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More Game Available Than in Indian Days

"When it comes to hunting and fishing the American public have never had it so good," State Conservationist Frank Mendell says. "Our Soil Conservation Service biologists estimate we have more kinds and greater numbers of game birds, mammal furbearers, and game fish in the United States than were here when the first white men set foot on American soil."

"The trouble is," he added, "this wildlife is not equally distributed among states and among farms. Some Iowa farms may not be harboring so much as one lonesome cottontail."

Mendell agrees that not all people are interested in game birds and other animals, but he pointed out that land that doesn't have some form of game birds or other animals is probably also short of the kinds of wildlife people like to have around just for entertainment and personal enjoyment.

"How long," he asks, "has it been since most of us have seen a hummingbird or oriole? When have our children heard the chant of the whippoorwill? And how far do we have to travel to find a good place to hunt or fish?"

Mendell thinks both farm and city people need to develop a conscious concern for wildlife even if it's only possible to plant, build a small shelter or birdhouse.

"Fortunately, on farm land, techniques have been developed to give wildlife a break," said Mendell. "Following any or all of the best wildlife practices will have some benefits. And if neighboring landowners share in these practices, the benefits will be increased several fold."

This is a critical season for wildlife in Iowa, it was pointed out. Farming operations in the next few weeks can disturb or wipe out nests and dens and some farm operators haven't learned the relationship between their farming practices and their success in keeping an abundance of wildlife.

Sylvan Runkel, Field Biologist of the Soil Conservation Service in Iowa, offers the following suggestions for "rolling out the red carpet" for wildlife:

1. Establish permanent vegetation on odd areas (grass if the farm is in pheasant country or shrubs if quail is the main species), and protect from spring and early summer grazing.

Avoid mowing fencerows, or other areas of natural cover until after oats harvest time (July 15), if they must be mowed at all.

3. Establish hedgerows or shrubs or small trees on field boundaries, or as permanent contour markers across fields.

4. Maintain grassed headlands at least one rod wide at the ends of cultivated fields.

5. Construct ponds for livestock water and erosion control and to provide drinking water for wildlife. Plant the surrounding area to permanent vegetation and stock the pond with fish.

Avoid burning fencerows, roadsides, sloughs, potholes and

Here's Davis County Contribution To Development of Iowa Wildlife

Here's how Davis county stacks up with the state as a whole in wildlife practices:

	Iowa	County
Farm ponds	24,000	1,340
Farmstead windbreaks (acres)	61,711	None
Field border planting (lineal feet)	86,601,317	495,000
Field windbreaks (acres)	6,825	None
Fish-stocked ponds	16,684	884
Grade stabilization structures	8,191	140
Hedgerow planting (lineal feet)	9,695,415	187,730
Tree planting (acres)	13,415	200
Wildlife habitat development (acres)	83,503	2,200
Wildlife wetland development (acres)	15,059	None

similar areas having plant cover suited to the year-around needs of wildlife.

7. Plant food patches where food is in short supply. Such patches offer both food and cover and are attractive to wildlife through the fall, winter and early spring seasons.

8. Use an adequate fertilization program for all farm crops including pasture.

9. Avoid overgrazing of pastures. Grazing within the carrying capacity of the pasture benefits to resident wildlife, the most important of which is nesting cover.

10. Farm ponds which are to be stocked with fish should be constructed to avoid invasions of troublesome aquatic weeds. Steep shorelines are often the answer. The water should be three feet deep or more within 10 feet of the shore.

11. Preserve wetlands of all kinds as they are attractive to wildlife throughout the year. Wetlands offer a wide variety of food and cover. Iowa has few wetlands left but they are important in keeping a bit of this habitat available to us.

12. Plant and maintain vegetation on streambanks and ditch banks.

13. Encourage shrub growth in fence rows. The woody plants attract beneficial insects and small mammals.

14. Practice good woodland management. Provide den sites for squirrels, nesting sites for wood ducks along lakes, ponds and streams and food producing

trees for game animals as well as songbirds. Leave one or two den trees per acre in woodlands.

15. If you have a preference for certain kinds of wildlife, consult a trained biologist to get the right combination of the above practices.