JUNE, 1975

iowa conservationist

conservationist

Volume 34, Number 6 June, 1975

STAFF

Roger Sparks, *Editor*
Robert Runge, Managing Editor
Kenneth Formanek, *A-V Coordinator*
Julius Satre, *Contributing Editor*
Wayne Lonning, *Photographer*
Jerry Leonard, *Photographer*

CONTENTS

COVER

Our cover for this issue features the wild rose, designated the official state flower by the Iowa Legislature May 7, 1897. Photograph by the Conservation Commission.

COMMISSIONERS

Jim D. Bixler, *Chairman, Council Bluffs;* Thomas Bates, *Bellevue;* Leslie L. Licklider, *Cherokee;* John Link, *Burlington;* Carolyn T. Lumbard, *Des Moines;* Herbert T. Reed, *Winterset;* John C. Thompson, *Forest City*

DIRECTOR

Fred A. Priewert
William C. Brabham, *Deputy Director*

DIVISION CHIEFS

Harry M. Harrison, *Fish and Game;* Stanley C. Kuhn, *Division of Administration;* Gerry F. Schnepf, *Resource and Program Planning;* John M. Stokes, *Chief, Lands and Waters*

SECTION SUPERINTENDENTS

Tom Albright, *Engineering;* Joe W. Brill, *Parks;* Robert Barratt, *Wildlife;* Jerry M. Conley, *Fisheries;* Roy Downing, *Waters;* Robert Fagerland, *Land Acquisition;* Lester Fleming, *Grants-In-Aid;* Gene Hertel, *State Forester;* Kenneth Kakac, *Law Enforcement;* Caryl Carstens, *License;* Larry Davis, *Information & Education;* Steve Brenton, *Planning;* Gene Geissinger, *Accounting;* Doyle Adams, *County Conservation Boards.*

Published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, State Office Building, 300 4th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579, manuscripts, mail items) to the above address. Subscription price: one year at $1.00; two years at $2.00; four years at $3.50. Second class postage paid at Des Moines, Iowa and other points.

(No rights reserved).

By Bob Runge

BILL looked back upstream. The early afternoon sunlight was beginning to fade into dusk. It was about time to find a nice place to camp. He lowered his nearly empty beer can into the stream, allowed it to fill with water and disappear to the bottom where it wouldn't bother anyone.

Pushing his canoe up safely on the sandbar, he secured it with a rope to a nearby tree and removed his gear. He set up his small tent and gathered rocks for a fire ring. Dissatisified with the jungle of small willows, he pulled himself up and over the bank and into a field. Crossing a fence Bill found an old feeder bunk. He was able to rip several nice pieces from the bunk and made his way back towards the river. By the fence he stripped several branches from a small tree. Perfect for roasting the hot dogs he'd brought along.

After eating his dinner, Bill threw his empty beer cans into the fire. He crawled into the tent and listened to the ball game which came to him courtesy of eleven transistors. This was really the life. People really didn't know how much fun the outdoors could be. It was just as well, he reflected, a bunch of people would just mess things up. Bill had carefully thrown his papers and garbage back in the willows where it wouldn't bother anyone.

The next morning he was in mid-stream before he realized he had not broken up his campfire. No problem though, the fire was definitely out and the cans would rust away in the rain. Bill wondered how long the aluminum cans would take to rust away.

About ten o'clock he tossed his empty cigarette box into the water and watched it float out behind him. When it was out about fifty yards he pulled out his twenty-two rifle and sank it on the second shot. A while later he came upon a hawk on a dead elm tree. The bird took a .22 full in the breast and fell to the bank where it would no longer bother anyone.

Around noon he went under a small bridge near a town. Three boys on bicycles threw rocks at him. He was deeply saddened that some people just had no respect. But the day was bright and cool and he had several more miles to go.

Entering a nice rock riffle area, Bill decided to fish the deep pool below it. Tying up downstream from the pool, he cast a small spinner up to the rocks and brought it gently through the pool. On the third cast he hooked and landed a ten inch smallmouth. Since the hook was deeply imbedded he had to pull hard to get it out. Although the mouth of the fish was slightly damaged, Bill released it. He always released them for someone else to enjoy. The pool yielded no more fish but he was able to shoot a turtle. As he cast off, Bill wondered what a turtle tasted like. He decided to try one someday.

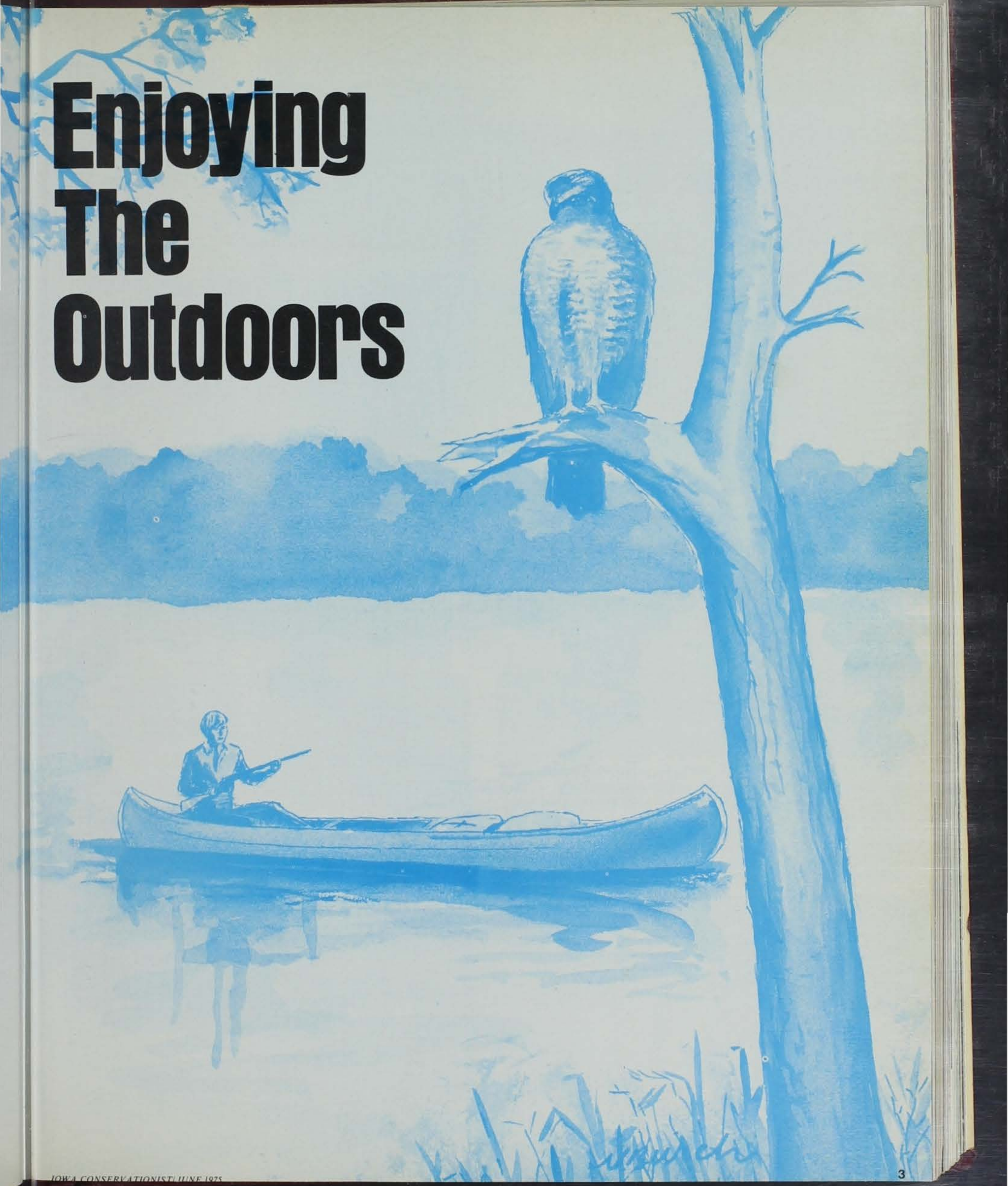
Bill looked at the bottom of the canoe. There were many food wrappers, pull-tab rings and other junk. He knew there was no trash container where he had left his car so he carefully dropped the trash into the water where it would sink to the bottom and not bother anyone.

Looking at his watch, Bill saw that he would reach his destination in about an hour. This was much too early. A nice large pool was around the bend so he decided to have a swim before going on. He tied a rope on an overhanging tree and after stripping to his shorts he swung way out over the pool and splashed deeply into the cool water. He decided to leave the old rope on the tree so that other people could enjoy a swim. Some canoeists might not like the fun and splashing of others as they came through, but really it was just clean fun.

About four o'clock he reached the bridge where he had left his car. He beached the canoe and hauled his gear up to the vehicle. Soon he had the canoe on top and everything stowed away. He drove home.

Hopefully he stayed there where he wouldn't bother anyone. □

Enjoying The Outdoors



I-29 Chain Of Lakes

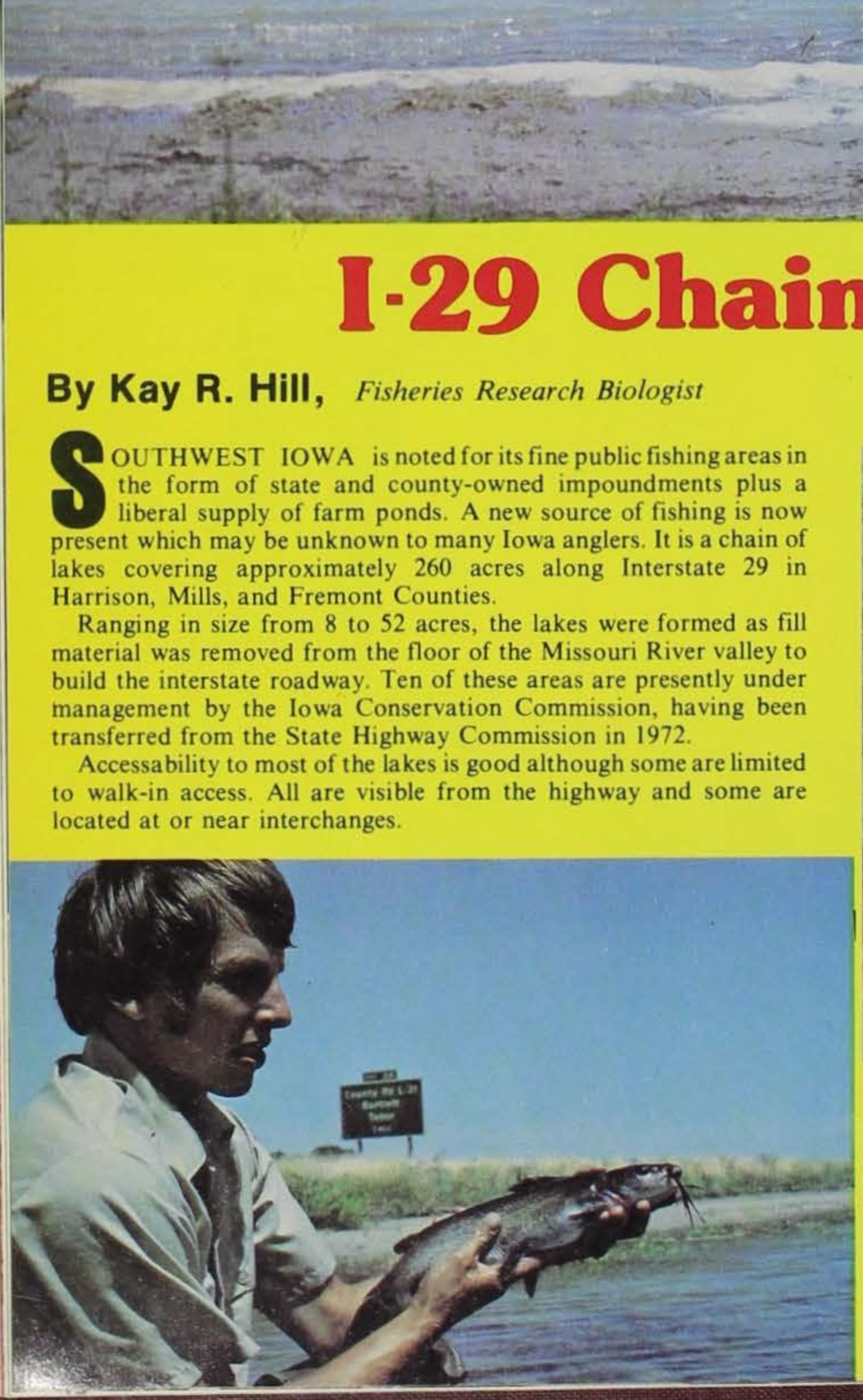
By Kay R. Hill, *Fisheries Research Biologist*

Photography by the Author

SOUTHWEST IOWA is noted for its fine public fishing areas in the form of state and county-owned impoundments plus a liberal supply of farm ponds. A new source of fishing is now present which may be unknown to many Iowa anglers. It is a chain of lakes covering approximately 260 acres along Interstate 29 in Harrison, Mills, and Fremont Counties.

Ranging in size from 8 to 52 acres, the lakes were formed as fill material was removed from the floor of the Missouri River valley to build the interstate roadway. Ten of these areas are presently under management by the Iowa Conservation Commission, having been transferred from the State Highway Commission in 1972.

Accessability to most of the lakes is good although some are limited to walk-in access. All are visible from the highway and some are located at or near interchanges.



St. John's Lake: The only state-owned interstate lake in Harrison County, St. John's can be reached by following a county road north and west of Missouri Valley. Although directly adjacent to an interstate rest stop on the east side of highway, the only direct access to the lake is via county roads.

St. John's covers 41 acres and will be stocked in the fall and spring of 1975-76 with largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish fingerlings. Keep this lake in mind for future fishing. Some sizable fish should be present by the 1977 or 1978 fishing season.

Fulsom Lake: Heading south on the interstate past Council Bluffs and on into Mills County, the next notable I-29 lake will be Fulsom Lake which is being managed by the Mills County Conservation Board. Many people have already become familiar with this area as evidenced by the large amount of use it has received in past summers from fishermen, swimmers, and picnickers. The 45 acre lake located here is not ideal for fishing due to its periodic flooding from Old Fulsom slough located immediately north. Old Fulsom contains large numbers of rough fish such as carp, goldfish, and gar which find their way into Fulsom at times of high water. Don't overlook this area, however, game fish such as largemouth bass, crappie, and bluegill are present in good numbers as well.

P-J Lake: The next state-owned interstate lake in Mills County is PJ Lake immediately south of the CB & Q railroad right-of-way on the west side of the highway. Although PJ has been stocked and is managed by the Iowa Conservation Commission, access to the lake is limited at this time. To reach the lake, permission to walk into the area should be obtained from adjoining land owners. Although the lack of public access has prevented fish population surveys by management personnel, PJ has been stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish and appears to be one of the finer lakes in the chain.

Keg Creek Lake: The largest lake in the chain (52 acres) is located next in line heading south. Keg Creek was stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish in 1973 and 1974. Surveys by management personnel in 1974 found good success from the stockings and are optimistic about future fishing here. To drive to Keg Creek Lake, turn west off the Glenwood exit and head south on the first gravel road for approximately 1 mile.

Fish the northern half of Keg Creek for best success. You will find the southern end to be quite shallow throughout. If you enjoy wading out to fish, Keg Creek is ideal. The northern half has an hour-glass shaped island and a shelf of shallow water running east-west across another portion — but watch your step, the water becomes deep in a hurry.

Bartlett Lake: Entering Fremont County, the Bartlett exit headed west parallels 22 acre Bartlett Lake. Relatively shallow throughout, Bartlett presently contains large numbers of small bullheads and carp. Like St. John's Lake, Bartlett will be renovated and restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish fingerlings in 1975 and 1976. Fish grow rapidly in newly stocked waters, but give this lake a couple seasons before testing it for fishing. Some scrappy panfish, bass, and catfish should be available by then.

Continued

Scott Lake A & B: Continuing south a pair of lakes will appear on the east side of the highway appearing nearly rectangular in shape. These are the Scott Lakes, A and B. To approach these lakes from the east, take the Bartlett exit and follow the first county road south from the town of Bartlett for about 1½ miles. Access to the lakes requires walking into the area for a short distance across state land.

Fish for largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish in these lakes. Surveys by management personnel in the summer of 1974 found the catfish in Scott A to be doing particularly well.

West Forneys A & B: Follow the same county road for a couple more miles and another pair of lakes will appear, West Forney's A and B. Lake A can be reached by a short walk while Lake B will require a jaunt of a mile or so through state game management crop land.

Lake A is the smaller of the two, covering approximately 10 acres at the 1974 level. Fish Lake A for largemouth bass, bullheads, and bluegill. You will find the lake quite shallow throughout with virtually no bottom structure, so for best results cast along edges of emergent vegetation.

West Forneys B covers approximately 28 acres with a maximum depth of 14 feet. Lake B appears to be the better of the two lakes and stocked fish have shown good growth and body condition. Try this lake for channel catfish, bass, bluegill, and bullheads.

Percival Lake: The Southern most lake in the chain is Percival Lake located near the town of Percival on the west side of the interstate. To drive to Percival Lake, take the first interchange south of Percival and back track one mile on the county road which parallels the interstate.

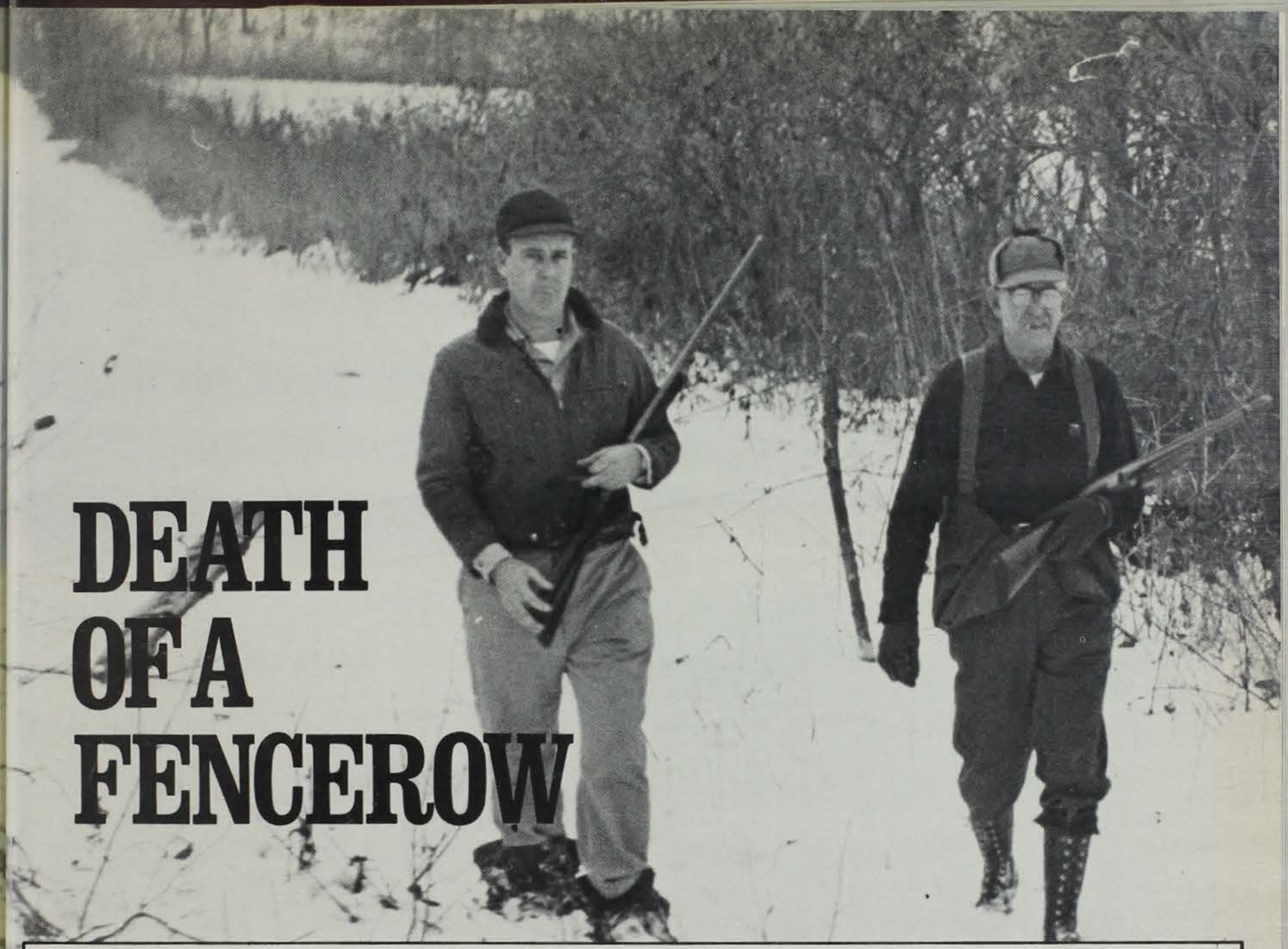
Percival Lake covers approximately 16 acres and is one of the deeper lakes in the chain with a maximum of 32 feet. The lake bottom appears to provide good structure for fishing, however the water in Percival has been found to be quite unproductive and fish from the 1973 and 1974 stockings have done poorly. Fish here for bass, bluegill, and channel catfish but don't expect trophy catches.

Future management plans for the lakes mentioned include the addition of fish attractors, possibly in the form of discarded Christmas trees. We also plan to look into the feasability of artificial fertilization to increase the productivity of some of the less fertile lakes.

Keep in mind these lakes are all virtually pits with little or no watershed to provide desired nutrients to the water. They all will remain relatively lower in productivity than impoundments of similar size in southwest Iowa. They can however become a welcome addition to the area angler who is searching for new water on which to test his skills or for the interstate traveler needing a refreshing break during a long drive.

All boating restrictions apply concerning lakes less than 100 surface acres, that is no outboard motors allowed except for electric powered trolling motors.

Several of the lakes are surrounded by state-owned game management areas and can provide some good upland game hunting. The Scott and West Forneys complex in particular covers approximately 245 acres. All game management areas are designated by signs. Respect the adjoining landowners and ask permission before straying off the state-owned land. □



DEATH OF A FENCEROW

By Thomas J. Neal, *Wildlife Biologist*

I SAW A FENCEROW DIE the other day on a farm in northern Iowa. A man with a bulldozer and his helper with a chainsaw were tearing the row down tree by tree.

It bothered me, because the scene has been repeated time and time again all over the state in recent years.

Nearby a youngster, probably the owner's son, and a dog were playing among the fallen limbs. The dog looked like it was a good hunter. The inconsistency of the situation was striking and very saddening.

For years this fencerow had been a favorite spot of pheasants and countless small birds. Its limbs had held many nests and who knows how many young had chirped, hopped, and finally found their wings among its branches.

It has sheltered grass and sprouts which in turn served rabbits, mice, foxes, squirrels, skunks and other living creatures so vitally needed for Mother Nature to do her work properly.

The soft soil beneath its spreading arms had marked the fascinating process of birth, life, and death thousands of times.

Men who love the outdoors found many hours of pleasure beside that fencerow. Fine memories were created walking along it with gun in hand and a fine dog ahead seeking those birds and animals who used the fencerow for a home. Now there will be no scents for the dog to follow, no creatures for those who enjoy the hunt to seek.

The farmer will not miss the scents, but surely he will feel an emptiness because the sights and sounds of the wild are no more there to be enjoyed. How many times has he been startled beside the fencerow by the sudden flush of a pheasant? Will he miss the early morning call of the cardinal sifting down to his house across the dew-laden corn?

Of course, the farmer has something to gain—why else would he go to such pains to remove a valuable piece of property? He will have 10 more feet of precious land along the side of a field in which to plant and harvest his crops.

I wonder if he has really weighed all the factors? Like most farmers, he probably likes to hunt. I wonder now if he will notice the pheasants and rabbits aren't as plentiful as last year? If his wife will notice the decrease in songbirds as she hangs out the wash? Perhaps, like others, he will curse the Conservation Commission for the lack of wildlife on his property.

I wonder if he ever stops to think of the things he's depriving his own son by eliminating that fencerow. Is there anything finer than watching a youngster and his dog scamper and hunt in such a spot? Is there a better place for a boy to learn, to grow, and to become a man? Is a 10 foot row of crops worth a lifetime of pleasure with thousands of lessons on life, lessons which only Mother Nature can teach?

The fencerow died. I wonder if any of us really know how much there is to mourn.

THE NEW CHICHAQUA MARSH

By Jim Layton

THE POLK COUNTY Conservation Board has invested nearly $38,000 for environmental quality. This investment is in the form of a 100 acre marsh on the Chichaqua Wildlife Area in the northeast part of the county.

This project is just one of many that county conservation boards are initiating to improve and save our natural environment.

The Chichaqua Wildlife Area lies within the Skunk River flood plain. Over a half a century ago, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers channelized the Skunk river through Polk County. Their purpose was to improve the agricultural productivity of the land by decreasing the flood potential. The channelization slowed the flooding but it also eliminated many acres of marsh habitat. In addition many migratory bird species, plants and animals associated with marsh habitats disappeared from this part of Polk County.

The artificial marsh will not be the original habitat but it will recreate a similiar niche. Not even a year old yet, Chichaqua's new marsh has increased plant and animal species within the wildlife area.

Photo by Jerry Leonard

Although Chichaqua marsh is a refuge, hunting in surrounding areas such as this will improve.

Construction of the marsh began in July of 1974 after being delayed for a year due to a high water table. But planning started several years before. A complete survey of the proposed site was made to determine if the area was suitable topographically, biologically and economically. Because of the flatness of the Skunk River bottoms in this area, careful consideration had to be taken in the planning. The levee system had to be designed to improve the drainage of lands outside the area as well as providing for internal marsh drainage.

After this planning, the work began. A total of 475 man hours moving approximately 20,000 cubic yards of earth with bulldozers was needed to complete the rectangular levee and drainage systems. The levees are generally twelve foot wide on the top with 3.5 to 1 foot side slopes. The levees have been seeded to alfalfa-broom at a rate of fifteen pounds per acre.

After the dirt work, two sixty foot wells were drilled to provide a water source. Turbine pumps driven by 15 horsepower electric motors produces approximately 1200 gallons of water per minute from each well. The cost of one well equaled the cost of the entire levee system.

Management manipulations of marsh habitat vary widely from one source to another or one area to another. Our basic plan of management for the Chichaqua marsh is one of flooding in the fall and draining during the late winter months. Soil moisture levels are retained to a point that natural moist soil plants common to marsh habitat will grow. Plants such as cattails, arrowheads, duckweed, smartweed and many others that are important to migratory birds will be produced. Smartweed alone is known to have 66 different species utilize its seeds and vegetation. Moist soil plants have also been found to produce food protein for wildlife that exceeds agricultural row crops.

Construction began in summer of 1974.

Photos by the Author

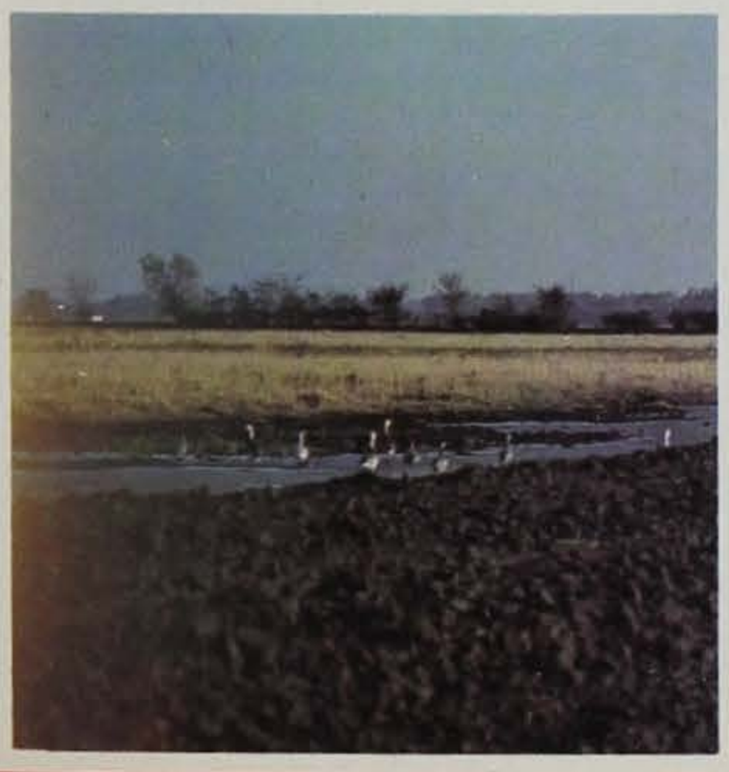
The marsh is designated as a waterfowl refuge. By establishing a refuge, the Conservation Board will be creating a flight pattern of annual users. There is nothing better than waterfowl to attract more waterfowl. A refuge will provide a safe area for resting and feeding which means that the migratory birds will use the area longer.

Hunters and nonhunters alike will benefit from the refuge. The hunter using the public hunting areas or private land in the Skunk River area will have a much better opportunity finding game.

Waterfowl will not stay within the refuge all the time but will venture out for miles in all directions. The nonhunter will have the opportunity to safely view migratory birds when their numbers are greatest in the fall of the year. This project is unusual because no hunting or fishing funds have been used. Polk County property taxes are the sole income for the county conservation board.

In the past our Iowa marsh lands have developed in natural succession. A lake formed by glacial activity slowly fills with soil sediments. As this lake becomes shallow, an ever larger portion becomes covered with vegetation. During this stage of succession most people recognize the area to be a marsh. Evenually if natural succession is not altered, the body of water will become a field of grasses.

But, in the history of marsh habitats, man has both accelerated and set back natural succession. Succession is accelerated by tiling wet areas and channelizing water movement with levee systems. At the same time, we are setting back succession by dreging the shallow lakes and chemically controlling aquatic vegetation. The future of new marsh habitats may well be on an endangered habitat list were it not for artificial marsh projects. □



Fishing Central Iowa Streams

By Tom Putnam
Fisheries Management Biologist

Photo by Wayne Lonning

WITH THE FISHING SEASON now in full swing, you have probably been wondering where this year's hotspot could be. Does your idea of a fishing experience include enjoying the serenity of a shaded stream gently gurgling over rocky shallows, or around occasional snags as it lazily meanders its course downstream? Is your trip more complete with the glimpse of a vanishing whitetail deer or the undulating flight of a kingfisher as it voices its shrill warning of your presence? Are you also ready for the opportunity to take home a "mess" of channel catfish, walleye, or smallmouth bass or, if you prefer, bullhead or carp? If this is your idea of fun, then pack your lunch, grab your tackle and head for the nearest central Iowa stream.

There are approximately 700 miles of major streams traveling through the 11 county central Iowa area. These streams comprise four separate drainages: the Des Moines, the Raccoon, the Skunk and the Iowa Rivers. These streams have nearly 60 state, county and city public access areas along them and several others are in various stages of planning to improve stream access. The Conservation Commission has requested $250,000 for purchase of additional stream access.

The Des Moines River, joined by the Boone River near the Hamilton-Webster county line, flows south through Boone, Dallas and Polk counties before reaching Red Rock Lake. Along its course are 15 access areas providing excellent opportunities for shore and boat anglers alike. The most sought after fish by far is the channel catfish which maintains a large population throughout the system. Numerous reports of large catches were received throughout the five county area and a recent fisheries management river survey confirmed the fact that large numbers exist.

Where to fish in the river and how depends on the species you are after. Fishing a snag located upstream from a deep hole is one of the best locations for catfishing. And don't be surprised if you hook an occasional flathead catfish, larger cousin to the channel cat, when fishing these areas. Live bait is required, however, if you want to land many of these large flatheads.

Another favorite species taken by those who know the river is the walleye. This species is frequently caught throughout the area and primarily below major obstructions and rocky areas adjacent to deep holes.

An occasional smallmouth bass and northern pike are also taken from the Des Moines each year. Although not numerous, the best chance to hook one of these two hard fighters comes when fishing in habitat similar to that where walleyes are found.

The Raccoon River, which joins the Des Moines River within the city of Des Moines, consists of three tributaries in central Iowa. the main branch meanders through Greene and Dallas counties while the middle and south branches both traveling through Guthrie County, join in Dallas County and merge with the main branch south of Adel. This river system has 16 access areas along it, including three concerte boat ramps in Greene County recently constructed by the county conservation board.

The old standby, channel catfish, is most popular here as it is throughout central Iowa. The real trophy species, however, is the walleye. Although this river is normally a shallow, narrow ribbon of water slowly meandering southward and does not appear to be the type of water to harbor this species, looks can be deceiving. The trick to success is in discovering the deep holes in the river, because it is in these areas that walleyes are usually found.

The smallmouth bass also frequents this stream but may be more difficult to locate than catfish or walleyes. Fishing around rocky areas or near small tributaries emptying into the river is the best bet for success with these secretive members of the sunfish family.

For the bullhead and carp fishermen, these two species should not be left unmentioned. Although both are undesirable in many of our artificial lakes due to their bottom feeding habits and destruction of gamefish spawning sites, they are not as harmful in most river systems and are much sought after by many anglers throughout the central Iowa streams. Fishing around snags, even in shallow water, and below the entrance of feeder streams are two likely spots for success with these species.

The South Skunk River, with its headwaters in Hamilton County, travels south through Story, Polk and Jasper counties in central Iowa before merging with the North Skunk farther to the southeast. The stretch of the river between Ames and Colfax was dredged and straightened during the years 1893 to 1923 and much of the fisheries habitat destroyed has not been reestablished. The section north of Ames, however, has a diversity of habitat suitable to channel catfish and smallmouth bass. The Story County Conservation Board has initiated work on a greenbelt system to extend north of Ames and river accesses are already available at three locations.

The South Skunk River below Colfax and the North Skunk are favorite areas for catfishing by Jasper County residents. Six county conservation board areas are located along these stretches giving adequate access in this area.

The final major stream traversing the central state area is the Iowa River, which flows through Hardin and Marshall counties. The greenbelt concept has been developed by the county conservation boards to the point where there are now 18 access areas in the two counties. The species of major importance to this area is again the catfish, although walleyes and a few smallmouth bass are also taken each year.

Since the number of anglers in Iowa is gradually increasing each year, it is time to consider the nearest river as an important fisheries resource not to be overlooked when the urge comes to wet a line. With the numerous areas available for easy stream access in central Iowa there is now no excuse for missing a most relaxing and pleasurable experience - fishing a central Iowa stream. □

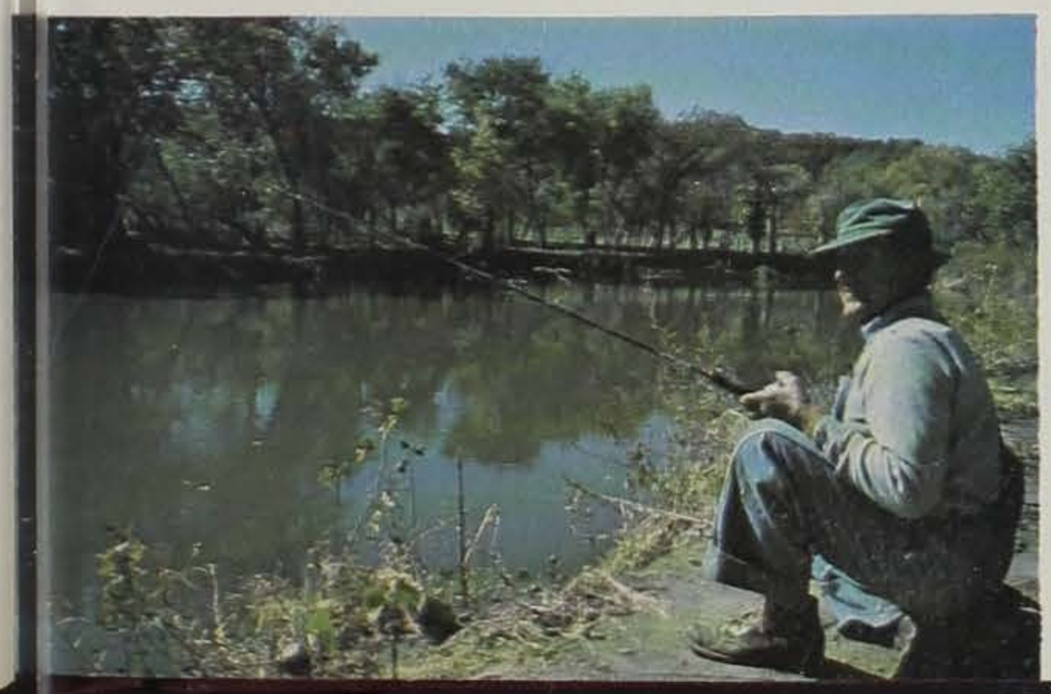


Photo by Jerry Leonard

AREA	LOCATION	COUNTY	BOAT RAMP
BOONE RIVER			
Briggs Woods	2 mi. S. Webster City	Hamilton	
Bells Mill	5 mi. NE Stratford	Hamilton	
DES MOINES RIVER			
Deer Creek Area	8 mi. N. Fort Dodge	Webster	
Woodman Hollow	6 mi. N. Lehigh	Webster	
Dolliver State Park	4 mi. NW Lehigh	Webster	
Lehigh Area	2 mi. SE Lehigh	Webster	
Carlson Recreation Area	3 mi. SW Stratford	Webster	
Fraser Dam	Fraser	Boone	
Boone Water Works Park	3.5 mi. NW Boone	Boone	X
Ledges State Park	6 mi. S. Boone	Boone	X
Luther Bridge Access	3 mi. W. Luther	Boone	X
Madrid Bridge Access	2 mi. W. Madrid	Boone	X
Jester Park Access	3 mi. NW Polk City	Polk	
Sycamore Access	2.5 mi. W. Saylorville	Polk	X
Flint Access	NW 12st Des Moines	Polk	X
MIDDLE RACCOON RIVER			
Springbrook State Park	7 mi. N. Guthrie Center	Guthrie	X
Lennon Mills	Panora	Guthrie	
RACCOON RIVER			
Hyde Park	7.5 mi. SW Churdan	Greene	X
McMahon Area	5 mi. NW Jefferson	Greene	X
Henderson Park	1 mi. S. Jefferson	Greene	X
Squirrel Hollow Park	5 mi. NW Rippey	Greene	X
Rippey Fishing Access	6 mi. SW Rippey	Greene	X
Spring Valley	3 mi. S. Perry	Dallas	X
Adel Access	Adel	Dallas	X
Booneville Access	Booneville	Dallas	X
Raccoon River Access	Des Moines	Polk	X
Walnut Woods State Park	Des Moines	Polk	
SOUTH RACCOON RIVER			
Nation's Bridge Park	5 mi. N. Stuart	Guthrie	
S. Raccoon River Access	1 mi. S. Redfield	Dallas	
Pleasant Valley	4.5 mi. SE Redfield	Dallas	
Earlham Bridge Access	8 mi. NE Earlham	Dallas	
NORTH SKUNK RIVER			
Wagaman Mill Area	1 mi. N. Lynnville	Jasper	
SOUTH SKUNK RIVER			
H-Tree Skunk River Access	4 mi. S. Story City	Story	X
Soper's Mill Area	3.5 mi. E. Gilbert	Story	
Sleepy Hollow	1 mi. N. Ames	Story	
Chichaqua Wildlife Area	5 mi. E. Elkhart	Polk	
Oswalt Bridge	2½ mi. W. Colfax	Jasper	
Hoffman Area	2 mi. W. Colfax	Jasper	
Colfax Area	2 mi. NE Colfax	Jasper	
Skunk River Wildlife Area	2 mi. SW Galesburg	Jasper	
Beyer's Bridge	2½ mi. SW Galesburg	Jasper	
IOWA RIVER			
Bigelow Park	3 mi. NW Alden	Hardin	
Bessman-Kemp Park	½ mi. W. Alden	Hardin	
Alden River Access	Alden	Hardin	
Ilco Park	NW Edge Alden	Hardin	
Canoe Launching	S.E. corner Iowa Falls	Hardn	
Robb River Access	6 mi. NE Owasa	Hardin	
Cross Ford Area	6 mi. SE Iowa Falls	Hardin	
Eagle City Access	7 mi. SE Iowa Falls	Hardin	
Hardin City Access	5 mi. NW Streamboat Rock	Hardin	X
Leverton Wilderness	3 mi. NW Steamboat Rock	Hardin	
Steamboat Rock Park	W. Edge Steamboat Rock	Hardin	
Falling Rock	1½ mi. SW Steamboat Rock	Hardin	
Long Memorial Park	1 mi. E. Union	Hardin	
Grammer Grover Wildlife Area	3 mi. SW Liscomb	Marshall	
Timmons Grove Park	1 mi. SW Albion	Marshall	
Nicholson Ford	1 mi. NE Marshalltown	Marshall	
Three Bridges Park	1½ mi. NW LeGrand	Marshall	
Holland Access	1½ mi. N. LeGrand	Marshall	

Photos by Bob Runge

For Fast Action . . .

TRY CASTING FOR SPORTY "STREAKERS"

By Sonny Satre
Contributing Editor

In case you're wondering, streakers in this context are yellow bass *(Roccus mississippiensis).* Yellow bass angling has gained renewed interest the past few years in selected Iowa waters. Good catches of these true members of the bass family (the other member found in Iowa is the white bass) have been providing some very good angling action at Clear Lake in Cerro Gordo County and Little Wall Lake in Hamilton County. Besides being a very sporty fish on the rod they also are delicious in the frying pan.

Although yellow bass aren't known for their extra large size, their ounce-for-ounce gaminess is hard to beat on light tackle. Their trademark is to strike quickly and after being hooked they streak or "run" erratically through the water until landed. From one-half to three-quarters of a pound (9-11 inches) is considered a nice sized yellow with few seldom attaining the one pound mark. The existing state record, set recently at Clear Lake, tipped the scales at 13 ounces. A serve winter kill eliminated the yellow bass from Black Hawk this past year.

Yellow bass are a schooling fish. They are most often located near rocky shorelines and rocky reefs. Once you find them the action can come fast. Small leadhead jigs ranging from 1/32 to 1/4 ounce are tempting lures with blue or yellow colors seemingly the preference of most anglers. Other baits proven to bring good results include small minnows, cut-bait and worms. A light line such as 2, 4 or 6 lb. test is recommended. Like most angling, fishing for yellows is usually best during morning and evening hours. Some anglers even have quite good success after dark. The yellow bass can be caught year around.

There was some fabulous yellow bass angling during the 50's at Clear Lake and Black Hawk. In fact, at Clear Lake yellow bass made up the largest percentage of the angler's creel (179,000 fish weighing over 64,000 pounds in 1953). Then in the late 50's and early 60's the tendency of yellow bass to be over prolific proved to bring their downfall. With an over population of the species, nature took its course and a bacteria-type disease almost wiped out the entire population. A winter kill at Black Hawk accomplished the same thing. After almost a void in the population of yellowbass, they have now managed to come back in fairly good numbers. There is a continuous open season on "streakers" and no restriction on the limit you can catch.

For an overnight yellow bass jaunt, the Iowa Conservation Commission offers excellent state park camping facilities. They are McIntosh Woods, and Clear Lake State Parks on Clear Lake. Commercial overnight cabin accommodations are also available at Clear Lake. At Little Wall Lake, the Hamilton County Conservation Board operates a nice campground for overnight campers. Boat and bait concessions are located at both lakes.

Besides yellow bass, Clear Lake offers fine walleye, northern pike, crappie, and bullhead fishing and also has the distinction of yielding the largest muskie ever taken in Iowa: 29 lb. 8 oz. Little Wall Lake is an excellent bullhead lake and also produces some good crappie, largemouth bass and an occasional lunker northern pike.

But for sporting quality and spunky panfish action, yellow bass surely rank right at the top. □

CLASSROOM CORNER

By Curt Powell,
Administrator, Conservation Education Center

HOW MANY OF US remember the fable by Aesop about the tortoise and the hare? As you probably remember, the hare was quite a braggard and spent a great deal of time basking in the glory of his tremendous speed. It finally got to the point that the turtle (tortoise) and the hare decided to have a race and see which one was the fastest. The hare, so certain that he would win, became careless and fell asleep during the race. The turtle, by keeping a slow but steady pace, finally won the race. Obviously, this was to the chagrin of the hare.

This famous race has been used many times to illustrate how a person can accomplish his goal by steady consistent work. But it does raise another question; how fast are some of Iowa's critters? There is a great deal of information available on the speed that some animals travel such as the deer, ducks, geese, rabbits, and others. But how about the smaller critters such as spiders, snakes, frogs, and others. Mark Twain wrote about a famous jumping frog. Do you remember how far that frog could jump?

Have you ever participated in a critter race? It really is a lot of fun. It does involve some observation and learning on your part however. The object is quite simple; find out which critter or creature moves the fastest and wins the race.

Make a circle on the ground (you may use a hula hoop if you wish), catch critters (one per person) and at a signal turn them loose from the center of the circle. The first one out of the circle wins. Now comes the learning part. Identify your critters before you capture them. It would be very unwise to catch one that is dangerous such as a rattlesnake. It really wouldn't be too wise to try to catch anything very big either, because you could have your hands full in more than one way (pun intended). After the race, release your critter in the place that you found it.

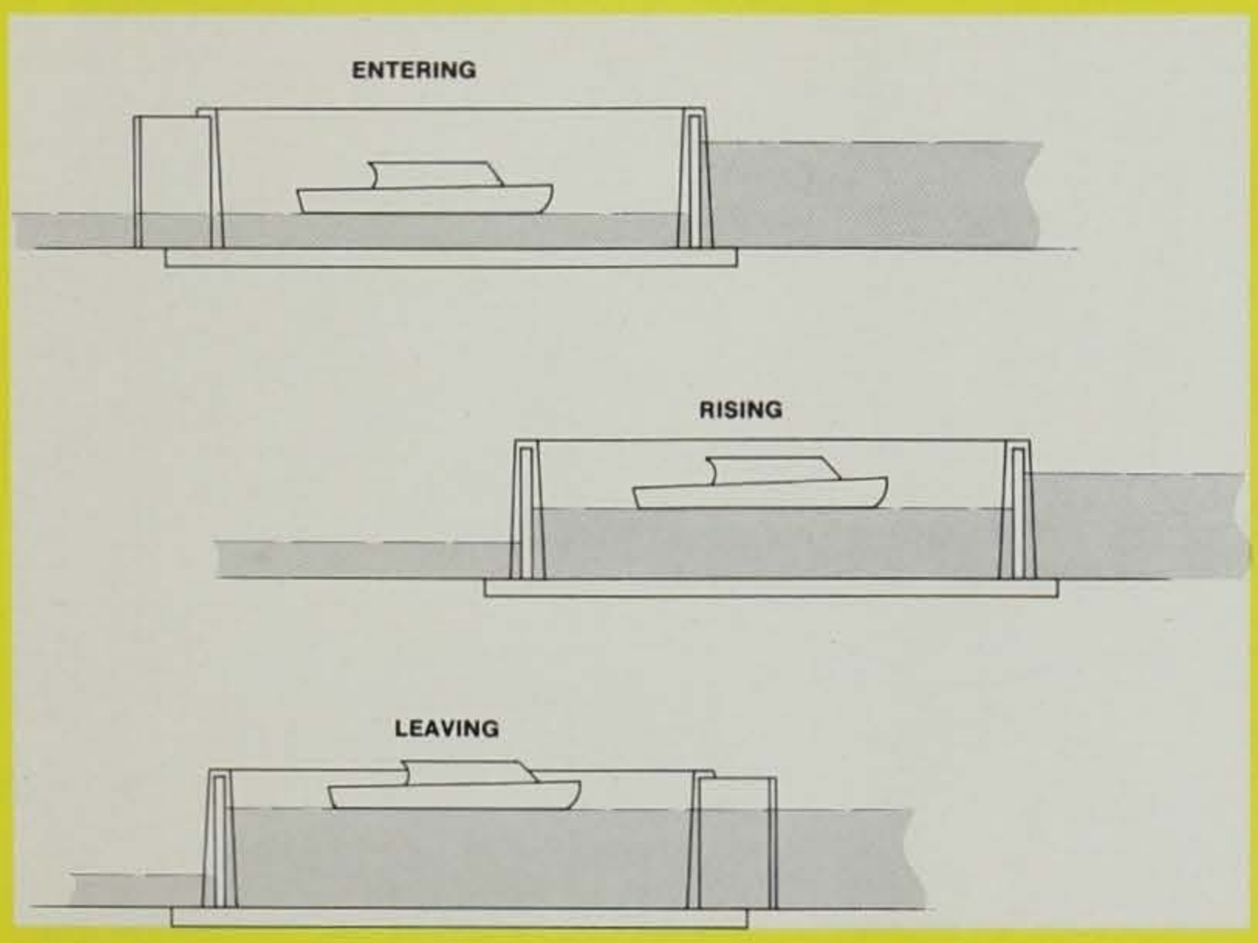
There are many creatures in the outdoors that may seem to have little significance. However, each has a place in nature's scheme of things. You and I need to build a better understanding and appreciation for all of nature's critters.

One final point about the critter race. One race that I was in charge of was anti-climactic to say the least. Two youngsters were going to race their critters, a frog and a daddy-long-legs. The signal was given and the critters were turned loose in the circle. A great race was anticipated. The frog sat poised to jump, the daddy-long-legs exercised his legs, hesitated, and the frog ate it! The frog won by default.

FIELD GLANCES

By Larry Pool

LOCKING THROUGH



Pleasure boating today is increasingly popular as more and more people navigate our inland rivers. Boaters who use the Mississippi River must face the special problem of locks and dams.

Locking through is the procedure by which you navigate your craft from one level of water to the next.

- When approaching a lock, always wait for the lockmaster's signal before entering. A flashing red light means stand clear. The flashing amber light means approach slowly. The flashing green light means enter the lock. Always use caution and keep your craft away from the dam area while waiting for the lock to open.
- Once in the lock, follow the lock attendant's instructions carefully. You will be required to hold onto a rope attached to the lock. Do not attach the rope to your vessel. Lowering of the water level will seriously damage your craft if it is attached to the rope. During this time, all passengers should remain seated and be wearing PFD's.
- Wait for the lockmaster's signal before proceeding to leave and then leave at a slow speed. Once clear of the lock, angle away from the other boats waiting to enter.
- Although commercial tows have priority at locks, pleasure craft are usually locked through within an hour of their arrival. Large tows are difficult to control and stop often, needing half-a-mile or more to change direction. Stay away from the bow and stern of these barges. Use caution when passing them.

LANSING HATCHERY ...a passing era

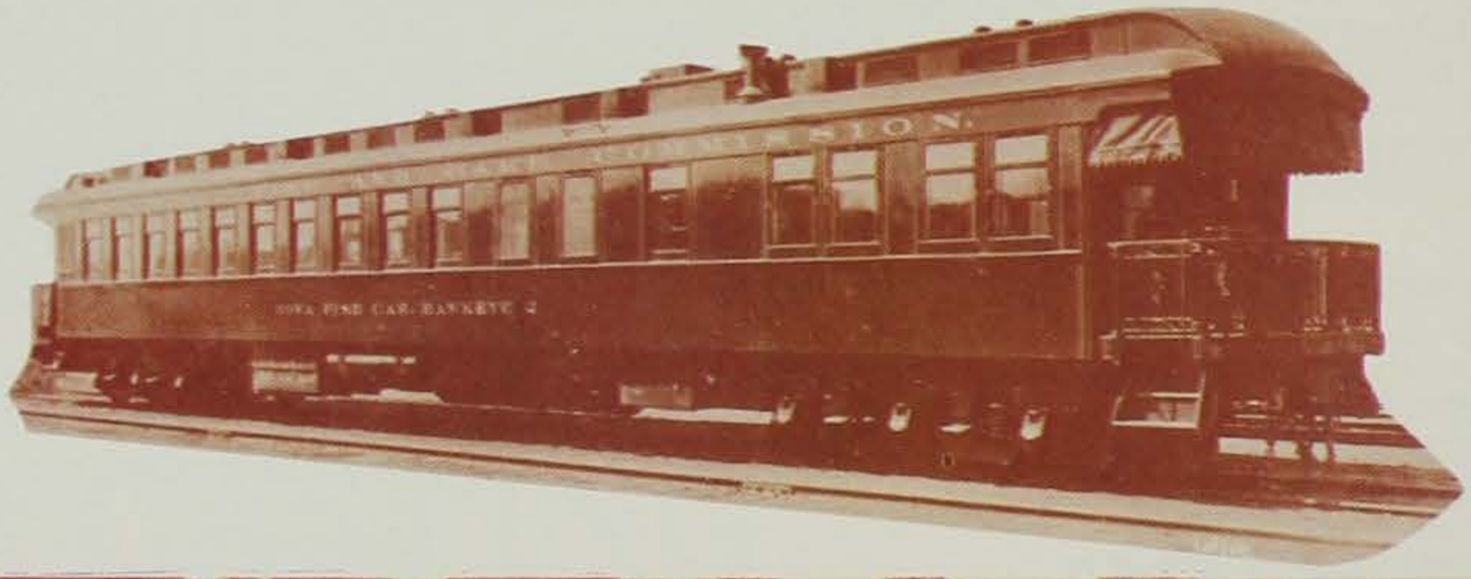
By John Spinner, *Fisheries Technician*

NESTLED IN A VALLEY between towering hills and adjacent to the great Mississippi River is the town of Lansing in Allamakee County of extreme northeast Iowa. The Iowa Conservation Commission's Lansing Fish Hatchery has been located there since 1917.

The events which led to the construction of the Lansing Hatchery began in the 1870's. Many people were becoming increasingly alarmed over the disappearance of fishery resources in the inland lakes and streams as well as the Upper Mississippi River. In 1874 the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin set up their first fish commissions to investigate this problem. Mr. B. F. Shaw was appointed the first commissioner of the Iowa Board of Fish Commissioners. Mr. Shaw was an enthusiastic advocate of stocking fish, both exotic and native, in many Iowa lakes and streams including the Mississippi River. Three exotic species of fish were stocked in the Mississippi in the late 1800's. Two of these, the Atlantic shad and Atlantic salmon were complete failures. The third species, the carp, was "very successfully" established. It is interesting to note that at that time the carp was considered a "miracle" fish and highly desirable.

Closely related to the fish stocking program was what came to be known on the Upper Mississippi River as "fish-rescue" work. The spring floods submerged the lowlands along the river. Many species of fish spawned in the backwaters and the young fish used these areas to feed. As the flood water receded some of these backwater areas did not drain completely and were isolated from the river. Many young and some adult fish were stranded in these waters. Most of these fish were doomed to die in these shallow water areas either from high temperature and low oxygen levels in the summertime or from complete freeze-out in the wintertime. Shaw originated the idea of seining these fish and placing them in the channel of the river thus "rescuing" them. Mr. Shaw also originated the idea of using some of these rescued fish for stocking inland lakes and streams in Iowa. This rescue work began in Iowa in 1876 and grew in importance until the 9-foot Mississippi River channel was constructed in the late 1930's.

The first stockings of inland waters with fish "rescued" from the Mississippi River occurred in 1877. These fish were transported inland on a railroad freight car equipped with aquarium tanks called "fish cars". Fish were then stocked yearly in many lakes and streams



Scenes from the past -- early Fish & Game Commission Fisheries equipment.

Conservation Commission Photos

throughout Iowa. As better road systems and trucks developed, fish distribution trucks began hauling these fish inland and the use of the railroad fish cars decreased.

The hatchery at Lansing was established in 1917 by Mr. W. E. Albert. The hatchery was located at Lansing because of its close proximity to much of the fish rescue work and its closeness to the trout streams in northeast Iowa. The following fish were hatched at and stocked from the Lansing Hatchery in 1917 and 1918: 125,000 trout were stocked in streams in Allamakee, Clayton and Winneshiek Counties; and 800,000 buffalo fish and 100,000 black suckers were stocked in the Mississippi River. Also during that biennium 50,601,000 fish were rescued from the Mississippi River by Lansing Hatchery personnel.

Trout were hatched at Lansing until the early 1930's when this work was transferred to the Backbone Trout Hatchery at Strawberry Point.

The Depression curtailed fisheries work at the Lansing Hatchery except the fish rescue phase. More emphasis was placed on W.P.A., N.Y.A. and C.C.C. group work, sponsored by the Federal Government. In the late 1930's Mr. W. E. Albert, Jr. was assigned supervisor of fish management activities in the eastern half of Iowa. He headquartered at the Lansing Hatchery. Mr. Tom Moen was later headquartered at the Hatchery with his main responsibility being the management of the cold-water streams in northeast Iowa.

The hatching of northern pike began at Lansing in 1946 and continued there until 1974. All northern stocked in Iowa waters have originated from the Lansing Hatchery. The Mississippi River provided a good supply of brood fish and an artesian well provided high quality, even-temperature water for egg incubation.

During the past 30 years the Lansing Hatchery has had many and varied additional duties. Fish on display at the State Fair were collected from the river at Lansing. The river was an ideal source because of the great variety of species present in the river that are common to Iowa waters.

Personnel and equipment at Lansing have assisted in distributing trout to the streams on a weekly basis from April into November each year.

The first successful incubation of musky eggs in Iowa was accomplished at Lansing in 1967.

Other duties included stream improvement work and maintenance of fishing access areas in northeast Iowa. Winter-time work consisted primarily of fyke and hoop net construction for biologists across the state to use in their management and research activities.

What then is the future of the Lansing Station? The northern pike hatching will in this and future years be conducted at the newly acquired hatchery at Guttenberg. Fish management on the Mississippi River and the development of the North Cedar-Sny Magill area will be coordinated from there. The Lansing station will now serve as a satellite office for Guttenberg.

Many changes have occurred over the past century in northeast Iowa, often described as the "Little Switzerland of Iowa". We are meeting the challenge for continued, progressive conservation of our natural fisheries resources to preserve and enhance the recreation it offers for all future generations. □

Photo by Jerry Leonard

WOOD DUCKS
Painting by Patrick J. Costello, 3027 Somerset Drive, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722
(Prints are available from the artist)