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# Iowa CONSERVATIONIST

AUGUST 1983



# Iowa CONSERVATIONIST

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1983

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Julie Holmes, *Assistant Editor*  
Ron Johnson, *Photographer*  
Kenneth Formanek, *Photographer*  
Larry Pool, *Graphic Artist*

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**FRONT COVER:** Shade trees at Pammel State Park nearly hide the old lodge built during CCC days (see story on page 17).  
*Photo by: Ron Johnson.*

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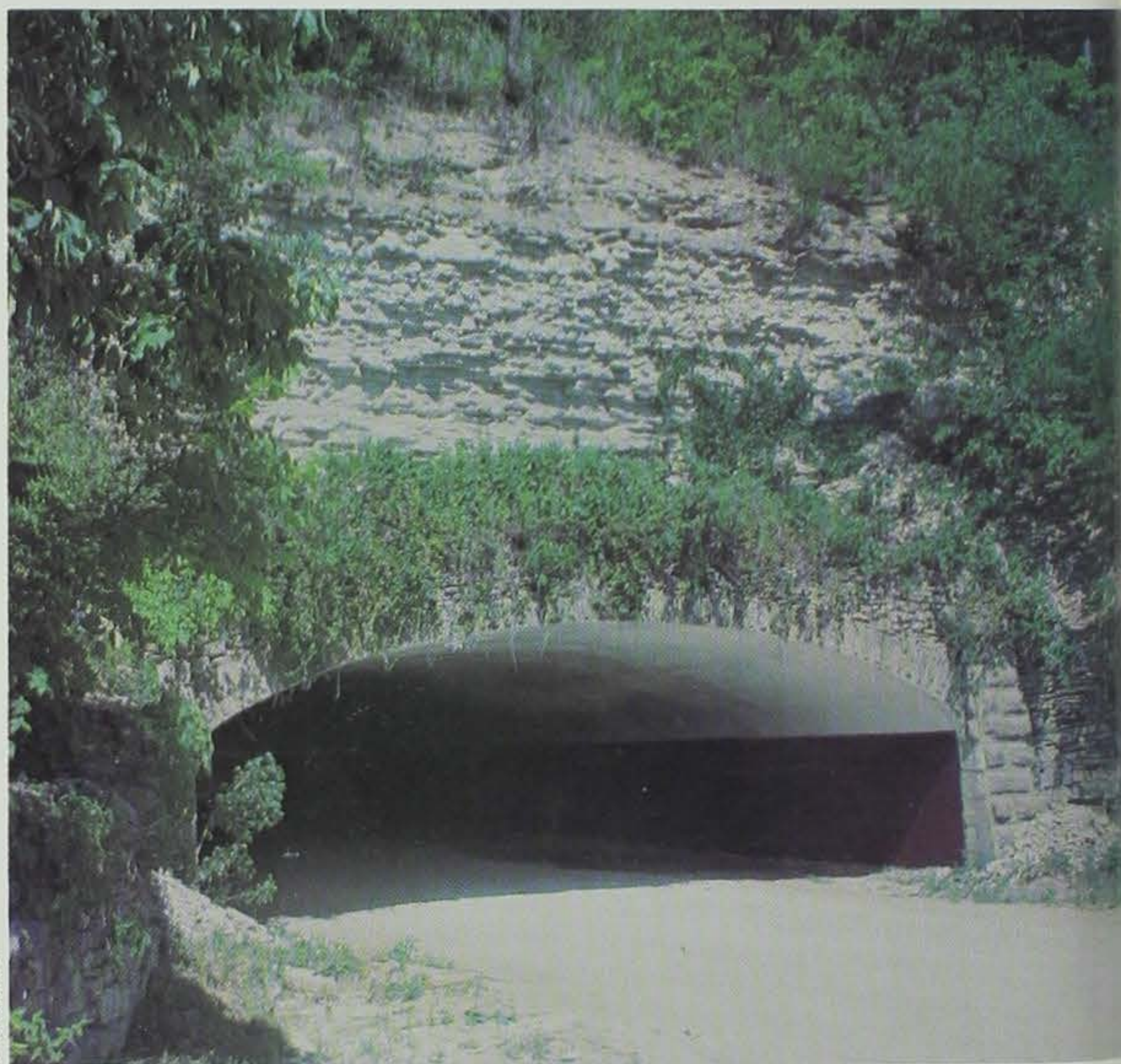
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# PAMMEL

## THE STATE PARK WITH A HOLE



Jerry Leonard

In the 1850's making a living was tough in southcentral Iowa and especially for William Harmon. He had a wife, five sons and two daughters to provide for. But William Harmon had a dream and that dream centered on a 100-foot high limestone ridge which divided two segments of the Middle River in Madison County. This ridge, and the way that William Harmon altered it, is the reason that Pammel State Park is sometimes referred to as "The State Park With a Hole Through It."

Pammel State Park is a 285-acre area located 5 miles southwest of Winterset, on Iowa Highway 322. Obtained by the state in 1923 the park was originally named Devil's Backbone State

Park because of the unique limestone ridge which divided the park into two sections. It was later found that there was another park in Iowa with same name so in 1930 the park was renamed in honor of Dr. Louis H. Pammel, an active conservationist and former head of Iowa State University's botany department. He was also president and chairman of the Board of Conservation which was the forerunner of the present Iowa Conservation Commission.

In 1855 three male members of the Harmon family began digging a tunnel through this ridge. The purpose of the tunnel was to divert water from the Middle River to provide power to operate a sawmill and grist mill. Work-



# HOLE THROUGH IT

By Paul E. Koehn

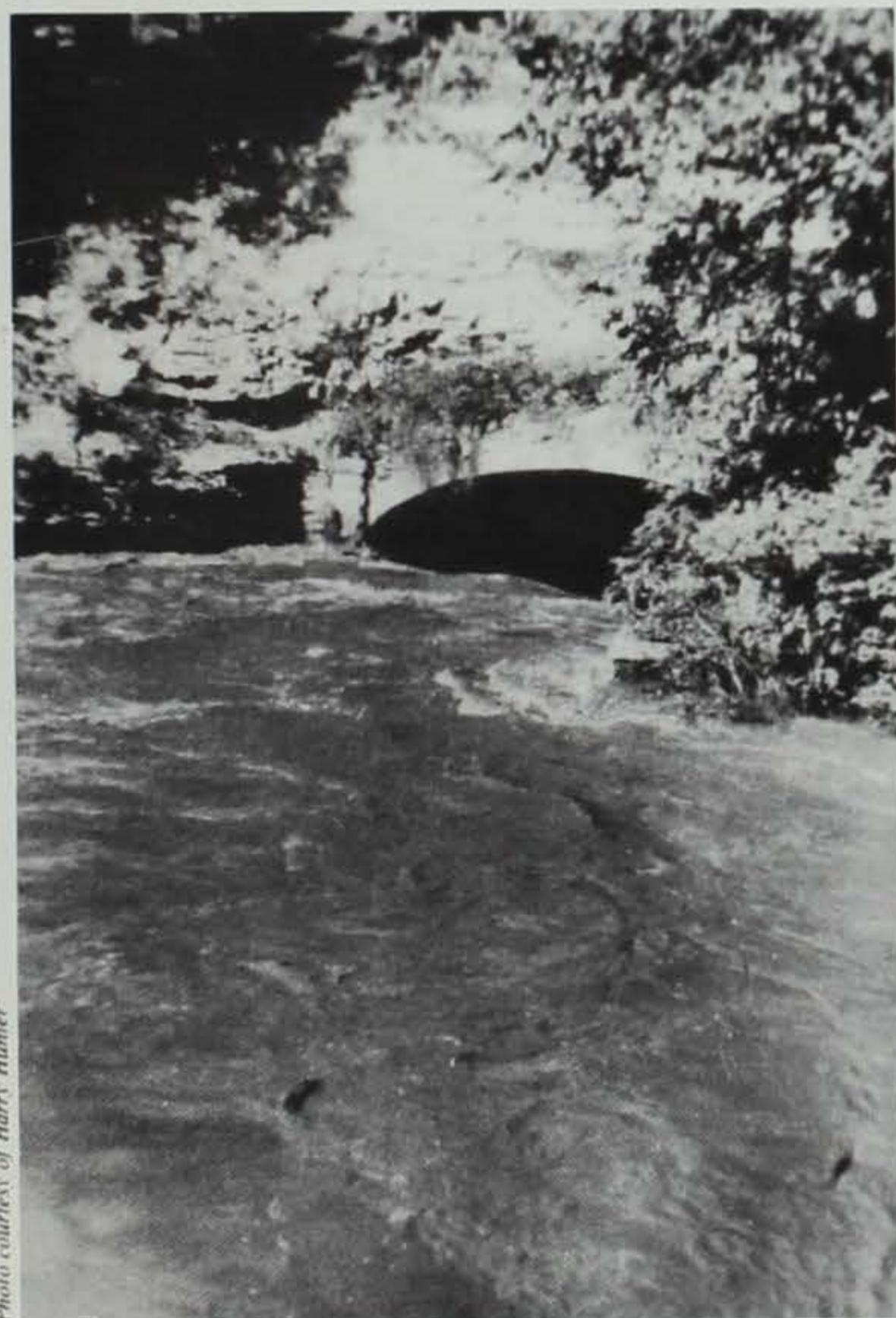


Photo courtesy of Harry Hunter

*Paul E. Koehn is the park ranger for Pammel State Park. He has been with the commission since 1977. He holds a B.S. degree in conservation and biology from Upper Iowa University.*



Photo courtesy of Madison County Historical Society

ing with only a carpenter's level and hand tools it took the Harmons three years to complete this task. The tunnel, at this point in its history, was only 4 feet in height and 5 feet wide. Upon completion of the digging, a low-head dam was constructed across the west section of the river to force water through the tunnel. Because of a natural drop in elevation from west to east, this provided the Harmons with a waterfall approximately 20 feet at the east end of the tunnel. This was more than enough to turn the huge water wheel and provide power for their operations.

The sawmill and grist mill were operated profitably for many years even though ownership changed hands

periodically. In 1904, due mainly to years of poor wheat crops in the mid-west, milling operations ended. The sawmill could not generate profits on its own and the owners decided to cease all work. The old mill and other buildings stood empty, and slowly deteriorated over the years. In 1917, due to obvious safety reasons, the last of the remaining structures were dynamited and all that remained was a pile of rubble.

A few years later, in 1925, the tunnel was enlarged to nearly 8 feet by 8 feet and a roadway was built through it to connect roads on the two sides of the ridge. This undoubtedly saved the taxpayers of Madison County a considerable sum of money since the only other

*Before renovation the tunnel at Pammel was subject to seasonal flooding. The tunnel was dug in the 1850's and a dam was constructed on the Middle River to divert flow for the sawmill and grist mill pictured above.*

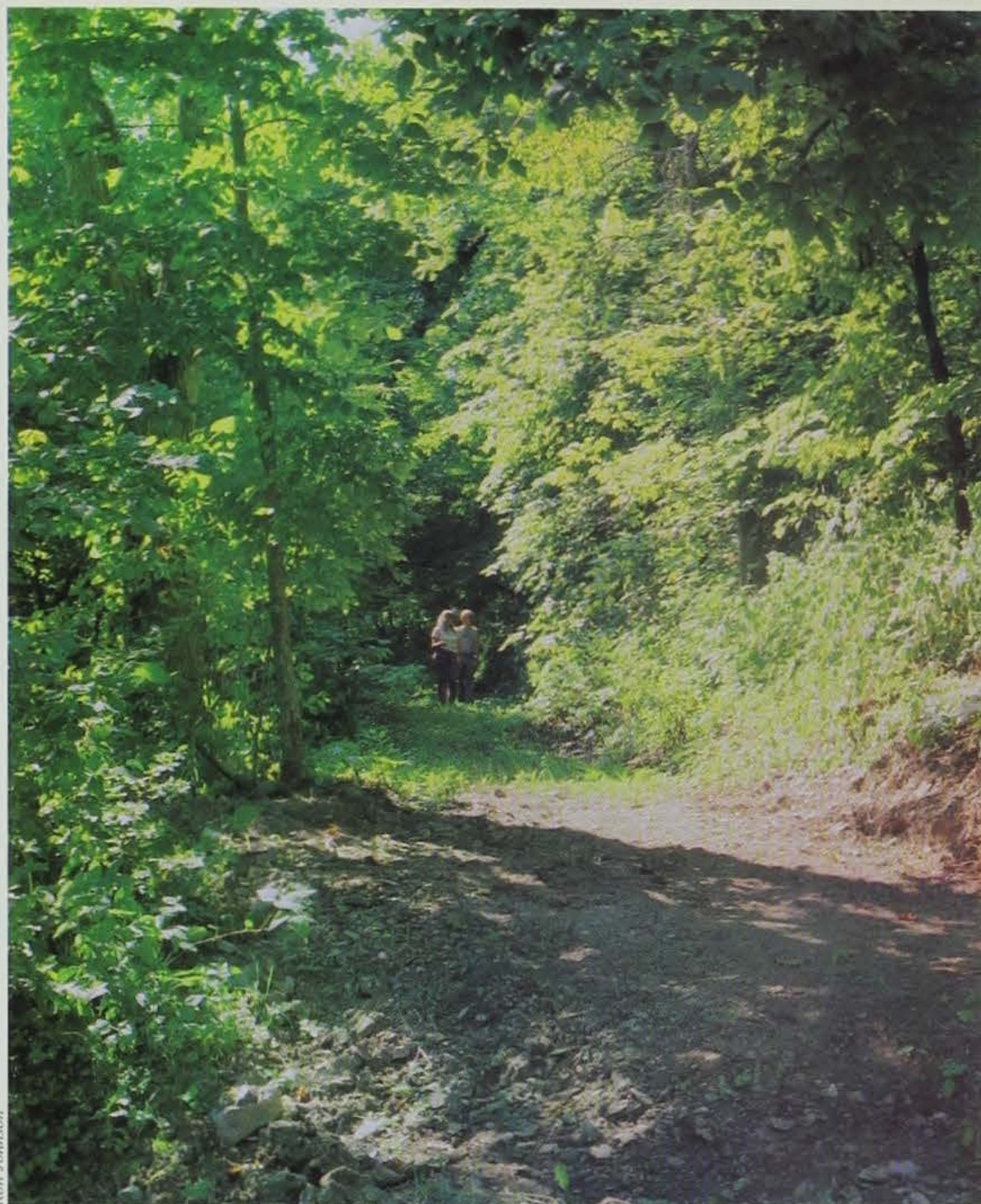


route for the road was over the steep ridge. Also, if the tunnel had not become part of the county road system there is little doubt that it would not be here today for us to enjoy.

The tunnel handled road traffic for many years but was subject to floods and rockslides. Many small springs filtered through the rock ceiling and sidewalls making the interior of the tunnel very hazardous to travelers. A work crew of prison inmates from the State Penitentiary at Fort Madison was brought in to cement the entire interior of the tunnel and also do some rock work on the approaches. This work seemed to solve most of the seepage problems but did nothing to deter flooding caused by the Middle River. In the 1940s and 1950s the tunnel flooded many times, doing a great amount of damage. Finally a contractor was hired to do extensive work to try to alleviate this problem. A dike system was installed on the west side of the tunnel to keep the river water out and a drainage system was placed in the floor of the tunnel to remove runoff and spring water. This system worked fine until the drainage tubes began to plug. Since all the roads in the area were dirt or crushed rock, each time it rained more debris was carried into the system. After a few years the entire drainage system became inoperable and flooding once more occurred in the tunnel.

In the summer of 1982 major construction once more took place at Pammel State Park with great emphasis on the renovation of the Harmon Tunnel. The tunnel floor was dug down to create an opening of approximately 13 feet in height and a new, larger drainage system was installed. The floor of the tunnel was cemented and the road system on both sides of the ridge was improved by putting down a blacktop surface. This road work included a drainage system to reduce water flow into the tunnel during wet conditions. Also, the dike on the west side of the tunnel was improved to further guard against flooding. These improvements came at great expense but can be easily justified when you visit the only highway tunnel in Iowa and remember its history.

Take some time this summer and drive to Pammel State Park—take a close look at the Harmon Tunnel for yourself. When you get home you can tell your friends and neighbors that you visited the “State Park With a Hole Through It.”



## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

The construction on the Harmon Tunnel was only a part of the renovations that took place at Pammel State park in the summer of 1982.

The highway bridge at the east entrance to the park was completely redone including a new deck or floor, new sidewalls and new guard rails. This work not only makes the bridge more pleasing to the eye but also makes it safer for vehicular traffic.

Approximately two miles of park roadways were hard-surfaced with blacktop including the main road through the campground area. A more modern and efficient drainage system was incorporated into this road work which provides the park a safer and easier maintained road system.

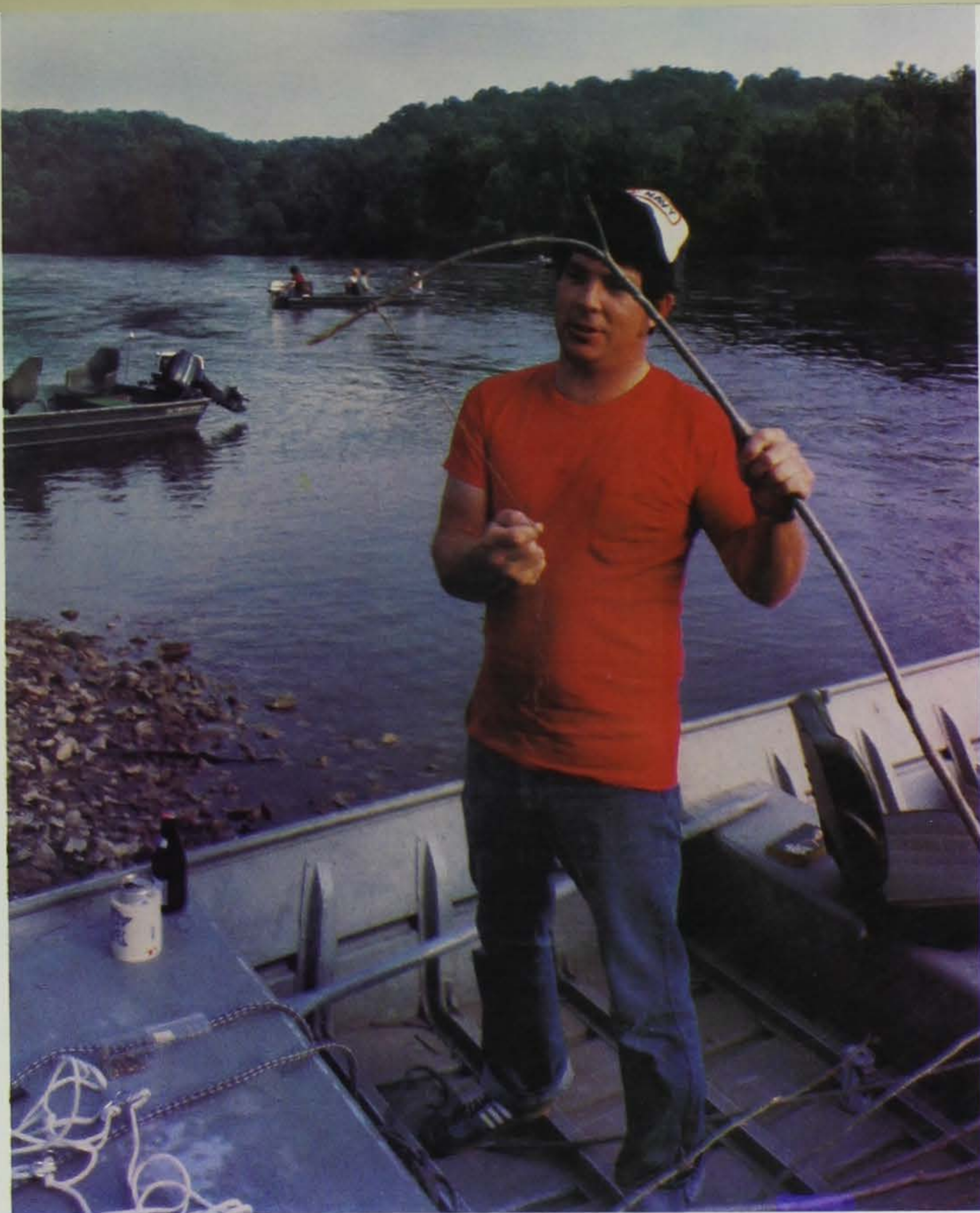
Some minor changes which are taking place include;

- (1) The development of a new parking area near the campgrounds. This will make a large open area

accessible for picnicing and/or recreational activities such as volleyball, frisbe tossing, etc. . .

- (2) Some trail changes near the lodge area to accommodate equestrian park users. This will include a large parking area for vehicles and trailers. There will also be picnic tables, fire rings and hitchrails available.
- (3) A self-guided nature trail, which should be completed soon, for those who just like to walk slowly and enjoy nature. There will be a brochure and trail map available near the trail entrance or at the ranger station to assist visitors on their walks.
- (4) Plans are under way to create a small museum building containing articles of historic significance to the immediate area. The main focus of this museum will be on the history of the Harmon Tunnel.



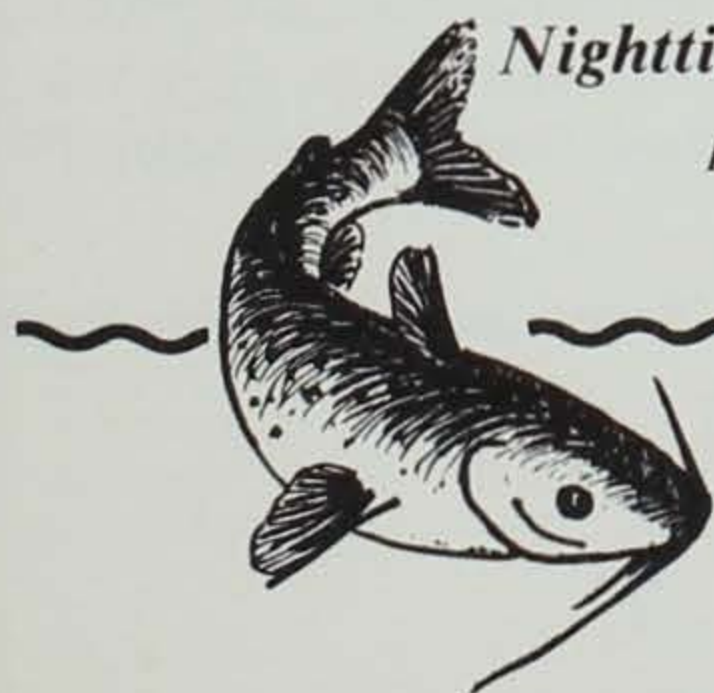


# *Diddypolers*

*Nighttime catfishing on the Des Moines River, near Madrid.*

*By Roger Sparks*

*Photos by Ross Harrison*







*When the beans are up,  
 The corn's laid by,  
 And the full moon's fat  
 As a Sunday pie;  
 The big water's risin'  
 And the river toads cry  
 For Jake, Crowbar and the Boys.*

*Where deep water laps  
 At the cottonwood trees,  
 And a fresh growth o' clover  
 Sweetens the breeze;  
 The big cats beckon  
 And the fish flies tease  
 Ol' Mark, Santi and the Boys.*

*With bait buckets squirmin'  
 And dry wood to burn,  
 Friends are gatherin'  
 At the river's big turn.  
 Dusk comes creepin' and  
 The fish'll soon learn  
 'Bout Jake, Crowbar and the Boys.*

*There's stringin' and baitin'  
 And placin' to do,  
 Some eatin' and drinkin'  
 And hollarin' too.  
 There's stories to tell  
 (And some even true!)  
 'Bout Mark, Santi and the Boys.*



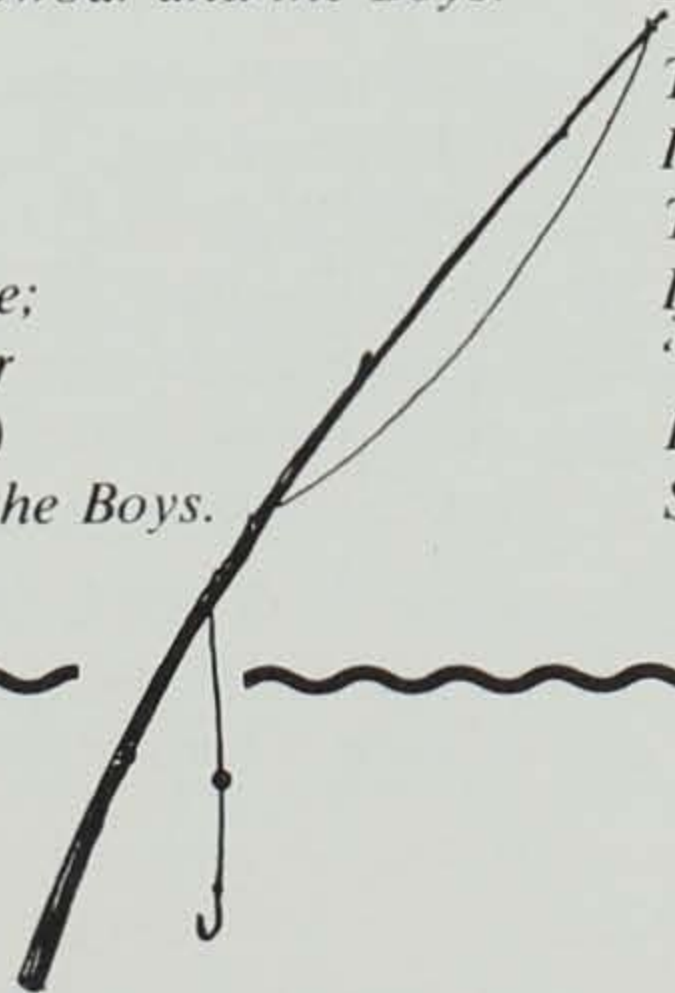


Their "handles" are short  
 Like "Boonie" and "Frey".  
 I don't ask 'cause  
 I'm 'fraid they'll say  
 What "Foamy" means,  
 Or "Creamy" or "Jake"  
 Or, for gosh sakes, "Crowbar and the Boys."

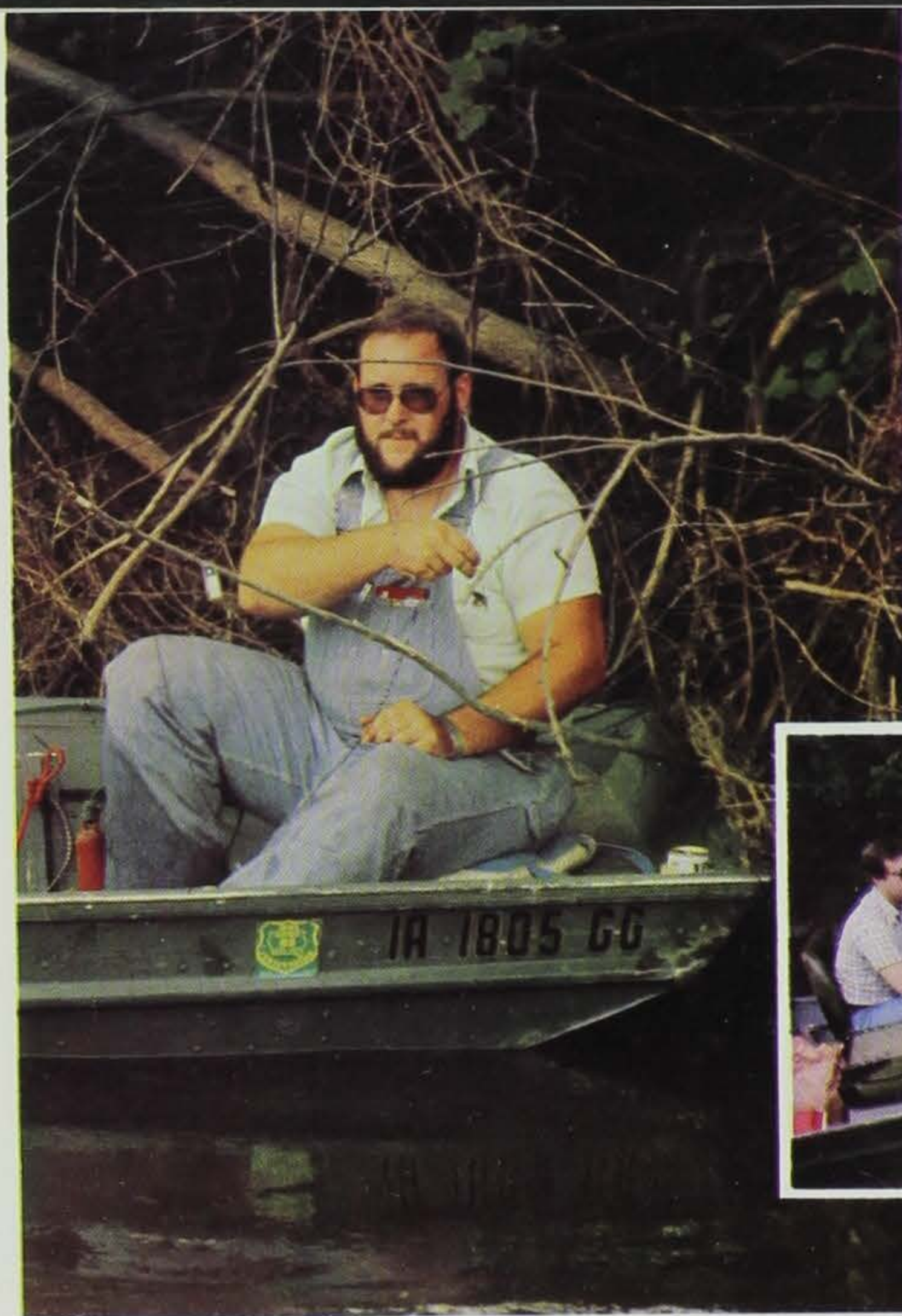
Those without chairs,  
 Must soon lay claim  
 To front row sand,  
 By the burgeoning flame;  
 Sharing snacks and beer  
 (And more of the same)  
 With Mark, Santi and the Boys.

On the first big run,  
 The poles are alive  
 With cats up to three pounds;  
 One, maybe five.  
 "Success," I declare, though  
 I hear no reply  
 From Jake, Crowbar and the Boys.

Then a tinhorn from town  
 Is rapidly taught  
 That fishin' is good  
 If "we get 'em or not."  
 "Ya see, catfishin's measured  
 By more than what's caught,"  
 Say Mark, Santi and the Boys.

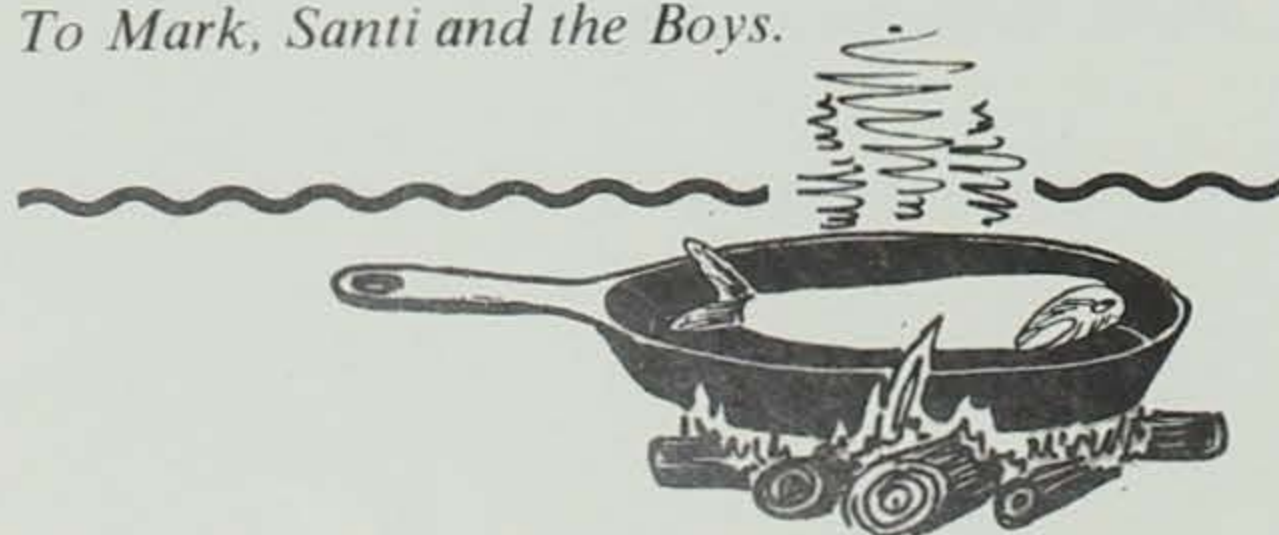






*The lines all re-baited,  
It's time for sleep;  
The moon disappears  
And the night turns deep.  
The bugs stop hummin'  
And there's nary a peep  
From Jake, Crowbar and the Boys.*

*Awakened by chill,  
The night critters prowls;  
A lantern light dances  
In the eyes of an owl;  
The black river whispers  
And the coyotes howl,  
To Mark, Santi and the Boys.*



*I think I'm learnin'  
To see beyond sight,  
As faint shadows spar  
With embers' last light;  
There's wonderful beauty  
In this fathomless night,  
To Jake, Crowbar and the Boys.*

*From sun-washed smiles  
To mud-soaked toes;  
From tricklin' dreams  
To the veins of their souls,  
There's river all through 'em,  
Yea, the big water flows  
In Mark, Santi and the Boys.*

*I'm talkin' 'bout Mark, Santi,  
Foamy and the Freys,  
and ol' Jake, Crowbar and the Boys.*





1983

## HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASONS

### Hunting Seasons

Game	Season Dates	Shooting Hours	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
RABBIT				
(cottontail)	Sept. 3-Feb. 29	Sunrise to Sunset	10	20
(jackrabbit)	Nov. 5-Dec. 18	Sunrise to Sunset	3	6
SQUIRREL				
(fox and gray)	Sept. 3-Jan. 31	None	6	12
DEER (bow)	Oct. 8-Dec. 2	½ hr. before Sunrise to ½ hr. after Sunset	}	One
*DEER (shotgun) All zones, 2 seasons	Dec. 3-Dec. 6 Dec. 10-Dec. 16	Sunrise to Sunset		
*TURKEY (Gun)	Oct. 18-Oct. 30	½ hr. before Sunrise to Sunset	}	One
*TURKEY (Bow)	Oct. 8-Dec. 2	½ hr. before Sunrise to ½ hour after Sunset		
*GROUSE (ruffed)	Oct. 8-Jan. 31	Sunrise to Sunset	3	6
*Check Regulations For Open Areas				
CROWS	Jan. 2-Feb. 25	½ hr. before Sunrise to Sunset	None	None
RAILS (Sora & Virginia)	Sept. 3-Nov. 11	Sunrise to Sunset	15	25
SNIPES (Wilson's - Jack)	Sept. 3-Dec. 18	Sunrise to Sunset	8	16
WOODCOCK	Sept. 17-Nov. 20	Sunrise to Sunset	5	10
RACCOON & OPOSSUM	Nov. 5-Jan. 15	Opens 8 a.m. 1st day	None	None
FOX (red and gray)	Nov. 12-Jan. 22	Opens 8 a.m. 1st day	None	None
WOODCHUCK	June 15-Oct. 31	None	None	None
COYOTE	Continuous Open	None	None	None
PHEASANT	Tentative Opening Nov. 5	}	REMAINDER OF LIMITS HOURS, SEASONS TO BE SET SEPT. 1	
QUAIL	Tentative Opening Nov. 5			
PARTRIDGE (gray)	Tentative Opening Nov. 5			
GEESE	Oct. 1-Dec. 9			
DUCKS (Split Season)	Sept. 17-21 (2nd season to be set)			
COOT	Sept. 17-21 (2nd season to be set)			

### Trapping Seasons

MINK, MUSKRAT, RACCOON, STRIPED SKUNK

OPPOSUM, and BADGER 8 a.m. Nov. 5 through Jan. 15

FOX (red and gray) 8 a.m. Nov. 12 through Jan. 22

BEAVER 8 a.m. Nov. 5 through April 15

except for the federal Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge.  
In this area, the open season will be from 12:00 noon December 31  
-February 26.

OTTER, WEASEL AND SPOTTED SKUNK No Open Season

COYOTE Continuous Open Season



# STAMP CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Three new winners were announced Wednesday, July 6 at the waterfowl, habitat and trout stamp contest judging.

Larry Zach's painting of a male and female wood duck won first place in the 1984 state migratory waterfowl competition. Zach, of Ankeny, took the top honor from a field of 38 entries.

Tom Carter of Cedar Falls won top honors in the 1984 trout stamp competition. Carter's painting of a brook trout took first place in a field of 20 entries.

Kenneth Wink of Laurens won first place in the habitat stamp competition for this pencil sketch of an owl in the woods. There were 19 entries in the 1984 habitat stamp category.

The waterfowl painting design will be used on more than 100,000 "duck" stamps. Revenues collected from the \$5 stamps are used for var-

ious waterfowl conservation programs such as land acquisition, development, restoration, maintenance and preservation of wetlands.

The trout painting will be used on about 50,000 1984 Iowa trout stamps. Iowa's trout program is primarily supported by revenue from the sale of these \$5 stamps which are required for all licensed trout fishermen.

The habitat painting will appear on over 450,000 habitat stamps. The revenue from these \$3 stamps will be used for wildlife habitat development within the state.

The winning designs for the three contests were determined by the judges based on composition, anatomical accuracy, and suitability for use on a stamp. Judges of the contest were Baxter Freese, commissioner, Iowa Conservation Commission, Wellman; Jim Mayhew, super-

intendent of fisheries, Iowa Conservation Commission, Indianola; Neal Deaton, museum artist, Newton; Mary Tone, *Iowan* associate editor and Iowa State University professor, Ames; and William Artis, wildlife art collector, Des Moines.

The following artists placed second through fifth respectively in the three contests: State Migratory Waterfowl — 2. John Eberhardt, Montrose; 3. Jack Hahn, Middle Amana; 4. John Bald, Davenport; and 5. Kenneth Wind, Laurens. Trout Stamp — 2. Jim Landenberger, Cedar Rapids; 3. Michael Dunbar, Bettendorf; 4. Ted McElhiney, LeClaire; and 5. Jim Siembieda, West Des Moines. Wildlife Habitat Stamp — 2. John Bald, Davenport; 3. Nick Klepinger, Reasonor; 4. Robert Beech, Polk City; and Tom Carter, Cedar Falls [tied].

## BOOK REVIEW

### *A TIME TO BE BORN*

by Lorus and

Margery Milne

218 pages

Illustrated with drawings.

Published by Sierra Club

Books, 2034 Fillmore

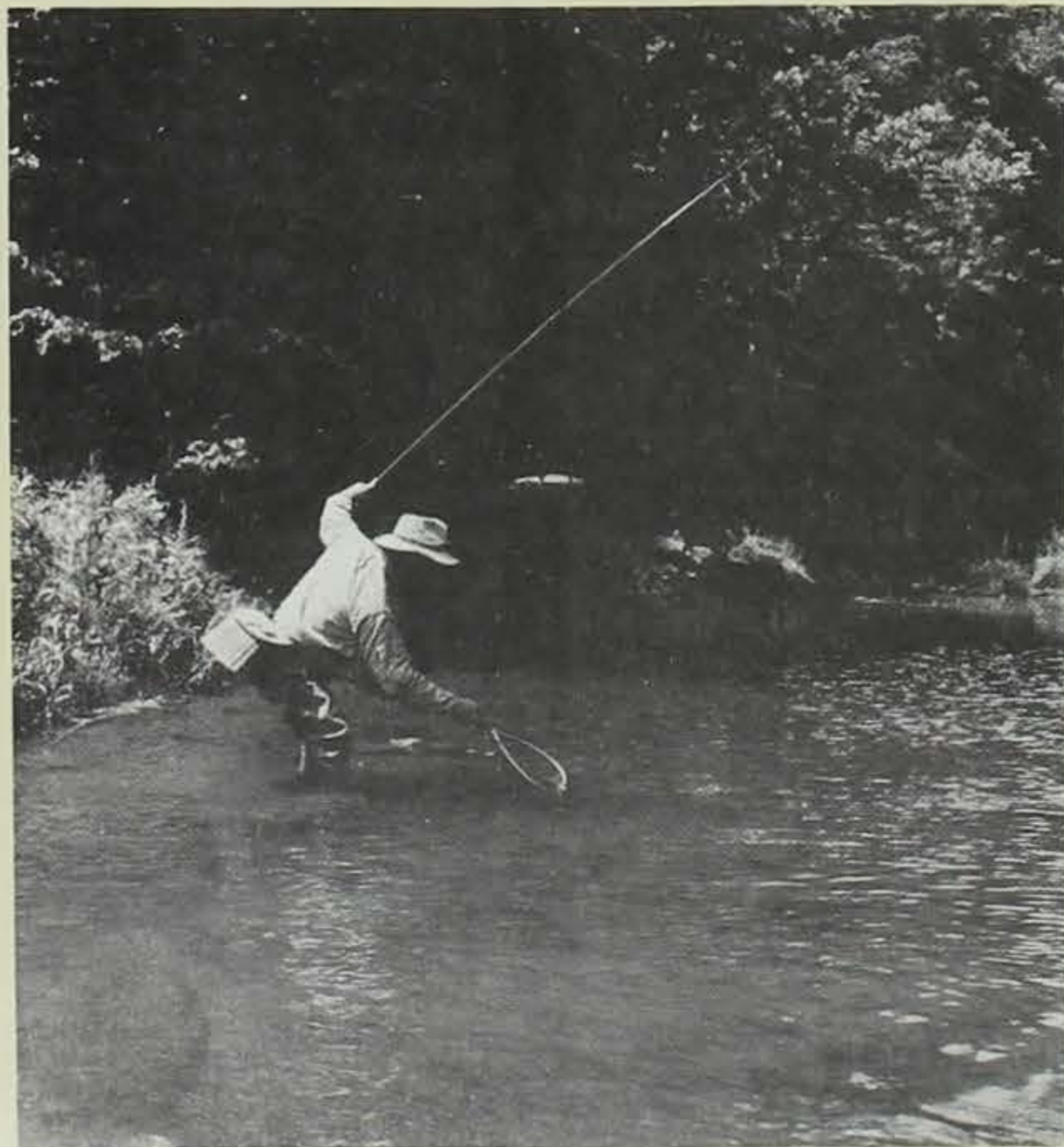
Street, San Francisco,

California 94115; 1982

\$15.95

In this lively almanac, the Milnes provide a unique view of mammalian courtship, birthing and parenting behavior. Beginning with the vernal equinox in March, the authors disclose reproductive habits of more than 100 species of mammals on six continents. Special attention is paid to tactics for species survival. Speculations are made about adaptations to climate and geography in relation to mating techniques and protection of the young.

Glimpses of animal behavior offered in this volume highlight surprising similarities among species and equally astonishing differences.



## 40,000 EXTRA TROUT

Trout fishing should be better than normal during the remainder of the summer according to Iowa Conservation Commission officials. Excellent spring flows and water quality at the Decorah, Big Springs, and Manchester trout hatcheries have resulted in unusually high survival of rainbow and brown trout. So, fisheries personnel will stock some 40,000 catchable trout in addition to normal stocking quotas. The weekly stocking rates on each of the trout streams will be increased approxi-

mately 25 percent during the remainder of the stocking season. Trout stocking extends through October on all streams and is continued into November on several streams.

The commission publishes a free "Iowa Trout Fishing Guide" which contains maps locating the trout streams and includes information on Iowa's trout program, fishing tips, hatchery and other information. These are available by contacting the I & E Section, Wallace Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.





## SPRING TURKEY SEASON BETTER THAN EXPECTED

Results from turkey hunter surveys indicate the 1983 spring turkey season turned out better than expected.

Last January, hunters applied to the Conservation Commission for 7,965 licenses, which were available for three hunting seasons (April 12-18, April 19-26 and April 27-May 8) in 10 hunting zones. Licenses were restricted to one zone and season, with a bag limit of one male, or bearded turkey.

The 6,835 hunters receiving licenses hunted 28,453 days and bagged 1,729 turkeys, for a 25 percent success rate. This was similar to 1982's season when 1,685 turkeys were bagged for a 27 percent success. Harvests and success rates were similar to 1982 in the major hunting zones in southern (Zone 1) and northeast Iowa (Zones 6-8), but were somewhat lower in central and eastcentral Iowa. Best suc-

cess rates were achieved the first season, with the second and third season slightly lower.

These results were better than anticipated by commission officials. According to Terry Little, research biologist, cold, wet weather during early April and the first two hunting seasons delayed turkey mating activities, which are normally finished by the time the season opens. "Hens were with gobblers during all three seasons," Little said, "so gobbling was greatly reduced and toms were difficult to call away from hens."

As a result of poor hatches during the past two springs turkey populations in southern and central Iowa were only about one third to one half of numbers seen in the recent past. A combination of these factors led us to speculation that hunting would be less successful in 1982," he said.

Little feels the fact that hunters were successful was a testimonial to the excellent turkey densities found in Iowa's mixed forest and farmland habitats. Even though turkey numbers were down, remaining populations were still excellent compared to traditional turkey range in the southeastern United States. Because of the two consecutive poor hatches, the gobblers which were left were older and larger than average," Little said.

Just 25 percent of the harvest was yearling males ("jakes") and many of the gobblers examined by commission personnel were in the 3+-year-old categories. "Normally, more than one-third of the harvest will be jakes and over half of the adults will be two years old," he said. "So, although the harvest was similar to 1982, the size of turkeys harvested this year was above average."

## TREE FARMS BLOSSOM

Iowa tree farming is catching on. At a recent meeting of the Iowa Tree Farm Committee, a 50 percent increase in the number of Iowa tree farms during the past 18 months was announced.

There are now 218 Iowa landowners who have been designated as tree farmers. This represents an increase of 71 tree farms containing some 4,800 acres. Iowa now has nearly 20,000 acres in tree farms. It is an encouraging trend says State Forester Gene Hertel, because more landowners are recognizing the value of woodland crop and will not be further depleting the state's forestland.

The American Tree Farm System is a nationwide program sponsored by the nation's wood-using industries through the American Forest Institute with assistance from forestry organizations, public agencies, consulting foresters and others. Its purpose is to encourage private forest landowners to protect and manage their forests. The system promotes the production of forest products with all the attendant benefits of improved food and habitat for wildlife, watershed protection and opportunities for outdoor recreation. [Iowa tree farms must contain at least three acres of plantation or five acres of native hardwoods.]

Those interested in learning more about tree farms should contact the Iowa Tree Farm Committee, Box 274, Story City, 50248; or Gene Hertel, State Forester, State Conservation Commission, Wallace Bldg., Des Moines, 50319.

1983 SPRING WILD TURKEY HARVEST AND SUCCESS RATES

Zone	Season 1	Season 2	Season 3	Total	Change in success from 1982
1	317(30%)	334(30%)	267(24%)	918(28%)	0
2	66(36%)	52(25%)	45(24%)	163(28%)	+ 6%
3	17(20%)	28(29%)	12(15%)	57(21%)	-17%
4	14(16%)	14(14%)	16(18%)	44(16%)	- 9%
5	32(20%)	47(31%)	37(23%)	116(25%)	- 9%
6	173(34%)	107(21%)	90(18%)	370(24%)	- 1%
7	19(21%)	13(15%)	6( 7%)	38(15%)	- 2%
8	3(21%)	0( 0%)	0( 0%)	3(10%)	New
9	0( 0%)	4(40%)	3(30%)	7(25%)	Zones
10	8(31%)	3(11%)	2( 7%)	13(16%)	
STATE- WIDE	649(29%)	602(26%)	478(21%)	1,729(25%)	- 2%



## RELEASING FISH IS IMPORTANT

Next to the satisfaction of catching a fish is the thrill of releasing it. Watching it gracefully slip down to the depths can bring a sense of accomplishment to any angler.

Releasing trophy fish to fight again another day is not a new concept, but it is a philosophy gaining wide acceptance, according to the fishing experts. The slogan of Trout Unlimited is: "Limit Your Catch, Don't Catch Your limit." At pro bass tournaments, all fish are released alive. Musky clubs honor members who catch and release trophy fish (some over 40 pounds).

Releasing a fish requires special effort and handling. The best technique is turning it loose without even touching it. For small fish, slide your hand down the line and slip the hook from the lip or jaw. Or, grab the hook with a long-nosed pliers and twist it free.

If a large fish, or the above method won't work, net the fish in a wet net. This will provide support for the entire fish, rather than a lot

of pressure in one area. A net will hold the fish steady. Try to keep the fish from flopping and unhook it while in the net. Don't set it on shore or the bottom of the boat. Two people can work quickly to remove the hooks.

Lower the net back into the water and hold the fish stationary until it catches its "breath." Remove it from the net and support it until it swims under its own power. If it doesn't come around in a minute or two, keep the fish because it will probably not live.

If fishing in a river, support the fish by holding its tail, then let it go in the slowest water available.

Never pick up a fish by the gill covers or eye sockets if you intend to release it. Don't touch the red gill tissue. A fish hooked in the gills, tongue or eye, or a bleeding fish has very little chance for survival.

Remember, fish is excellent food, but releasing a trophy brings a great deal of satisfaction, and improves fishing in the future.

## DONATIONS

The Commission would like to recognize and thank the following people for their recent donations:

J. H. Hammill LeClaire	\$5 for habitat fund
Solon Four-leaf Clovers Solon	\$20 for prairie grass seed
Edith Buresh Cedar Rapids	\$10 for prairie grass seed
Cedar Rapids Audubon Society Cedar Rapids	\$50 for prairie grass seed
Clifford Reams Milo	\$5 for skunk traps
Christopher Sutton Silver Spring, MD	\$75 in memory of J. E. Houenstein
M. B. Koontz Des Moines	\$5 for Chickadee Checkoff

## 1982 FIREARM ACCIDENT STATISTICS

During 1982, there were 42 firearm accidents in Iowa with five resulting in fatalities.

According to Charles Olofson, hunter safety officer for the Iowa Conservation Commission, there were five fewer fatalities in 1982 than the previous year. Olofson said 30 of the 42 accidents were hunting-related. Three of the fatal accidents occurred while hunting, while two fatalities occurred in the home.

Following are some firearm accident statistics Olofson cited:

- 48% were accidentally self-inflicted
- 76% of the accidents were 0 to 10 yards from muzzle
- 29% were nonhunting accidents
- 62% involved gun handlers 16 to 20 years of age
- 56% of the accidents were with shotguns
- 32% of the accidents were with rifles
- 7% of the accidents were with handguns

## YEARLY FIREARM ACCIDENT REPORT

Year	Nonfatal	Fatal	Total
1965	95	20	115
1966	121	19	140
1967	95	19	114
1968	64	11	75
1969	87	12	99
1970	76	7	83
1971	57	12	69
1972	67	5	72
1973	55	12	67
1974	72	14	86
1975	47	5	52
1976	61	5	66
1977	60	10	70
1978	61	9	70
1979	53	7	60
1980	57	4	61
1981	61	10	71
1982	37	5	42





# MISSISSIPPI CANOEING

By Charles R. Baumhover

Photos by author



Canoeing the Mississippi is an enjoyable thing to do. However, mention to the average person that you are planning to do so and most people, including some experienced canoeists, will tell you that it is just too big for canoes. People fear barges, cabin cruisers, speed boats, white caps, swells, storms, dams and fast currents. Bunk! Just plain BUNK! By all means, if you are actually afraid of the river, stay off. But if you have a desire to experience her majestic shores and are in reasonable physical condition combined with a willingness to use common sense, then make the trip.

Bear in mind, I spent the first twenty two years of my life on the Mississippi at Dubuque. I learned to swim in it before the days of locks and dams. My favorite summertime sport was renting a small row boat, crossing to the Wisconsin shore and swimming from the upstream end of a sand bar. I made crossings in the fall, braving larger waves and colder water than good sense called for. I skated on its harbors in the winter. I knew all aspects of the river, including the loss of more than one boyhood friend to its swift, deep waters. Eventually, I learned not only to love it, but also to respect it.

I moved from Dubuque in 1950 and still miss the Mississippi. Twelve years

ago my family acquired two canoes and we began to learn the sport. But after many years in Des Moines it's still hard for me to accept the Des Moines and Raccoon as rivers rather than creeks, as they often appear to me. It should be no surprise that I immediately wrote for more information when I read that a nine-day canoe trip from Dubuque to Burlington was being arranged.

The canoeists were scheduled to meet in Dubuque on Monday, May 23rd. The trip was to commence the following morning at 8:00 am and continue downstream for nine days arriving at Burlington on Wednesday, June 1st. Fortunately, I found a partner but he had only three days available for the trip. This meant I would have to leave the group at Clinton.

My partner and I left Des Moines, bound for Dubuque on a sunny, windy May 23rd. The next morning under sunny skies and mild breezes sixteen canoes, including ours, pulled out of the Dubuque marina, accompanied by a press boat, a Coast Guard patrol and a john boat.

Prior to departure we were briefed on safety rules. We were told that the pool above the dam at Clinton could prove to be the most hazardous part of the trip. A strong wind could produce

swells up to seven feet high. We had to stay in the channel because of stumps in the pool outside. It doesn't take much imagination to visualize what would happen to a canoe riding a swell and coming down on top of a stump. The Coast Guard advised us to stay in the channel at all times so they could keep track of us and also to wear a life jacket at all times. We were told that the water temperature was 55° with a human survival time of twenty minutes. If we capsized it was imperative to begin rescue immediately. Forming a "T" between a capsized canoe and an upturned partner can permit one to partially lift the capsized canoe out of the water, empty it and get the occupants back in. Short of having the Coast Guard fish you out, this maneuver might have to be used. Naturally, it is a good idea to carry bailing equipment.

By now you are probably thinking this guy is a nut and if you were interested in a Mississippi canoe trip are ready to change your mind. Remember, I told you after I learned to love the Mississippi I learned to respect her.

Plan on how to get yourself out of trouble and you probably will not get in. The most dangerous part of the trip is probably from your driveway to the edge of the water. It is wise to travel in groups of at least two canoes. While not always necessary, it is a good idea to stay within marker buoys. Green marks the right side and red the left side of the channel as you move downstream. Remember, red right return.

To stray out of the channel could get you lost in a slough. Sloughs are large and most of them navigable to canoes and other craft, but unless you know them thoroughly, stay out. Keep an eye out for barge traffic. They are large and easy to see. Watch for them from behind. Give them plenty of room. Don't attempt to take right of way over them. Keep out of their way. You don't need to have your heirs suing the barge line. I believe canoe travel on a major river is always better before Memorial Day and after Labor Day. Speedboat and houseboat traffic is at a minimum before and after this prime vacation season.



## MISSISSIPPI CANOEING *Continued*



I had purchased a new, zip-on life jacket for the trip. Even though the water was calm for the most part of the first day I wore my jacket at all times. The only rough water we experienced was at the point between the base of Chestnut Mountain on the Illinois side and Spruce Creek on the Iowa side above Bellevue where the trip ended the first day. A stiff breeze came out of the south and created rather large white caps. With the help of my young strong partner we managed to keep the canoe dry as a cork. My partner was ideal. Old enough to be strong and young enough to take orders.

On this trip a van carried our camping equipment and various community groups, restaurants and hotels made meals available along the way. There was no need to cook. Compared to other canoe trips I had made, this one was luxurious. We were met at camp by busses or vans and taken to local shower facilities. It was a good way to travel.

Passage through the pool above Clinton turned out to be free of hazard. We left Sabula, Iowa's beautiful

friendly island city at about 8:40 am. The river appeared as a mirror. We floated easily downstream, passed through the pool without event and approached the lock at about noon.

Passing through a lock is an interesting experience in itself. The wind was out of the northeast as we passed through at Bellevue. The waves slapped us around quite a bit, even after we were within the shelter of the lock. Once in, the gates closed behind us. In passing through, you hold the rope offered from the side wall of the lock while sitting in the canoe. If enough ropes are available you may wish to have your partner hold one also. Do not tie the rope to the canoe. There can be eight to ten feet difference between entering and exiting and a tied rope could leave you dangling. Do not proceed through the locks until the lock master sounds the horn. He will not do this until the gates are completely free of motion. If you approach the dam and the roller gates are down do not attempt to go through them, no matter how safe the water may appear to be. On the small streams without locks,

make a portage. Know the river. If you approach a dam on the Mississippi without other escort, tie up securely, upstream from the structure and out of the way of traffic. Keep off the structure and walk back to the main lock. They will give you instructions on procedure.

After passing through the lock at Clinton we paddled downstream to the next scheduled stop where I picked up my truck, regretfully left the group and headed back to Des Moines.

I understand the plan is to make this trip an annual affair; so I hope to see you on the next big Mississippi canoe trip, planned for the spring of '84. Unless of course, someone would like to plan a float from Lansing to Guttenburg for this October.

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*Charles Baumhover was originally from Dubuque, Iowa. He currently lives in Des Moines and is an agent with Bankers Life Insurance Company.*

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# IOWA'S VANISHING WOODLAND WILDLIFE

*Last of a 3 part series*

*By Jewel K. Bennett*

*Illustrations by Rex Heer*

## Disappearing Creatures of our Woodland Edges and Thickets

Iowa's original woodlands have been reduced from over six million acres to just over two million. Nineteen percent of the state was once forested, but now only four percent is. This great loss of forest habitat has been devastating for wildlife of the timber and riverbottoms. This change of the landscape has also affected a third group of creatures, those who inhabit the ecotone between field and forest, the wildlife dwelling along the "seams" of the landscape.

There is an entire group of animals adapted to the part-open, part-closed habitat of woodland edges and thickets. Many are songbirds familiar to us because we see them as they feed out in the open, but they retreat to the bushes for safety and to raise their young. Many of our state's amphibians and reptiles use these areas, sunning themselves in the open, but returning to stumps and logs for shelter. Land use practices that eliminate woodlots and clear fencerows have affected these wildlife species.

The western slender glass lizard is now *endangered*, with few breeding population left in the state. The northern spring peeper, once common, is now *threatened*, just one category away from the endangered classification. Several species, like the bluebird are declining; their status warrants monitoring. Range maps accompany the descriptions of our vanishing species. These maps indicate where a species might be found in the state, however, most now have only scattered distributions in their potential range.

### EASTERN BLUEBIRD

*Sialia sialis*

Declining

The eastern bluebird is an all-time favorite, with its bright blue head and wings, rusty bib, and cheerful, gurgling song. It was once a common sight near the edge of farmyard woodlots where it nested in small cavities provided by woodpecker holes, hollow trees, or

old, wooden fence posts. The bluebird might be found anywhere in our state, but populations are apparently declining in Iowa and through the midwest. Proper nesting cavities are less abundant, and the bluebird must now compete with the introduced house sparrow and starling for the remaining nest holes.

A bluebird eats mostly insects, commonly grasshoppers or caterpillars, although wild berries are also a favorite treat. A pair takes large numbers of



insects when they have a brood to feed, but they may have trouble raising their young in areas widely sprayed for agricultural pests. Under favorable conditions, however, a pair of bluebirds will raise two broods each summer.

Saving hollow trees at the edge of a woodlot or in a fencerow will help bluebirds. They will also use properly sized nest boxes placed at the edge of a woods or on a fence. A nest box built 5x5x8 inches high with a 1½-inch diameter hole located six inches from the bottom would be suitable for blue-

birds. The small diameter of the entrance hole is critical, or starlings will take over the nest box.

### LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

*Lanius ludovicianus*  
Threatened



The loggerhead shrike is no larger than a robin, yet it feeds on large insects, mice and even small birds. It is sometimes called "butcher bird," referring to the way it handles large prey items. The shrike's feet do not have talons to grasp its victims, so it often impales its food on thorns or barb wire, making feeding easier. Its heavy, hooked bill, is well suited for feeding on its prey. Its genus name, *Lanius*, meaning "watchful sentinel," also refers to its hunting style. A shrike frequently sits patiently at the top of a tree, watching the ground below for prey.



A shrike inhabits open country and will do quite well in farming areas. It might be found almost anywhere in Iowa, frequenting thickets and fencerows, and nesting in a small, isolated tree. Its nest is a loose, bulky structure built of twigs, and it usually contains four to six off-white, spotted eggs. The loggerhead shrike has always been an uncommon bird, but recently it has become threatened in Iowa and other states on the northern edge of its range. The trend to remove shrubby fencerows and windbreaks is detrimental to this species, as that removes habitat for both the shrike and its prey.



### BLUE-WINGED WARBLER

*Vermivora pinus*  
Threatened



The scientific name of this little bird means "worm-eater," and its common name describes its blue-gray wings set off against its yellow body. Insects are the staples of its diet; it forages through bushes gleaning caterpillars and beetles off the leaves with its slender bill. The blue-winged warbler is a summer resident in Iowa, dwelling in thickets, fencerows and brushy pastures. Its status in Iowa has become threatened as such areas are often cleared out.



With the male guarding nearby, the female takes charge of the nest, placing it close to the ground and building the cone-shaped cup of dead leaves and grasses. She lays four to six speckled white eggs, and incubates them until they hatch after only 10 or 12 days. Both male and female work at gathering insects for the young.

### YELLOW WARBLER

*Dendroica petechia*  
Declining



This little yellow bird is usually seen as a flash of yellow darting in the bushes. Females are solid yellow, but males also have rust-color breast streaks. A territorial male sings a rapid series of notes that sounds as if he's bragging: *sweet sweet sweet so sweet*. The yellow warbler favors small streams and ponds surrounded by thickets. Its nest is hidden in bushes and usually contains four young birds. A high-protein diet of insects helps the chicks grow quickly; they fledge when only 10 or 12 days old.



The yellow warbler winters in Central America, migrating north to breed. It appears that fewer nesters are returning to Iowa as marshes are drained and thickets dry out. Our greatest concentrations of yellow warblers are to be found near lakes in northwestern and north-central Iowa.

### NORTHERN SPRING PEEPER

*Hyla crucifer*  
Threatened



This small tree frog is part of the chorus heard over the marshes and woodland ponds in early spring. It is calling for a mate from a blade of grass or a twig at the water surface. A female is attracted, and up to 1000 tiny eggs are laid on underwater vegetation. The adult spring peeper then leaves the pond to spend the rest of the spring and summer hunting for insects in shrubs and thickets. Tiny tadpoles emerge from the eggs in only two or three days and transform into froglets by June. As the weather cools in the autumn, the spring peeper goes into hibernation under debris on the forest floor.



A spring peeper was probably common at one time through the eastern half of Iowa, but it needs both marsh and woodland thickets to complete its life cycle. Drainage practices have reduced its distribution to only the eastern edge of the state.

### WESTERN SLENDER GLASS LIZARD

*Ophisaurus attenuatus*  
Endangered



The glass lizard is certainly an odd creature! At first glance it appears to be a thin snake because it has no legs and may be three feet long. But, on closer inspection, it can be distinguished from a snake by its movable eyelids and external ear openings. Without any legs, the glass lizard moves about with the help of its long tail that may be a full two-thirds of its total length.

It is called a glass lizard because its tail will disjoint into several pieces, or

appear to shatter, if grasped by a predator. A drastic, but effective, means of escape! A new, shorter tail will regrow after a few weeks. The glass lizard is a predator on grasshoppers, crickets, snails and even baby mice. It inhabits the edges of woodlands or sandy oak savannas and takes refuge in burrows.



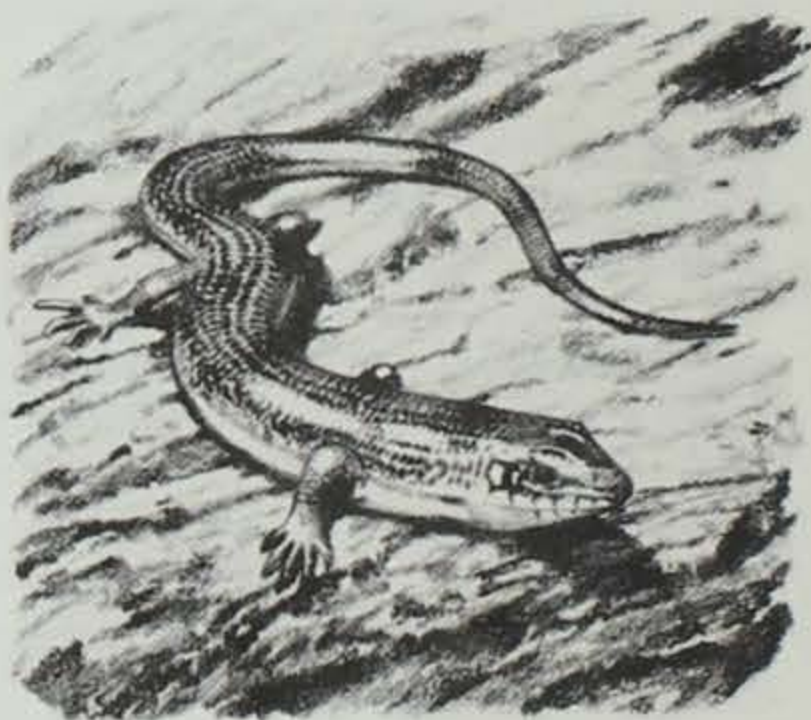
It is believed that the glass lizard is normally an uncommon creature with small, scattered populations. Such species are especially vulnerable to extirpation because of their inherent low abundance. In fact, the western glass lizard is considered endangered in Iowa and is becoming rare in neighboring states.

### GREAT PLAINS SKINK

*Eumeces obsoletus*  
Endangered



Although often considered a grassland species, our only populations of great plains skink are found on the edge of woodlands in the extreme southwestern corner of the state. Their range in Iowa is so restricted that they are considered endangered.



They are very secretive and spend a great deal of time underground, near rotting logs, or under loose rocks. The great plains skink is one of the largest skinks and may exceed 10 inches in length. Adult great plains skinks are light gray color with detailed patterns of dark striping around each scale, looking as if they are wearing a coat of armor. Female skinks can be devoted mothers. They lay seven to fifteen eggs in a sheltered nest during early summer. Females stay with the eggs and guard them fiercely for the six-week incubation period. Their vigil ends when the precocial young skinks hatch out and start life on their own.



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Ron Johnson



## CCC'ers REUNITE

By Ross Harrison

As the bearded 80-year-old mopped the plate with his last corner of bread, he began to chuckle, "You know, this fancy roasted hog and all the trimm'ns is pretty good eats, but I really liked the cornbread and beans we had in the C's."

In the cool shade of a nearby oak, lemonade in hand, his wife remarked, "I guess the country has got some economy troubles today, but I think most folks are spoiled. I just don't remember too many bad times back in 19 and 34 when we got by on \$22 a month. That's what my son and I got, with my husband getting \$8 out of the \$30 monthly salary working in the C's."

They can make you feel guilty.

And, there were about 350 of them. They came together on a hot weekend last month for the 50th reunion of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1983. There was enough sparkle in their eyes to light the night.

The Conservation Commission, recognizing that the CCC was responsible for building most of Iowa's state parks, hosted the gathering at the Springbrook Education Center, north

of Guthrie Center. People came from California and Pennsylvania, from Texas and Orgeon, and from hundreds of places between. Many saw faces they hadn't seen for 40 or 50 years.

FDR's CCCers racked up enough accomplishments across the nation to rank among the highest in any government of the world for peacetime mobilization of men, materials and transportation.

In Iowa, the C's employed more than 49,000 workers between 1933 and 1942. They planted 6.4 million trees, built 737,000 rods of fence, collected 880,000 pounds of hardwood seeds, controlled tree diseases on almost 2 million acres, and constructed countless stone/log shelters, cabins, trails, roads and more. They spent about \$48,500,000 on their work.

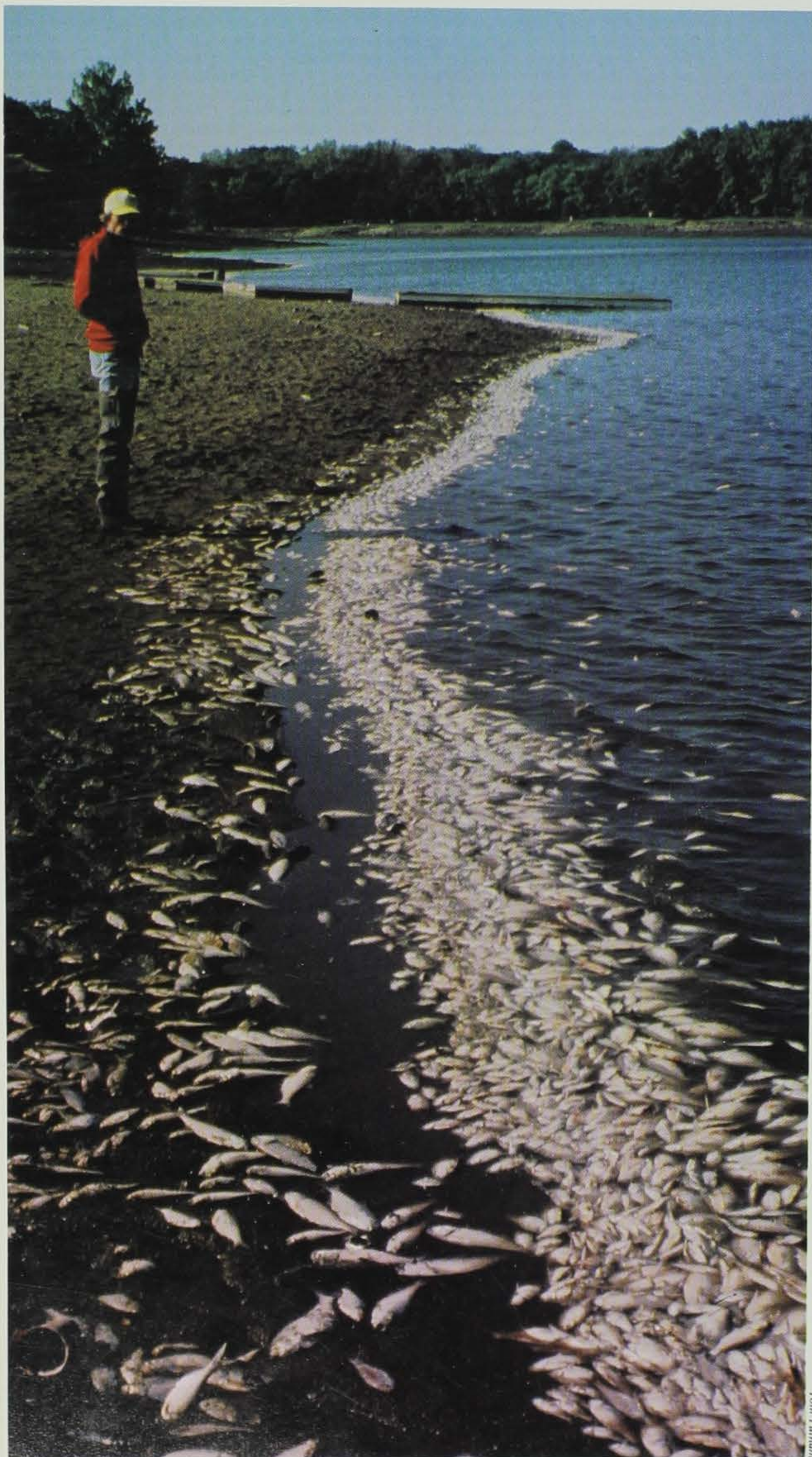
There were no women in the C's; men lived away from their families for long periods of time, mostly in tent camps. Bathing was rare, sickness was too common, the work was all by hand and it was tough.

Still, they can sure make you feel guilty when they tell you of all the good times they had.



At the 50th reunion picnic, former CCC'ers recalled building facilities like the old lodge at Fort Defiance State Park. They also enjoyed the music of Cliff Knight of Dexter.





*Chemical kill yielded mostly shad, few game fish.*

# LAKEA

*By Tom Putnam*

This expression, or some other unprintable derivation, was voiced more than once during the fall of 1981 when unsuspecting anglers, having somehow avoided the media blitz on the fish management project, arrived lakeside to discover Lake Ahquabi partially drained.

"Looks like they poisoned her too, Wilma. There's dead fish everywhere! Why don't they just leave well enough alone?"

Ask these anglers to reminisce about past fishing success, however, and a clearer picture of the fisheries problems may come to light. For several years, panfish angling has been characterized by small bluegill and crappie. They were the same size each year, small, and appeared to be in poor body condition. Redear sunfish used to be abundant in the lake and commonly weighed one pound or more. Numbers just prior to renovation were low and the average size had declined. No large redear were being caught.

Bass fishing had slowed from previous years. Although a 14-inch size limit was in force, few anglers were encountering the largemouth even below the legal "keeper" size. Surveys showed a fair population of bass still existed but they appeared to be slow to bite.



# LAKE AHQUABI RENOVATION

*"They're foolin' with our lake again, Wilma!"*

A few channel catfish were still being taken, now and then a monster. But catfishing had peaked several years before and the trend was definitely towards lower harvest.

The scenario appears to portray a typical "out-of-balance" fish population; too many slow-growing panfish, the result of an insufficient number of predators to control them. Enter onto the scene the culprit responsible for most of the problems at Lake Ahquabi, gizzard shad.

The gizzard shad is a clupeid, a member of the herring family, that frequents Iowa's larger river systems. It is a popular forage species for large flood control reservoirs in the southern U.S. Unfortunately, the species is not adaptable to small lake fish management plans for several reasons. Gizzard shad are prolific and are soon present in large numbers. They compete with bluegill, crappie and small fingerling bass for the same plankton food, limiting the amount available for gamefish. Shad provide gamefish forage for only a short time and a month after hatch are too large for consumption by most crappies and fingerling bass. Gizzard shad don't winterkill in small impoundments, as is often the case in reservoirs, and their numbers increase to a surprising proportion of

the total biomass of the lake's fish population. It was because of the presence of this species, clandestinely introduced into the lake in the late 1960's, that the decision was made to renovate Lake Ahquabi in September of 1981.

A project is never meant to go as smoothly in the field as on the drawing board and here was no exception. Those familiar with Lake Ahquabi

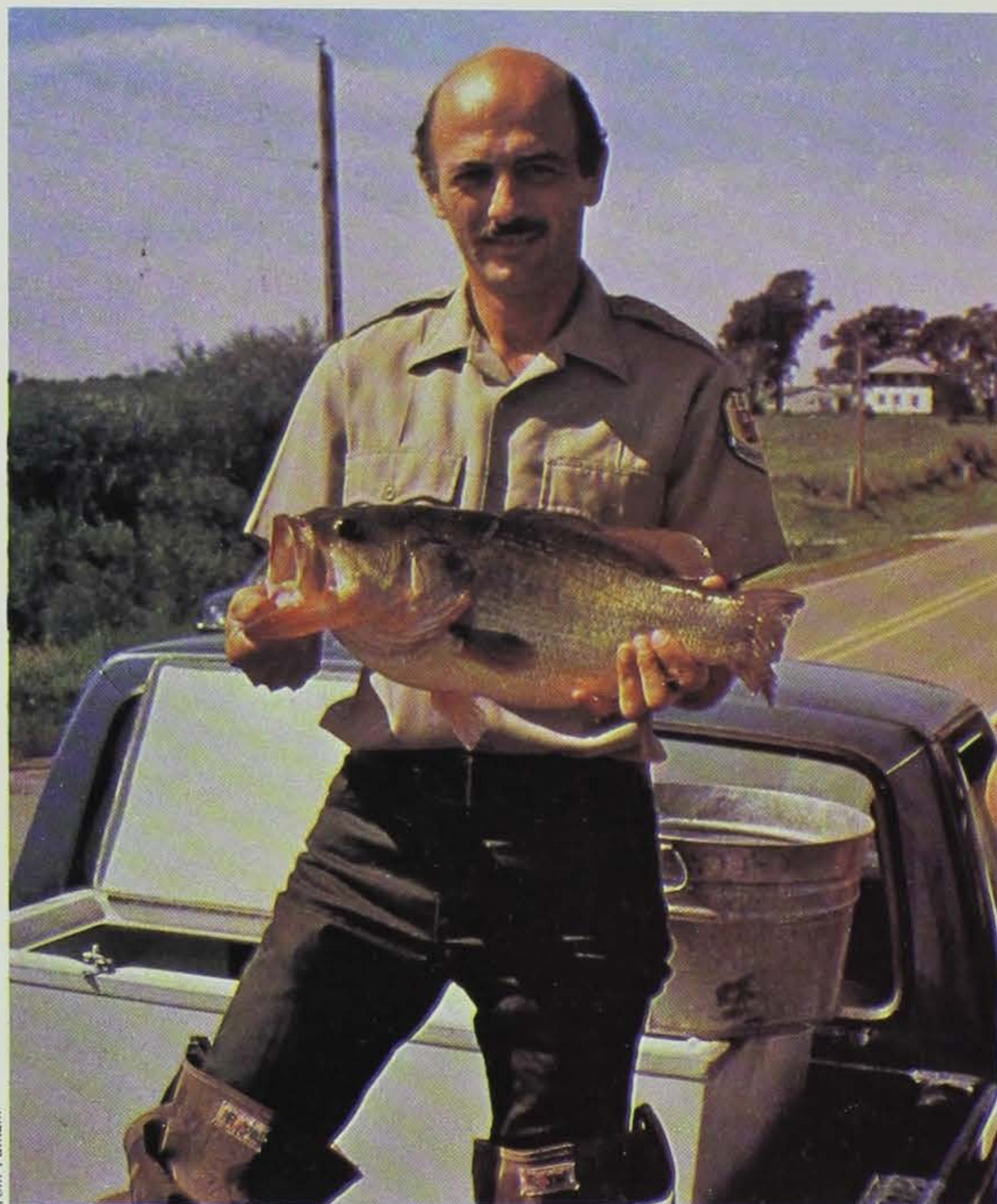
know of its extensive floating lily beds. Since these were a hindrance to effective application of fish toxicant, the plan was to draw the lake down seven feet prior to treatment. This procedure would evacuate water from the weedbeds to greatly reduce the volume to be treated. The lake's control structure, however, had been damaged in a drainage fifteen years previously and

*Restocking included muskey fingerlings.*



Tom Putnam





Tom Putnam

Many big bass were netted and restocked in nearby lakes.

was now inoperable. To accomplish the task, a giant siphon was set up at the dam. A series of ten-inch water main pipe sections were joined extending from the deep water near the dam, up over the structure to the base on the far side.

To operate the system, the far end was first capped and that section pumped full of water from a gate valve at the top of the dam. When full, a suction pump was attached to the gate valve to reduce air pressure in the lake side of the system. In a short time, the lake water rose up to the gate valve, the valve was closed, the cap at the far end of the system was removed and the siphon was in operation. To insure rapid drawdown, four siphons were installed at Ahquabi.

When the lake level had dropped seven feet, a fish rescue operation was initiated using electroshocker boats, to remove larger gamefish prior to reno-

vation. It was later estimated that 43 percent of the poundage of bass was rescued and restocked in surrounding public waters during the two-day operation.

The fish toxicant, rotenone, was used to renovate the fish population. This chemical indiscriminately kills all fish in the lake. Prior to application, the lake was opened to promiscuous fishing where licensed anglers were able to pick up what fish they could, usually by dipnetting.

The results of the renovation, estimated by shoreline samples of the dead fish, promiscuous fishing estimates and fish rescue records were startling (see table). Gizzard shad made up 67 percent of the weight of fish in the lake. Panfish species and bullheads, all less than "keeper" size, made up 17 percent of the weight; another 9 percent was composed of grass carp and European carp.

*Tom Putnam is a fisheries management biologist for central Iowa. He has been with the commission for twelve years and holds a B.S. degree in fisheries & wildlife biology from Iowa State.*

Desirable species, catfish, bass and tiger muskie made up the remaining 7 percent of the fish weight. Of this, one third was too small to be kept by anglers leaving only 5 percent of the total weight of fish in the lake of catchable size. No wonder fishing was slow!

Species	% composition by weight (lbs)	- wgt (lbs)
Gizzard shad	66.8	.09
Bluegill	7.4	.04
Crappie	5.6	.12
Readear sunfish	1.1	.17
Bullhead	3.1	.22
Catfish	1.7	.35
Catfish	2.7	12.00
Largemouth bass	.5	.10
Largemouth bass	2.0	1.35
Tiger muskie	.2	2.40
Grass carp	2.3	3.00
Carp	6.9	7.40

The restocking program began less than a month after renovation and several fish species are becoming well established. Bluegill, catfish, largemouth bass, tiger muskie and adult bullhead were stocked in 1981 and 1982. Adult crappie will be added this year as brood fish to establish that fishery. Additional bass, catfish and tiger muskie will also be included in this summer's stocking.

Fishing at Lake Ahquabi will be slow in 1983 with bullheads and catfish offering the best chances for success. By 1984, some bass and bluegill will be "keeper" size and tiger muskie will have reached the thirty-inch minimum limit.

Having to wait several years for good fishing to return to Lake Ahquabi can be exasperating, but "foolin' with the lake again" was the best alternative. By renovating and restocking, anglers can be assured of many successful fishing trips in the near future.



# A Good Friend Makes the Trip



Ron Johnson

By Don Kline

The man had just slid a 12-inch crappie onto the stringer and carefully replaced his minnow between the branches of the partially submerged tree. Immediately his small bobber jerked beneath the surface and just as quickly the veteran of many fishing seasons lifted his pole and boated another crappie.

It was a perfect spring day, just right for a grandson and grandpa combination. They talked about the warm breeze and new leaves just unfolding. Crappie schools came and left all day, leaving just enough time between rushes for the two to relax and talk.

The boy asked his grandpa, "Why did we catch only a few large crappie today, and so many small ones?"

He remembered last year when nearly every crappie he and his grandfather caught at this very spot was a jumbo.

In his anticipation before this first trip of spring, he had checked his fishing tackle a dozen times, trying to remember things he had learned from the year before. After cleaning and oiling his fishing reel, he had replaced the worn line and made sure he had a good supply of hooks, split shot and bobbers. He remembered how those old tree limbs could gobble up tackle almost as

fast as the crappie could go through minnows. But this year, he vowed to place the bait and bobber in the right spot the first time, and just *maybe* he wouldn't lose so much tackle.

As their boat eased in next to the snag, everything looked just right — but fishing was different this year. Where were all those nice big crappies?

The grandpa explained that over the thirty plus years he had fished this lake, he had observed many ups and downs in crappie fishing. The fisheries biologist he had talked with told him this is a common pattern in crappie fishing. This is called the *crappie cycle*.

The first time he fished the lake, it was a crappie "hotspot." There were lots of big crappies. The following two years there were fewer big ones, but angling was still good. By the end of the third summer a lot of smaller crappie began to show up. Things seemed to fall apart the following year. Small 7-inch crappie predominated, and there seemed to be too many of them. He worried through the next winter, but to his surprise those small crappie were plump in the spring, and by fall had grown into scrappy fish worth the attention of any serious angler.

He had discussed his experiences many times with the biologist and was

now able to "read" the lake by his catch. The memorable years, with stringers full of 10 to 14 inch crappie, were the best the lake had to offer. He found out these fish were in their fourth or fifth year of life and would soon be gone because of fishing and natural causes. Because there were so many of them, they dominated the lake and inhibited crappie spawning for one or two years. Those crappie able to survive the dominance grew well, but their numbers would not produce much excitement among the anglers. The dominant large crappie were gone, so abundant space and food were available. This insured a very successful spawn. Large numbers of hungry crappie were the result. However, it takes them a couple of years to reach acceptable size. Of course, they dominate because of numbers and the cycle starts anew.

Now it was the grandpa's turn to pass on his knowledge to another generation of anglers. The young boy absorbed the knowledge and resolved to be at the lake each year to take advantage of the fishing opportunities. Because of his grandpa, he was able to better understand the ups and downs of crappie fishing. He would eventually realize a fishing trip with a friend is worth as much as the fish he takes home.



# CLASSROOM CORNER

By Bob Rye

*Bob Rye is the administrator of the commission's Conservation Education Center. He holds an M.S. degree in biological science from Michigan State and has been with the commission since 1975.*

The Conservation Education Center has worked to develop a demonstration backyard wildlife habitat. Groups have toured through it and observed the immediate changes in appearance. In addition to this small area, the center is also working within a wildlife management plan, making large scheme changes.

These changes in development of the center are obvious not only in appearance but also in what they produce. There are flowers, fruits and many young animals. Have you ever stopped to think about the young of the year?

Is the animal you see part of an early or late litter, the only litter of the year, a single offspring or one of 30 or 40? If it is a young rabbit, just think—in the absence of disease, accidents and predators, a pair of cottontail rabbits and their descendants could produce 350,000 offspring within five years.

As you watch a robin in your backyard, think of yourself and your demands. For humans who think that excessive demands are placed upon them by their children, consider this—the feeding of young robins, like all altricial young which are confined to nesting places after birth, is a tremendous chore. Both parents feed their young an average of once every 12 minutes.

In addition to rabbits and robins, we see fox, squirrels, chipmunks, ground squirrels, jays, sparrows, finches, quail, ducks, pheasants and deer.

James Wooley, a Wildlife Research Biologist for the Conservation Commission, provided us with a nature quiz that fits our thoughts for this time of year.



*Pheasant chicks are precocial, meaning they have downy feathers and the ability to move on their own immediately after hatching.*

1. What is the average incubation period for the bobwhite quail and ring-necked pheasant?  
a) 30 days b) 23 days c) 16 days d) 27 days
2. The bobwhite quail has an average clutch size of:  
a) 14 eggs b) 6 eggs c) 20 eggs d) 24 eggs
3. The hen ring-necked pheasant usually lays a clutch of:  
a) 6-9 eggs b) 12-15 eggs c) 18-21 eggs d) 21-24 eggs
4. What is the average incubation period for the mourning dove?  
a) 6 days b) 23 days c) 14 days d) 28 days
5. Mourning doves usually have a clutch size of:  
a) 1 egg b) 4 eggs c) 2 eggs d) 6 eggs
6. During the nesting season mourning doves are capable of a complete nesting cycle about every;  
a) 10 days b) 20 days c) 45 days d) 30 days
7. Newly hatched young of Iowa upland gamebirds such as pheasant are considered:  
a) altricial b) precocial c) anorexic d) dyslexic
8. Undisturbed nesting cover is important to bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasants, and gray partridge during which month(s) of the year?  
a) May b) May and June c) May, June and July d) July
9. To obtain good rabbit habitat, one would maximize the amount of:  
a) cropland b) cover type interspersed c) brush and woodland d) grassland e) brush piles
10. Which one of the following is *not* a native Iowa gamebird?  
a) Bobwhite quail b) Prairie chicken c) Eastern wild turkey d) Ring-necked pheasant

ANSWERS: 1-d 2-c 3-b 4-c 5-b 6-d 7-b 8-c 9-b 10-d



# Warden's Diary

"See here, Warden — It's my very first time," — "But I was just holding the pole," — "I was just on my way to town to get a license," — "I found this and I was going to bring it to you," — "My friend accidentally shot it and you won't want it to go to waste — I don't believe in wasting anything."

Excuses, excuses, in the past twenty odd years I think I've heard them all. I should write a book someday. I don't mind listening to all the different reasons why they're in the particular predicament...it gives some interesting insights into people's thinking. Most everyone has to have an excuse or an explanation for wrong actions. Very few will simply accept the responsibility — ever notice that?

I remember sitting in court one day listening to the defendant's testimony.

The arresting conservation officers had given their part and I had been on the stand, relating my observations from the aircraft. It was a "shining case" (hunting with an artificial light) where I had observed the vehicle using a spotlight, shining up and down the trees and across the fields. The vehicle was traveling slow and pausing at all the bridges and wooded areas. I had radioed the location of the shiner to the officers on the ground. It's not very difficult to see a spotlight from an airplane at night. As one officer's patrol car approached the intersection in front of the vehicle, another officer came in from the rear. I radioed down that they were stopping the correct vehicle and the red lights came on. The officers radioed back as we circled — there were two loaded guns and one warm

spotlight in the vehicle and neither subject had a license. It was a pretty open and shut case.

The first lad had hired an attorney and plead not guilty. His testimony was amusing. He hadn't been hunting. He never hunts. Didn't own a gun because he doesn't like guns. He was just taking them back to a friend's house. Couldn't remember his friend's name at the moment. At any rate, those monstrous officers had forced him off the road, shined lights in his eyes and for no reason seized all his equipment. Yes, they had given him a receipt but he wasn't hunting so they had no right to stop him and give him a ticket just because they didn't like him.

At this point the defense attorney called another lad to the stand. I noticed him shake his head at the attorney, but the attorney insisted and he was sworn in. After the routine questions as to name and address, the defendant's attorney asked the young man to tell the court in his own words just what he and his friend were doing out there that night. To everyone's amazement, he replied "huntin' coon." The attorney tried desperately to rephrase the question — "No, that's what the officers said you were doing. I want you to tell what you were really doing!"

His answer was, "Hey, man, I'm under oath. I've got to tell the truth!"

The case came to a close in a hurry but as I went out the court door I heard loud voices in the back. The two lads were arguing almost to the point of a fist fight. As I approached I reached out my hand and said, "I wanted to shake the hand of an honest young man." Not many in this day and age would have been that honest. Sure they would have to pay a fine but there was no doubt in anyone's mind, who stood the tallest in that courtroom. Sure he was a violator, but he had his respect — and mine!

Speaking of respect I passed Rossville and smelled something dear to my heart — Vivian Huffman's Black Walnut Pie.

Her recipe:

4 eggs lightly beaten, add 1 cup light corn syrup, 1 cup sugar, 2 tablespoons melted butter, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1/8 teaspoon salt, 1 cup black walnut meats. Mix together, then pour into an unbaked pie shell. Bake 55 to 60 minutes in a 350° oven. She lowers the temperature to 325° after a half hour so it doesn't turn too dark.

Now you'll know why black walnuts are so hard to come by. Bet you thought the squirrels ate 'em.



## FASTEST CATALINA 25 IN THE NATION

By Ross Harrison

A large group of sailboat racers in Ohio picked their fastest skipper and boat to come to Saylorville Reservoir, north of Des Moines, to win the Catalina 25 Nationals. If he would have won, the competition would have been held in Ohio next summer. But he just couldn't match the prowess of the "Peaches" and her crew, so the race will again be at Saylorville next summer.

Paul Pietzsch of West Des Moines, skipper of the "Peaches" blew them all out of the water. He won the first

annual Catalina 25 Nationals and the Des Moines Register/Coors Annual Regatta. About 60 ships competed in the July 16-17 regatta that was held in conjunction with the nationals. He beat out the 10 other Catalina 25 model vessels which came from all over the midwest to claim next year's race for their own hometown lake.

Pietzsch has been racing for about four years and sailing for about seven. His winning crew, above, include (left to right) Pietzsch, son Todd, Randy Ratliff of Altoona, and Marion Turnipseed for Des Moines.



# WILDFLOWER of the MONTH



**COMPASS PLANT**  
(*Silphium laciniatum*)

By Dean M. Roosa and Mary Jean Huston

Lost on the prairie? Never fear! Look around for the compass plant, a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae). Its leaves tend to be oriented in a general north-south direction, so you will soon be on your way. But remember . . . the compass plant is not wholly reliable as a compass.

The compass plant is found on mesic prairies throughout the midwest and south. It blooms from July through August, but its large dissected basal leaves can be seen earlier in the season. Growing to a height of 6 feet, the stiff rough stem yields blossoms resembling wild sunflowers; these are arranged alternately on the stem. The flowers are up to four inches across, with ray flowers up to 2 inches in length. Leaves clasping the stem have fewer lobes and are smaller than the basal leaves.

The compass plant has a notably thick and deep taproot. In *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold devotes a chapter to the compass plant's struggle to survive human disturbance on a Wisconsin prairie. Although hardy, it is no match against the plow or livestock. In fact, cattle seem

to prefer this species, so grazed prairies are almost always devoid of this native plant.

Native Americans and early settlers also selected this species for a variety of uses. When in bloom, a gummy material is formed along the upper third of the main stem. Indians used this resinous material as a chewing gum, hence another common name - rosinweed. Burning the root during electrical storms was believed to ward off lightning strikes, according to an Omaha-Ponca tradition. They also used it as a tonic for horses. The Dakota Indians used compass plant to worm horses. An unspecified species of *Silphium* was used by Creek Indians and traders as a breath freshener and tooth cleanser.

Settlers found the plant useful in treating rheumatism, scrofula, and glandular enlargements. It was also used as a diuretic, an expectorant, to induce vomiting, and to treat fevers.

When you take to the fields and prairies, look for this hardy member of our native flora. It has survived human impact thus far . . . let the compass plant continue to point the way toward protecting and enjoying our prairies.