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JUNE 1977



conservationist





IOA conservationist

Volume 36, Number 6 June 1977

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Cover Photograph by Ken Formanek

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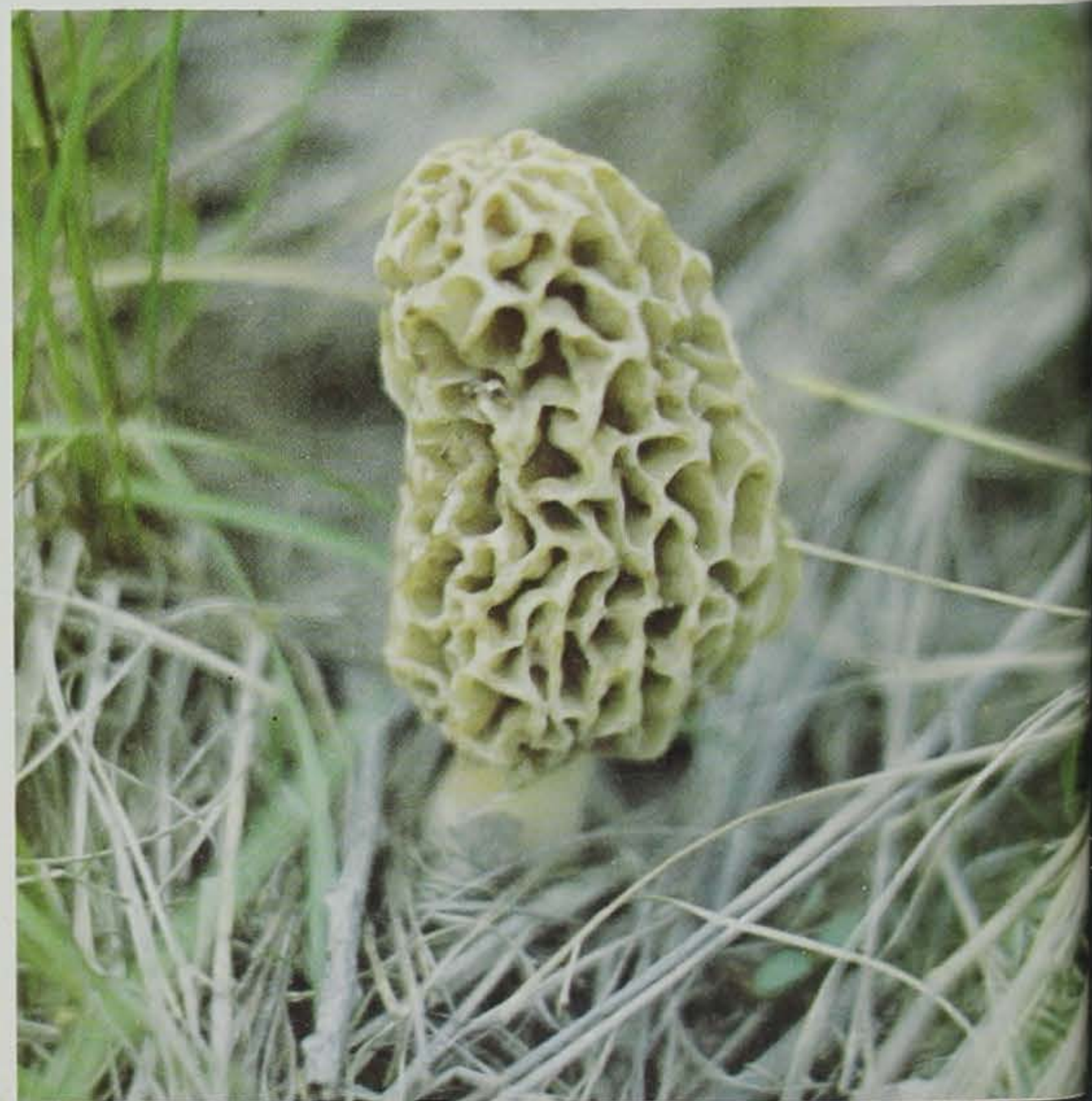
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Published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, State Office Building, 300 4th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579, manuscripts, mail items) to the above address. Subscription price: one year at \$2.00; two years at \$3.00; four years at \$5.00. Second class postage paid at Des Moines, Iowa and other points.



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STOP AND LOOK AROUND!

by Bob Mullen

STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER

Photos by the Author

WE ARE LIVING in days which seem too short to get done all the things we think we must do. The rat race of life is sometimes too much to stand. We wish we could stop for awhile and slowly look around. Too many people are going about their jobs and life at full speed ahead. The effects of such a rapid pace of living are high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes. All of these are resulting from pressure and a lack of relaxation.

You've all heard the phrase, "Can't see the forest for the trees." I think it exemplifies life today. We are so unaware of the things around us that we don't take time to enjoy them. We are constantly passing up much of the enjoyment and beauty of nature, even though we are surrounded by it. We should just take a little time and look around. The good Lord didn't create this world for us to exploit with concrete highways, cities, and shopping centers. If we looked around, we could see beauty in nature that an artist can't justly put on canvas, or a photographer can't capture on film. As you drive down the road, how often are you aware of a fantastic sunset, or the rainbow after a storm?

Why not put aside the everyday pressures for at least a couple hours. Get outside and enjoy nature and relax. Take time to look

at the countryside, enjoy the rolling hills and fields. Stop by a small stream and *Really Listen* for the sound of the water bubbling over rocks as it wanders through the forest. I guarantee it will calm those jangled nerves.

Take time with your family to enjoy wildlife. Watch a fox hunt a field mouse, or observe waterfowl as they rest on their migration through the state. The family will enjoy it and it will bring the kids and parents a little closer together.

Throughout the summer and spring, the forest, fields, and road ditches are alive with the beauty of wild flowers. All you have to do, is take a little time and you'll be surprised at what you have been passing by for so long. It's there if you'll only look. A special treat and gourmets delight, in the spring, is the morel mushroom. Remember to look for it.

There is so much to enjoy in nature if we only take the time. Why not slow down and notice nature. You'll be surprised at the beauty. And it is great for those frazzled nerves. It has a wonderful calming effect. Slow down. It might just help your high blood pressure, or help prevent a heart attack. You don't want to be guilty of not being able to see the forest for the trees! □



BARRINGER SLOUGH

by Thomas J. Neal

WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

Photo by the Author



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A BLACKBIRD that's half yellow, birds that build floating nests, and one known as a "thunder pumper." What do they all have in common? For one thing, they are all residents of Barringer Slough, a large marsh located at the outlet of Lost Island Lake in Clay County.

Barringer Slough is one of the few remaining large "natural areas" in northwest Iowa. Although heavily used for waterfowl hunting and muskrat trapping in the fall, it is seldom visited at other seasons of the year.

A quiet summer canoe trip on this marsh is like a trip into the past. You can spend hours exploring the cattail beds and open channels and seldom see signs of another human being. Muskrats, birds, turtles and other wildlife can be approached quite closely in a drifting canoe, and they make excellent subjects for photography or art.

Nests of the beautiful yellow-headed blackbird are everywhere suspended in the cattails over deeper water. The less aggressive red-wing nests only near shore because of competition for territory with the yellow-head.

The floating nests of coots and pied-billed grebes are frequently found. The remarkable grebe nest looks like nothing but a pile of waterlogged cattails—until you remove the top layer and discover 5 or 6 white eggs.

The "thunder pumper" or American bittern receives his nickname from his strange call. If you hear it on a spring evening, you'll understand why. His "love song" sounds for all the world like an old wooden hand pump: oong-ka-choonk, oong-ka-choonk, oong-ka-choonk.

Other common nesting birds include rails, marsh wrens, redhead and ruddy ducks and Canada geese. Blue-winged teal

and mallards nest in adjacent uplands and take their broods to the marsh as soon as they hatch. Great blue herons, although not marsh nesters, are frequently seen hunting in shallow areas for fish and frogs.

Musk rats are the most common mammal in the marsh, and their mound shaped houses are often seen. Moderate numbers of muskrats create ideal habitat for other wildlife. Openings made by muskrats in dense cattail are necessary before most birds will use a marsh. Ducks and geese frequently build their nests on top of muskrat houses.

Too many muskrats, however, will destroy *all* the marsh vegetation, and along with it the homes for other wildlife. Then the muskrats themselves die of starvation. Controlled trapping of muskrats provides for the use of a renewable natural resource, while at the same time helping to avoid the "boom and bust" cycle so detrimental to marsh wildlife habitat. As many as 9,000 muskrats have been trapped on Barringer Slough at their peak populations.

Waterfowl hunting is very popular on this area. Many people hunt on opening day, fewer on other weekends, and fewer still during the week. The area is closed to Canada goose hunting as part of an effort to restore breeding populations of Canada geese to the area. Hunting is also good for pheasants and deer. After freeze-up, these animals use the large stands of cattail for cover. The big expanses of cattail provided good cover for pheasants, even in the January, 1975, blizzard.

So if you think all the wildlife is gone in northwest Iowa, or that there are no natural areas left, take a look at Barringer Slough. You'll be pleasantly surprised. □

Roger Sparks

Jerry Leonard

Wayne Lonning



Left: Balanced marsh habitat.
Above: Muskrat.
Right: Green heron.
Below: Great blue heron.





Red heads.

THE Iowa Conservation Commission has recently released final Master Plan details of its new State Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek. This final plan is a culmination of a year long process carried out by the firm of Smith-Voorhees-Jensen Associates under the direction of the Conservation Commission Planning and Coordination Section. In March of 1976, the Conservation Commission adopted a master plan preparation procedure which has provided for the maximum in staff involvement, public review and Commission review and action.

The Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek is located in west-central Linn county and east-central Benton county. It lies approximately 3½ miles north of Palo and fifteen miles northwest of Cedar Rapids.

STATE RECREATION AREA AT PLEASANT CREEK

by Randy R. Edwards, Park Ranger, and Bob Sheets, Wildlife Biologist

Trees are removed from soon-to-be-flooded areas.



Fish stocking will take place as water level permits.



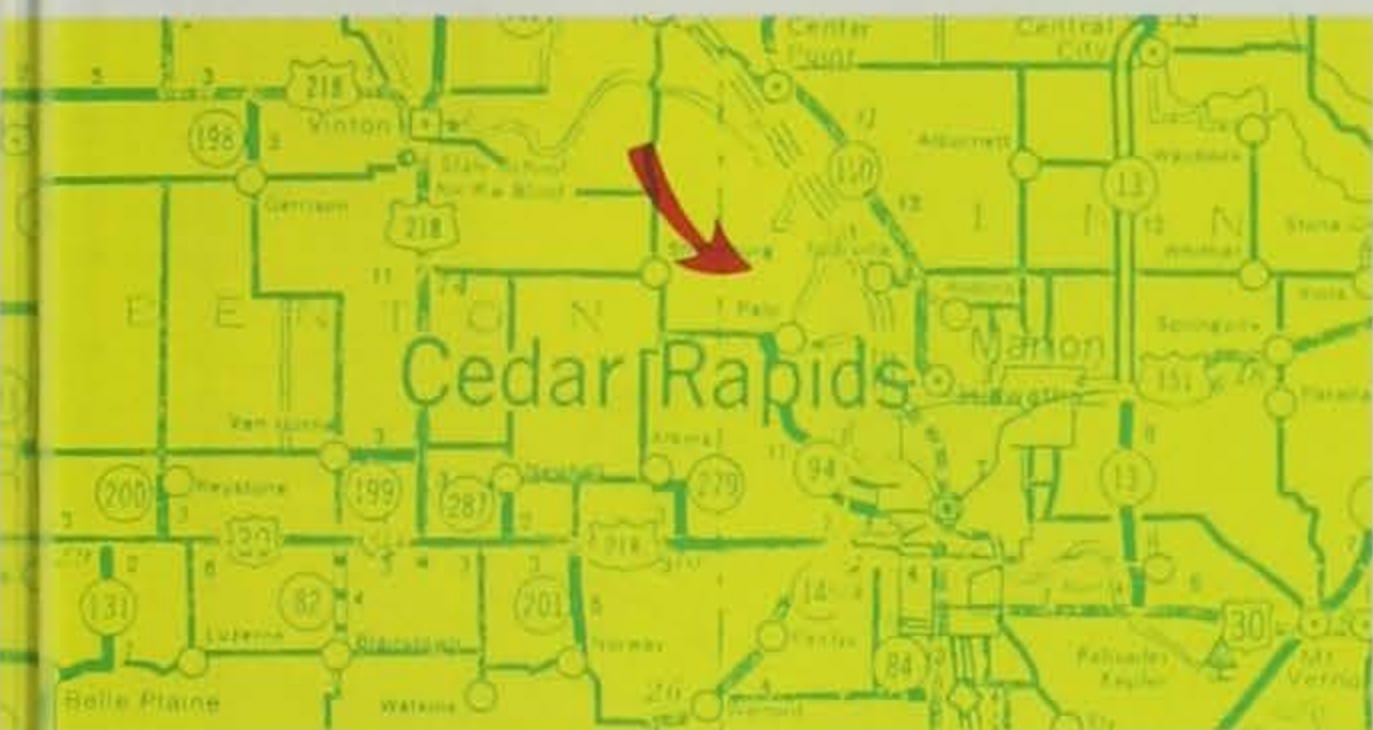
Pleasant Creek will soon expand to more than 400 acres.



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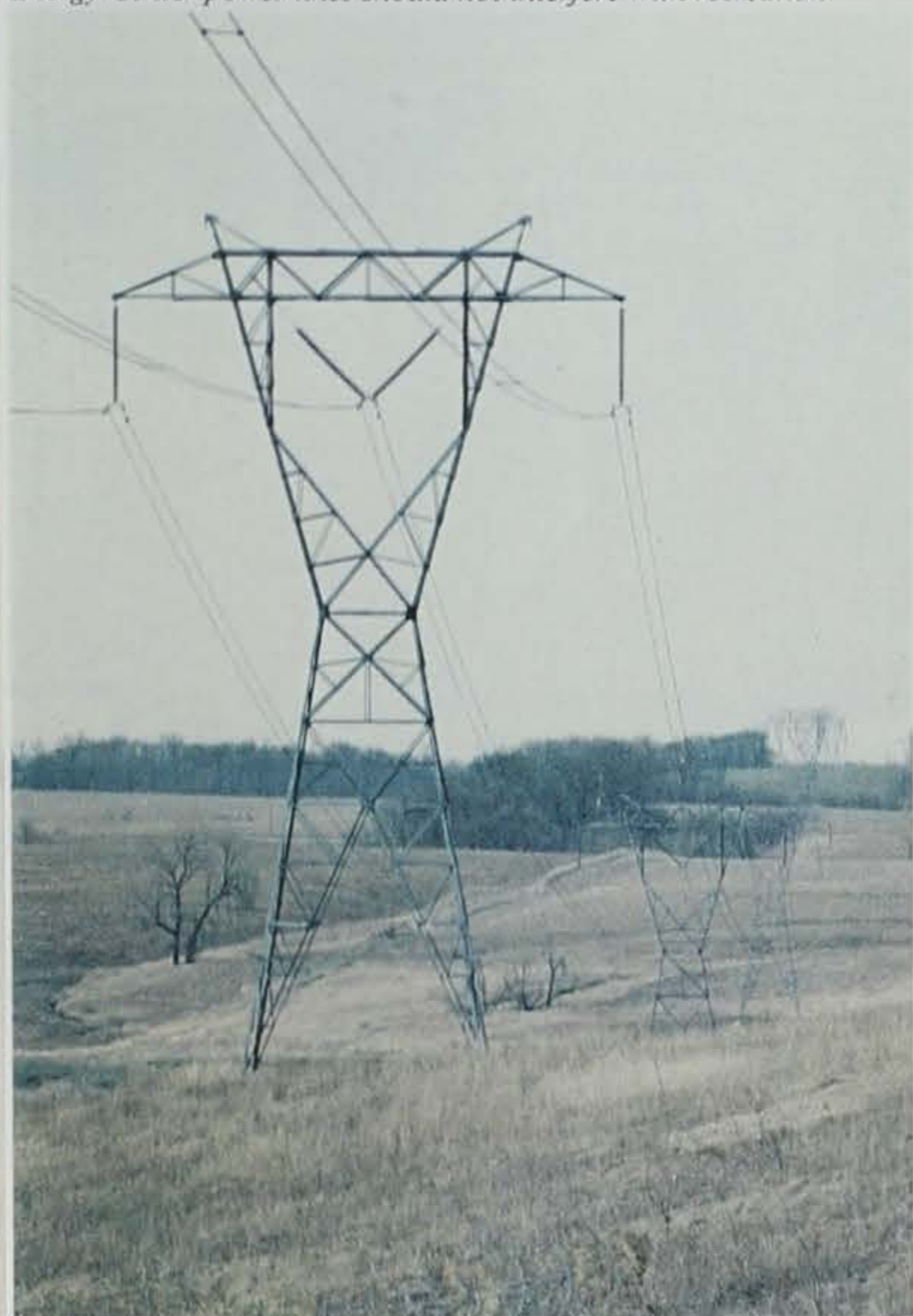


A water reservoir needed by Iowa Electric Light and Power Company and a growing need for public use lands led to the construction of a dam across the Pleasant Creek watershed, one mile west of its confluence with the Cedar River. The quarter mile long earthen dam will impound a 410 acre lake, with a maximum depth of 60 feet. The gently rolling slopes above the proposed lake will soon be developed to maximize outdoor opportunity on the area. It is planned that this 1,927 acre tract will provide the greatest diversity in the types of recreation to be offered to the people of Iowa.

Pleasant Creek is being developed in direct relationship with existing geology, vegetation, past and existing culture and anticipated metropolitan influence. Basically, the area is being evolved to create and maintain a natural, aesthetic relationship with the proposed facilities and recreational activities. A high degree of planning standards are being maintained to provide a recreational facility with qualities second to none.

What constitutes outdoor opportunities? Does it mean picnic areas? Modern and primitive camping? Boating?

Energy Center power lines should not interfere with recreation.



Swimming? Nature trails? Undisturbed forest land? Hunting and fishing? The questions signify the answer about the Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek—*All* will be provided. Within the Conservation Commission, a joint effort has been made by the parks, fish and wildlife, waters, forestry, planning and engineering sections to provide the many forms of recreation.

As previously stated, the area will have a 410 acre lake which will provide a dual purpose facility. First of all, it will create a recreationist's haven for water and ice oriented activities. Secondly, it will serve as an emergency auxiliary water source for the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) which is located approximately 2½ miles to the southeast on the Cedar River. Most of the water impounded in the reservoir will be pumped in from the Cedar River, one mile to the east. As far as the DAEC is concerned, the lake will serve solely as an emergency *supplementary flow* to the Cedar River in severely dry periods. The DAEC draws water from the Cedar River for cooling purposes. There is **no** literal connection between the lake and the DAEC. Water pumped into the lake will be returned to the river by way of Pleasant Creek.

Due to past problems in the development of lake facilities, a new resolution has been recently adopted by the Conservation Commission. The Commission staff feels it inappropriate to knowingly provide the public attraction of a lake without first providing proper facilities and services to handle the influx of visitors. Therefore, the resolution states, "... the lake at the State Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek shall be filled to a level only necessary to sufficiently fulfill the needs of the Duane Arnold Energy Center, and not to its full recreational level until such time as the complete incremental first phase of recreational and support facilities are provided for public use."

Activities and Facilities

The recreation area will offer a wide variety of activities and facilities. A number of modern campgrounds will be established, complete with electricity and modern shower and restroom buildings. A primitive campground will also be created and will be accessible by foot trails only, making it attractive to hikers and backpackers.

Of course there will be boating, as well as a boat concession which will offer boat and motor rental and storage. Four boat launch areas will be conveniently located around the lake. Swimming will be provided at a large beach, complete with a concession, showers, restrooms and clothes change facility.

Naturally there will be a number of scenic picnic areas strategically located throughout the area. In addition, the area will offer an extensive trail system which will be composed of many miles of hiking, nature, equestrian, snowmobile and bicycle trails. Proper trails will also be provided for the handicapped.

The State Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek will by no means be a seasonal use facility. As fall approaches, sportsmen's groups may use the dog field trial area. Portions of Pleasant Creek will be open to hunting. As winter progresses, it will provide opportunities for snowmobiling, ice skating, cross country skiing, winter hiking and photography trips.

The Pleasant Creek land management program will be developed for a wide variety of public, environmental and wildlife use. Many species of game and non-game birds and animals inhabit the area.

A preliminary wildlife management plan was designed for the Pleasant Creek area in 1975. It was implemented in the spring of 1976. Nearly eight hundred acres were placed under rotational contour farming to provide food, nesting cover and loafing areas for upland game birds and forest wildlife indigenous to the area. This phase of the program consisted of studying contour maps, aerial photographs, reading soil maps with associated soil capability charts and then planning an appropriate land use program.



Game and non-game wildlife will benefit from additional cover.

Permanent tree and shrub plantings are being planned for the area. Historically, the entire area was once timbered. Now patches of timber exist only on the hills, with occasional stringers of trees along the creek.

Boundary plantings are being scheduled as priority one in vegetation development. They will serve as a natural boundary designation. Tree and shrub corridors will be developed along contour lines at areas of intensive public use and wherever established wildlife travel lanes can be enhanced. Present farmland leases on the area allow amendments during any given year to continue development.

Impressive numbers of bobwhite quail, ringneck pheasants, rabbits and whitetail deer are found on and around the public land. This past fall ushered in the first public hunting on the area. Many hunters became aware of what the area had to offer and made many return trips to try their luck with their new find. Other furbearers including squirrel, raccoon, fox, muskrat, opossum and mink have left regular sign of activity in the snows of 1976-77.

The lake, once completed, will serve as a new attraction center for migrant waterfowl. This will provide new opportunities for hunters to bag a few of the many species of diving and dabbling ducks. For the non-hunter and camera enthusiasts, such interesting species as whistling swans, grebes, bitterns, herons, rails and gulls will undoubtedly be attracted to the new area, offering individuals many enjoyable hours afield.

A comprehensive fisheries program is ready, although the lake will not be filled to capacity until the major support facilities are completed. Anglers can be looking forward to some exciting action in the future.

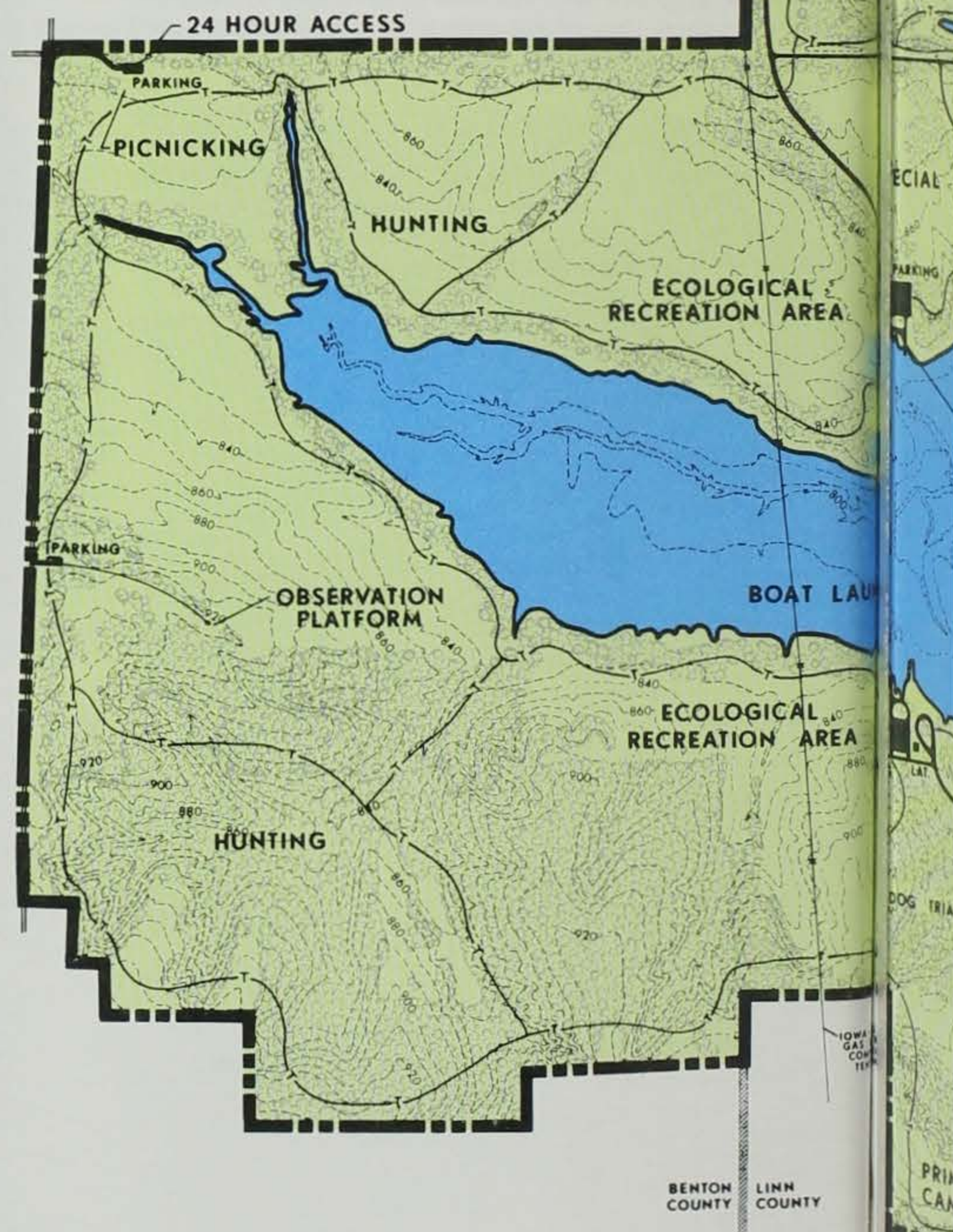
Control and Management

Overall, the Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek will have many unique features. Probably the most unique feature is that the area will be open to the public 24 hours a day, making it convenient and accessible to all.

The manpower management of Pleasant Creek will provide for protection, law enforcement, safety, visitor assistance and maintenance and will be an integral function in the organization and control of the area. The area will be managed by a team of three rangers to best serve the public and the facility.

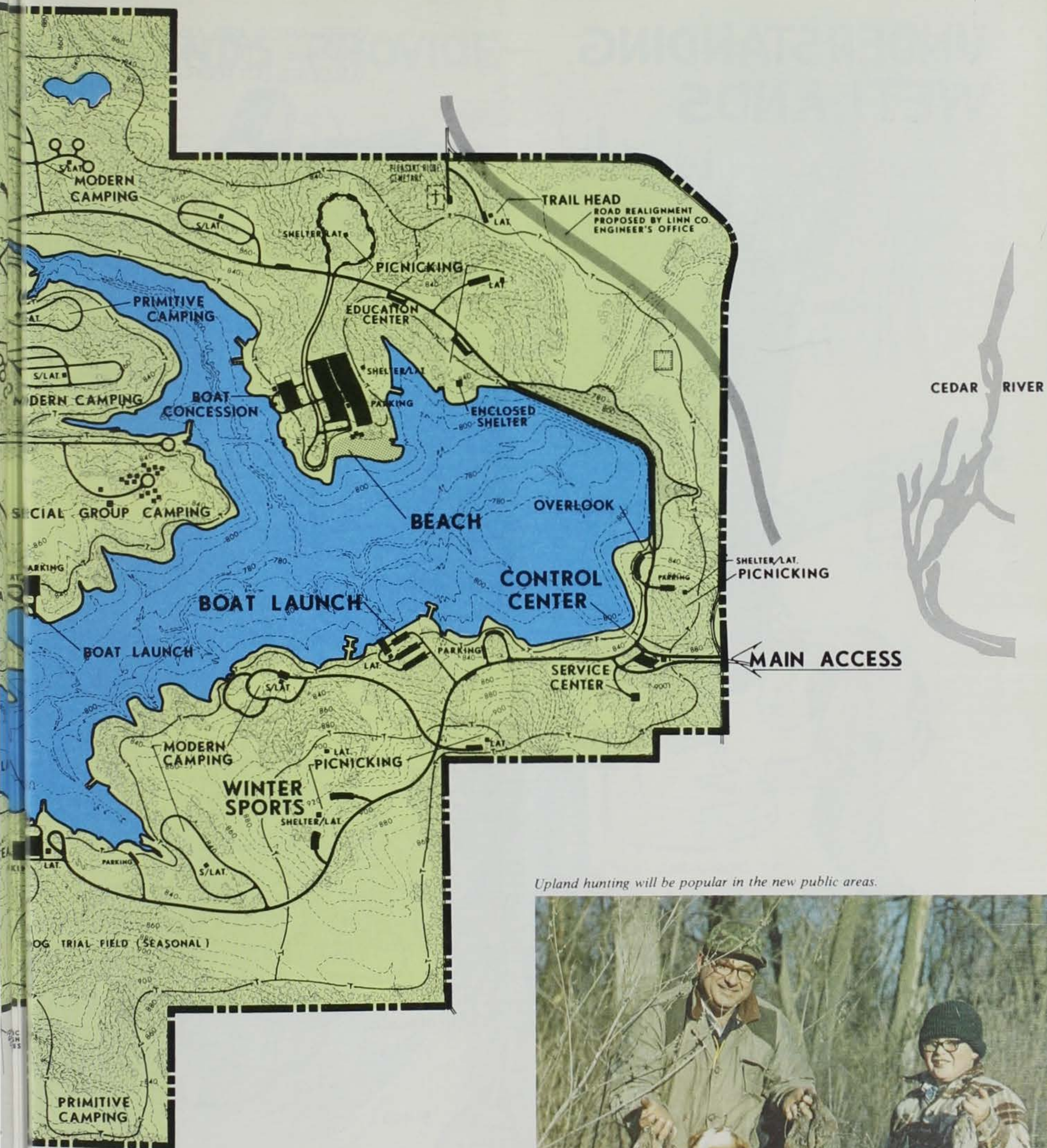
Implementation

The development of the Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek has four phases of development. The Intermediate phase provides limited development and restricted access prior to legislative appropriations. Phase I will provide for boating facilities, some camping, and management control area. The remaining two phases will develop trails, additional camping, implementation of education programs and facilities, and other miscellaneous supportive buildings and facilities.



The projected completion date for the Pleasant Creek area is fall of 1984. Naturally this will depend on a number of influencing factors, including legislative appropriations.

The purpose of the new approach on this area is to provide true multiple-use in ways of interpretation and utilization. Pleasant Creek intends to be more than just a multi-use recreation area. Hopefully, it can get the visitor *involved* in understanding nature, ecology, conservation and the true sense



Upland hunting will be popular in the new public areas.



of the word "recreation." Using the outdoors is fun, but understanding it is a much greater, lasting experience.

With an increasing population, greater need for public use area, and more leisure time available to the individual, the State Recreation Area at Pleasant Creek will indeed be a welcome addition to outdoor Iowa! □

UNDERSTANDING WETLANDS

WETLANDS ARE NOT WASTELANDS AS SOME STILL BELIEVE. NOT ONLY WILDLIFE BUT PEOPLE NEED THEM.



WETLANDS ARE MARSHES, BOGS, SWAMPS, POTHOLES, SLOUGHS, SHALLOW LAKES AND PONDS. THEY CAN BE FRESH WATER OR SALT, TEMPORARY, PERMANENT, STATIC OR FLOWING.

REPTILES



FLOWERS



MAMMALS



AMPHIBIANS



FISH

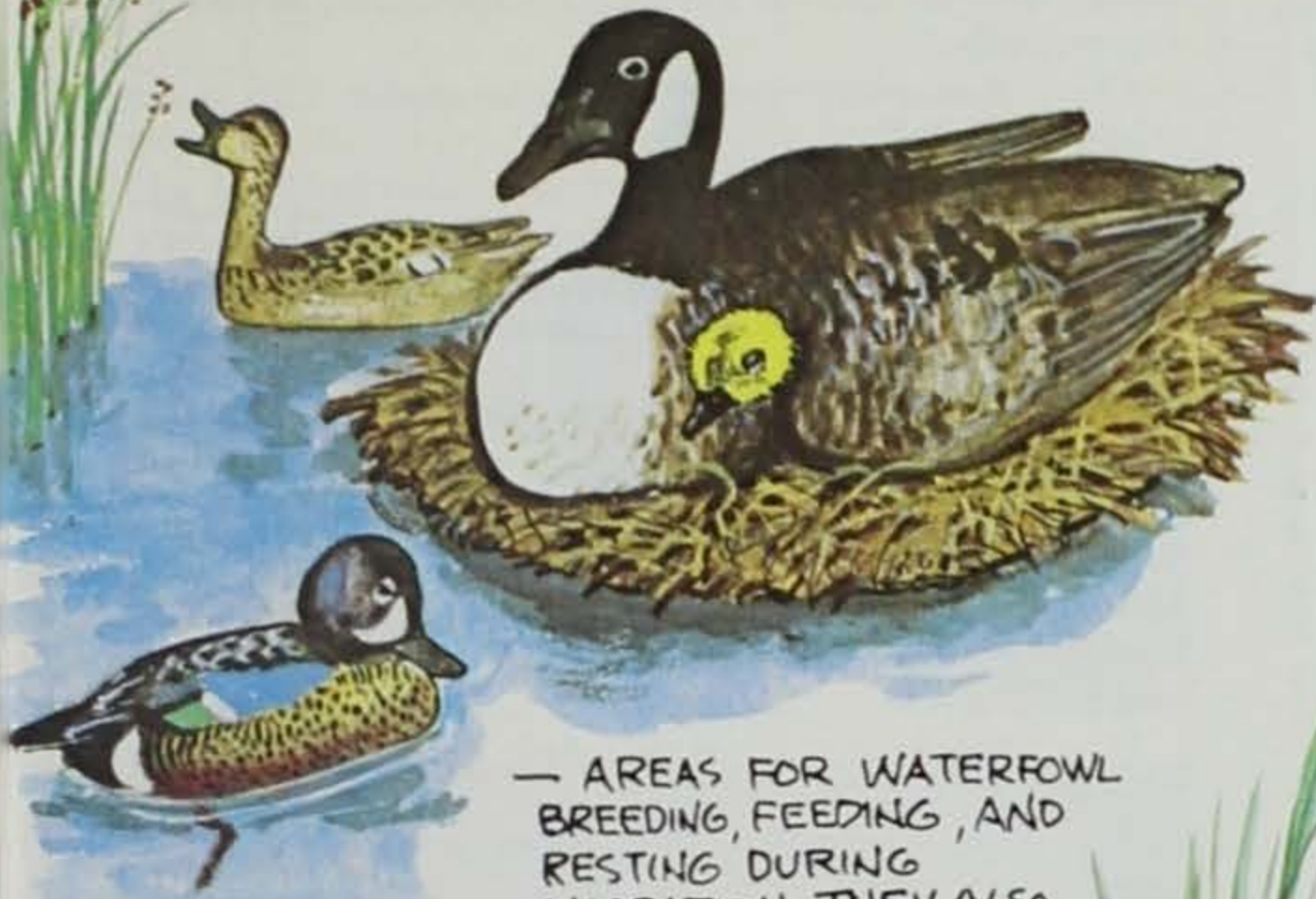


BIRDS



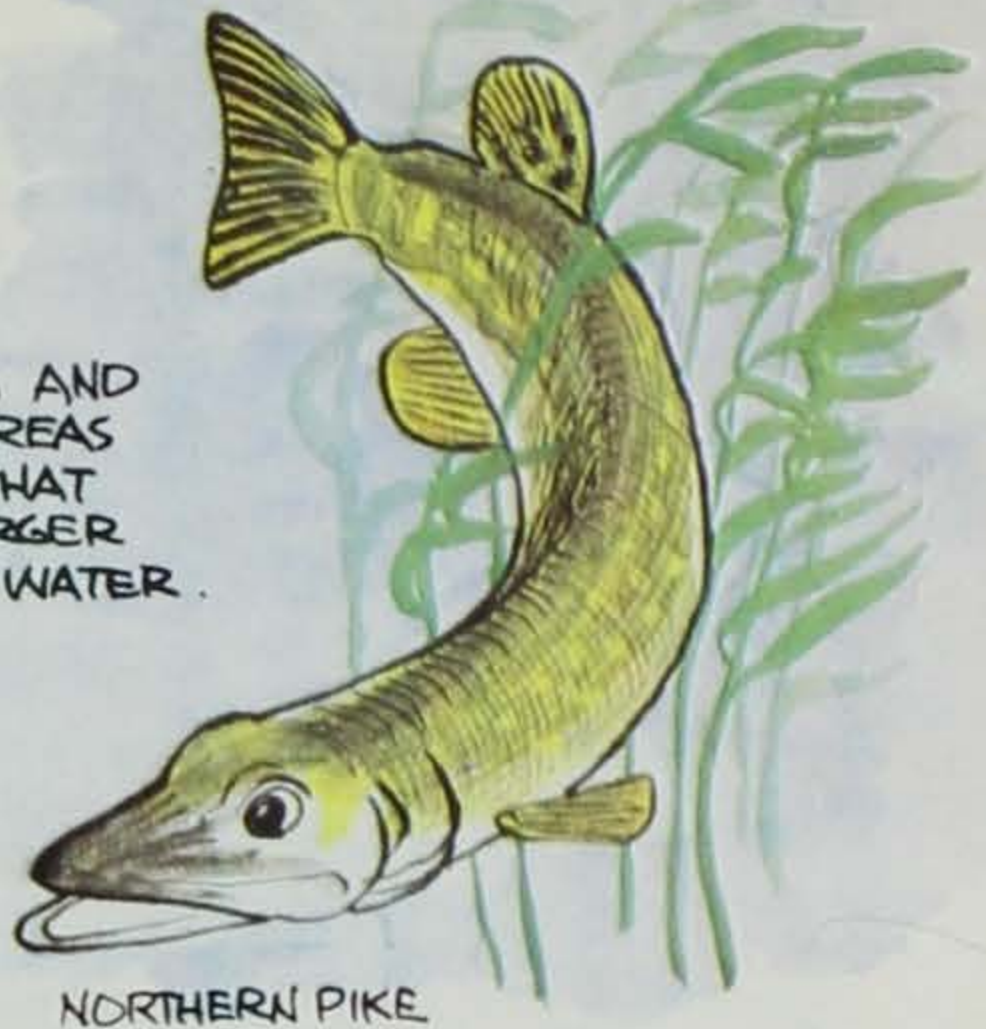
ACRE FOR ACRE, WETLANDS PRODUCE MORE WILDLIFE — IN NUMBERS AND VARIETY — AND MORE PLANT GROWTH THAN ANY OTHER HABITAT.

WETLANDS PROVIDE—



— AREAS FOR WATERFOWL BREEDING, FEEDING, AND RESTING DURING MIGRATION. THEY ALSO PROVIDE WINTER QUARTERS.

— SPAWNING AND NURSERY AREAS FOR FISH THAT LIVE IN LARGER BODIES OF WATER.



NORTHERN PIKE

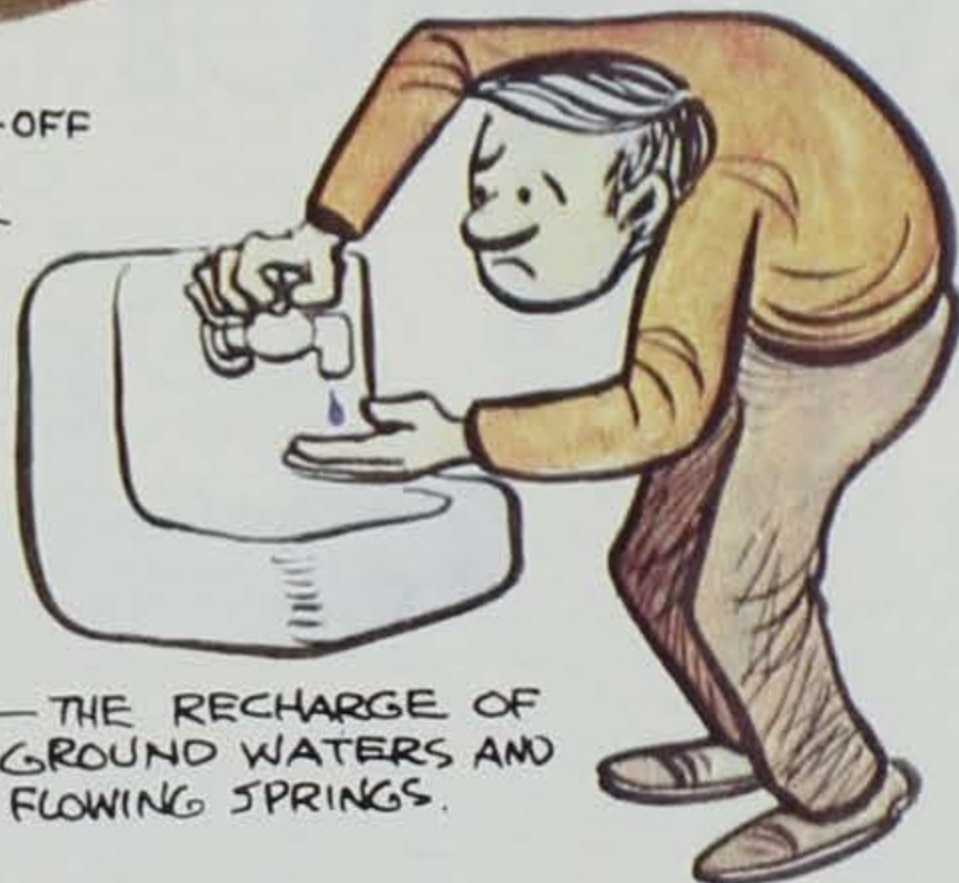


CLEAR WATER NEEDED BY SPAWNING FISH AND SUBMERGED PLANTS.



SILT-LADEN WATER

— A FILTER FOR SILT-LADEN RUN-OFF WATER. SOLIDS ARE REMOVED RESULTING IN CLEANER WATER ENTERING STREAMS AND LAKES.



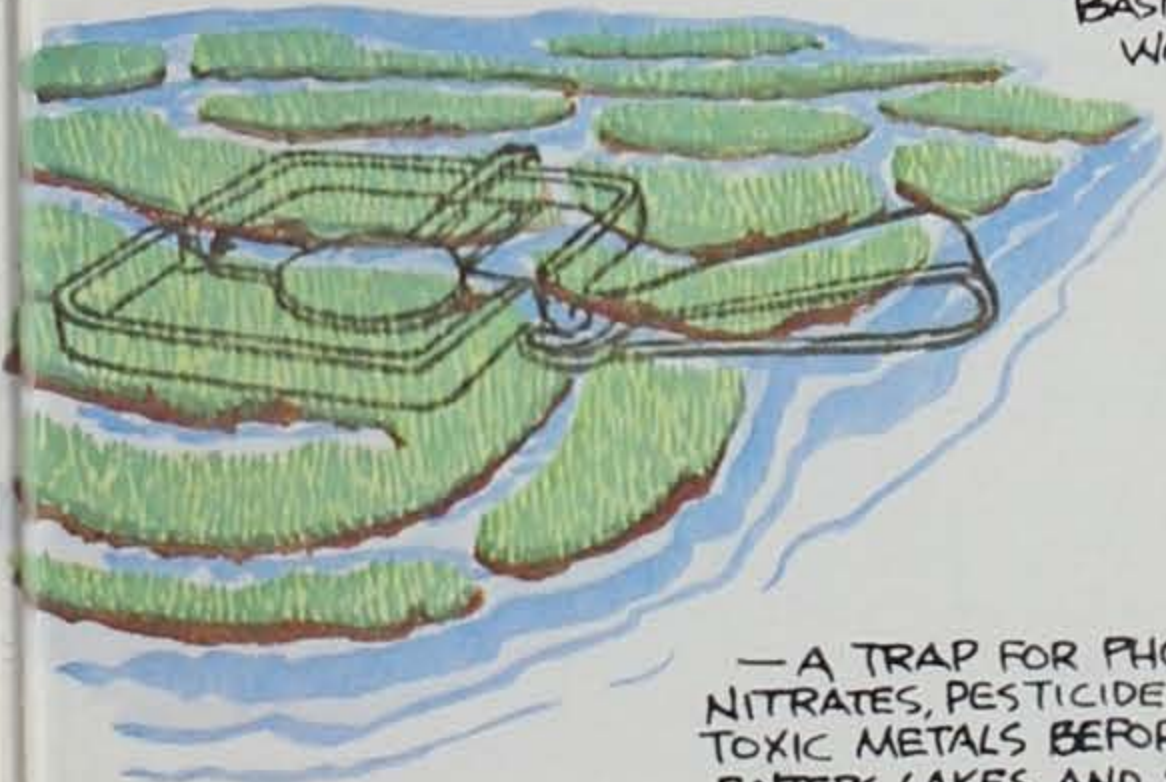
— THE RECHARGE OF GROUND WATERS AND FLOWING SPRINGS.



— TEMPORARY STORAGE BASINS FOR FLOOD WATERS AND SO CONTROL EXTREMES OF STREAM FLOW.

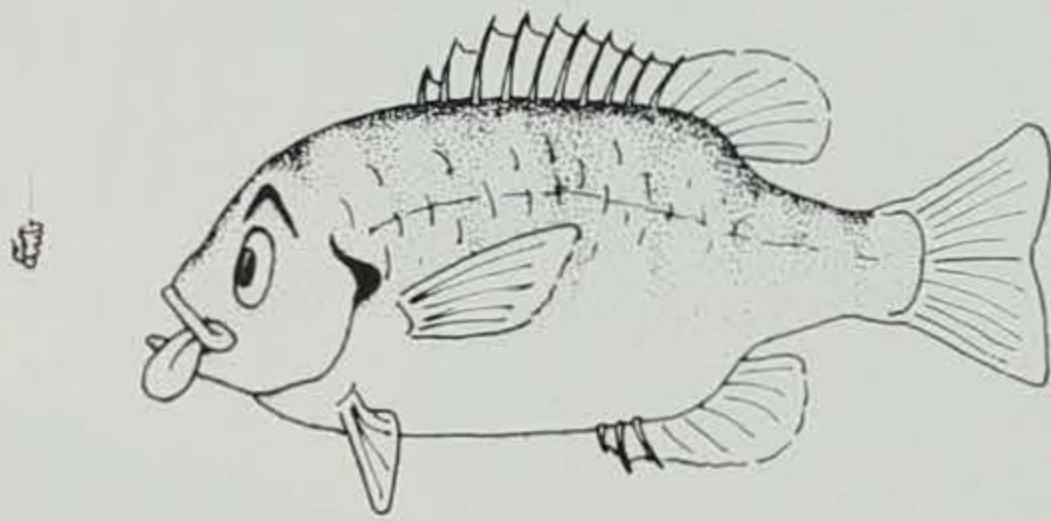
KONG-KA-REE

— THE SOUNDS OF SPRING.



— A TRAP FOR PHOSPHATES, NITRATES, PESTICIDES AND TOXIC METALS BEFORE WATER ENTERS LAKES AND STREAMS.





Meet Mister Gill

by R. Runge

Sketch by Larry Pool

THE BLUEGILL is the most abundant member of the sunfish family in Iowa. It is found in the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and nearly everywhere in between. In Iowa's farm pond program it is of tremendous importance and as a result is abundant in most of Iowa's inland waters including natural lakes and reservoirs. It is time that Iowa fishermen learned to know this little fellow better. We were able to locate and interview an understanding and generous bluegill. The following information was obtained.

I.C.: "Would you prefer that I call you Mr. Gill or Blue?"

Gill: "As long as you don't reveal to your readers where this pond is, you may call me what you like."

I.C.: "Thank you. I take it from your response that fishermen make you uncomfortable. Do you find your position here as a fish in this pond under constant threat?"

Gill: "Listen, some of these yoyos who come around here couldn't catch mosquito bites in the Everglades. There are however, a few guys who show up here who have made life a little hectic from time to time."

I.C.: "Have you ever been caught?"

Gill: "What are you, some kind of a nut?"

I.C.: "I suppose I should rephrase that. Have you ever come close to being caught?"

Gill: "When I was much younger, I nearly made the mistake of falling to a little blond kid with a cane pole. The little beggar had me clear out of the water. Luckily he started thrashing the pole around a bit and I fell off. I never forgot it."

I.C.: "What had he used for bait?"

Gill: "A type of worm that I was particularly fond of at the time. I caught the hook right here in the mouth. The small wound healed however and has not presented problems in later life, even cosmetically."

I.C.: "You seem proud of your appearance. Can you describe yourself for us?"

Gill: "Of course. I am now eleven inches in length and weigh nearly one pound. I have this nice flashy orange belly here with a classic blue to black tip on the upper gill, going to dark green on the back. All in all, I feel that I am much prettier than the other fish in this pond."

I.C.: "What do you think of catfish and largemouth bass?"

Gill: "Catfish are basically stupid. However, we have had a few bluegills go down into their neighborhood and never come back. That in itself is scary. As for bass, I think they're pigs. They try to eat everything. We encourage our young ones to hide in the shallows but sometimes it doesn't do any good. That's life in the jungle."

I.C.: "Speaking of life in the jungle, what do you do here over a typical year?"

Gill: "After the arduous process of spawning, which creates somewhat of a festival atmosphere around the shallows here, we more or less wander around picking off a midge or mayfly now and then all summer. Then it's the carefree days of fall. I prefer to tuck myself under this log and snap up a small snail or tiny crayfish occasionally. When the ice covers the pond we move out into deeper water and feed on what's ever around. Then it's back to spring again."

I.C.: "Ice fishing is gaining popularity around farm ponds. Do you get ice fishermen here at your pond?"

Gill: "Slaarp!"

I.C.: "Mr. Gill?"

Gill: "Sorry, I was just scarfing down that foolish aquatic invertebrate who tumbled by."

I.C.: "I said, do you get many ice fishermen here?"

Gill: "Oh yes, a few. They come crunching over to the middle of the pond and dig through the ice with some sort of digger. We like to watch because when they come through with the digger it is like fireworks. A flash of light, bubbles, ice crystals—very exciting. Sometimes they dig a lot of them."

I.C.: "I hate to bring this up, but do they catch any of you?"

Gill: "Yes, those little grubs are tasty. The trick is to nibble it off before the stooge upstairs can react. Unfortunately, some of us aren't too good at it and boom, right up through the fireworks hole. The most fun is to go down and kick one of those bass awake, point it up at the grub and zippo - bye bye bassy. They eat anything."

I.C.: "What do you think of artificial lures?"

Gill: "Those I know who have eaten them were not around later for comment. I've seen them quite often, however, and must say that at certain times I've nearly snapped at them only to catch myself at the last second. Most of them seem to be used by dumb fishermen. They go out, buy a spinner bait, two or three lures and presto! Another Virgil Ward. What they don't realize is how dumb they look. Sometimes we float up close to the surface just to look at them. New vest, goofy hat, rubber boots... what clowns. Some of them even use two rods. We always wait and see the lure then nail the worms right off the other hook. Drives 'em crazy."

I.C.: "What do you think of women who fish?"

Gill: "One of them drove a golf ball in here one time."

I.C.: "But the golf course is clear across the road."

Gill: "I know."

I.C.: "Seriously, do you get any female fisherpersons around here?"

Gill: "Only rarely. Usually they come down here to find their husbands. There is very rarely a scene, only if 'ol dad has been into the pop a bit. To be fair, however, there have been several excellent female fisherpersons here this year."

I.C.: "I notice you are somewhat anxious to go, but before you do, could you answer this last question? If you are caught would you prefer to be mounted?"

Gill: "All things considered, I'd rather be in Philly." ■

THE CATFISH WORM

by Sonny Satre and Roger Sparks

Photos by Roger Sparks



WITHIN the last few years, a new method of catching the popular channel catfish has really caught on in Iowa. It's a method that has been very successful; it's legal and it's quite simple to use. It's called the "catfish worm" and whether you fish in lakes or rivers, it's the hottest thing since rotten chubs and chicken guts.

No, we are not referring to earthworms or nightcrawlers. The catfish worm is a plastic worm that comes in a vast array of colors. A monofilament leader runs through the entire length of the worm with a small treble hook attached at the end. You may ask why a plastic worm is appetizing to a channel catfish. The answer stinks!! Yes, the glue-like smelly concoction (of unknown origin) you dunk the worm in is the secret. There are a number of excellent sponge or stink baits available and many of them are manufactured in Iowa. The new sponge baits are gooey and should not be confused with the conventional "dough ball" stink baits. These baits and the worm rigs can be purchased at most bait shops. For the economy minded, it's easy to make your own worm rigs.

For weight, most anglers prefer a small to medium sized, egg-shaped slip sinker with a snap swivel attached to the end of the line. Then attach the catfish worm rig to the swivel and you're ready for action.

Most anglers use a small stick and dip the bait around the lure to avoid getting the odorous substance all over their hands and gear. Fishing above and around brush piles, log jams and other snags usually brings the best results. If the catfish shun your bait for several minutes, reel in and cast to a different spot near the snag. Don't fish unproductive water—after several casts, try another brush pile. Cast the worm (gently) above a snag with just enough weight to hold it on the bottom. Although small fish may peck at the bait, larger catfish pick it up and quickly run with it. They can hook themselves but usually don't, so hold the rod firmly and set the hook as soon as the "strike" feels solid.

You'll find that catfish take these baits more readily and deeper than most, often swallowing the hook, so it's best to take along a cooler with ice to prevent wasting dead fish. A knife and a needle nosed pliers are a must for extracting the hook.

The next time you go to your favorite catfish hole try the new plastic worm-stink bait method. As unlikely as it may seem, catfish "worming" has revolutionized the sport. □



LOOKING BACK IN THE CONSERVATIONIST

Ten Years Ago



1967 season.

Polk County reported that it was making further progress in the development of the Yeader Creek project later known as Easter Lake.

State Conservation Officer, Dale Entner of Fort Madison and a Mr. John Willey of Beardstown, Illinois, were commended for saving the lives of two men from the towboat, Bixby, which had sunk in the Keokuk Pool of the Mississippi River during an incredibly fierce storm.

Twenty Years Ago



the Iowa Conservationist explained that "free lunch" was over for the women of the state. The 57th General Assembly has passed a bill requiring women over 16 to have a fishing license to fish in any water of the state.

The book "Iowa Fish and Fishing" was judged the best book on conservation information for 1956 and the film series, "Outdoor Talk" received complimentary recognition at the American Association for Conservation Information annual meeting held in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Thirty Years Ago



it was reported that when the population of this country reached 200 million people the land would have scarcely enough mineral resources and top soil to adequately support them at all and certainly not on a permanent basis. We flew by the 200 million mark a number of years ago.

The General Assembly passed a major allocation for a lake development in Jasper County — would this soon be Rock Creek?

Mink pelts brought an average \$18.14 to lucky trappers during the previous season. Over 60,000 were taken.

Iowa's Little Catfish The BLACK BULLHEAD

by Dick McWilliams

FISHERIES RESEARCH BIOLOGIST

A warm, easy-going type of day. A favorite rod and reel. A can of worms. A blanket or lawn chair for relaxing under a big oak tree. My perfect ingredients for a lazy day of bullhead fishing—topped off by a picnic of Beer Batter Bullhead with all the trimmings. While channel catfish is considered the "king" of the river, its smaller kissing cousin, the black bullhead, could well be considered the "prince" of the natural lakes. Although black bullheads are distributed throughout Iowa, the most abundant populations, and generally the best fishing, are located in the north-central and northwestern natural lakes and streams.

The black bullhead is known by a variety of common names, including bullhead, yellow-belly bullhead, brown catfish, horned pout, river snapper, and—for the unwary—the stinger. Spawning generally occurs in late May and June, with the saucer-shaped nests constructed usually in weedy or muddy areas in 2 to 4 feet of water. The male bullhead prepares the nest, guards the eggs from predators during incubation (normally about a week), and also performs guard duty during the first few weeks after hatching. The tight ball-like schools of young bullheads are commonly seen swimming along the shorelines during early and mid-summer, with the schools remaining intact until the young are approximately 2 inches long. Bullheads are omnivorous and will eat almost anything they can catch, from various water midges and other benthic organisms to small fish and minnows. Bullheads in the northern parts of the state usually range from 7 to 10 inches long and weigh around one-half pound, with bullheads weighing over a pound fairly common in some areas.

Among the reasons for the popularity of the black bullhead are its willingness to take a baited hook from the time spring arrives until the last days of autumn, and that expensive equipment is not necessary to have a good time and catch fish. During the spring and early summer bullheads are commonly found in shallow water and are easily caught from shore. As summer progresses bullheads normally move away from the shallow water areas and

bullheaders take to boats. One of the best methods of boat fishing is to locate the bullhead feeding areas, often around beds of submergent vegetation, then just drop the bait down and wait for a tug. Another favorite method is night fishing, with many of the best catches, particularly during mid-summer, taken during the evening hours.

As with other fish species and fishermen, a variety of tackle and baits are used. Small to medium long shank hooks are among the best for bullhead, with "bullhead" rigs available at most bait shops. By far the most common baits are nightcrawlers and fishing worms, but a variety of baits is used including cut baits, stink baits, etc. Bullheads typically are bottom feeders, so the baits should be allowed to rest on or float just off the bottom. One caution, however, although sinkers are usually required for casting, they shouldn't be heavy enough to cause the bait to sink into the bottom, or so heavy bullheads can't "carry" off the bait. Normally bullheads swallow the hook, so careful attention to the pole is not required. In fact, after casting and making the line taut, a short rest on a blanket or in a lawn chair is often the order of the day. Among the best known bullhead lakes are Clear Lake, Blackhawk Lake, Spirit Lake, Lower Gar Lake, East Okobojo Lake, Silver Lake (Dickinson Co.), Lost Island Lake, Iowa Lake (Emmet Co.) and Five Island Lake in northern Iowa and Prairie Rose Lake, Green Valley Lake and Lake Icaria in southern Iowa. A number of streams also boast good bullhead populations, with the best fishing in roily, turbid waters or where small tributaries join the main stream.

Although catching bullheads is fun—the proof of the pudding is in the eating. There are many recipes for preparing bullhead—from the traditional pan-fried to the more exotic smoking, and they are all delicious. One complaint voiced about bullheads is the muddy flavor which occurs at various times of the year and which sometimes can be quite strong. This off-flavor is caused by algae and to remove some of it try soaking the fillets in a solution of vinegar water overnight in the refrigerator, or make a solution using about 2 teaspoons of baking soda and a dash of salt, then soak the fillets for four or five hours before cooking. But back to the eating. Among my favorite recipes for bullhead are:

Beer Batter Bullhead

1 cup flour
1 Tablespoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking powder
½ to 2/3 can beer

Roll fillets in batter and deep fat fry at 375°F. (The batter should be very thick. If it comes off the fillet it is too thin.)

FROM THE

Warden's diary

by Rex Emerson

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPERVISOR

IT WAS a big beautiful June day. In fact, when I started out I didn't know just how big a day it was going to be. I stopped in to see the old man who lives down by the river. He said, "There are 40 million fishing licenses sold annually in the United States and only 2 million marriage licenses. Which proves one thing. People would rather fish than fight!"

While checking some fishing licenses along the river bank, I saw a boat with four men in it go motoring downstream. It looked like quite a few bank poles were stacked in the boat. Here in the southern part of the state (south of Highway 30) they could each use five bank poles, provided they do not have more than a total of fifteen hooks and they are attached to the bank above the water line. The person who puts bank lines in the river must have his or her name and address on each line and must check them at least every 24 hours. Even if you are in attendance of the bank lines you must have your name and address on the line. As the boat went by out in the middle of the river one man pointed at me and they all looked my way.

I had almost forgotten about them as I motored in to the river bank at various places to check licenses. I had gone about six miles down the river and back through a field to a cabin and was talking to some fishermen when I saw the same boat again. They were coming back up the river and pulling into the bank at various places. I ran down the bank toward them. By this time they were out in the river again so I stopped on a cut bank where a tree had fallen into the river and laid down on the bank in order to see what they were doing. They came into the bank right below me. The man in the bow of the boat had a baited bank pole in his hands and as the boat touched the bank he stuck it into the bank. As he did, he said, "There's another bank line without any name on it, Mr. Game Warden." They were just starting to back away from the shore when I stood up and said, "Hey, come here." There is no way to explain how surprised they were. They thought I was six miles up the river and they didn't know how I could drive down to a private cabin site. They didn't know that most people give the game warden a key to the gate so we can check on the area when they are not at the cabin. A little boat ride with them proved they not only didn't put their name and address on the bank poles, but they also had put out too many. While writing out a citation for each one in the boat for the illegal lines, one of them tossed a beer can into the river. So, he had a second charge—littering.

I got home for supper and ready for a nice quiet evening. Old Johnny was just coming on the "tube" when the phone rang. It was off to Johnson County where three of us worked the rest of the night on some commercial fishermen using nets in the Iowa River. This made four times we had caught one of these men fishing with nets in this area. At the Sheriff's office, when he was told they would have to have \$1,600 or be guests of the county for awhile, he said, "I ain't comin' back to this county any more." We told him he was finally getting the point.

After transferring a ton of fish and the nets out of their boats into our trailer, it was time to get some breakfast. As we worked on the first cup of coffee we wondered how anyone could ever expect a game warden to work only a 40 hour week.

Shake and Bake

1 cup flour
2 teaspoons paprika
1/8 teaspoon garlic salt

1 teaspoon soda
A dash of salt and pepper

Mix together in a plastic bag. Then beat 1 or 2 eggs with about 2 Tablespoons milk. Dry off fillets and dip in egg mixture, then shake well in flour mixture. Melt 1/2 cup margarine. Place fish in jelly roll pan (lightly greased) and pour melted margarine over it. Bake for 20 min. (or until done) at 350°F, turning fillets over once.

CLASSROOM CORNER

by Robert Rye

ADMINISTRATOR, CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER



Photo by Jerry Leonard

THE TREE FROG is one of the "surprises" to the inquisitive eyes of visitors at the Center. Many people do not live in areas where these animals are found and never even consider looking for them.

Tree frogs are renowned for their loud but not unpleasant trilling, which keeps country nights alive with sound. The calls they make in spring and early summer are for the purpose of attracting a mate. Each species has its own call which attracts others of its own kind. With a sharp ear you can pick out different species calling at the same time.

These small frogs tend to have a smooth skin and should not be confused with tree toads. Most grow to a length of only 1/4 - 2 inches.

The group of tree frogs found around the Center in Guthrie County have two unusual characteristics that set them apart from the rest of their family members. First, the tip of each toe has a sticky broadened pad that is, of course, used for climbing on the trees and shrubs the frogs prefer. A few may be found among the rocks and stones. The second characteristic is their ability to change color. The gray tree frog can hide only a few feet from the hopeful observer and with its color-changing ability it can stay both on the trunks and leaves of trees.

These frogs follow a life cycle common to other frogs. The eggs are laid, followed by the aquatic tadpole stage and then the emergence of the adult.

Adult tree frogs have the ability to breath through their skin but they have a problem of moisture control. Since they live in trees, available moisture is minimal. To control the moisture loss, they hunch up to limit skin surface exposed to the air.

Tree frogs feed on insects and any small animals that come within their range. They obtain food by using their tongue. They even have the ability to jump, catch their meal in midair and land on another leaf.

Classes have made searches for tree frogs. Usually the disbelief that any frogs can be found in such a dry area stimulates a tremendous hunt. This is an excellent activity to help students become aware of their environment.

Once the frogs have been found, comparisons by the groups flourish. They have been compared to mammals, reptiles, and even insects. With an open mind, the students can find similarities and differences between the frog and any animal. They observe the ability to see, move, hide and general appearance.

The Conservation Education Center is open year round. It is available to all groups and any age persons for educational meetings. The Center's staff is prepared to present programs on conservation and environmental education. These can be worked to fit whatever goals the group has. Now is the time to plan your programs for the rest of the year.



Campfire by Jerry Leonard