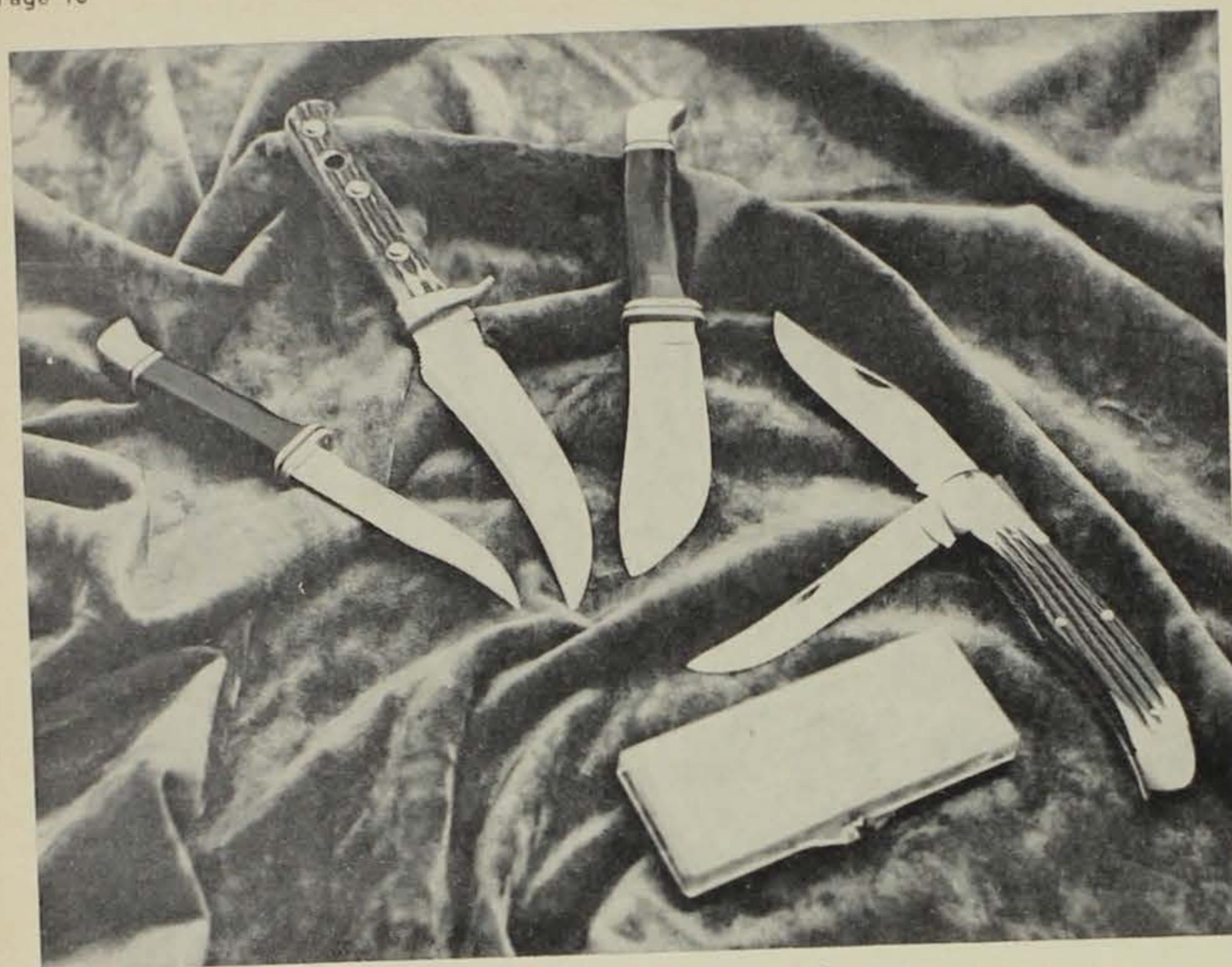
Over 5,000 acres of public hunting areas are available on portions of the outer perimeter of the refuge. About 3,000 acres offers good upland game hunting for quail, pheasant, rabbits, squirrel and deer. The remaining 2,000 acres is bottom land and is expected to provide good waterfowl hunting.

These public hunting areas are clearly marked with green and white signs while the refuge is distinctly posted with yellow and black signs. Hunters must observe these signs as it is very important that the refuge be kept inviolate (no trespassing) during the fall migration so that the flock of wild Canada's will continue to increase.

The Red Rock refuge waterfowl management program has proven itself successful in two short years. The ultimate goal is to build up a goose flock and provide quality Canada goose hunting for the Iowa hunter on a controlled basis. A dual purpose also provides the outdoorsman opportunities to observe and study these magnificent migrators as they stop over and feed in this state managed sanctuary.



"Call Flock" of Canada Geese.



A variety of modern hunting knives.

The Hunting Knife

Man's Old Friend

by David Evans

Ever since man started eating anything that didn't eat him first, a knife has been one of his most treasured tools. And modern man, for all his technological advancements, has still not found a substitute for a dependable blade.

A good knife is vital for the outdoorsman, weekend camper or soldier in Vietnam. Through the years knives have been used for everything from fighting a bear to cleaning fingernails.

Thousands of Iowans carry all types and sizes of knives when hunting, fishing or camping. Because a knife is so important, a person should select his with care and treat it properly. One who is planning on buying a blade will find a bewildering variety available.

A question often asked is: "How much should I spend for a knife?" The best answer is: "As much as necessary." Prices range from \$5 for mass produced types to \$50 or more for custom made jobs of highest quality. Good knives are expensive, but it's a lifetime investment and well worth the price.

Anyone can waltz into a sporting goods store and plunk down \$15 for a good serviceable blade. However, many hunters of modest means are putting out \$20 to \$30 for hand-made knives of excellent quality. One will be better off buying a high quality, high priced blade than a low priced knife. Chances are it will last longer and give better service.

Tempered blades are a good choice. They hold an edge longer and because they have been heat-treated, are stronger. A cheap blade will only be a menace to life and limb. Poor blades become dull easily . . . and a dull knife is dangerous. The duller the knife, the more pressure

one must apply to cut. When pressure is increased, the blade is more likely to slip. This can result in slicing your finger, arm, leg or anything else in the way. The ultimate in frustration is having a cheap knife blade break while cleaning a deer in the boondocks.

A survey of what outdoorsmen carry to perform the necessary field and stream surgery would turn up everything from pearl-handled pocketknives to mini-machetes. Actually, most will perform adequately, but the right size and shape will do a job easier.

What makes for a good knife can start a few "hot stove" arguments and most outdoorsmen have their favorites. Obviously certain types gain reputations such as the Bowie knife and become very popular.

Size and shape are a matter of personal preference as long as they get the job done. One can use a pocketknife to field dress an elk if necessary. However, a larger sheath knife will do a much better job.

A good pocketknife will be more than satisfactory for the fisherman and small game hunter in Iowa. Most deer hunters prefer a sheath knife. A 5-inch knife is an excellent choice for field dressing deer. It's not necessary to lug around something only slightly shorter than Excalibur when deer hunting. However, if hunting out west, don't be misled by the idea that a large knife is the mark of a tenderfoot any more. A 5-inch blade will handle most field dressing and camp chores, but in emergencies a good big knife is generally better than a good little one.

Probably more pocketknives are sold than any other kind. They range from the single bladed job to "Boy Scout" and Swiss Army types. They feature such interesting accouterments as a leather punch, screwdriver, bottle opener and corkscrew.

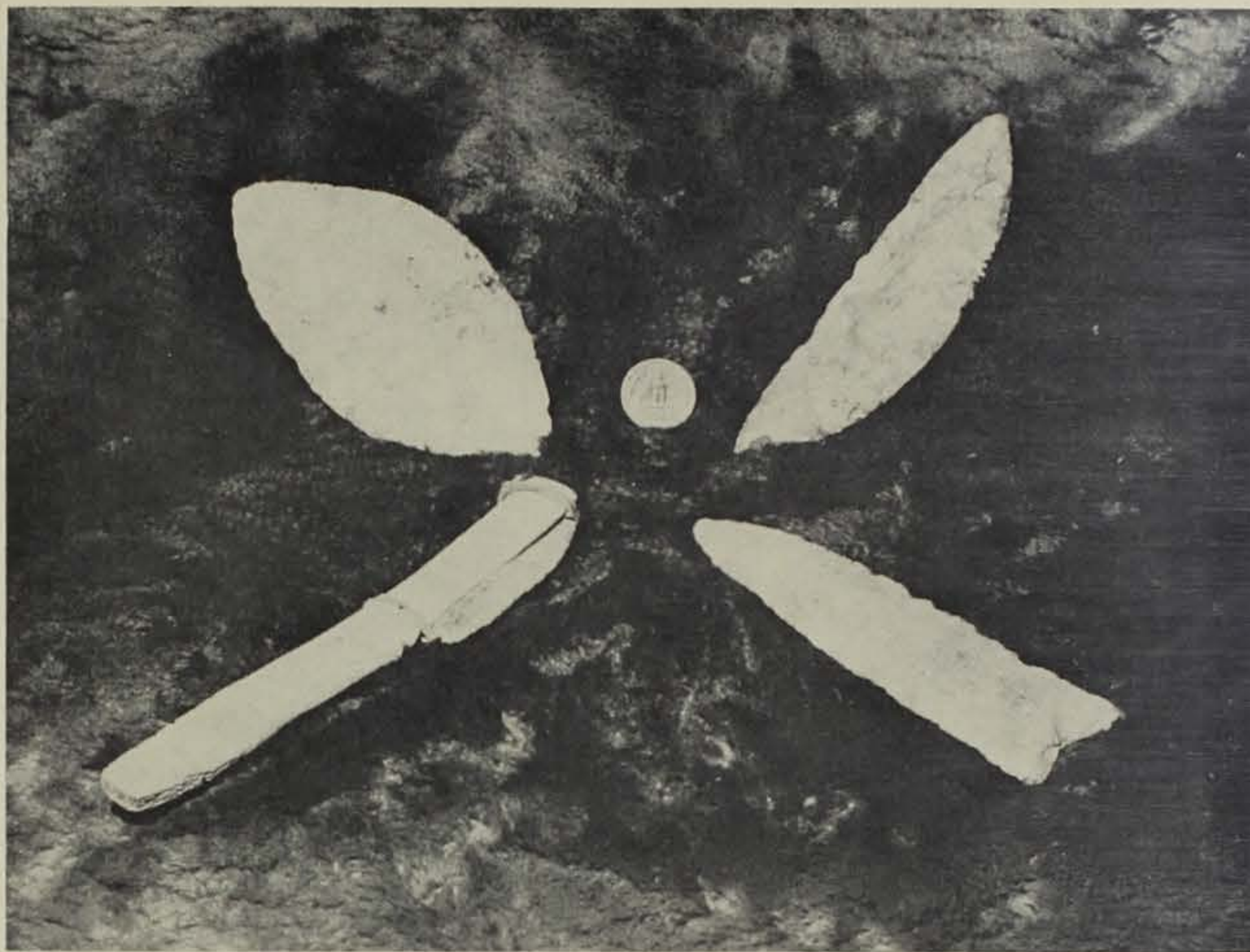
Machetes, skinning and filleting knives are more specialized tools. For skinning game, a wide bladed knife is best because it will ride along the fleshy side and as a result there is less chance it will jump and cut through the skin. The cutting edge should have a curve to "rock" the blade through difficult spots.

The filleting knife is becoming more popular all the time. Thin and flexible, it must be long enough to properly cut through the fish. Reducing a three-pound walleye to boneless, skinless fillets with four passes of a thin bladed knife is a beautiful piece of work to behold.

Machetes are used for clearing brush and cutting firewood and not for carving up game. Many have replaced the trusty hand axe with a machete from the local military surplus store. But an axe will not only cut brush and wood, but also helps clean big game. When dressing out a deer, it's often necessary to cut the pelvis in half. A couple of whacks with a small hand axe does a fine job.



Hunting knives of the frontier from the 1840-1865 period.



Some of America's early stone knives from the Woodland culture of approximately 3,000 years ago. The one in the lower left is a reproduction of a bone handled stone knife.

Men may disagree over the type of knife to carry, but no one disputes the fact that it must be sharp. Most knives need sharpening when purchased from the store, but there is nothing very mystical about putting a keen edge on it.

The first consideration in sharpening a knife is to determine its use. A knife for field dressing game will need a different angle on the cutting edge than one to be used for cutting firewood and splitting stakes. For all around skinning and field dressing, a cutting edge of between 10 and 30 degrees is very satisfactory. An angle much less than 20 degrees will make the edge so thin it may bend slightly under honing pressure so it can't be made really sharp. A properly tempered piece of steel will take and hold a good edge provided it's honed correctly.

So the next consideration is the abrasive oil stone. Among the best are those from Arkansas. Priced according to size and shape they run from \$1.25 for a pocket stone to \$5 for a work bench stone to about \$25 for one almost a foot long.

First of all, place a few drops of light honing oil on the stone. Saliva will also work if no oil is handy. This is not so much to lubricate, as to carry away the fine metal cuttings from the knife and to keep open the pores of the stone.

Personal preference will determine the honing direction and method. Laying the blade at an angle of 20 to 30 degrees and drawing it across the stone with a diagonal movement is one of several ways. The blade should be drawn lightly across with an even number of strokes on each side. It's vital that the proper angle is maintained during the operation. The angle should be held from the blade point to the rear-most portion of the cut-

ting edge on both sides. Besides the diagonal movement one can move the knife in small circles working up and down the edge.

The abruptly curved skinning knife requires special treatment in sharpening—drawing it across the stone in a careful, continuous motion to sharpen the curve.

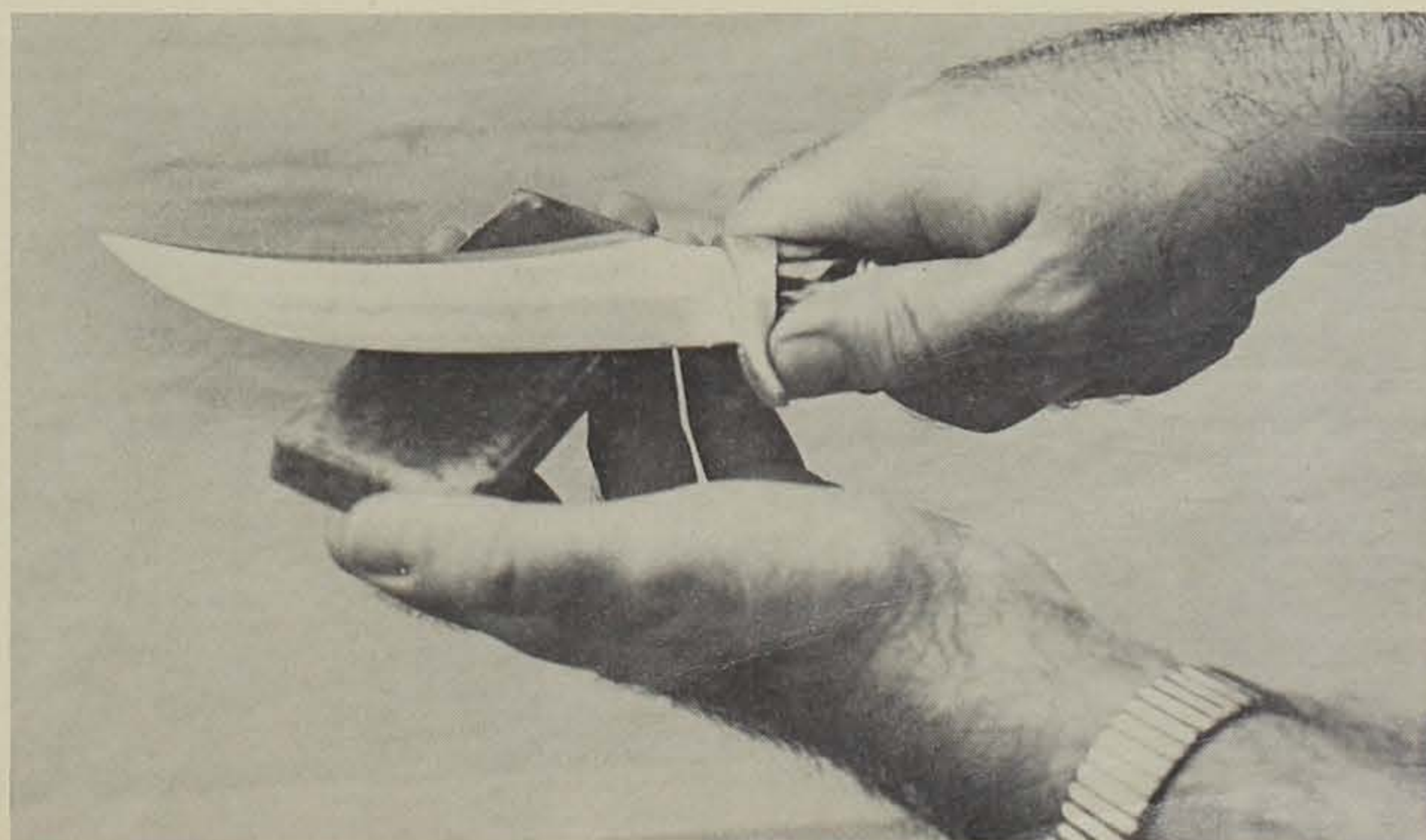
Once you have a knife sharp . . . keep it that way.

Just about everyone likes to test the cutting edge. If properly sharpened, the blade should shave the hair from your arm. An even better way to test it is on the smooth paper from a magazine page. If your knife can push through the paper without sawing, it's mighty sharp.

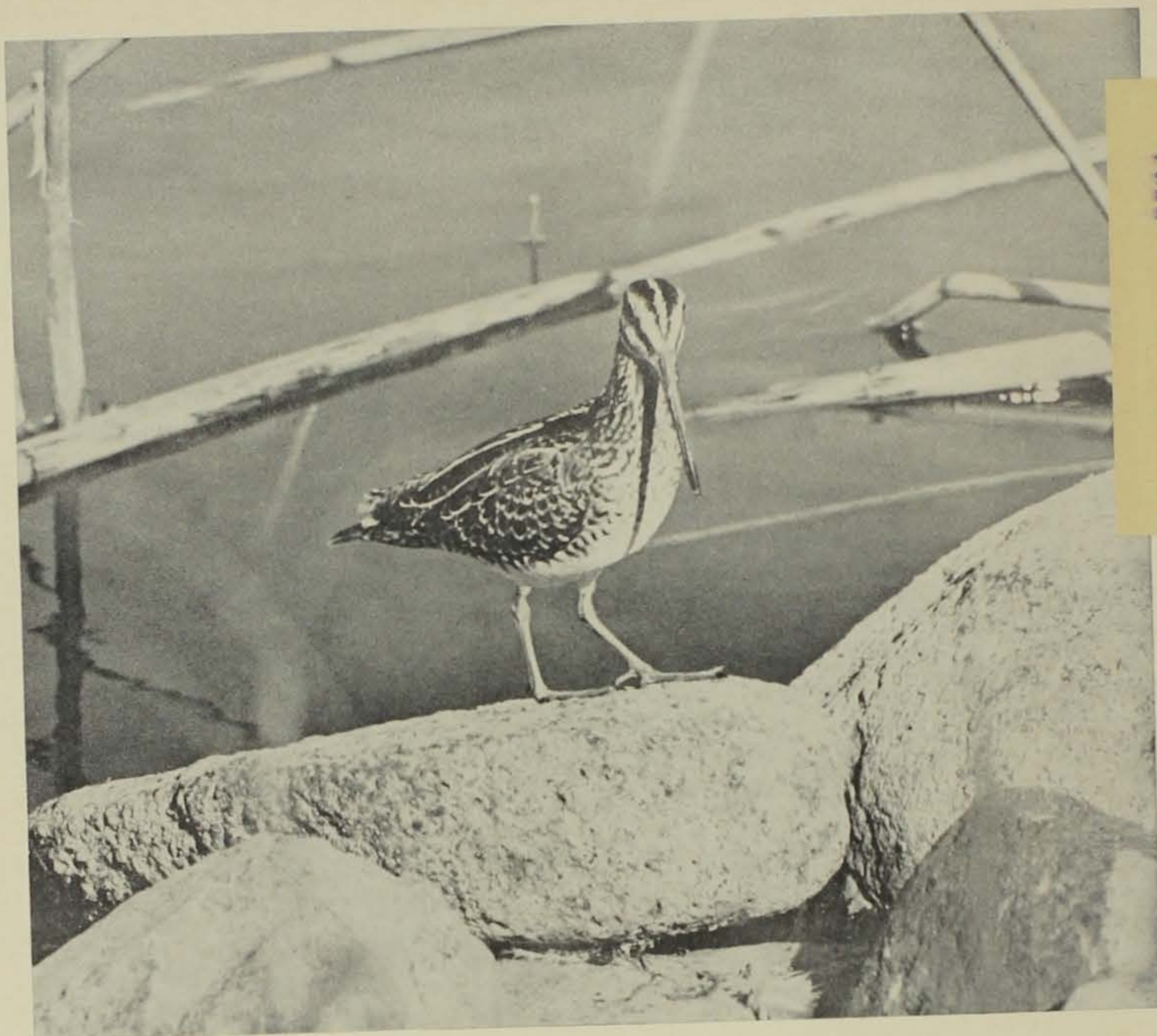
The taper of the edge must be considered. Almost all knives from the factory

have a double taper, good for whittling and rough cutting because it doesn't easily break. However, a double taper is not designed for an extremely sharp edge. So it should be removed by honing until it's a single taper which is better for field dressing game and skinning. Most stones have a rough side and fine side. If necessary to take off a lot of steel or change the taper use the rough side. Finish the cutting edge with the fine side.

After using a knife clean and thoroughly dry it. If you intend to store it for some time, it's advisable to coat the blade with a protective and leave it out of its sheath. One should use saddle soap to keep the leather handle from drying out. From an esthetic point of view, metal polish will keep the hilt and butt looking as sharp as the edge.



Draw blade across stone in steady strokes.



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Discover the Wilson's Snipe

Ronald Rowing, Unit Game Manager
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The Wilson's snipe, sometimes called jacksnipe or common snipe, is a visitor to Iowa during the fall and spring migration. They nest from Newfoundland and northern Manitoba south to northwest Pennsylvania, northern Illinois and South Dakota. They winter from the Gulf of Mexico north sparingly to the Northern States. They can be told from dowitchers, which are about the same size and shape, by the browner more streaked head and back, extremely long, slender bill, and in flight by the brown rump and orange tail. When flushed they fly off in rapid zigzag flight uttering a rasping note. They are generally found close to cover, while dowitchers prefer to feed in the open. Their call sounds like a low rasping kzzrt. Snipe feed on worms and other invertebrate animals found in wet soil along boggy margins of streams and marshes.

The Wilson snipe is almost a forgotten game bird in Iowa. In January 1940, a

severe freeze struck the winter range lasting two weeks. Their feeding grounds froze and made it almost impossible for them to obtain food. A large part of the population perished due to this freak weather condition. Hunting was closed until the seed stock could make a comeback. It was more than 10 years before the population could again stand a harvest. The older dyed in the wool snipe hunters then returned to their favorite snipe areas to again hunt the elusive bird. However, there was a new generation of hunters who had never experienced this grand sport.

About 1,090 hunters harvested 12,875 Wilson's snipe last year. Only about .3 per cent of the hunters in Iowa hunt snipe. Many hunters are passing up the opportunity to hunt this fine sporting bird.

The snipe hunting season in Iowa this year opens October 3 and closes December 6 with a daily bag limit of

eight and possession limit of 16. Shooting hours are from sunrise to sunset.

Hunting this little bumble bee of the marsh can be both rewarding and frustrating. The wild erratic flight of the snipe can be a test for even the best shot. Most all shotguns will work, even a four-ten if you are an excellent shot. The snipe isn't hard to kill, so even a few 7½'s, 8's or 9's will do the job.

Like any hunting sport there are several ways to hunt the snipe. Jump shooting, pass shooting near feeding or roosting areas and by hiding in cover and shooting feeding areas with or without decoys are a few. Snipe are sometimes difficult to find after downed because they usually blend in well with their surroundings. A good retriever will make your hunt more enjoyable and also eliminate possible lost birds.

If you want a real unique hunting experience try this little darter of the wetlands—discover Wilson's snipe.