

Wildlife and Wildlife Management

"Wildlife management" was a term unknown in the vocabulary of our grandparents. Today, largely because of their reckless and ruthless waste of natural resources, it has become a household word.

How to preserve the precious heritage which still remains and to reconcile the conflicts arising from the joint occupation of the entire country by its native denizens and by man, greatest of all predators, are problems so acute that out of the necessity of solving them has been born a new science and technique. Wildlife management and wildlife technique are the terms given to this scientific attempt to make land produce a sustained supply of wildlife for recreational use. Such work is being carried on by a new and highly specialized profession -- wildlife technicians or ecologists.

Among the first Federal bureaus to recognize, support, and apply this scientific approach to the subject was the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. Charged with the responsibility of administering the most superb areas of natural wilderness remaining under the Stars and Stripes, the National Park Service is bound by a two-fold policy. The Service must recognize that the national parks belong to the people and that they are to be open to the public for recreation and enjoyment for all time, yet it must jealously safeguard the primeval aspect of the areas and protect their wild creatures, which constitute their greatest assets. One of the most truly relaxing pastimes which the national parks provide is the novelty of observing wildlife in its native state.

Directly or indirectly human intrusion into these sanctuaries of nature affects adversely their native denizens. Concentration of people in camps or recreational fields necessitates provision of sanitation; of such public utilities as water, lighting, and telephone systems; of architectural and engineering projects, all necessary factors in making the national "pleasuring grounds" of the people accessible to them. Each of these developments means a disturbance of natural conditions on which wildlife depends for its existence. Hence, the importance of the ecologist, or wildlife technician, as a mediating agency reducing man's interference in nature's kingdom to a minimum, is increasingly admitted.

"Wildlife technique" must in the National Park Service preserve the biotic whole as nearly as possible in that exquisite balance which mother nature has worked out only after untold eons of evolution. Thus wildlife workers in the national parks are concerned with the broadest set of biological factors in the national wildlife program.

Desirability of coordinating the experience and research of all workers in the entire field of American wildlife management was recognized a year ago when, as a temporary expedient, the first and only organization of wildlife experts in the world was formed -- The Society of Wildlife Specialists. So well were its need and usefulness demonstrated that at the recent North American Wildlife Conference the association crystallized into permanent form under the name "The Wildlife Society". A number of scientists of the National Park Service are among the charter members of this organization.

Development of all types of wildlife management along sound biological lines, establishment of professional solidarity among conservation biologists, and maintenance of the highest attainable professional standards are among its aims. Active membership is limited to those engaged professionally in the wildlife field, who are graduates of schools approved by the Society, or who have acquired an understanding and knowledge of wildlife management and technique comparable to that required for graduation from schools approved by the Society. Associate membership is based upon conditions easily met by any layman sincerely interested in wildlife conservation. Both classes of members will enjoy the advantages of the official publication shortly to be launched, "The Journal of Wildlife Management", edited by W. L. McAtee, of the Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.

Rudolf Bennett, associate professor of zoology of the University of Missouri, is the president; Joseph S. Dixon, field naturalist of the National Park Service, San Francisco, is vice president; Victor E. Cahalane, of Washington, D. C., assistant chief of the Wildlife Division of the National Park Service, is secretary; and Warren Chase, Soil Conservation Service, Des Moines, Iowa, is treasurer.

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