



conservationist

NOVEMBER 1978





OXO conservationist

Volume 37, Number 11 • November 1978

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COVER: *QUAIL HUNT* by Ken Formanek

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Published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, 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.

Adult Red-Tailed Hawk.



THEY CLAW AND BITE AND SCREAM ...

but I think they're beautiful anyway!

BY DEAN M. ROOSA
STATE ECOLOGIST

*"Get down, here comes a Cooper's! Nope, too high."
"Quick, the lure, you've got a Red-tail at eleven o'clock."*

These and more colorful remarks are frequently heard at a raptor trapping station in eastern Iowa, where the State Preserves Board, in cooperation with the Iowa Conservation Commission and several interested individuals, operates a raptor observation and trapping station for several weeks each autumn on the Mississippi River flyway. Counts on raptors (hawks, falcons, eagles, vultures, and owls) are conducted and information recorded on time of day, species, date and weather conditions during and prior to the flights. This is part of a national count which attempts to detect population trends, especially of the endangered and threatened species. One species of special interest is the Peregrine Falcon and several are recorded in eastern Iowa each fall.

In conjunction with the observations, a trapping station is operated, where as

many migrating raptors as possible are trapped. These birds are banded, weighed, measured, examined for ectoparasites and released. Occasionally a small blood sample is taken for blood chemistry and to check for blood parasites.

During the past three years, over 150 raptors have been trapped and released; the

Immature Red-Tailed Hawk fresh from the sky and ready for a fight.



Adult Cooper's Hawk.

majority are immature Red-tailed Hawks, hatched the previous April or May. Occasionally an accipiter (Sharp-shinned Hawk or Cooper's Hawk) is trapped.

Some hoped-for results from such a project are determination of where the birds originate, where they winter, how long they live, what pathway they take to their winter grounds, what ectoparasites they carry and what plumage variations occur within a species. An unusually light bird is shown in an accompanying photograph.

This is an exact counterpart to hunting — the anxious awaiting of the migration season, the excitement of wondering what species will fly by next and the inevitable discussions that carry through the winter — "Boy, you should have seen that big Red-tail that got away."

As you read this, I am sitting in a blind with field glasses in my hand and ... wait! ... you'll have to excuse me, I have a Red-tail at eleven o'clock ... □

Pheasant Research in Southern Iowa or Biologists Bug the Birds

by James B. Wooley, Jr. and Ronnie R. George
WILDLIFE RESEARCH BIOLOGISTS

As part of its many ongoing research programs, the Wildlife Research Section maintains an active interest in the welfare of the ring-necked pheasant, Iowa's most abundant and most sought-after game bird. This interest has manifested itself in a study of the life history of the pheasant in Lucas and Wayne Counties of south-central Iowa. Researchers are investigating the problems of pheasant mortality and habitat use throughout the annual cycle.

We are studying the ring-neck in southern Iowa for a number of reasons. First, adequate habitat is available to maintain good populations of pheasants. Secondly, while a number of previous studies have addressed themselves to various aspects of pheasant biology, few have been conducted in southern Iowa, and only a single Iowa study has dealt with mortality and habitat use throughout the annual cycle. The decline of pheasant populations in northern Iowa and the concurrent shift of the primary pheasant range to east-central and southern Iowa has made it imperative to study population dynamics in these new areas of importance.

In order to obtain the most accurate information possible, solar-powered radio transmitters were placed on birds captured by nightlighting during the fall of 1977. Pheasants were captured with large nets when they ran ahead of specially-lighted vehicles moving slowly through a roosting field at night. A radio was later attached to the pheasant's back by securing a loop of elastic around each wing. Generally only hens were radio-equipped since we feel the hens are the most critical segment of the pheasant population. Once the age of the hen was determined she was weighed, banded, equipped with a radio and released. As hens were lost to mortality, the radios were usually recovered and placed on other hens captured by winter bait trapping and spring nest trapping. A total of seventy birds were radio-equipped this year. Radiotelemetry studies of this type have been conducted previously in Wisconsin with a high degree of success. However, their results are not directly comparable to ours because of differences in habitat.



PHOTO BY RON GEORGE

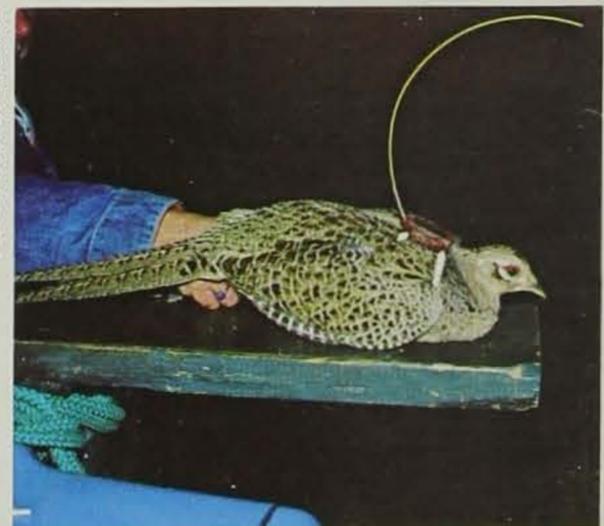


PHOTO BY JIM WOOLEY

Above: Hen pheasant equipped with solar radio transmitter and ready for release. Opposite Page: Excellent pheasant winter cover area with adjacent corn fields. Left: Researchers locating radio-equipped pheasants using a vehicle-mounted antenna.

In south-central Iowa, because of different topography and farming traditions, large amounts of cover still exist for pheasants, in sharp contrast to north-central and northwest Iowa where pheasants were formerly abundant. A major part of the project is to determine which habitats (such as brushy or grassy waterways, idle upland areas, standing and picked crops, hayfields and pastures, or brushpiles) are most important to the pheasant during various seasons of the year. Since the radios used in this project do not hamper flight or normal movements in any way, we are able to keep track of the birds and determine what types of habitat they are using by monitoring the signal that is emitted by the radio. Investigators follow the hens daily, both on foot and in a truck with an antenna mounted on the cab. If birds become lost, due to long-range movements or terrain problems, antennas are mounted on the wings of a light aircraft and birds are tracked from the air.

Since the project has been underway on a full scale basis for less than a year, only tentative results are available. All of south-central Iowa was very wet last fall and corn was left standing in many of our study area fields until mid-February. Pheasants therefore were not forced to move to what would normally be considered wintering areas, such as brushy waterways. Instead, the birds were attracted to the large fields of unharvested corn and movements averaged less than a quarter of a mile. Standing corn was most important from November through January, followed by waterways and idle upland areas. Generally, no winter movements of any consequence were noted. Pheasants generally dispersed from the areas in which they wintered during the last two weeks of March. From this period through June, upland areas were most important. This is tied to the use of areas such as pasture and hayland for courtship activities and nesting in spring. Several hens moved distances of over one and one-half miles from wintering areas to nesting areas.

The other main thrust of the investigation has been determination of mortality rates and causes of mortality. Over the period from November 1977 through June 1978, 66 percent of the radioed hens were killed. Eighty percent of this loss was due directly to avian and mammalian predators. Pheasants were most vulnerable to hawks and owls during fall and winter, while mammals such as coyotes and farm dogs were the most important predators during spring. Other mortalities were attributable to farming operations, roadkills, or other factors. Losses were highest in the spring period, followed by fall and winter. Even though the winter was unusually harsh for southern Iowa, the effects of snowfall and cold temperatures on pheasants were negligible. Abundant corn and adjacent good cover provided the birds with food in close proximity to secure winter cover. No pheasants were lost to starvation or blizzards.

Most hens on the study area established nests in late April or early May, with adult birds initiating the earliest nests and the largest clutches of eggs. Most nests have been located in waterways or hay, but early attempts were often in corn stubble. This spring we had several nests destroyed and one hen killed when nests established in last year's corn stubble were disced as the land was being prepared for this year's planting. Radio-equipped hens that nested this spring have been very successful in that 55 percent of established nests hatched, a rate that exceeds that of most other studies. Many hens that lost nests have renested, two doing so twice after their first nests and first renests were destroyed. Brood rearing, however, has been less successful and we have recorded substantial losses of young due to wet weather, night-time farming, and predation.

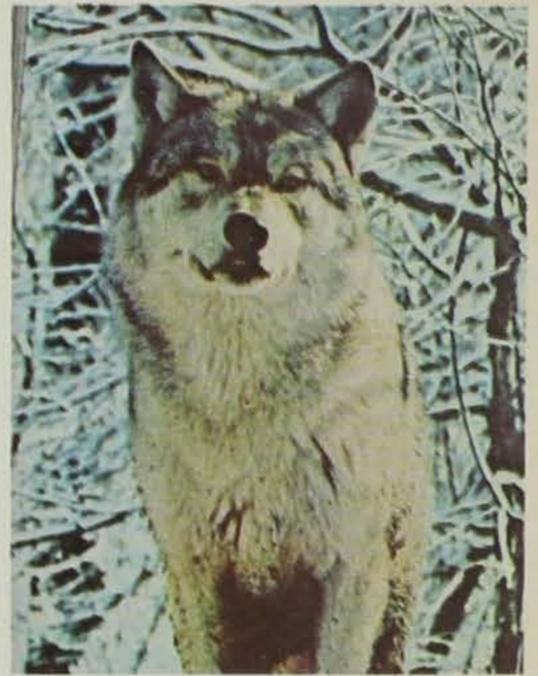
Thus, by "bugging" the pheasant we are learning more about Iowa's most important game bird. Hopefully, information of this and other types will enable us to maintain Iowa's position as the highest pheasant harvest state in the nation.

PHOTO BY J. SEUSE





Pictured Rocks (left), as seen from the air, derives its name from unusual formations in the ancient limestone bluffs of the Maquoketa River shown winding through the area.



The Indian Bluffs and Pictured Rocks Wildlife Area

Winter covers the Indian Bluffs Area with a blanket of snow.

"I improve this opportunity to write and inform you that we are all enjoying good health at present and hope to hear the same from you. We have a light winter in comparison to what we used to have back East. We have not had snow to hinder anyone's going into the woods to draw rails or timber anywhere they please."



BY BOB SHEETS

WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

SO BEGINS A LETTER FROM THE WIFE of one of the first white settlers to ever see the Indian Bluffs and Pictured Rocks Area. The date was 1842. At the time, a government homestead filing gave an individual the land of his choice for \$1.53 per acre. Many years have passed, but you can still enjoy an environment similar to what these pioneers met. The land need not be purchased because it is already owned by you and me.

This unique wildlife are complex lies along the south fork of the Maquoketa River five miles from Monticello, Iowa. The pictured rocks portion entails 867 acres of prime forest partially concealing the rock bluffs along the river. Likewise, the Indian Bluffs segment, lying one mile downstream, accounts for 410 acres of undisturbed forest land. Both areas are presently under a wildlife management plan to improve the forest environment and to increase resident populations of forest wildlife.

Assuming that you are at least an interested student of nature, the history surrounding this area is most interesting. When the white settlers arrived, they found the upland prairies insulated by thick, matted carpets of wild grass with few trees except an occasional crab apple or wild plum and few herbaceous shrubs save the red rooted prairie tea well known to the pioneer who broke the prairie sod. The timberland along the Maquoketa River and Jordan Creek presented a difficult problem to the settler. Since a massive amount of labor was necessary to convert the land for the plow, this rocky timberland remained as a permanent source of fuel for 80 years after white man's coming.

The common bedrock material found throughout the Pictured Rocks and Indian Bluffs areas is an extremely old formation that was formed during the Silurian Epoch approximately 300 million years ago. This ancient limestone known as dolomite makes up most of the prominent rock bluffs along the Maquoketa River. It is unseamed and irregular in shape creating many unusual formations that can lead an imagination on forever. As one travels along the Maquoketa River, he will soon realize this river forms in the low, flat sloughs of northwestern Delaware County and appears to rise in order to cut a deep gorge through the highest and rockiest ridge in Jones County as it travels on its way to the Mississippi. Why the river appears to defy the laws of gravitation, this author cannot explain. All I know is that the gigantic river channel cut through the axis of this rock ridge within the Pictured Rock and Indian Bluffs Wildlife Area creates some of the most unworkable but beautiful land in Eastern Iowa.

The area under study herein was originally known as the Black Hawk Purchase. Following the Black Hawk War, a treaty was made on the 21st of September, 1832, with the Sac and Fox Indians by the terms of which there was granted to the U.S. Government a strip of territory extending 50 miles west of the Mississippi River. The territory was vacated by Indians and thrown open to white settlement on June 1, 1833. No organized government existed. So for sake of organization, on June 28, 1834, the area containing our present state of Iowa was attached to and made part of the territory of Michigan. Then on September 6, 1834, the legislative council of Michigan laid off and organized two counties west of the Mississippi River known as "Dubuque" and "Des Moines".

The territory of Michigan was admitted to the union at this time so Congress declared the remaining Black Hawk Purchase area, (including the two counties that comprised Iowa), under the jurisdiction of the nearby formed territory of Wisconsin. At the second annual legislature of Wisconsin (held in Burlington, Iowa) on November 6, 1837, a law was passed subdividing Dubuque County into 14 new counties that gave Eastern Iowa its first semblance of an organized way of life.

As white man came to the Pictured Rocks and Indian Bluffs region, so came the well written and interesting records of wild game. "In those days, deer, elk and wild turkey were plentiful" as narrated by Mr. Hiram Joslin. Joslin arrived in the region on August 27, 1837, and proceeded to keep accounts of his encounters with wildlife. Old Joslin took top honors in downing the largest whitetail buck in the area. With witnesses at hand, his trophy weighed over 400 pounds.

On one occasion Hiram was returning home by moonlight from a trip into the Buffalo Creek timber west of Pictured Rocks and Indian Bluffs. He discovered a roost of turkeys, and quickly mimicked a hoot owl which started a chorus among the gobblers. Hiram slipped through the brush and downed a bird by the light of the glimmering moonlight on his barrel. Hiram's father recalled a fishing trip in which he and two friends came upon two fine elk. One elk was brought



Elk such as these no longer roam the area.

down and dressed before reaching the fishing spot. Their fishing methods involved the questionable sport of quietly walking the banks of the river with torches. A sixty pound sturgeon and six or eight 20-28 pound Northern Pike were hanging from poles on their shoulders before they concluded their night's sport. Wild geese, ducks and pigeons seemed to be in the millions and prairie chickens and quail innumerable — all easy quarry for a trading session at the town market. Those were common days for Hiram Joslin. Hunting wild game was an integral part of being an American. The U.S. Government had suffered a severe economic crash in 1837 and government land offices were accepting nothing less than gold or silver. Settlers were scrambling to pay off their

(Continued Page 13)

1978 Record Racks



Robert Miller of Wyoming (Iowa) with his winning rack in the bow and arrow typical class.

Two new state records highlight the record deer rack entries for the 1978 registry. In all over sixty whitetail racks qualified record rack honors.

Both bow and arrow records were broken in 1977. The Typical record now belongs to Robert Miller of Wyoming, Iowa. Miller took a deer with a rack measuring 198-1/8. This topped Lloyd Goad's deer which he took in 1962.

The Non-Typical record was smashed by Jerry Monson of Clear Lake with a rack which measured 220-7/8. This topped by more than four points the old record held by Blaine Salzkorn.

The top typical deer rack taken in 1977 by shotgun was one shot by Stan Means of Villisca. It measured 171-2/8. The top non-typical rack was taken by David Mandersheid of Welton. The 253-3/8 point rack now ranks third on the Iowa all-time list.

In order to enter your trophy it must be legally taken with bow and arrow or shotgun - muzzleloader within Iowa boundaries. If the rack meets minimum scoring standards you qualify for a certificate and a colorful shoulder patch in recognition of your feat. Unentered deer taken in past seasons as well as the present are eligible for entry. To have the rack officially measured, simply contact the Iowa Conservation Commission, Information and Education Section, Wallace State Office Bldg., Des Moines, Iowa 50319. After we receive notification, we will forward a name of an official scorer who may be contacted. Because of shrinkage in varying degrees when antlers dry out, they cannot be officially measured for at least 60 days from time taken.

Racks Measured in 1978

SHOTGUN TYPICAL (MINIMUM QUALIFYING SCORE — 150 POINTS)

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
Stan Means	Villisca	1977	Montgomery	171 2/8
William J. Musgrove	Muscatine	1977	Keokuk	169 4/8
Greg Zirbel	Mason City	1977	Winnebago	166 2/8
Robert W. Albright	West Chester	1977	Van Buren	164 4/8
Joe Petra	Boone	1977	Cass	164 3/8
Dick Steinke	Cedar Rapids	1977	Van Buren	164 3/8
Jeff Wonderlich	Ollie	1977	Keokuk	164 3/8
Buddy Crum	Des Moines	1977	Decatur	163 5/8
Weston Laing	Chariton	1977	Lucas	162 4/8
Don Kunch	Derby	1977	Lucas	162 1/8
Alan Bronner	Cresco	1975	Howard	161 4/8
Larry Asche	Parkersburg	1976	Butler	161 2/8
Kenneth Lycke	Rowan	1977	Wright	161
Edwin McCollum	Bartlett	1975	Fremont	160 1/8
Vern Chandler	Lacona	1976	Lucas	159 4/8
Kelly Smith	Knoxville	1977	Marion	159 2/8
David Brand	Ft. Gibson, OK	1977	Ringgold	159
John D. Evans	Marion	1976	Monroe	159
Lloyd Eekhoff	Steamboat Rock	1977	Hardin	157 7/8
Kevin Niebuhe	Fairbank	1977	Bremer	157 3/8
Kevin Voss	Missouri Valley	1977	Harrison	157 2/8
Bernard Gehrke	Sumner	1977	Fayette	155 7/8
Wendell E. Luko	Mt. Pleasant	1977	Henry	155
Joe Page	Harlan	1977	Shelby	154 7/8
Jack Arrasmith	Winterset	1977	Madison	153 2/8
Forrest Tenley	Stanwood	1975	Jones	152 5/8
Roy Shedd	Des Moines	1977	Marion	152 1/8
Jerald Fenton	Melrose	1976	Lucas	152
Austin Connor	Cumming	1977	Madison	151 7/8
Doug Dawson	Des Moines	1977	Madison	151 4/8
Dicky Christianson	Waterville	1977	Allamakee	150 1/8

SHOTGUN NONTYPICAL (MINIMUM QUALIFYING SCORE — 170 POINTS)

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
David Mandersheid	Welton	1977	Jackson	253 3/8
Mike Pies	Ackley	1977	Hardin	221 2/8
Tom McCormick	Harpers Ferry	1977	Allamakee	215 1/8
Ronald Eickhold	Correctionville	1977	Woodbury	203
Jeff Baughman	Pulaski	1977	Henry	195 2/8
M. P. Schonhoff	Dubuque	1977	Dubuque	188
Jack McLain	Danville	1977	Henry	177
Steve Haase	Boone	1971	Boone	175 6/8

BOW AND ARROW TYPICAL (MINIMUM QUALIFYING SCORE — 135 POINTS)

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
*Robert Miller	Wyoming	1977	Jones	198 1/8
Gary McCormick	Anamosa	1976	Jones	161 4/8
Jim Wanned	Sioux City	1977	Woodbury	156 3/8
Gordon Headlee	Coon Rapids	1977	Guthrie	154
Kendal R. Miller	Rock Valley	1976	Sioux	153 3/8
Fred Weimerslage	New Albin	1977	Allamakee	152 6/8
Donald Bennett	Monroe	1977	Marion	145 4/8
Joe Walleser	Harpers Ferry	1976	Allamakee	144 4/8
Robert Millius	Dubuque	1977	Jackson	142 6/8
Thomas L. Tucker	Knoxville	1970	Marion	141 6/8
Dan Gilbert	Amara	1974	Iowa	137 3/8
Larry Kruse	Lake City	1973	Calhoun	136 6/8

BOW AND ARROW NONTYPICAL (MINIMUM QUALIFYING SCORE — 155 POINTS)

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
*Jerry M. Monson	Clear Lake	1977	Cerro Gordo	220 7/8
Dorrance Arnold	Oelwein	1977	Clayton	199 7/8
Lyle Miller	Vinton	1977	Benton	188 3/8

* NEW STATE RECORD

Help At Last for Nongame Wildlife?

By Roger Sparks

THIS YEAR marks the beginning of what the Iowa Conservation Commission hopes will be a successful nongame wildlife program. A \$5.00 nongame support certificate is now on sale and will provide an opportunity for all persons with an interest in bettering Iowa's wildlife to contribute.

Historically, hunters have carried the burden of financing wildlife programs nationwide. The track record for those contributions has been good, remarkably so when considering the vast economic forces working against wildlife habitat these days. Game species, receiving almost all the attention and money garnered from license fees and excise tax on sporting gear, have fared pretty well. Nongame species have ridden the "coat tails" of those hunted and have benefited from habitat development, land acquisition and enforcement. However, programs aimed specifically at nongame wildlife have been almost nonexistent. There are few research pro-

nongame species. There is only general knowledge of basic requirements of many kinds of animals not and management programs have been directed at the game species. True, wildlife agencies funded by dollars purchase natural areas which provide excellent habitat for nongame wildlife but money has not been spent for specific research and management programs.

How much help can the nongame support certificate provide? Probably not a great deal at first. Iowa didn't invent the nongame program and other states have had very limited success with it. But Iowans have shown increased interest in wildlife resources in recent years, and all programs exist in some form somewhere. In 1909 license fees paid for the first officer and now support more than 250 enforcement, management and research personnel.

What is the biggest benefit to nongame wildlife will come from the modifications of current

(Continued on Back Page)

1978-79

List of Iowa Shooting Preserves

Each Preserve Hunting Season is from September 1 - March 31 of Each Year

SHOOTING PRESERVE NAME	OWNER OR MANAGER	LOCATION FROM NEAREST TOWN	SPECIES AVAIL.*
Arrowhead Hunting Club Box 28, Goose Lake, IA 52750	John Mullin Owner	3½ miles SW of Goose Lake (public)	P-Q-C-M
Wingover Ranch RFD, Keokuk, IA 52632	John Broughton Manager	5 miles North of Keokuk (public)	P-Q-C-M
Oak View Game Farm Rt. 1, Prairie City, IA 50228	Ron DeBruin Owner	7 miles SW of Prairie City (public)	P-Q-C-M
North Star Shooting Preserve RFD, Montour, IA 50173	Arlo Hinegardner Owner	3 miles NE of Montour (public)	P-Q-BG
Outdoorsmen Hunting Club RFD, Webb, IA 51366	Larry Buettner Owner	4 miles West of Webb (public)	P-Q-C
Wilkes Shooting Preserve Rt. 1, Dorchester, IA 52140	Lyle Wilkes Owner	3½ miles NW of Dorchester (public)	P-Q
Wildlife Acres Rt. 3, Adel, IA 50003	Hank Rozanek Manager	1 mile East of Adel, IA (public)	P-Q-C

Public - Open to the general public.

Private - Hunting available to club members.

P - Quail C - Chukar M - Mallard T - Turkey BG - Big Game
* Resident Shooting Preserve License - \$5.00 (for use on shooting preserves only).

CONSERVATIONIST/NOVEMBER, 1978

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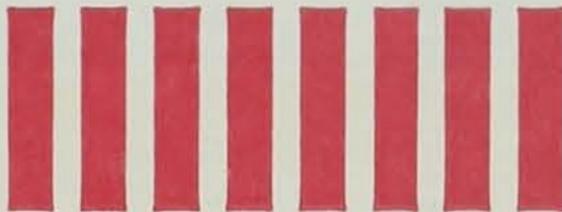
The scoring system used for Iowa records is identical to the Pope and Young and Boone and Crockett Clubs. The Pope and Young Club maintains scores for archery killed deer while Boone and Crockett keeps records for big game legally taken with firearms.

The four following classes with minimum scores for each will receive recognition:

Shotgun - Muzzleloader	Archery
Typical 150 Points	Typical 135 Points
Nontypical 170 Points	Nontypical 155 Points

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From _____ Zip _____



Total Score
253.38
221.28
215.18
203
195.28
188
177
175.68

Total Score
198.18
161.48
156.38
154
153.38
152.68
145.48
144.48
142.68
141.68
137.38
136.68

Total Score
220.78
199.78
188.38

1978 Record Racks



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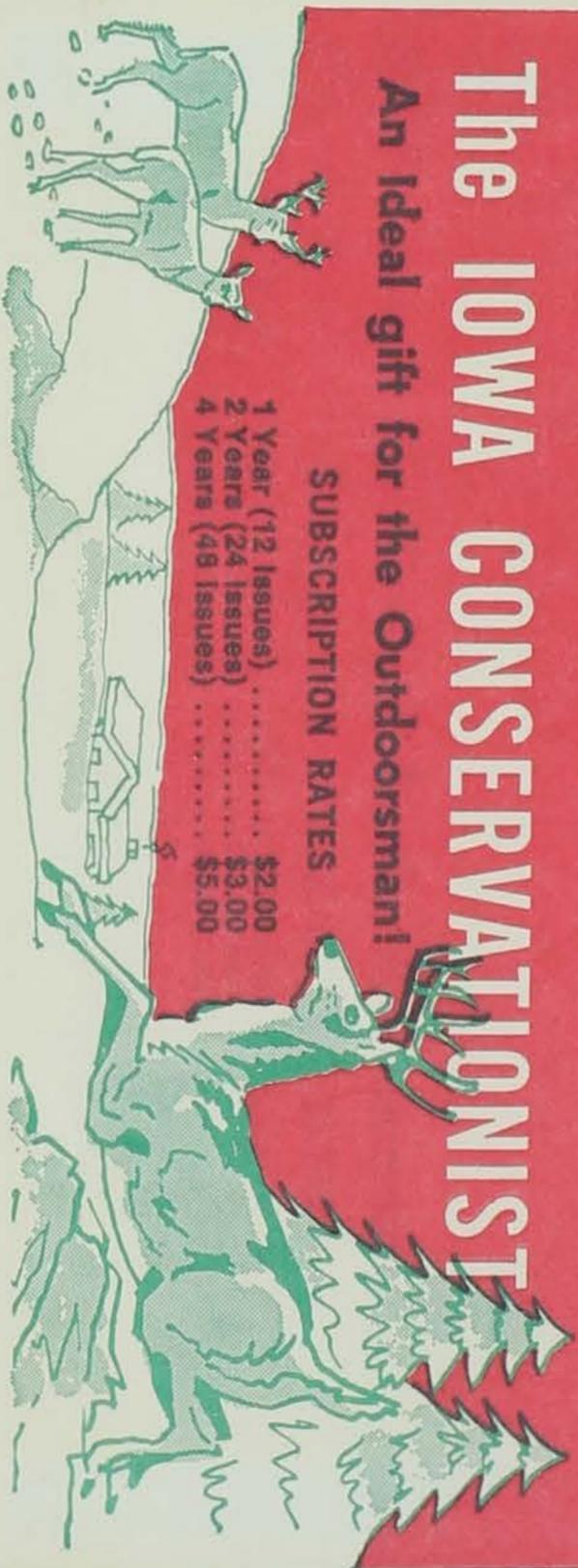
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Racks M

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Austin Connor	Cumming	1977	Madison
Doug Dawson	Des Moines	1977	Madison
Dicky Christianson	Waterville	1977	Allamakee



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Help At Last for Nongame Wildlife?

By Roger Sparks

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1978-79

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IOWA CONSERVATIONIST/NOVEMBER, 1978

9

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The four following classes with minimum scores for each will receive recognition:

Shotgun - Muzzleloader		Archery	
Typical150 Points	Typical135 Points
Nontypical170 Points	Nontypical155 Points

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1978 Record Racks



Robert Miller of Wyoming (Iowa) with his winning rack in the bow and arrow typical class.

Racks M

SHOTGUN TYPICAL (MINIMUM QUALIFYING SCORE — 150 P)

Name	Address	Year	County	Tal
Stan Means	Villisca	1977	Montgome	
William J. Musgrove	Muscatine	1977	Keokuk	
Greg Zirbel	Mason City	1977	Winnebago	
Robert W. Albright	West Chester	1977	Van Buren	
Joe Petra	Boone	1977	Cass	
Dick Steinke	Cedar Rapids	1977	Van Buren	
Jeff Wonderlich	Ollie	1977	Keokuk	
Buddy Crum	Des Moines	1977	Decatur	
Weston Laing	Chariton	1977	Lucas	
Don Kunch	Derby	1977	Lucas	
Alan Bronner	Cresco	1975	Howard	
Larry Asche	Parkersburg	1976	Butler	
Kenneth Lycke	Rowan	1977	Wright	
Edwin McCollum	Bartlett	1975	Fremont	
Vern Chandler	Lacona	1976	Lucas	
Kelly Smith	Knoxville	1977	Marion	
David Brand	Ft. Gibson, OK	1977	Ringgold	
John D. Evans	Marion	1976	Monroe	
Lloyd Eekhoff	Steamboat Rock	1977	Hardin	
Kevin Niebuhe	Fairbank	1977	Bremer	
Kevin Voss	Missouri Valley	1977	Harrison	
Bernard Gehrke	Sumner	1977	Fayette	
Wendell E. Luko	Mt. Pleasant	1977	Henry	
Joe Page	Harlan	1977	Shelby	
Jack Arrasmith	Winterset	1977	Madison	
Forrest Tenley	Stanwood	1975	Jones	
Roy Shedd	Des Moines	1977	Marion	
Jerald Fenton	Melrose	1976	Lucas	
Austin Connor	Cumming	1977	Madison	
Doug Dawson	Des Moines	1977	Madison	
Dicky Christianson	Waterville	1977	Allamakee	

Two new state records highlight the record deer rack entries for the 1978 registry. In all over sixty whitetail racks qualified record rack honors.

Both bow and arrow records were broken in 1977. The Typical record now belongs to Robert Miller of Wyoming, Iowa. Miller took a deer with a rack measuring 198-1/8. This topped Lloyd Goad's deer which he took in 1962.

The Non-Typical record was smashed by Jerry Monson of Clear Lake with a rack which measured 220-7/8. This topped by more than four points the old record held by Blaine Salzkorn.

The top typical deer rack taken in 1977 by shotgun was one shot by Stan Means of Villisca. It measured 171-2/8. The top non-typical rack was taken by David Mandersheid of Welton. The 253-3/8 point rack now ranks third on the Iowa all-time list.

In order to enter your trophy it must be legally taken with bow and arrow or shotgun - muzzleloader within Iowa boun-

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Help At Last for Nongame Wildlife?

By Roger Sparks

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Historically, hunters have carried the burden of financing wildlife programs nationwide. The track record for those contributions has been good, remarkably so when considering the vast economic forces working against wildlife habitat these days. Game species, receiving almost all the attention and money garnered from license fees and excise tax on sporting gear, have fared pretty well. Nongame species have ridden the "coat tails" of those hunted and have benefited from habitat development, land acquisition and enforcement. However, programs aimed specifically at nongame wildlife have been almost nonexistent. There are few research projects on nongame species. There is only general knowledge about the basic requirements of many kinds of animals not hunted and management programs have been directed toward the game species. True, wildlife agencies funded by hunter dollars purchase natural areas which provide excellent habitat for nongame wildlife but money has not been available for specific research and management programs.

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Typical	150 Points	Typical	135 Points
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New All-Time Top Ten Racks

SHOTGUN TYPICAL

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
Wayne A. Bills	Des Moines	1974	Hamilton	199 5/8
George L. Ross	Ottumwa	1969	Wapello	195 1/8
Dennis Vaudt	Storm Lake	1974	Cherokee	187 4/8
Randall Forney	Glenwood	1971	Fremont	186 2/8
Jack W. Chidester, Jr.	Albia	1976	Monroe	186 1/8
Franklin Taylor	Blencoe	1976	Monona	185 6/8
Marvin Tippery	Council Bluffs	1971	Harrison	185 1/8
Wayne Swartz	Bedford	1967	Taylor	183 7/8
Austin Watters	Ottumwa	1974	Van Buren	183 6/8
Terry Daniel	Marshalltown	1967	Marshall	182 3/8

SHOTGUN NONTYPICAL

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
Larry Raveling	Emmetsburg	1973	Clay	282 5/8
Carrol Johnson	Moorhead	1968	Monona	256 2/8
David Mandersheid	Welton	1977	Jackson	253 3/8
Duane Fick	Des Moines	1972	Madison	228 2/8
LeRoy Everhart	Sumner	1969	Van Buren	224 4/8
Donald Crossley	Hardy	1971	Humboldt	221 4/8
Mike Pies	Ackley	1977	Hardin	221 2/8
John Meyers	Council Bluffs	1969	Pottawattamie	218 3/8
Tom McCormick	Harpers Ferry	1977	Allamakee	215 1/8
M. V. Bruening	Hawkeye	1954	Allamakee	215

BOW AND ARROW TYPICAL

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
Robert Miller	Wyoming	1977	Jones	198 1/8
Lloyd Goad	Knoxville	1962	Monroe	197 6/8
Gary Wilson	Cherokee	1974	Cherokee	175 4/8
Gordon Hayes	Knoxville	1973	Marion	175 1/8
Jack Douglas	Creston	1974	Union	173 2/8
Ardie Lockridge	Amama	1965	Iowa	172 2/8
Bob Fudge	Burlington	1966	Des Moines	170 4/8
Brad Vonk	Des Moines	1974	Warren	168 5/8
Loy J. Brooker	Clinton	1963	Clinton	166
Richard L. Larsen	Ottumwa	1976	Wapello	165 7/8

BOW AND ARROW NONTYPICAL

Name	Address	Year	County Taken	Total Score
Jerry Monson	Clear Lake	1977	Cerro Gordo	220 7/8
Blaine Salzkorn	Sutherland	1970	Clay	216 3/8
Bill Erwin	Sioux City	1966	Woodbury	202 5/8
Dorrance Arnold	Oelwein	1977	Clayton	199 7/8
Dennis Ballard	Iowa City	1971	Johnson	197 4/8
Lyle Miller	Vinton	1977	Benton	188 3/8
Richard Rekemeyer	Maquoketa	1974	Jackson	186 1/8
LeRoy Spiker	Harpers Ferry	1968	Allamakee	183 4/8
H. F. Nelson	Iowa Falls	1964	Hardin	181 3/8
Dan Mueller	Donnellson	1974	Lee	169 3/8

1 YEAR \$2.00
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4 YEARS \$5.00

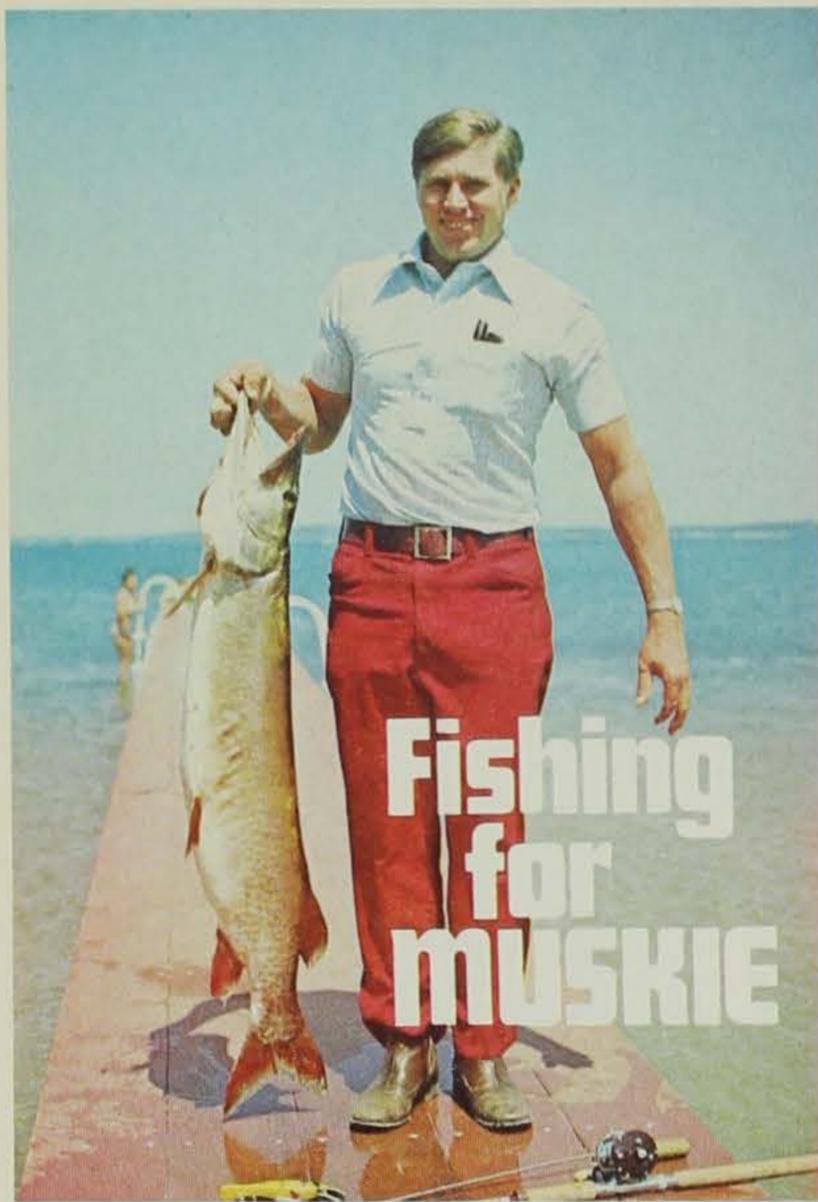


PHOTO BY BOB RUNGE

BY DICK McWILLIAMS
FISHERIES RESEARCH BIOLOGIST

If you're visiting a lake and see a boater charging along with a stout pole in hand, check again; he may not be crazy. He may be just fishing for Iowa's newest trophy fish and renowned battler, muskie. Since the advent of the program in 1960, the muskie has become one of the better known and ardently sought trophy fish species in the state. Originally, muskie were stocked in Clear Lake and West Okoboji, but with the development of brood stock populations, the program has been expanded and muskie are now stocked in Big Creek Lake, Spirit Lake and Lake Rathbun. The muskie (*Esox masquinongy*) is known by a variety of common names, including the tiger or jack muskelunge, muskelunge, maskinonge and great pike. It is a close relative of the more common northern pike and was originally found in various parts of Iowa.

Catching a muskie usually requires heavy tackle, some oversized lures and a change in fishing techniques. To learn about the various techniques and types of tackle employed in fishing for muskie in Iowa, I visited with Ed Feldhacker, the current Iowa muskie record holder (and world record holder for the largest muskie taken on 25 pound test line) and Leo Kofoot, former state record holder.

Although, like most fishing equipment you can spend a small fortune buying certain items, the basic equipment can be purchased for about \$60. A stiff rod, normally 4-5 feet long capable of handling 20-30 pound test line is almost a must for trolling. There are several spinning or casting reels on the market from \$20-25 and up, but regardless of cost it should be a good sturdy reel. Both Leo and Ed used monofilament line and, although heavier lines are available, 25 pound test should be adequate for most situations. For deep water trolling (30

feet or deeper), Leo Kofoot preferred a monel wire line to allow the lures to reach these depths while speed trolling. The wire line is heavier and doesn't require additional weight to pull the lures to the bottom as does monofilament line. Another important piece of equipment not to be overlooked is the leader. Short leaders were not recommended, with a 3 foot steel leader the most desirable. The reason for a longer leader is after a muskie hits, there is a good chance during the fight it will roll with the leader thus wrapping the line around the head and *opercula* (gill cover). An ordinary monofilament line may be cut in the process, leaving the unlucky angler with nothing but a big fish story. Incidentally, this almost happened to Ed Feldhacker, but luck was with him and the fish was netted when the line broke. This may tend to make people think a heavier tackle is necessary, but it isn't.



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

According to most muskie anglers, the beginners normally use heavier than necessary tackle and consequently miss some good strikes.

A variety of oversized spoons, plugs, bucktails and other types of plugs are used for muskie. For speed trolling Ed and Leo preferred a deep running spoon or plug. Both said one purpose of the spoons was to rise the ire of lurking muskie to a point where they would strike. For casting, jerk baits were favorites along with large bucktails and spinners.

Speed trolling is a different but effective technique. As speed trolling is jokingly described, go just fast enough to pull a skier. Actually, the boat is moving from 5-10 m.p.h., depending on water depth, type of lure and angler preference. At those speeds a good strike or snagging a rock or underwater obstacle can jerk the rod right out of the boat, so it pays to have the rod firmly in hand and the drag properly adjusted. As has been pointed out, the proper time to set a drag is *prior* to a hit, *not* while fighting or trying to land a fish.

Fishing is normally best along beds of submergent vegetation, along drop-offs, and along rock reefs. Depth will vary, depending on the lake and time of year but generally the best method is to allow the lures to run close to the bottom. Both Leo and Ed agreed the best time for muskie fishing is September-October with dusk or sunrise the best time of day. However, it was quickly pointed out, no one really knows when a muskie will decide to strike.

Another important ingredient mentioned by both Ed and Leo and also by Larry Bendlin, another muskie enthusiast, is patience. Don't expect to hook into a muskie every time out, although you may well catch northern pike, smallmouth bass, walleye or some other fish species. The catch success for muskie is among the lowest for freshwater fishing with an average of one muskie caught for every 10,000 casts. Why then would anyone fish for muskie? The answer is simple yet hard to describe to anyone not a fisherman — the indescribable thrill associated with the first strike and lunge of this fighting fish. As Ed Feldhacker described his experience, after fighting the muskie for an hour and finally getting it in the boat, "I let out a yell that could be heard at the other end of the lake". And with that it's time to go . . . except, some reliable muskie anglers say there's a 50 pound muskie lurking, just waiting for the right moment, then . . . □

Lookin' Back

Ten years ago



the Conservationist ran a special feature urging hunters to be careful and courteous. The Conservation Commission has always encouraged hunters to use common sense both in hunting safety and also in asking permission before entering private land.

In another story hunters were encouraged to enjoy their sport without being obsessed with shooting a "limit." It is not whether you get your limit, but whether you enjoyed the opportunity to hunt.

Twenty years ago



the magazine featured a story introducing eight new waterfowl hunting areas. Forneys Lake and Riverton were not new but did have more acres of water area that year. The new areas were: Walnut Creek, Ringgold County; Bays Branch, Guthrie County; Big Marsh, Butler County; Weise Slough, Muscatine County; Troy Mills, Buchanan County; and the Princeton Area, Scott County.

The outlook was bright for the 1958 quail and pheasant seasons.

Thirty years ago



the Conservationist investigated the effects of winter feeding on game birds. It was noted that although it did help local populations in times of severe ice and snow, to ever attempt it on a large scale would be very impractical. In addition it was not deemed wise to encourage birds to depend on artificial feeding.

The Commission approved a study on the proposed Saylorville Reservoir.



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Deer + Car + Lights = CRASH!

by Wendell Simonson
CONSERVATION OFFICER

When the phone by my bed rings at 2:00 a.m. — it seems especially harsh! I can be almost one hundred percent sure of what it will be.

"C-352 — this is Cedar Rapids State Radio — you've got a car-deer 10-50 PD one mile north of Iowa river on I-380"
"10-4, I'll be 10-76."

In plain language — that means I'll be getting out of bed to go check another car-deer accident!

I could see flashing red lights about a mile ahead when I crossed the river bridge. A State Trooper helped me load the big buck onto my small trailer — it was pretty bloody and broken up — not fit for human consumption. This one would go to the burial pit. Had it been in good shape and the driver desired, I could have tagged it with a deer tag and he could have taken it home to butcher — he would have had first choice. Second choice is a charitable organization, third choice a non-profit group, and lastly — anyone else. A courteous

warning: get the deer tagged by the officer before transporting it.



The front end of the driver's vehicle was badly damaged — grill, hood, headlights, and the radiator smashed into the fan. Anti-freeze was running all over the shoulder. The driver admitted seeing the bright deer-crossing sign back up the road a short distance — but he'd never seen a deer there before . . . ! The wrecker soon arrived, cleaned up the glass and broken chrome, and left the scene.

Iowa's Conservation Officers are checking about three thousand car-deer accidents a year now. This officer checked about one hundred in Johnson county last year and will probably

exceed that figure this year. Some deer also hit crawl off into the brush to die and are never reported. Peak periods are during the rutting season in the fall, when many big bucks are killed. I have had as many as four car-deer kills in one evening — this ruins my whole night! We also have quite a few pregnant does hit during April and May. They are heavy and clumsy, and are seeking out remote areas to give birth to their young. During the spring months we "post" the pregnant does, measure the unborn fawns and take teeth samples from the doe for research being conducted by the biologists of our department.

While the major crossings are well known and well marked on our major highways, the car-deer accidents can happen on gravel roads out on the open prairie — sometimes even within city limits. So, when you see shining eyes adjacent to the road some night, be alert and ease off the gas pedal — a sudden collision with a deer might well ruin your whole evening!



PHOTO BY RON JOHNSON

EDITORIAL

Timber Resource Disappearing in Iowa

by Robert Grau

Each year thousands upon thousands of Iowans use and enjoy the native timberlands scattered over the state. Some are hunters who seek the deer, raccoon, quail, ruffed grouse, wild turkey etc. and spend, in total, millions of dollars in pursuit of this recreation. Some are loggers who seek the logs for lumber, railroad ties, pulpwood, and veneer — the principal money crop that these areas can produce when kept as timberlands. Some are people who drive many miles just to see the splendor of the autumn colors on the woodland hillsides. And there are those who simply enjoy walking in the woods and studying the various forms of life found there — the birds, animals, insects, flowers, shrubs, trees, etc. Some increasingly rare forms of life are found only in some of these woodlands.

Economics and high land prices are encouraging the rapid conversion of these woodlands to a use that the owner considers more profitable. Thirty years ago it was estimated that there were 2½ million acres of timberland in our state. In a survey in 1974 it was found that only 1.6 million acres remained. Since that survey, thousands of acres have succumbed to the bulldozer. The rate of conversion in the last couple of years has accelerated rather than declined because of the continued inflation of land prices and because of larger and heavier equipment that can clear land much more quickly and more economically than in the past. In many cases this land had not been cleared before because the soil was not considered good enough for farm crops or because the land was so rolling that it was feared that the soil would be lost and a wasteland would result. This land is now being cleared and will pose a serious erosion problem and the water holding capacity of some watersheds will be seriously reduced. The farm owner is likely to clear the land regardless of the cost to the environment because of

his economic needs. It takes only a short time to clear and bulldoze a good young timber, but it may take one hundred years to restore that land to its function as a producer of timber and as a water holding resource.

There has never been a vast acreage of timberland in Iowa in comparison to the total land area. However, this makes the area that we do have even more valuable to the residents of this state — particularly those who enjoy using this resource. We can-

not justify keeping these lands for timber production alone since land prices have reached astronomical figures. However, there should be some way to make it economically feasible, as well as aesthetically and environmentally necessary, to avoid bulldozing away this natural resource. If those who spend millions of dollars using and enjoying this resource were to consider the value that they receive from this land and this were added to the timber production value, it

would seem profitable to keep more of this land in timber production. Hunters spend millions of dollars on equipment every year — surely it should be worth something to them to have a place to hunt. There is no way that even a good timberland can produce as much monetary return in one year as good crop land. If a man keeps his timber and protects it from grazing so that it maintains its water holding capacity, his neighbor will likely benefit as much or more than he does.

The public expects the landowner to shoulder the cost and liability of owning timber, while the public shares many of the benefits. The landowner does not receive dollars from the aesthetic and environmental values and can not use them in making his decision to clear or not to clear. There should be some way for the timber owner to justify to himself the decision to keep the land producing timber crops with the additional benefits for all of us. □

INDIAN BLUFFS AND PICTURED ROCKS

(Continued from Page 7)

homestakes with the precious commodity. The abundant wild game meant survival when next to worthless currency under such interesting names as "red dog", "wildcat" and "stumptail" would purchase very little. The constant need for settlers to hunt, reinforced a somewhat weakened "east coast" knowledge and enjoyment for hunting. That rekindled spirit for hunting and fishing lasts today.

Black bear were common to both of these wildlife areas. One account by John McDonald in 1861 reveals McDonald finishing chores and turning to find a huge black bear in the barnyard. With his hunting instincts fully aroused, McDonald was all attention. He had guns but alas no bullets. In the work of a short time, lead balls were molded. The boys started after the bear and when John was ready, he followed on horseback. The bear was found and John took shot. The first ball tossed fresh snow by the nose of the bear. While reloading on horseback in the brush, John's horse was bit on the knee by the bear. The horse charged and fractured some ribs on the bear. Another attempt to shoot the bear was made but the dampness caused the caps to snap. After three more attempts, John was about to retreat in disgust but found one more cap in his pocket. This warm cap saw that the bear tramped his last tramp. At the age of 85, with sparkle in his eye, Mr. McDonald relayed this encounter to the editor of "A History of Jones County" while at his long time home five miles below the Pictured Rocks area in 1910.

More settlers came and in 1835 Alexander McClain, a Scottish pioneer down from the Red River and Winnipeg, declared the Pictured Rocks and Indian Bluffs portion of the country a fine area in which to settle and build grist mills. He returned with his message to Jon Sutlerland and his ten sons. In 1837, with two wheeled wooden wagons made without an ounce of iron, the Scottish settlers came to find the present nearby village of Scotch Grove. From 1000 miles away, they came with the accompanying ear-piercing shrieks of the wooden axles. The carts were drawn by a bullock or cow fastened with rawhide buffalo thongs. By 1858, the first grist mill located in the heart of the wildlife complex was operating under name of "Eby's Mill." The first local sawmill was built by Mr. Dale at what is known as "Dales Pond". It ran prosperously until a horrendous rain in June of 1865. The river rose 17 feet and took the sawmill to points yet unknown.

Tibb's Mill, also located in the heart of the wildlife complex was constructed in 1860. It produced up to 1000 feet of lumber a day for nearby prairie settlers needing fencing lumber. It also floated away in the floods of 1876. These mills caused the value of this timberland to raise from \$7.75/acre to \$30-40/acre. Then in the mid 1860's came barbed wire. The first wire fence was strung by John E. Holmes and was built by boring holes through wooden posts, stringing smooth wire and then applying the barbs. Such practice reduced the value of timberland back to \$12-15 an acre.

These few accounts are a small smattering of the history surrounding the Pictured Rocks and Indian Bluffs Wildlife Areas. If only there were written accounts of Indian History revealing the wildlife resources in the area, we would have a rich history indeed.

The region is abundant with cave systems. I can, without a doubt, account for Black bear, elk, wild turkey, and deer in the area. I have visited several caves that were excavated by interested explorers 30-40 years ago. I have witnessed bone artifacts including the jaw of a bear and leg and wing bones of elk and wild turkey providing interesting proof of what the area once held.

Today many of the same species can be found, excepting the bear, elk, prairie chicken, and passenger pigeon. Wild turkeys have been reintroduced into the area and are doing exceptionally well . . . proof that the second growth, undisturbed hardwood forest is providing what is needed by this species. The management program for the area is aimed at forest wildlife. Small fields of cultivated cropland interspersed throughout a forest that exhibits a healthy understory is beginning to provide all points to the magic wildlife triangle — food, cover, and nesting or breeding habitat. The particular stretch of the Maquoketa River coursing through both areas provides excellent smallmouth bass fishing, as well as occasional walleye and northern.

Any hunter, fisherman, canoeist, or naturalist can reach the complex by driving to the Pictured Rocks public access point four miles south of Monticello on U.S. Highway 38. That portion of the complex on the north bank of the river can be reached by studying a county map and then driving to the river access point within the Indian Bluffs Wildlife area just downstream of Jordan Creek and the historic Dales Mill. I wish you well on your travels, fellow explorer. □

WATCH THAT MUZZLE!

by Bob Mullen
STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER

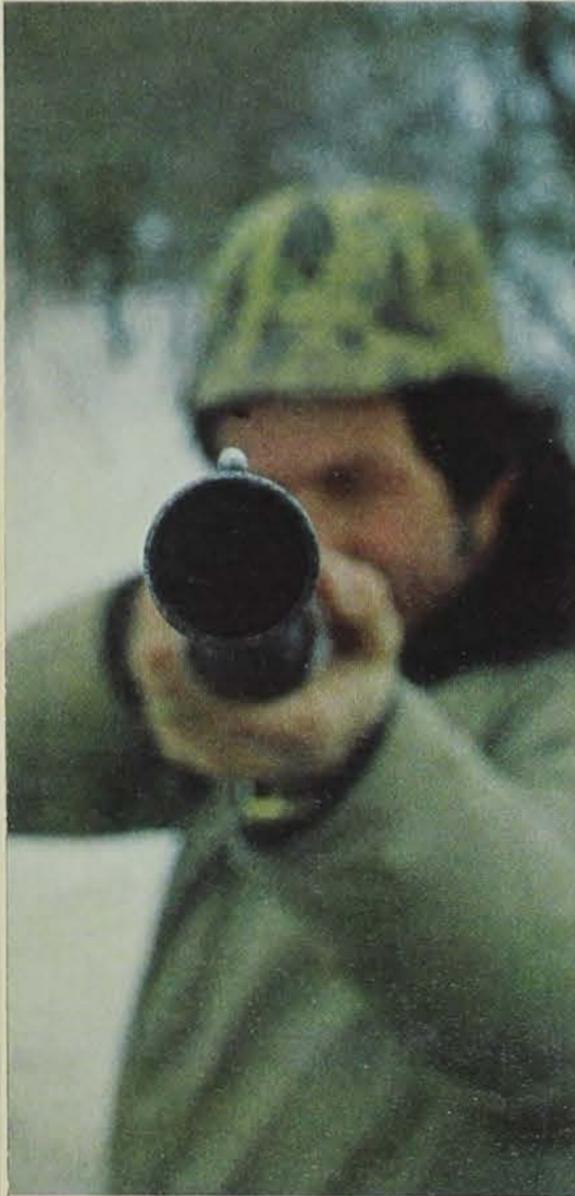


PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

As a safe hunter, you have many responsibilities toward conservation, the landowner, and to yourself. Most important is your responsibility toward safe gun handling.

Always point the gun muzzle in a safe direction. This is one of the basic rules of firearms safety. If you will just **think first** this is a very simple rule to follow. Gun accidents are caused by persons that do not think, or use common sense when they use a firearm.

Safety rules are only effective if they are remembered and applied by each individual. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction. This means you must keep the gun muzzle pointed away from people at all times. It only takes a fraction of a second for a firearm accident to take place. If a gun should accidentally discharge while pointed at someone, it's too late to prevent serious injury or death. If the hunter keeps the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, and the gun should discharge, no one will be injured.

A firearm should be placed so it can not be accidentally knocked over and discharged at someone. Leaning a gun against a fence post, a tree trunk, against the side of the car, or against a fence is creating a situation where a gun accident could occur. When stopping in the field, unload the firearm and lay it down so it cannot be knocked over. This is nothing more than common sense. If a firearm is mishandled someone can be put in danger.

The possibility of accidental discharge of a gun should never be forgotten. A careless move, or a sudden fall, and a gun could go off. The safe hunter **never** allows the muzzle to point at himself or someone else. Remember that bullets will penetrate walls, floors, windows, and will also ricochet from flat surfaces, including water. Pointing the muzzle in a safe direction depends on where you are — indoors, afield or on the range.

It's your responsibility to not only know the rules of gun safety, but to use them constantly when handling a firearm. □

Warden's diary

by Rex Emerson
LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPERVISOR

"HEY, it's about time for the pheasant season to open. You guys will have to go to work."

That's what the officers hear every year just prior to the pheasant season. Makes us wonder who they think has been checking all those fishing licenses, sitting on fish traps, conducting hunter safety courses, talking to people at club meetings and outdoor classrooms for those of school age.

There are also car killed deer to take care of, wildlife surveys to make, nuisance animal complaints, and people who illegally kidnap young animals for pets. About the time you think everything is under control some person shoots a protected bird, such as an owl or hawk, so his kid can learn to be a taxidermist. Our work changes from season to season, but it never ends. I like having an unlimited number of duties as the work never becomes boring, at least not for very long.

Law enforcement is a tool of fish and wildlife management. In my own *biased* opinion it is the most important tool of management. Seasons and limits can be set for biological reasons, but wouldn't be very successful if

the seasons and limits were not enforced. Actually it takes the entire management program to be successful in the wildlife business. About the time one thinks everything is going well the habitat changes, and it's "back to the drawing board". For instance, when we had government set-aside acres, the pheasant population exploded. Iowa had the best pheasant hunting in the United States for several years. When the set-aside acres program ended the habitat dwindled and the pheasant population went down accordingly. We still have excellent pheasant hunting, but nothing like that enjoyed a few years ago. That is sure proof the abundance of wildlife depends directly on the amount of cover, or habitat.

Some people think the pheasant season should be closed for two or three years to "let them get really thick". Well, it just doesn't work that way. The human population would diminish greatly if it didn't have adequate shelter. It works that same way with wildlife.

Approximately half of the pheasants hatched are roosters. That many roosters are not needed for reproduction. In fact, that many roosters

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would do more harm than good. Just ask any chicken rancher how that works. Therefore, it is possible to have a limited harvest of rooster pheasants, and still fill the existing habitat to capacity.

If there had been a wildlife management program many years ago, perhaps we would still have the passenger pigeon, but I doubt very much if we would still have wild buffalo *roaming* the Iowa fields. The buffalo range was turned into cornfields with barbed wire fences around them. Naturally it is the hunter who gets blamed for the depletion of the buffalo herds just as he is for the pheasant crop being a little smaller than it was a few years ago. The next time you are out in the country when we have a complete snow cover, take time to look around. Then ask yourself, "Where would I sleep tonight if I was a pheasant?"

When you go pheasant hunting don't shoot the hens. If you can't tell a hen from a rooster you shouldn't be out there. Last year we found a fellow who didn't know we could tell a hen from a rooster after he had dressed the bird. Another man didn't think we would find a hen hidden behind his spare tire. Each claimed the hen was a "mistake" shot, which I didn't buy at all. If the sun gets in your eyes, as one person described his "mistake", then just don't shoot at all.

One man had a hen pheasant which he claimed had been hit by a car and killed. He didn't want it to go to waste. Had he left it on the road it wouldn't have gone to waste. There are animals that need food, too, and would appreciate the easy meal of a car killed pheasant. If we permitted people to have "mistake" birds, or car killed birds, we would soon lose all control on wildlife. Everyone would expect a few "mistake" birds.

Yes, the Conservation Officer will have to go to work when the pheasant season opens — just as he does at all other seasons of the year. The time of day or the work that he is doing will vary greatly at different seasons, but he will be *working*. □

Classroom Corner



by Robert Rye

ADMINISTRATOR,
CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Do you know which Iowa mammal has the most teeth? Which one is related to a Kangaroo?

The opossum is an animal which has been frequently found by people using the Center. While they are most active in warmer weather, they can be noticed as late as November.

Groups of all ages have little knowledge of where these animals fit in nature or even what they look like. The opossum is a medium-sized animal with long, rather coarse fur. The body is predominantly grayish white, with the front and hind quarters darker and the belly lighter. The guard hairs, the longer ones, are all white while the short hairs are either all white or white with black tips.

This medium-sized animal is 24 to 34 inches including a 10-15 inch tail. It weighs 4-15 lbs. It has a pink nose, pink to white toes, black eyes, bluish black ears, and a tail that starts black and goes from a

yellowish white to pink. Also noted is a pointed slender muzzle, short legs, and a grasping tail covered with scales, which swings from side to side as the animal moves.

This information is usually covered in classes on fur bearers of Iowa during which tanned hides are studied. The value of a hide has been around \$1.60.

The opossum is also discussed when studying tracks class participants have found. The front feet have five claw-bearing toes, while the hind feet have four claw-bearing toes and a large first toe that is thumb-like. (see picture of tracks)

The opossum's home is any place that is dry, sheltered, and safe. They prefer to live in wooded areas near streams. Densely forested areas are not inhabited as greatly as areas like Springbrook where farming surrounds and divides the woods.

The opossums spotted by groups while studying near the Center have always

climbed trees in an attempt to escape. Several have been caught with a camera. They are basically shy, secretive, and nocturnal and most often seen along highways where they are often hit by vehicles.

The opossum is also noted for "playing opossum." None have ever done this for the groups. When they do, it is a reaction to a nervous shock from which the animal quickly recovers. When opossums play opossum, they lay on their side, become limp, close their eyes, and allow their tongues to hang out.

The opossum eats a variety of foods. We, as shown in the picture, even find them eating leftovers from the kitchen. Since they are scavengers, they do prefer animal matter, most of which is carrion. They also feed on insects, birds, bird eggs, snails, crayfish, earthworms, fruit, and corn.

The opossum is a pouched mammal — the only one in Iowa. This pouch is on the belly and on the female is fur lined and contains the teats. It is where the incompletely formed young are carried.

There are usually 2 litters a year. The young are born and climb 3½-4 inches up the female's fur with their front feet to the opening of the pouch. There they become firmly attached to a teat for 2 months. The young in the picture are probably 8-100 days of age.

Opossums are usually silent, but may give low growls, hissing or clicking sounds. The clicking sounds are used during the breeding period and to stimulate the young out of the den. The other sounds are used when disturbed. The main predators are dogs, man, foxes, coyotes, and the great horned owl.

The opossum fits into cycles. Cycles are series of events which bring us back to the beginning. The opossum fills many roles which are studied at the Center. One time they are scavengers, another time a fur bearer, another time producing new opossums, another time feeding on insects and so on. Look around and you will find that other plants and animals fit somewhere in many different types of cycles. □

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CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) Male

IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The first Iowa Nongame Support Certificate features a male cardinal photographed by Commission photographer Ken Formanek. Each of the 5000 prints will be individually numbered. Revenue from the sale of these collectors' items

will be used specifically to enhance Iowa's nongame species. They are available now and can be purchased for \$5 each from the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

(Continued from Page 9) game management programs. For example, one research project on song birds may disclose a fact about the habitat required by that species. That information may then be used to modify vegetative management plans on a quarter million acres of wildlife lands across the state. The end result may be a definite and noticeable increase in numbers of that particular bird. Or perhaps enough money will be available from the certificate to purchase small tracts of land crucial to one or more members on the state's endangered species list. Chances are the first dollars will go into determining the population status and identifying the critical habitat of a nongame species. Ultimately, these facts are necessary to purchase and manage land. One thing is certain — the money must be specifically earmarked for enhancement of nongame species and cannot be siphoned into game programs.

No one knows just how much revenue will be forthcoming from the nongame support certificate. In other states, the col-

lection plate has come back pretty light and a survey conducted by one state indicated that, to no one's surprise, most nongame dollars were being contributed by hunters. Obviously, there are many hundreds of thousands of outdoor enthusiasts who do not choose to hunt in this state but can afford to contribute \$5.00 to a program specifically designed to benefit nongame species. If even a minute percentage of these people would purchase a certificate, a potentially fine program would become a reality.

So, the challenge is there. This generation may be the first in Iowa to recognize the value of all its wildlife. This generation may be remembered for its farsighted conservation programs and its wise stewardship of a precious resource. This nongame support certificate may be the first of many, one day collected, framed and valued for its proud history. Or it may only be remembered in books, like the varied and colorful wildlife we take for granted today.