



The stakes go far beyond the wishes of nature lovers and bird watchers, Udall said.

"Every species, being unique, may prove essential in current and future scientific research into the mystery of life itself. Each species is a part of the food chain which supports other species. Each has a function to perform. Man is a part of the vast web of life and cannot escape the natural consequences of his actions.

"Federal and State agencies, private organizations, industry and citizens must learn to consider wildlife and its habitat as vital natural resources which deserve consideration in all actions affecting the environment," Udall said.

"If a dam is to be built, if a shoreline is to be moved, if a swamp is to be filled or a wooded area stripped of its cover, let us at least consider what we are doing before we take action that cannot be reversed. Sound, coordinated planning can save us from disaster."

Udall said that if he could choose a "picture of the year" to illustrate the crisis it would be the widely circulated photograph of Everglades alligators-- their marshy habitat drained off by a combination of human action and drought-- being carried bodily by naturalists to waterholes which still offer a chance for temporary survival.

The Department of the Interior, launching its drive to preserve the 78 species of wildlife considered endangered, has put a corps of biologists into the field to study specific problems; reexamined some long standing practices involving pest control; and established a 300-acre "modern day Noah's Ark" at the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge in Maryland to propagate some endangered creatures, Udall noted.

The Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service, Udall said, is moving rapidly into a new concept of dealing with wildlife by holding off on animal population reduction until its effect on endangered wildlife species has been determined.

Further, he said, new control measures on such troublesome species as starlings and blackbirds will be studied so that they will be more selective and not result in the loss of other, more desirable, birds.

An example of the new approach being taken by the Department is the black-footed ferret, a large weasel that inhabits the Great Plains and preys on prairie dogs, Udall said.

"On Indian lands in South Dakota, plans were underway to eliminate an infestation of prairie dogs, but before any such control measures were undertaken we first determined whether their removal would eliminate or contaminate the food source for the extremely rare ferret.

"Following the ferret survey, controls were put into effect as a range improvement measure.

"The Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Pine Ridge Tribal Council and owners of private lands all cooperated in this program.

"As a consequence, the program was extended over the known range of the ferret. In this area, prairie dog control and ferret survival will be companion considerations."

One of the species involved in the research at Patuxent, the Florida Everglades kite, has become so rare that the Department has had to import a similar species--the snail kite--from South America to facilitate studies of the Florida bird.

"This is the extreme to which we have been driven," Udall said. "There are so few surviving specimens that we feel we should avoid any possibility of losing the Everglades kite to the experiments themselves."

In a recent census, 70 State and Federal observers counted 38 California condors, the Nation's largest soaring bird, but the species has become so rare that Interior studies for its perpetuation will be conducted, instead, on imported South American Andean condors.

Udall said the forecast for the future of the key deer in Florida "is indeed bleak," adding:

"The area this animal favors is being taken over by developments and it is becoming almost impossible to afford to lease enough land to assure its survival."

He said he was heartened by the small increase in the whooping crane flock in 1965, "but the net gain of two birds to a total of only 44 does not give cause for rejoicing."

Udall recalled that the Department during 1965 also made an intensive nationwide study of State laws to determine the legal status of rare and endangered species.

Following are other 1965 developments centering on the Department's work in the endangered species program:

Whooping Crane: The food supply at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, favorite wintering ground of the crane, has been increased by planting grains and other crops. The refuge now has 36 adults and 8 young, for a total of 44, but five other whoopers from the 1965 northward spring migration have not reappeared.

Apache (Arizona) Trout: The Department worked with the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe to select sites in the headwaters of trout streams on the reservation for the construction of barrier dams. These will prevent the mingling of the Apache trout with introduced rainbow trout and the hybridization and possible loss of the Apache.

Masked Bobwhite: Scientists are trying to restore this bird to Arizona. They plan to study it in its Mexican habitat to learn what kind of restoration site they will need in Arizona.

Bald and Golden Eagles: Scientists will conduct a midwinter survey of the bald and golden eagles to determine their distribution and use of habitat. Other studies are designed to preserve their nests and nesting habitats, and to learn factors that may be responsible for decimating their populations.

Attwater's Greater Prairie Chicken: Researchers have studied it on its natural range in Texas and have recommended needed habitat.

Atlantic Salmon: Interior has worked with Maine authorities to restore the Salmon. Tentative plans for protecting the habitat and managing the fish populations have been developed.

Florida Sandhill Crane: Several tracts of land have been examined in Florida which would provide habitat.

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(Note to Editors: Photographs of the Snail Kite, Black-Footed Ferret, California Condor, Whooping Crane, Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, and Attwater's Greater Prairie Chicken may be obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service Information Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 20240.)