



# conservationist

FEBRUARY 1979





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COVER: Black-billed cuckoo by Jim Landenberger of Cedar Rapids.

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# The Real Cuckoo

THANKS to a mourning dove nesting study being conducted by the Iowa Conservation Commission, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we are expanding our knowledge of the nesting habits of several Iowa birds, including cardinals, orioles, thrashers, and cuckoos.

We are all familiar with cuckoo clocks (with their noisy mechanical birds) and expressions such as, "He's a real cuckoo" (meaning "scatterbrained" or crazy), but many people have never seen a real live cuckoo.

There are six members of the cuckoo family that occur in the United States. The mangrove cuckoo lives in the dense thickets of the mangrove swamps in

Florida and, like most cuckoos, feeds on insects (caterpillars, grasshoppers, moths, etc). Another member of this family from Florida, the smooth-billed ani, is a dark black bird with a large curved upper bill which gives it a unique appearance. The groove-billed ani of Texas is similar to the smooth-billed ani but it doesn't have as high a curved upper bill and the bill is grooved, not smooth. Anis are interesting in that several females will lay their eggs in the same nest and then many of them will incubate simultaneously. The road runner, as its name suggests, is a fast and agile runner which dwells in the arid southwestern United States. Besides insects, the "Chaparral," as it is sometimes called,

PHOTO BY LOREN SMITH





will feed on vertebrates such as small snakes, lizards, rodents and some birds.

The two species of cuckoos found in Iowa are the black-billed and yellow-billed cuckoos. Both winter in South America and return to North America to breed. The two are similar in appearance — dull brown color on top and white below. They are both about the size of a brown thrasher, but the yellow-billed cuckoo has black markings and large white spots on the underside tips of the tail feathers and a reddish color on the wings. The black-billed cuckoo lacks the reddish color on the wings and has only small, white spots and pale gray markings on the underside of the tail. Upon closer examination, one discovers that the yellow-billed cuckoo has a yellow eye ring and a yellow lower bill, while the black-billed cuckoo has a red eye ring and a dark-colored bill.

The yellow-billed cuckoo is one species of bird which is able to focus its eyes on things either in front of or behind its head! Also this bird, along with its cousin the roadrunner, practices the behavior of courtship feeding in which the male offers the female some type of food during mating. This apparently assures the female that her mate's intentions are good. Both the yellow-billed cuckoo and the black-billed cuckoo are known as the "Rain Crow" because they have the habit of voicing their calls before a storm.

Both species of cuckoos build a nest of twigs and lay two to four pale blue eggs. The black-billed cuckoo's eggs are darker colored and a little smaller. Cuckoos are known to lay their eggs in each other's nests as well as in other birds' nests. If this happens, a young cuckoo may push its nest mates out of the nest and become the sole inhabitant. The majority of the cuckoo nests we found were in red, white, or scotch pine trees, although some deciduous cover was also used. The nesting season, as we witnessed it in southern Iowa, was from about the end of May to the end of June. These birds reproduce quickly, with incubation lasting 11 to 12 days and a fledgling time of only seven to nine days.



PHOTOS BY RON GEORGE

Sawfly larvae feeding on pine needles, a possible food source for the now-abundant cuckoos.

The yellow-billed cuckoo is a fairly common nester in this state, but the black-billed cuckoo was given an "undetermined" status by State Ecologist Dean Roosa in the 1977 report on "Endangered Iowa Birds". This means that the bird is known to breed in Iowa although not enough has been learned about the bird, and it could become "threatened" in the future.

Dean Stauffer, a graduate student at Iowa State University, who conducted a bird nesting study in Guthrie County during the summers of 1976 and 1977, found five black-billed and nine yellow-billed cuckoo nests. During our 1978 mourning dove nesting study in Lucas County, we found 10 black-billed and five yellow-billed cuckoo nests. This relative abundance of cuckoo nests could be explained in a couple of ways. First, cuckoos are known to be abundant during caterpillar outbreaks, and the pine trees in our study area this spring contained large numbers of caterpillar-like sawfly larvae which feed on the needles of pine trees. Possibly the cuckoos utilized the larvae as an abundant food source. Also, cuckoos are known to select dense secondary vegetation for nesting and their nests may be overlooked by casual observers.

When you are out next summer keep an eye out for these beneficial and somewhat secretive birds; it should be quite an experience. □

Left: Young yellow-billed cuckoo and (below) yellow-billed cuckoo nest. Below, right: Young black-billed Cuckoos.





# THE MANAWA STORY

By James Clouse

*Courtesy Frank Smetana and Jerry Reisinger*

It is a gay, frivolous place. A wealthy peoples' resort. Hundreds of well known personalities visit the area each year. There is an unmistakable air of fantasy pervading it, yet it is a place of tragedy also. There seems to be one disaster followed by another. In many ways it presents a singularly strange mixture of gaiety and sorrow. The place: Lake Manawa in south Council Bluffs; the time period: the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

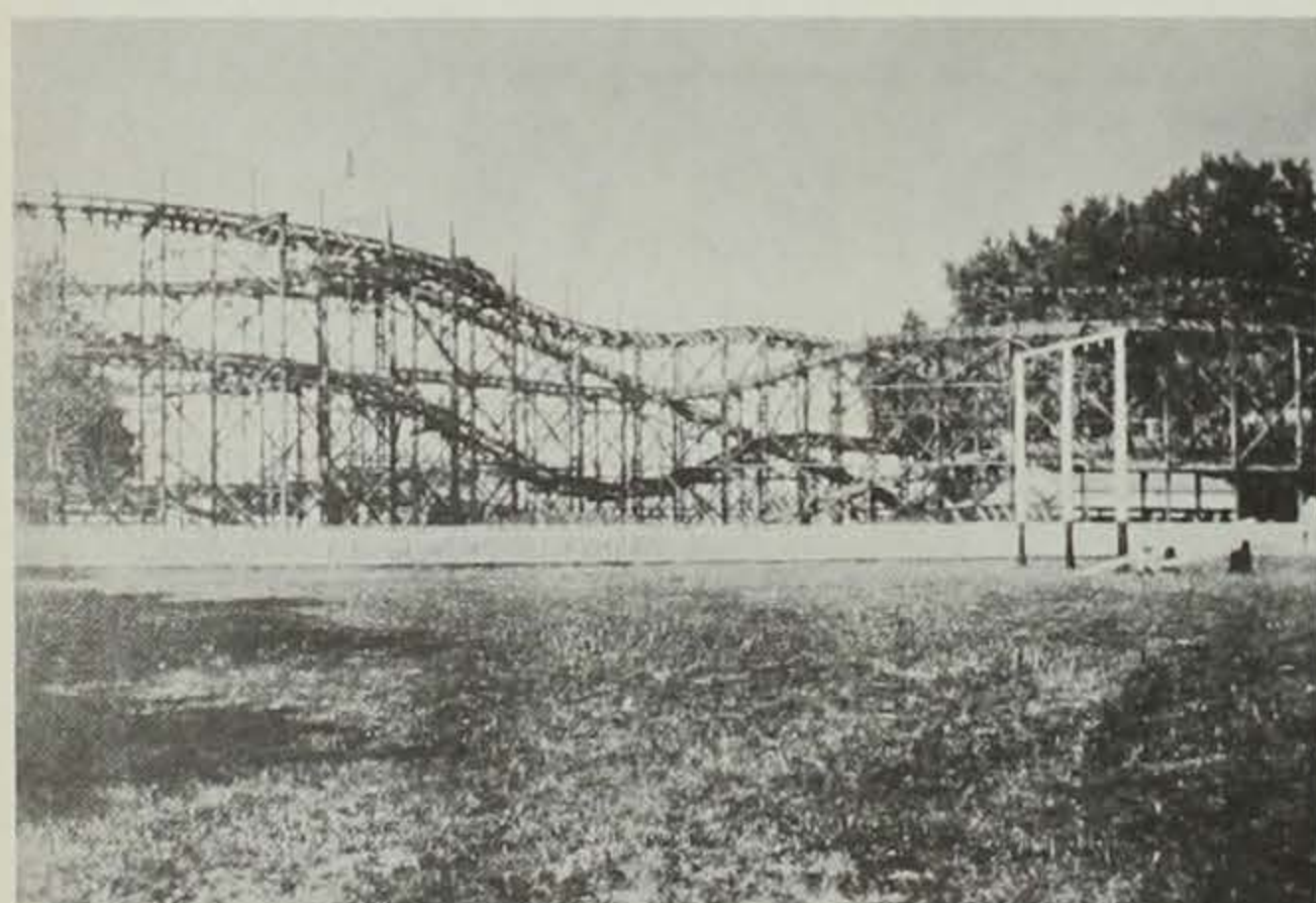
Indeed, at one time the Manawa region was a very posh resort. Frank Smetana, undoubtedly the leading authority on the history of the Manawa region, and the author of a book on that subject, talked about this in an interview held Feb. 18.

According to Smetana, the lake was formed by a flood in 1881. At that time the Missouri river had a large, sharp hairpin turn in an easterly direction. The flood filled in the neck of the

bend and the river switched course, moving farther west. This left a question in people's minds about whether the lake was Iowa or Nebraska territory.

According to Smetana, it was shared for a while, part of it being Iowan and part of it being Nebraskan. Eventually legislation was passed making the lake entirely Iowa property.

Oddly enough, the first use of the lake was as a camping site for the elite society. It's hard to imagine millionaires going camping today but that was exactly what happened. Of course, as Smetana explained, "Camping then was a lot different than it is now!" At that time, people took along cooks and maids and any other housekeepers or servants they might need. If two or three families went along on the trip, it became quite a social event. Camping at that time must have been like living in a portable mansion!



Above: The roller coaster and the pavilion as seen in publicity photos around WWI. Below: The famed Kursaal, social center of the turn-of-the-century Council Bluffs area.





Soon buildings began to be established. The first of these was the Manawa Hotel, built by a Mr. Clark from Minnesota. Meanwhile, more and more wealthy people kept trickling in all the time, using any available mode of transportation. Smetana said, the only way to get to Manawa at that time was by horse and carriage or by tally ho, which was like a wooden double decked vehicle pulled by a team of four horses or more.

The real boom in population came within a few years when a man by the name of Graves built the first railroad. It was then that the big inflow began, and along with the inflow came the "barons." These were the people who invested in and developed the region.

It is interesting to note that the locomotives that carried people on these early railroads were far from what we associate with trains. Smetana remarked, "They were nothing but a street car with a boiler in them." All during this time the Manawa region continued to grow and prosper at an ever accelerating pace.

Perhaps one of the biggest events that took place around this time was the day the Hagenbeck Circus came to town in 1904.

One of the premier attractions was the elephants ridden by natives of India. It was advertised that on June 24, the elephants would bathe in the lake. On that date the place was literally swamped with people. According to Smetana, every street car in Omaha and Council Bluffs was in use that day. He also mentioned that reports from that time estimated the attendance to be around 35,000 people. This was approximately 10,000 people more than the entire population of Council Bluffs at the time!

Even before this, though, Manawa was always bubbling with excitement. In the late 1800s the Kursaal was built, a 250 foot long, 60 foot wide, two-story structure. This became the social center of the region; containing a ballroom, stage, locker rooms, opera hall and other various rooms for the performing arts.

Large dances went on here, and many teenagers attended. The latest dance step then was not the bump or the hustle, but more along the lines of a cakewalk or a march, Smetana explained.

Modern day girls might want their dates to take a few tips from that generation of teenagers. For instance, the boys always placed a handkerchief in their right hand so as not to dirty the girls' dresses. Also, and especially applicable today, it was the custom by the men not to smoke for a day before the dance so as not to "contaminate" the girls.

As time went on, more and more additions were made on the resort. In 1906 a rollercoaster was built and at about the same time a man named Odell began the development of the South Manhattan Beach, currently the swimming site in the summer.

This was Manawa at its best. Many important people came to visit the area, including John Phillip Sousa, the famed composer. Names like Beno, Simms, Haas, Wright and Hannon all showed up and some stayed, establishing businesses or industries. As Smetana said, "It was the Mecca, or the Coney Island of the Midwest."

There was another side to Manawa, though; despite the gaiety, there was also disaster.

In 1894 the Manawa Hotel burned to the ground; it was, remember, the first building erected on the lake. In its place, a

*(Continued Page 15)*

Elephants ridden by natives of India from a traveling circus bathe in the lake in a 1904 promotion.







## NO MORE CABIN FEVER!

by Ken Trotter

In my opinion snowmobiling has to be one of the most wonderful things to happen to winter. It gets you outside and keeps you active. You see the most wonderful scenery decorated with freshly fallen snow, and the beauty of a quiet winter night is something to behold. Another bonus is the opportunity to see birds, deer and other wildlife in their natural winter surroundings while remembering to disturb them as little as possible. Yes, there is action and excitement in snowmobiling but there is also beauty and peace.

My wife, Merry, and I started snowmobiling in 1969 with a friend of ours named Larry Keller. He had just one 18 hp sled and we had to take turns but it was enough to hook us both. The next year we got our own sled and began going on trips with Larry and his wife. All of us had fallen in love with this winter sport.

In 1974 my wife bought her own sled since she enjoyed driving much better than riding behind. It was the best thing for both of us because it allows us much more freedom and fun.

We have snowmobiled the Des Moines river for several years and have watched the development of Lake Saylorville. It has turned northern Polk County into a great snowmobile area. Many people think when all those boats go home in the fall that's the end of it — not true at all. We often pack a lunch and stay out all day. When you are sitting along the frozen river enjoying hot soup you will hear the beautiful sounds of winter, something you've never experienced if you only go to the river in summer. When the workmen

were building the bridge across Saylorville several years ago, we would cruise down and take them for rides — they really loved it. We have made many new friends through snowmobiling.

There is one thing. Snowmobiling, like many sports, can be dangerous. That's why there are rules and regulations and they are to be obeyed for everyone's safety. Another thing — learn to drive carefully and be safety conscious always. You will find that you too will enjoy snowmobiling as much as we do. □



# Iowa's Seldom Seen Winter Visitor

by Bob Mullen  
STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER

SOME IOWA ANIMALS find winter conditions inhospitable and use a variety of methods to escape. Many birds travel south in late fall; many small mammals hibernate or become dormant during severe cold spells.

Cold as it may seem in Iowa, some arctic or boreal animals find this climate very inviting. One of these is the Snowy Owl which occasionally comes to Iowa due to a lack of food or an extremely severe winter in the northland. The normal breeding range of this owl is the arctic circle, south to central Mackenzie and northern British Columbia and may normally move southward to the northern United States during the winter. Periodically, however, lemming populations collapse; this causes the Snowy Owl to forage farther south for food. One such outbreak of this arctic visitor occurred in the winter of 1976-77, when over 200 sightings were reported from Iowa. In addition to lemmings, the Snowy Owl's prey includes other small mammals, rabbits and an occasional duck, ptarmigan or grouse. The Snowy Owl is an expert at catching live fish, and, when other food is scarce, will feed on dead fish which have been washed up on shore.

This majestic bird of prey may stand 24 inches in height and have a wingspan of 60 inches. Ear tufts are absent, contrary to the Great-horned and Screech Owls, which are familiar to many Iowans. The plumage of the adult male

may be entirely white, with occasional transverse spots or bars of slaty brown on the crown, back and shoulders. The female is darker and immature birds have spotting or bars on their bodies. The owl's feathers are soft and fluffy, making the birds appear larger than their actual size. These fluffy feathers act as very effective insulation and have the added feature of muffling the swishing sound that most birds make when they fly. The Snowy Owl, as with all owls, is a silent flyer that can often strike before its prey is aware danger is near.

The habits of this winter visitor is different from that of familiar Iowa owls, which are night-time, or nocturnal, feeders. The extremely long summer days of the arctic region have made the Snowy Owl chiefly a daytime, or diurnal, feeder. When in Iowa, the Snowy Owl may be seen in search of food in the early morning or late afternoon hours. Because of the lack of trees in its normal range, the Snowy Owl seldom utilizes trees for perching, even when in Iowa. It is seldom seen in woodlands, but often may be seen sitting directly on the ground.

The majestic Snowy Owl may go unobserved during its periodic visits to Iowa because its white coloration blends so well with the normal white Iowa winter landscape. If you have the good fortune of seeing one of these birds, it will probably be as a white form silently gliding across a windswept Iowa cornfield, in search of prey. □





# CARP

## They Tried It and Liked It!

by Tom Gengerke  
FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

THE LOWLY CARP, often maligned by fishermen and resource managers, may be coming into its own as a result of promotional efforts by the commercial fishing industry and by State Conservation departments. An example of a state-supported promotion is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' 1977 Wisconsin State Fair "Great Carp Feed Experiment." Three thousand samples of cooked carp were handed out to visitors to the 1977 fair under a joint program of the Milwaukee County University of Wisconsin-Extension Office and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The purpose of the experiment was to introduce people to carp as a food fish and determine their acceptance of it.

Fish, averaging ten pounds, were collected during August. The carp were filleted and cut into two-inch chunks, but it was not possible to remove all the bones. Chunks were soaked in milk for an hour, dipped in a beer batter and deep-fat fried.

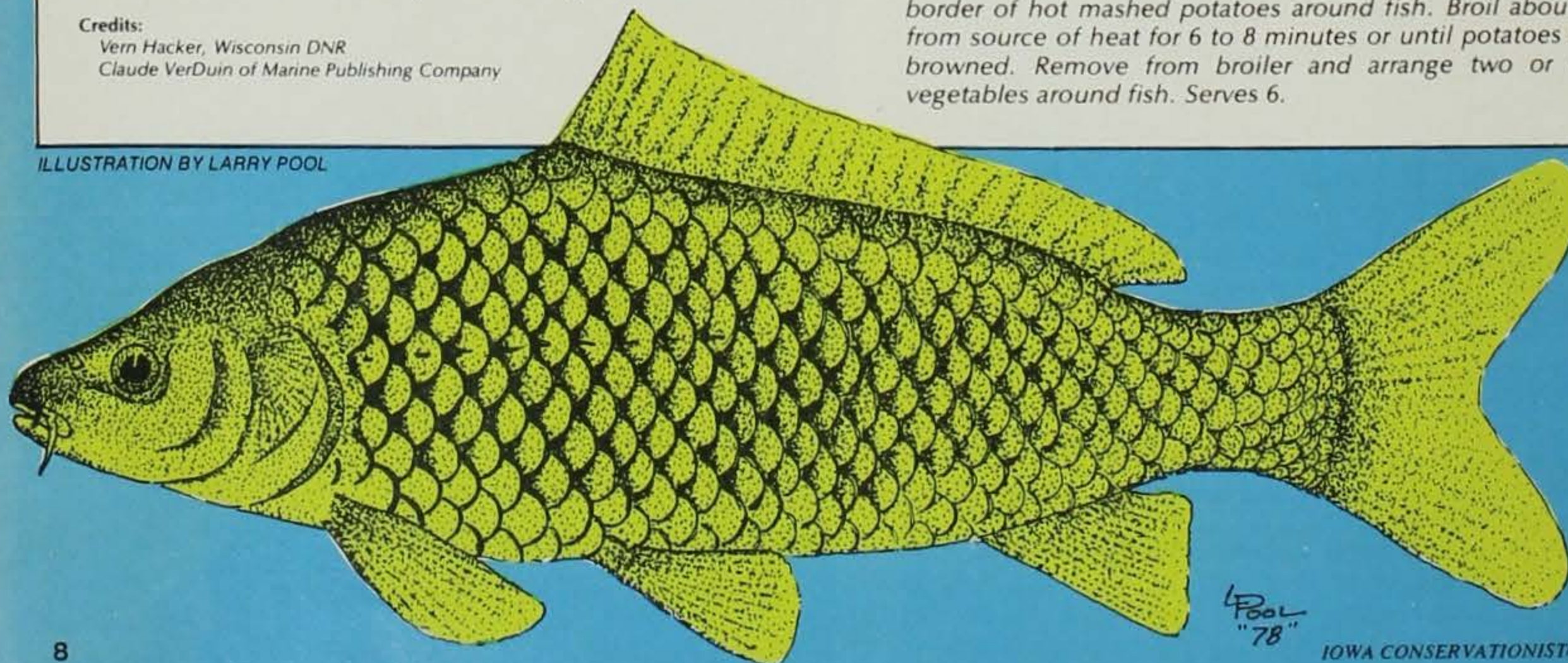
The project had prior media coverage. One deep-fat fryer was used and it simply could not cook enough carp to handle the demand. Lines of twenty or more people developed as visitors waited for the next batch to be brought out. There was no charge for the samples.

Two volunteers interviewed 155 of those trying the carp. Seventy-eight of the respondents were male and 77 were female. Most were adults over 20 years of age. The respondents were asked: (1) did you like the carp; (2) how would you compare to other fish; (3) would you have felt differently if you didn't know it was carp; (4) how often would you eat a meal of carp; and (5) would you be willing to pay for a meal of carp?

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents liked the fish. Seventy-nine percent liked it as well or better than other fish. Only 11 percent said they would have felt differently if they hadn't known they were eating carp. Seventy-five percent responded they would eat a meal of carp at least once a month. Thirty-four percent would eat a meal of carp at least once a week; 71 percent said they would be willing to pay over \$1.50 for that meal; 28 percent would have paid more than \$3. Isn't it about time you tried carp?

Credits:  
Vern Hacker, Wisconsin DNR  
Claude VerDuin of Marine Publishing Company

ILLUSTRATION BY LARRY POOL



### SMOKED CARP CHOWDER

1 pound smoked carp	1 small bay leaf
1 can (10 1/4 oz.) frozen condensed cream of potato soup	Dash pepper
3 cups milk	1 can (8 oz.) whole kernel corn
1 tablespoon grated onion	Chopped parsley

Remove skin and bones from carp. Flake the fish. Combine soup, milk, onion, bay leaf and pepper. Heat until soup is thawed, stirring occasionally. Add corn and fish; heat. Remove bay leaf. Garnish with parsley. Serves 6.

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### SMOKED CARP POTATO SALAD

1 pound smoked carp	1 tablespoon prepared mustard
2 cups diced cooked potatoes	1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 cup chopped celery	1 teaspoon vinegar
1/2 cup chopped peeled cucumber	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sliced ripe olives	1/4 teaspoon celery seed
1/4 cup grated carrot	Dash pepper
1/4 cup chopped onion	Salad greens
2 tablespoons chopped parsley	Tomato wedges
1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing	

Remove skin and bones from carp. Flake the fish. Combine vegetables and carp. Combine mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, vinegar, and seasonings; blend well. Add mayonnaise mixture to fish mixture; toss lightly. Chill. Serve on salad greens. Garnish with tomato wedges. Serves 6.

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### LEMON RICE STUFFED CARP

3 or 4 pounds dressed carp, fresh or frozen	Lemon Rice Stuffing
1 1/2 teaspoons salt	1 tablespoon melted fat or oil

Thaw frozen carp. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Sprinkle inside and out with salt. Stuff fish loosely. Close opening with small skewers or toothpicks. Place fish on a well-greased bake and serve platter, 16 x 10 inches. Brush with fat. Bake in a moderate oven, 350°F., for 40 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Baste occasionally with fat. Remove skewers. Serves 6.

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### PLANKED CARP

3 or 4 pounds dressed carp, fresh or frozen	2 tablespoons melted fat or oil
1 1/2 teaspoons salt	Seasoned hot mashed potatoes
Dash pepper	Seasoned hot cooked vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, onions or tomatoes)

Thaw frozen carp. Clean, wash and dry fish. Sprinkle inside and out with salt and pepper. Place fish on a plank or well-greased bake and serve platter, 16 x 10 inches. Brush with fat. Bake in a moderate oven, 350°F., for 40 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove from oven and arrange border of hot mashed potatoes around fish. Broil about 8 inches from source of heat for 6 to 8 minutes or until potatoes are lightly browned. Remove from broiler and arrange two or more hot vegetables around fish. Serves 6.



**I**NTRODUCTION OF A "WILDLIFE Habitat Stamp", effective January 1, 1979, gives every hunter who takes to the woods and fields an opportunity to contribute to the creation and upkeep of wildlife habitat in Iowa. The revenue from the sale of these stamps, under the direction of the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Iowa Conservation Commission, will help to guarantee nesting sites for game birds, provide protection for prime wildlife habitat, and give Iowans a chance to repay wildlife for the pleasure, beauty, and excitement provided hunters every season.

Beginning with the New Year, all residents and non-residents who possess a valid Iowa hunting license must also purchase the \$3.00 stamp. Only those resident hunters who are disabled, under 16 years of age, over 65, or landowners on their own land, are exempted from the requirement. The attractive stamp will feature a reproduction of an original work of art.

Hunters may note a similarity between the Wildlife Habitat Stamp and the Waterfowl Stamp. One major difference exists between the two, however. All revenue collected from the sale of the Wildlife Stamp, estimated to reach the one million dollar mark in 1979, must be spent within the state. The projected income will be placed in the Fish and Game Trust Fund, to eventually be allocated for various projects such as land acquisition for new habitats or development programs for present state lands to increase their desirability and effectiveness. Management of the proposed projects may rest entirely with the state, or the stamp revenue could be applied toward cooperative projects with county conservation boards. Any funding provided by the state for county board projects must be matched, dollar for dollar, by the counties if the projects are to be approved.



## A "Thank-You" Stamp for Iowa's Wildlife

by Becky Leach

Although it may appear that the ICC will be flooded with dollars from the sale of the stamps, actual revenue may initially trickle in rather slowly. According to Allen Farris, Wildlife Research Supervisor, hunting license purchases, and thus stamp purchases, always tend to drop temporarily when fees are increased. A "time lapse" in fee collection also will occur because the majority of licenses are not purchased until late October or November, in anticipation of the upcoming hunting seasons. Once the money is collected,

approximately \$250,000 will be allocated to county conservation board projects with the remainder of the revenue retained for state-operated programs, at least during the first year of the program.

Iowa hunters may part with their dollars more easily when they know that their contribution will be carefully spent. The cost-sharing projects with the county conservation boards will be determined by the Fish and Game Division, which will develop a system of competitive criteria for selecting those projects to be funded. County

conservation board directed funds will be slated only for habitat development and enhancement — no maintenance or management programs accepted — and will be apportioned on a "most good for least cost" basis. Thus, funds will be channeled where they will prove most beneficial. Because of the expected time lapse, the county conservation boards should have ample time to draw up proposals and budget their contribution toward all approved projects.

One impetus behind the creation of the Wildlife Habitat Stamp program was the desire to improve habitat available for many Iowa game birds, particularly pheasants. Projects undertaken by the state will reflect this aim in various ways. Acquisition of attractive uplands surrounding currently-owned marshlands will provide nesting areas for a variety of wildlife. Concentration on improving the function of present public lands should prove wise use of the available resources.

The ICC also hopes to remedy public land shortages in parts of Iowa. Many counties in the state have no suitable public habitat lands and a program of selective purchasing should help to produce game in these areas and fill the public land gap.

The prime directive of "conservation" is the wise use of natural resources. This rule applies not only to forestry or soil management, but to wildlife management as well. Across Iowa, the favorite haunts of the white-tailed deer, the ring-necked pheasant, and other game and nongame animals are being destroyed by the progression of economic development. If the Iowa hunter wishes to ensure the continuation of his or her favorite species, not only for hunting but for the sheer pleasure the knowledge of their existence can bring, then the need for the Wildlife Habitat Stamp must be recognized and respected. □



## Red-Shouldered Hawk

(*Buteo lineatus*)



by Dean M. Roosa  
STATE ECOLOGIST

Two decades ago, it was common to hear a two syllabled 'ker-yerr' emanate from Iowa's woodlands. It is seldom heard now because the source of the call, the red-shouldered hawk, has nearly disappeared from Iowa as a breeding bird. Although this is one of the most common raptors in North America, for reasons yet unclear it became very rare in Iowa in the early 60's. In fact, it was thought to possibly be extirpated until Jim Bednarz of Iowa State University undertook a status determination of the species for a master's degree project. Jim located three nests in northeast Iowa in 1977, five nests in 1978 and had leads on several other pairs.

Medium-aged riparian woodlands are the preferred nesting habitat, where the hawk builds its nest in the canopy and often decorates the rim of the nest with down feathers. The young, numbering from two to five, leave the nest in early June and are fed by the adults for several weeks on a diet consisting of small mammals captured on the floodplains.

This bird of prey is an attractive bird, with a red wash and darker streaks on the upper breast and on the upper surface of the bend of the wing, and is somewhat smaller than the more common red-tailed hawk.

In 1977, the red-shouldered hawk was placed on the Iowa Endangered Species list and on the national 'Blue List'. Like so many species high on the food chain, it accumulates pesticides found in low concentrations in the prey items; this affects the ability to lay fertile eggs. However, with the trend toward a cleaner environment and the concern now given our rare co-inhabitants, perhaps there is still time to help this species remain an important and interesting part of our native fauna. □





# Last Call For Cottontails

By Roger Sparks

A GLANCE AT your gun rack conjures bittersweet thoughts. Fond memories of flushing pheasants, and of mallards hanging over decoys bring the sad realization that it is over for another year. If you're like most sportsmen, the sundog days of February are for indoor rather than outdoor activities. That is truly a shame, for where good cover has resisted winter storms, cottontail rabbits exist in good numbers. Knowing the cold weather habits of these critters can lengthen your gunning season and put a little hasenpfeffer on the table.

If you plan to hunt rabbits in January or February, head for the thickest cover you know — probably some spot in the southern one-third of the state. Places with less cover, where you found moderate numbers of cottontails in November, probably won't hold many now. Harsh weather, predators, and disease take a continual toll on rabbits, and their numbers fluctuate dramatically with the season. But the rough, brush country of southern Iowa provides such ideal habitat that even though their

numbers decline as winter rolls on, plenty of shooting can be had late in the season. Remember, they have an incredible reproductive potential so where there is habitat, rabbits will be abundant again next year.

Extremely dense cover lends itself to shotgunning. Some hunters claim they never pursue rabbits with anything but a rifle; but if that is the case, they probably don't shoot many. Brush country cottontails are no giveaway and even the experienced shotgunner learns to pass hope shots at that blur of fur streaking through the dense thickets. You'll miss some, so take plenty of shells.

Another consideration is weather. Cottontail habits vary a great deal with temperature, wind, and snow cover conditions. Ever see thousands of tracks and wonder why you don't find more rabbits? Chances are, either the temperature is bitterly cold or the wind is too strong. Under these conditions, most rabbits hole up in the deepest brush pile in the county. Mild, calm

days, particularly those immediately following a cold spell, will find them much more active, while a fresh snow is good for tracking and spotting your quarry.

If the snow has a crust, you may encounter a problem of getting close to them, as they hear you approaching and move out ahead. If so, take a friend along and try blocking — it can greatly improve your rabbit hunting success late in the season. Blocking isn't exactly a science, but there are several things you should consider before doing it.

First, spend a little time planning before crashing wild-eyed into the cover. Take a few minutes to climb to a vantage point overlooking the draw or hedgerow and pinpoint exactly where the blocker will be and the direction from which the other hunter will approach. Be confident of your companion's respect for guns and wear blaze orange before block-hunting in heavy rabbit cover. Anytime that hunters set up a blocking situation where game can



be "sandwiched" between them, safety must be emphasized. Hunting with people who fail to use good judgment with guns can be horrifying; on the other hand, it is a pleasure to share an outing with those friends who always make certain of their target and watch the direction their shotgun is pointed.

It is best to start at the upper end of a draw and work down to the blocker below. The draw will eventually join a timber or larger corridor and rabbits will move to these areas for escape. If the draw is short, the blocker should be positioned just above the junction; if it is long, it can be worked in segments. Large brush piles make good breaking points and again the blocker should be located just above, in position to intercept rabbits headed for the dense protection.

Choosing the right place to stand is also important. Don't position yourself in an opening where game moving down the draw or fencerow can see you too soon and escape out the side. Likewise, don't get caught in cover so dense you can't swing on running rabbits as they pass. Stand behind a bush or tree with plenty of open area to the sides. If there is a creek, get to a spot on one bank where both the creek bottom and the opposite bank can be covered. Rabbits may also use the lanes along outside edges of cover areas, so if possible, locate yourself where your

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shot pattern can effectively reach both sides. Finally, stand still and be ready. Rabbits coming down the chute will seldom see you if your outline is broken by cover and you don't move. Wait for the good shot. If a cottontail disappears into some dense cover out of range, stay put — he'll probably show up again much closer.

The right day, several good hunters and a productive area — that combination can result in quite a few cottontails bagged. If so, carrying that heavy game bag will soon become work, so take time out occasionally to field dress the rabbits and return them to the car. A cooler is rarely necessary late in the year — plastic bags will keep the meat fresh and the trunk clean. Thus, the only post hunt chores are washing the meat and cutting it into pan-size pieces.

If the lure of a longer hunting season doesn't whet your appetite, the thought of good smells from the kitchen should.

Any good game cookbook will contain many fine ways to enhance the delicate flavors of rabbit to suit your taste. Here are two recipes for preparing the common ol' Iowa cottontail:

#### HASENPFEFFER

1 rabbit, cut up	3 cups water
3 cups vinegar	½ cup sugar
1 medium onion, chopped	2 teaspoons salt
	1 teaspoon pickling spices
¼ teaspoon pepper	
Dash garlic salt	

Place rabbit in crock or other nonmetallic container, then cover with mixture of vinegar, water, onion, seasonings and spices. Put a cloth over it and let stand in a cool place for two days. Remove the rabbit, brown the pieces on both sides. Gradually add one cup of the pickling juice, cover and place in the oven at 375 degrees for one and one-half hours or until tender.

#### BAKED RABBIT

2 rabbits, cut up
½ can Cream of Mushroom Soup
½ can Cream of Chicken Soup
¼ cup finely chopped onion
¼ cup water

Season pieces lightly with poultry seasoning, pepper, and garlic salt. Dust in flour and pan fry to a medium brown. Place in bottom of foil-lined roasting pan and sprinkle onion over top. Mix soups and pour evenly over meat. Add water, cover, and bake in oven at 300 degrees for two and one-half hours or until tender.

## ICC NAMES NEW CHIEF OF FISH & WILDLIFE DIVISION



Photo by Ron Johnson

Fred A. Prievert, Director of the Iowa Conservation Commission, announced that Dr. Allen L. Farris has been named Chief of Fish and Wildlife for the Commission effective January 15, 1979.

Dr. Farris, 36, will replace Harry M. Harrison who has held that post since 1969. Harrison is retiring from the Conservation Commission after 33 years of service.

Farris joined the Commission staff in 1971 as a wildlife research biologist. He was named wildlife research supervisor in 1975 and is the coauthor of *THE RING-NECKED PHEASANT IN IOWA* published in 1977.

In his new position, Dr. Farris will be responsible for administering the projects and programs of the wildlife, fisheries and law enforcement sections of the Iowa Conservation Commission.

A native of Illinois, Farris is a graduate of Western Illinois University and received his Ph.D. from Washington State University. He and his wife Kathie have three daughters: Beth, Heather and Laura, and make their home in Indianola.

Harrison began his long career with the Conservation Commission in 1946 as a fisheries biologist. A graduate of Iowa State College in Ames, Harrison became superintendent of biology in 1963 and was named Chief of Fish and Wildlife in 1969. Harrison and his wife Dorothy live in Madrid.



# Littlefield Timber



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

by Ben Van Gundy

*Mr. Van Gundy is Executive Officer of the Audubon County Conservation Board.*

Rising above a landscape dominated by agriculture, Littlefield Timber stands out like a jewel. In contrast to the simple plant communities that surround it, this woodland offers a colossal variety of living creatures.

Located in southern Audubon County, this valuable 60 acre timber area came into public ownership by means of a gift from Roy S. Littlefield of Exira. Upon his death in 1961, the woodland became the property of Iowa State University. His will stated, "said premises may be used and developed as a wildlife refuge and forest reserve."

Roy Littlefield was locally noted for his closeness with nature. He was described as a quiet studious man and well respected. For forty years Mr. Littlefield kept bees in his timber and was noted statewide as an apiarist. He learned about bee keeping while attending Iowa State College.

In 1965 the Audubon County Conservation Board acquired the area from Iowa State University. The Conservation Board has developed part of the timber (20 acres)

into a picnic area and campground. The remaining 40 acres has remained undeveloped except for hiking trails.

Littlefield Timber is small when compared to many forest areas, but when it's the only public forest in the county it becomes quite precious. Hiking its easy-to-walk trails is a uniquely pleasant experience. The primitive naturalness allows hikers to enter a world without time. An occasional owl's hooting, the timber's lush greenness, breezes through the tree tops, sounds of woodpeckers all give a hiker a sensation of wilderness.

This woodland also provides an ideal area for environmental study. Nature's fascinations are interpreted by various programs provided by the Audubon County Conservation Board and other conservation organizations. Young and old alike can take advantage of such programs.

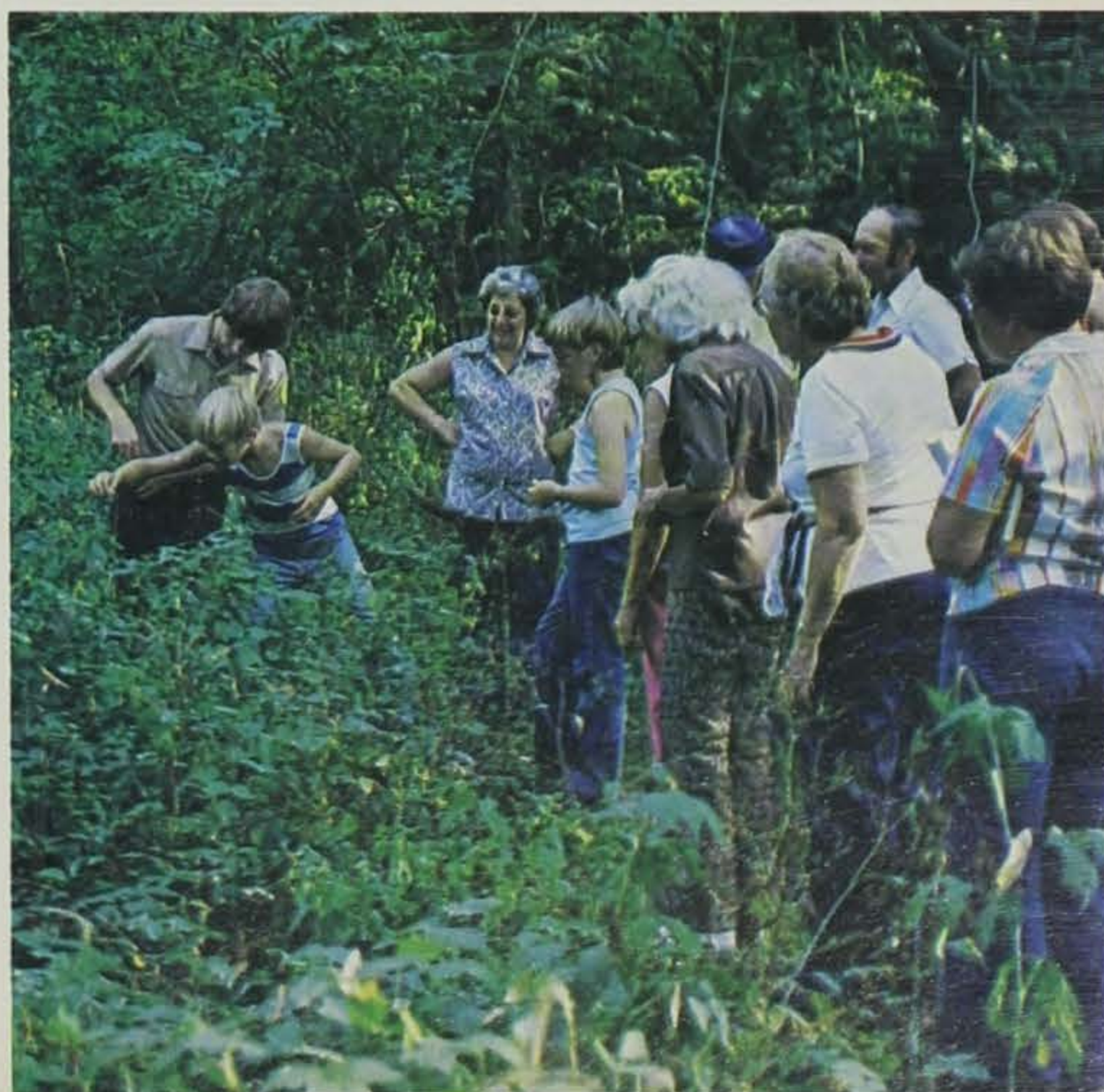
Roy Littlefield's wishes have been carried out. In fact, his foresight has snowballed for the benefit of the public and other nature lovers like himself. Recently the Conservation Board has purchased 385 acres of land adjacent to

Littlefield Timber and is developing a multi-use outdoor recreation area which includes a 70 acre lake.

For the first time in Audubon County the people will have a public area in which to fish, swim, enjoy limited boating, and watch migrating waterfowl. Much of the area will be left as wildlife habitat.

Thousands of trees and shrubs have been planted along with several types of grasses to add the diversity needed for good wildlife habitat.

For generations the public can use this area for a variety of outdoor activities. Indeed, Roy Littlefield has given the people a gift without time. □





# Warden's diary

by Rex Emerson

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPERVISOR

Rabbit hunting can be fun if done legally. The meat is really hard to beat. But when the illegal hunter gets caught by the game warden, he wishes he had never seen a rabbit.

The rabbit season is open throughout the month of February. It was a sunshiny day, with some fresh snow on the ground and the temperature about 26° — a perfect day for the rabbit hunters. As I patrolled in an area with good rabbit cover on both sides of the road, I couldn't help but notice how beautiful the countryside looked. The wind wasn't blowing at all, and the snow was piled on top of each fence post, making each one look like a vanilla ice cream cone. The brush and the trees looked like flocked Christmas trees. Tracks in the fresh snow were proof that this was good rabbit country. However, one playful rabbit can make a lot of tracks. On days like this you just can't help but feel a little sorry for the people in the southern states who don't get to enjoy snow.

Rounding a curve in the old road, I saw a station wagon parked by an open field gate. They had been careful not to park in the gateway just in case the farmer might want to get in that field for some reason. A quick inspection of the vehicle was made by walking up beside it. There were two empty gun cases draped over the back of the seat. Dog tracks were all around the vehicle. The people tracks and the dog tracks led off through the gateway in the direction of a hillside that looked like rabbit country. Just then I heard a beagle hound let out a howl

like he had stepped on a thorn. Then some other beagles joined in with the same kind of voices, but maybe with a little different pitch. They were hot on the trail of a rabbit.

Up on the long sloping hillside in a small clearing I found a man and his wife, each standing on a stump, enjoying the race. Each one had a .410 shotgun, and each one had a hunting license. They had four beagle dogs that loved to chase rabbits. Now this type of dog is not very big. They have long ears and a good nose that is naturally tuned for rabbit scent. They can't catch the rabbit, but they stay right on the trail and make a lot of noise. After awhile the rabbit will circle back to where the hunters can get a shot at it.

That is what happened while I was there. If I had been doing the hunting I'm afraid that I would have been too fascinated by the race to remember to shoot. But they got the rabbit, and four very pleased dogs went off to find another one.

After dark I was out in the rabbit country again. Rabbit hunting hours are over at sunset, but that doesn't stop some people. In fact, if you pick the right kind of night this time of the year, the chances of catching an illegal hunter are pretty good. For that reason I hope our working hours are never set by someone in an office a week or two in advance. We work by instinct, advance information, and "violation in progress" calls from the good sportspeople around our area.

Driving several miles of roads had produced absolutely nothing. About

9:00 p.m. I backed into a field driveway and shut off the lights. The old dirt road was lined with sumac and wild plum bushes, but I could see about a quarter of a mile each way. The waiting soon paid off. At 9:20 p.m. a car was slowly coming up the road with a light shining in the ditches from both sides of the car. As they came closer, I thought, "I sure would like to see the expression on their faces when the red lights start flashing."

It was four smart-acting, boisterous, foul-mouthed young men who obviously had learned their ungentlemanly manners while growing up under the guiding hands of similar acting parents. After carefully but thoroughly explaining some of the facts of life to them, their two hand-held spotlights, one .22 rifle with ammunition, one 12 gauge shotgun with ammunition and three rabbits were put into my car to be held as evidence. The guns and ammunition would be returned to them after court, because the law requires this. The disposition of the remaining items would be up to the judge.

One at a time, they got into my car where a citation was issued. It surely was surprising how their manners changed when they were no longer with their friends.

A call came on the two-way radio that a state trooper had stopped a car for running a stop sign and found a gun and four rabbits in it. He escorted them into the law center where I met them.

They claimed that the gun and the rabbits were left in the car from their hunting trip that afternoon and that they hadn't shot anything since sundown. With the aid of my thermometer and charts put out by Jerry Hoilien, our law enforcement research officer, I told them within a few minutes when each rabbit had been killed. As each rabbit was tagged with the time of death noted, the three hunters began to change their minds about not being guilty.

They had learned that rabbit hunting can be fun, if you do it right.

## LOOKIN' BACK

in the files of  
the CONSERVATIONIST

### Ten Years Ago



the *Conservationist* featured a story on spring fishing. The new regulations took effect on March 1 and anglers across the state were looking forward to an exciting season.

Elsewhere in the issue was a story on the Conservation Commission's central shop at Lake Macbride State Park where hundreds of signs for state parks are made each year.

### Twenty Years Ago



the magazine was also looking forward to spring in the form of the exhibit at the Des Moines Home and

Flower Show. The Commission exhibit featured an old mill scene with blooming wildflowers and flowering shrubs. The plants came from all across Iowa and were brought to bloom to create an artificial spring at Veteran's Auditorium, February 21, 1959.

### Thirty Years Ago



the *Iowa Conservationist* reviewed the 1948 hunting season. Officers from most counties reported a

good season with more Iowans than ever before taking to the field. Pheasants were very popular with 52 counties reporting better hunting than the previous year. Squirrels were also up and a newspaper poll showed that one in five Iowans hunted in 1948.



# Classroom Corner



by Robert Rye

ADMINISTRATOR, CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

HAVE YOU EVER made a list of your personal major purchases to be made, or of tasks to be accomplished? Have you then compared these to other people's priorities? All individuals and interest groups have high and low precedence items and activities. At the Conservation Education Center this ranking in value is noted in the programs chosen and the interest displayed in them.

Nature and the things of nature also have priorities. Their main priority is survival. Plants aren't interested in beautiful fall colors. They are using a mechanism of survival. The drab brown weasel becomes the white ermine of the snowy winter — as a means of survival to escape detection by predators.

Other methods of survival are migration, predation, diseases, parasitism, and cannibalism. Survival is also affected by weather, cycles, starvation, and overcrowding.

As you think about these priorities and "limiting factors", factors which outweigh all others in limiting productivity, which arouses most interest in you?

There are some who are greatly interested in weather or cannibalism, a few who are interested in overcrowding and parasites, and at various times throughout the year migration greatly affects the thoughts of Iowans. The Center's experience has shown the greatest interest in programs on predation.

This interest may stem from the fact that man is a

predator. It may also be the color or shape of the animals which attracts people's attention. Curiosity of seeing animals not available for viewing in everyday life may also be a factor.

As people come to the Center's office, they always note the eagle and owl, both predators, more than the duck and deer, non predators. These are all taxidermied specimens so it cannot be their movements.

As we hike through the Center's area, interest is always very high for predator sightings. We capitalize on this interest with activities such as Owl Calling and Predator-Prey games.

Try to visualize in your mind being at the Center and observing the following during your stay: a Redtail Hawk soaring overhead as you walk through the native grass plots toward a pond. Around the pond you find tracks of mink and raccoons. As you follow the path through the woods, you catch a glimpse of a fox and tracks of a coyote. In the evening you see bats and owls as we play an owl calling tape. Which of these predators sparked a special interest in your mind?

If you were like most of our guests, the coyote was probably your choice. His existence is the instigation of many questions as we discuss the mammals of Iowa.

Coyotes are very dog-like, closely resembling a small German Shepard. Typically, the color is a light gray with the outer hairs tipped with black. Average statistics are: 18 - 30 pounds with a total length of 40 - 50 inches — the tail being 10 - 16 of these inches. Coyotes are noted for their vocal outbursts. They live in brushy country, along the edge of timber, and in open farm land. Coyotes eat animal foods — primarily rabbits and mice.

Take time to think of nature's priorities and nature's population controls. Predators are only a part and can be a limiting factor or be affected by their own limiting factors. To think more about this part, visit one or more of Iowa's public lands. Look for the predators themselves, as well as the effect they have on the whole environmental picture. Make a list in each place of specific things you notice and compare them from location to location, habitat to habitat.

## MANAWA

(Continued from Page 5) 900 foot long boardwalk was built.

There were also tragic accidents. Once a sea plane went into a tail spin and crashed in shallow water near one of the small islets in the lake at that time. Miraculously, no one was hurt seriously.

Another accident involved a steamer. Late at night, during a violent storm, the boat tried to cross the lake with passengers headed for the north shore. The boat split in two and water rushed into the lower decks. The people below all crowded to one side of the steamer causing it to capsize. Many small rescue boats came and managed to save most of the passengers, but three people died a terrible death that night, drowning in the cold, gripping waters of the lake.

Later, in 1913, the Kursaal was demolished by a tornado. In 1922 the rollercoaster burned down and in 1926 the huge boardwalk also burned; an almost unbelievable chain of events!

Evenutally, all of this took its toll on the entire Manawa area. Coinciding with these disasters was the introduction of "shady characters," as Smetana termed them. The automobile, then becoming very popular, gave the wealthy people more freedom, and when they saw what was happening, they moved out.

It is kind of ironic that Manawa was in its waning days as a national attraction at the height of the 1920's, an age known for its funloving atmosphere.

Presently there are plans being made to rejuvenate the area. Who knows? Smetana could very well be correct in his predictions, and Manawa might again become the "Coney Island" of the Midwest.

## Back Cover

### Cross-Country Ski Trail Opens on Wildlife Management Area

by Doug Harr  
Wildlife Management Biologist

The Kettleon Hogsback Wildlife Management Area, HQ for the Big Sioux Wildlife Unit, offers perhaps some of the best cross-country skiing in northwest Iowa. A wildlife and hiking trail through woodlands, marshes, and glacial moraine has been quickly growing in popularity with local nordic skiers. In the summer of 1977 a new loop was added to the trail, making the total length of the system about 5 km, or about 3.1 miles.

A short loop of about .8 km near the headquarters buildings is excellent for the beginning skier. The remainder of the trail system is suited to the skier of intermediate abilities. None of the trails are groomed, so it is up to the individual skier to stay on the trail in existing tracks for the easiest skiing.

Cross-country skiers will be expected to police the area as they ski and to observe the signs asking them to take their litter out with them. The area is not open for snowmobiles or other vehicular use. Parking areas for visitors are available at Marble Lake and at the Unit headquarters. Although this is one of a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities offered by this 1100 acre complex of fish and wildlife lands, skiers should be aware that the primary purpose of the area is for wildlife management. Abuse of the trails or regulations could result in limiting activities in the future.



