

TRANSCRIPT

OF

**DOUG
TRAVIS**

**KENTUCKY FISH
AND WILDLIFE**

INTERVIEW OF

DOUG TRAVIS

KENTUCKY FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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The information contained in this transcription has not been modified or edited in any way to reflect either party in the interview. The information contained herein is to the best of my ability to clearly hear the tape and accurately transcribe the interview between the parties.

Doug Travis Interview
Kentucky Woodlands
Kentucky Fish and Wildlife

Doug Travis: Where going to start here and in five years we are going to get the help that we need. If you look through the _____, in five years we will have a season. There were forty-nine of them in 1949. You can imagine what some of these people have told us at this time. To think that we had no deer in the country for years and years and years and we were going to do all this and in five years we were going to be able to go deer hunting. Y'all are crazy people. Well, I got the difference. I got to go back and tell some of these same people that we were going to have a deer season this year. I told them we were going to have one in five years.

Interviewer: So you guys did have one on 1954.

Doug Travis: Yea... No... We did not have it on the books.

Interviewer: OK

Doug Travis: Just in the state. I don't remember how many counties that we had in the state. I know that the first one that I ever worked was the counties around the Burnham Forrest up in the third district. And I know we pulled out almost everybody down here and sent us up there for that deer season.

Interviewer: Uh Huh.

Doug Travis: Of course they filled out a pretty good population on that end of the county near the Burnham Forrest

Interviewer: Uh Huh.

Doug Travis: And they had some red deer up there too and they had some _____ too. But any how. Then we started the...when we started trapping the deer. The first year..... I think the fish and wildlife would tell us how many deer....I don't know if they took it out of the air the number....they said we were going to trap up to 400 deer. And at that time, it was probably....it wasn't 4000 deer in the between the rivers.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So they were trapping them from between the rivers?

Doug Travis: Those were the only deer in the state.

Interviewer: Oh, so there were deer.....so they were bringing deer from the Kentucky woodlands to out of the woodlands.

Doug Travis: They stocked the state.

Interviewer: They did.

Doug Travis: They were the first stockers. And we took 400 deer we did not get into it..... we were catching those deer and nobody knew how to catch the deer. We had those big box traps and it took us half a season to find out how to get them in the trap. If you put them in the trail, they would walk around them. If you bait them with the thing that normally you would think a deer will like this, they wouldn't eat it. You could put corn there and it seemed like it would scare them. We eventually found out that salt is the best entrapment.

Interviewer: And they would come to lick the salt?

Doug Travis: They would come to lick the salt. And there was never any natural salt on that side of Kentucky woods. And some people tickle me. I laugh a little bit at some of these younger people at this natural salt lick over here on this old road. I said yea it is. And it would have a little sign around it. What made that natural salt lick was house and their smoke house and their meat box. See they had the meat box and _____ under it and they salted their meat down. And when the house fell down, the salt box fell down and the 200 pounds of salt went down there on the ground. And that made a natural salt lick. So all kinds of things like that. Well any how, the first deer we took out of there. We took 400 deer out there in '49.

Interviewer: And these came out of the Kentucky woodlands?

Doug Travis: These came out of the Kentucky woodlands. And they went to Louis County. Ford Motor Company had a I don't remember if it's a hundred....but they had a great big tract of land up there. And that's were they went to. We took them up there. And our mortality rate was pretty high because like I said nobody knew how to trap deer and nobody knew how to handle deer. And we first tried to haul them together. Four or five on a trip. Well, they killed each other before they got out of Treck County most of the time. So evidentially we are going to have to crate these animals. We are going to have to put these animals in plywood boxes....put them in individual boxes. And because you did not catch 15 or 20 a night, some it would be weeks that you did not catch any. There was big, long barn over there and we redid that barn. There must have been three stall likes on one side....three on one side. And an open one up the middle. And we took these stalls and made a hole to where we could put some crates up to that hole. And crate them like that.

Interviewer: Uh Huh.

Doug Travis: Well, we found out that every once in a while, that the deer would be dead in the barn. We didn't think much about it you know. Nobody knew. Well, we found out that they were trying to get out and they were jumping at light. If there was a hole here that light was coming in there, they would want to get out. They would jump at that hole. We had to go inside that barn or outside that barn and felt up everything that would make a hole even as big as your thumb so light would not get in there. We would throw the food down to them from the loft. Because when they get ready to move them. We had some jeeps and some pickup trucks and we had some one ton trucks that we moved them in. And we would take those crates. That is another thing that we learned. That you don't build you a big box that it was too much trouble. When you get a buck that you want to keep, the first thing we would have to do is reach in there with a thing like a hook where we can reach in there and catch his rack where we can pull it up there and saw it off right then. So now we have something we can fool with. We have a young buck....those were easier to handle...we would crate them. We would take these crates and put them right up to the hole....there were drops on either side and we would open the other end so they could see through it. And we would try to get them out of there about 4 o'clock in the morning. We would go in.... people said, "Hell, no you didn't do that." Said, "Yes, we did do that." You could get right down in that.... in that barn with those deer in the dark and have someone outside with a flashlight. We would do this thing. They would get about half way in the box and sometimes they would back out. So you got one going in there so you got right up against him or her and shove them on in there.

Interviewer: You shoved them in there.

Doug Travis: People would say, "Didn't they hurt you." "No." They step on your feet a little. They never dumped you or anything. And we would take them and load them on trucks. And we would have to take them all the way to east Kentucky. And didn't even stay overnight. Come right back. It was torture.

Interviewer: And that was in 1949. And it wasn't on the interstate.

Doug Travis: There weren't any interstates. It was hard, hard, hard work.

Interviewer: Yea! Did the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assist you with this at all?

Doug Travis: They didn't have many people. They would have a manager over there and they would have a secretary over there. And it would be about 10 or 12 people.

Interviewer: Yea, and not much has changed. Because we still don't have a lot.

Doug Travis: Well, we did 90% of the first Kentucky.

Interviewer: That barn that you were talking about was it on Kentucky woodlands, the barn was?

Doug Travis: Yea, the barn's still there.

Interviewer: But they weren't out there helping that much with the restock.

Doug Travis: No, this was our program. We were begging the deer. We wanted the deer.

Interviewer: I got you.

Doug Travis: So the deer when we stocked the state with white-tailed deer, first catch we moved and when to Louis County that first year. The next year we put deer in Malon Carrie. We didn't know and Malon Carrie didn't know the purpose of that whether it be hunting or whether they wouldn't. There wasn't

Interviewer: There was no hunting.

Doug Travis: No hunting. They would never be any hunting. Some national parks from the time they were set up they were set up on the code and most of them are still on it. Malon Carrie is still on it.

Interviewer: So there is no deer hunting. You saw a deer there that they couldn't deer hunt.

Doug Travis: And it caused a big problem because it was good habit and now they just exploit it. And the overflow couldn't get out for two or three years after they were actually hurting the park. They had a birth control program over there.

Interviewer: At Malon Carrie to keep them from reproducing.

Doug Travis: Yea.

Interviewer: OK

Doug Travis: So the next year that we got....we went on those programs for a number of years....taking all the stock we was taking that was coming out of _____. And then Fort Knox got into it....Fort Cannon got into it. And they wanted deer. There weren't any deer at Fort Knox and weren't any deer at Fort Cannon. So we went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma...we sent our trucks. We sent five or six two and half ton trucks. We sent our trappers down there and we built the traps. We sent our trappers down there. And we got there to Fort Sill. But most of the deer that we got from Fort Sill came to Fort Knox and to Fort Cannon. So that built up the population of deer there and built the repopulation....we never moved any falla deer and we never moved any red deer. And the reason we didn't.... Kentucky

don't pay liability on native game. They would have to pay liability on exotic game.

Interviewer: So there were falla and red deer in the Kentucky woods.

Doug Travis: There were falla and red deer.

Interviewer: But you left them there.

Doug Travis: We left them there.

Interviewer: I think there are still some falla deer.

Doug Travis: There are still some falla deer. The last red deer was killed.... the boy that killed him worked for me at camp... his father is attorney....at Princeton. And killed it down on _____ Road down below the _____ horse pasture. Found out he thought it was the better so he shot it.

Interviewer: That was the last red deer.

Doug Travis: That was the last red deer.

Interviewer: What year was that?

Doug Travis: It was in the last.....about 25 years ago.

Interviewer: About 25 years ago.

Doug Travis: The white-tailed deer....there were not white-tailed deer at the turn of the century. Not a white-tailed deer. We probably did not have a white-tailed deer in the state in 1900.

Interviewer: Not in the Kentucky woodlands.

Doug Travis: Not in the Kentucky woodlands. In 1917, now this is factual information. I talked to the man who powered the boat from Eddieville up to Old Hematapaw Landing with the deer....with the falla deer and the red deer. And they came from Missouri and St. Louis... and the year was 1917.

Interviewer: They had white-tailed deer, falla deer and red deer. At that time was that Kentucky woodlands or was it?

Doug Travis: No, at that time it was the Hillman Land Company

Interviewer: The Hillman Land Company

Doug Travis: They were the people that got those deer and the white-tailed deer came from Wisconsin.

Interviewer: And they piloted a lot of boats and brought them in.

Doug Travis: They brought them in the rail to Eddieville down there below _____. There is a big rail yard down there. And then they made it where they could _____ a boxcar. And then they had slip way or whatever you want to call it built down to the boat. And they had a barge with about a 15 foot fence built on it and a gate on one side. I talked to the man that piloted that boat.

Interviewer: Do you remember his name?

Doug Travis: I can't remember his name.

Interviewer: But you did talk to the man that actually piloted the boat.

Doug Travis: I talked to the man. I remember the boats name was "The Vixen". He told me....he said, and he was a common river pilot....he piloted for Igert Towing Company.....I g e r t.....Igert Towing Company. It was one of the big towing companies there. The _____ toma River to work with all the tight bends and everything. And he said that when they contracted to take the deer....he told them that he was going to have to go up there and push the barge in and they had a big pen they were going to keep them in. And he said when they got up there, they had to turn the boat all the way around because they had the gate on the wrong side. He had to go up and make a great big turn and bring it back coming down the river.

Interviewer: The gate was on the wrong side of the boat.

Doug Travis: On the wrong side of the boat.

Interviewer: I see what you are saying. But he brought it for the Hillman Land Company. They wanted to stock the deer on that land.

Doug Travis: I don't know how many acres they have out there. They have about half the land out there. I was a big piece. Like I said, nobody know anything about it. They had falla deer and red deer too. And they never moved. Do you know where the old Himatawpa Landing was? Well, down in the bottoms those good white-tails they scattered. The red deer and the falla deer they stay right there in those bottoms. They didn't go five miles up the river. They didn't go five miles down the river.

Interviewer: They're still there. They never left there

Doug Travis: They are. That is just the way they do. They are strange. And what moved them as much as they did was when TVA came in there and started pushing some of those old shoulders back and started flattening them. And that got them.

Interviewer: I don't think there are many over there. But they still exist.

Doug Travis: The gene pool is down to zero. Because they have never brought any....this was initial stock. They never let any more.

Interviewer: And that was 1917.

Doug Travis: That was 1917. I have never seen that written anywhere, but that is the information that I know is correct. Because this man....he told me....he sat down and talked for a hour. And I checked back with the boat. He said that was "The Vixen" or another boat called his name. And they were big on the Ohio River, the Mississippi River and the Cumberland River. The Cumberland River...a lot of the big companies didn't handle the Cumberland River because it was too _____. Any how, this boat was built in Vicksburg, Mississippi. And he told me it was. He said that the old "Vixen" was built down in Vicksburg, Mississippi. And said, "Do you remember the month?" And he, "It was in the winter time." That's all I know....he said it was in the winter time. Then I asked, "Was Iger the third...he is not as old as me but I knew his dad and his grandfather. They had this towing company for years and I asked this. I asked, "Is this old fellow telling the truth?" He said, "He is telling the truth. He is telling it just like it happened. That is just like the thing was workin'." And then teacher who was....she was a Bloodworth....and she married. Ms. Else Joyce....she taught in the Trip County schools for years and years and years. She gave me that same date. 1917 when they brought the deer in there. And I said, "Well, Ms. Jessie what did they...." She said these people....a lot of the people....not a lot because there were not a lot of them there. And they have deer over there that is why they were interested in spying deer. Because that was Robin Hud's deer. That part of the deer world. Any how, they are the ones. They kept them in a pen. She said the people would go down and look at them in the pen. I said, "How many?" She said, "I don't know. It was just deer." And they had pens over there. You know the old refugee office? Where the Empire's Farm is over there? That's where the headquarters was. That building right there.

Interviewer: Yea. I was not aware of that. So the headquarters was at Empire's Farms?

Doug Travis: That's were the headquarters was.

Interviewer: For Kentucky woodlands.

Doug Travis: Yea, and they had a pen there. I have a rack. The brow rod is about that big and it looks like a mushroom. And Cleve Hudson that worked for me....he worked

for....see Kentucky had.... the Kentucky Game and Fish Department had that land for a while.

Interviewer: They had Kentucky woodlands before it became Kentucky woodlands? It went from Hillman Land Company to Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Then to the TVA and now to the Forrestry. So it has been through five different hands.

Doug Travis: Through the chain of command. So Hillman...I don't know where their headquarters was. If they had a headquarters.

Interviewer: Yea.

Doug Travis: I am sure they did. Because they had a world of land up there. They had a pen right there. And the headquarters so people could see them. And this deer....Cleve Hudson whose two sons worked for me and he was born and raised over there. And he worked for Kentucky and he worked for Hillman and he worked for Kentucky. He work for TVA.

Interviewer: Did he work for Kentucky woodlands?

Doug Travis: Yea, he worked for Kentucky woodlands. He was a ranger.

Interviewer: He was a ranger.

Doug Travis: He was a ranger and moved by horseback.

Interviewer: He patrolled by horseback.

Doug Travis: He patrolled by horseback

Interviewer: And his name was again Cleve Hudson.

Doug Travis: His name was Cleve Hudson. And he lived a mile down from headquarters on the edge of the management area. He told me....he gave me this rack. He said that deer was 19 years old. He said they were born right there in that pen. Somebody came by one night and shot it three or four times with a .22 rifle. And it died right there in that pen.

Interviewer: It was a white-tail?

Doug Travis: No, it was a red deer.

Interviewer: It was a red deer.

Doug Travis: It was a red deer. Its skull plate is nearly half an inch thick.

Interviewer: And it was 19 years old. It was raised in a pen at Kentucky woodlands. So the Kentucky woodland folks....did they try to capture the falla deer and the red deer or did they just have some on this place?

Doug Travis: They had them out there in a pen.

Interviewer: They were just for display.

Doug Travis: Just display. They wouldn't have even attempted.

Interviewer: Yea, Too small.

Doug Travis: Too small. And they did well for years. I have got a....I've taken three falla deer out there. When we was hunting.

Interviewer: Right.

Doug Travis: Paul Strung, he was there and I think he was a keen biologist there when we started having seasons.

Interviewer: Paul Strung. He ended up being a manager, didn't he?

Doug Travis: Yea.

Interviewer: I saw the obituary on him.

Doug Travis: He came there as a biologist. And he wound up as the manager. He was probably the last manager they had.

Interviewer: Yea, I think he was. I had an obituary on him. He just recently pasted away. At least in the last two years. What else can you tell me about....I know that you were involved in that archery hunt over there start out. Tell me a little about that.

Doug Travis: Alright, I don't remember the year. They had a hunt before that. They had a gun hunt before that. I guess the only gun hunt that....the first gun hunt they had. I am not sure whether there was break after that time. I think they were continuous but I am not sure. But they had a die off over there.

Interviewer: A die off of deer?

Doug Travis: Deer. And it was pretty serious. We worked on it.

Interviewer: Was this in the early 1950's or late 1950's.

Doug Travis: I am going to say the late 1950's because the population was at its highest population they had ever had. And they wasn't having any season. No kind of season. They had this gun hunt before they ever had an archery season. And it was a two day season. They found out...the federal biologists came in and determined the cause. It was _____ arthritis, a parasite that was feed on them. That man was a biologist from Wisconsin. Any how, we decided that we were going to have a two day gun hunt....shot gun on a Saturday and a Sunday. And we had to work it. Well, I was living in Marion then and I didn't know what the weather was. The weather was alright the night before like all these other people. I got up the next morning, you couldn't see the ground for the frost. And the woods were a total fog all over west Kentucky. Any how, people were trying to get out there. I don't know how many wrecks they had over there but they would just run into each other. And they killed in the two days, we didn't get to start hunting until the fog lifted around 11:00 before noon. So actually we got a day and a half hunt and we killed around 1300 deer.

Interviewer: 1300 deer in a day and a half hunt and that was Kentucky woodlands for a gun hunt.

Doug Travis: That was a gun hunt. And I am not sure whether they continued....I think they continued that short gun hunt until TVA came in and set the season like they've got it now. It hasn't changed much. So the season now is about what TVA decided they wanted to do.

Interviewer: And then they had an archery hunt.

Doug Travis: The archery hunt...that is when Billy Watson who was...he was an archery tackle builder. And he lived here.

Interviewer: I think I have a picture of Billy Watson.

Doug Travis: You have a picture of Billy Watson. Now that picture that you have with the man with the bow with the deer. That was not killed the first year because the deer that was killed the first year....Lester Cartwright killed one of them and a man from Georgia killed the other one. Because I was there I know.

Interviewer: They were the first legal archery taken deer taken in the state of Kentucky since the Indians. They were taken on Kentucky woodlands. Who were those two men again?

Doug Travis: Lester Cartwright and I can't remember this other man's name but he was from Georgia.

Interviewer: OK

Doug Travis: And I don't remember his name.

Interviewer: They took the first two legally archery harvested deer.

Doug Travis: And Lester's deer was an eight point buck with a little old slim rack. Deer nearly starved to death over there for years and years and years. It got to where a grown coon would not weight over three and a half to four pounds. It wasn't that big.

Interviewer: Just nothing to eat.

Doug Travis: Just nothing to eat. Everywhere there was something to eat there were deer, there were coons, there were turkeys, there were squirrels. We opened the season one year over there where you could double the limit of squirrels. Squirrels, if you go in the woods it looked like ass on the ground. They had a limit of twelve squirrels over there. You could kill twelve squirrels. Any how,

Interviewer: We were just talking about the archery hunt.

Doug Travis: The archery season. Buddy came to me. He and Harold Murphy who later became one of our commissioners in Louisville. And Harold was big in archery. Won a lot of tournament, bow hunter tournaments. So they came to me because Buddy knew me from Marion. And Buddy came to me and said the Kentucky Archery Association was wanting to have a deer season, bow season on the Kentucky woodlands. And I said, "Well, have you tried?" He said, "No, we came here first. You know people." I said, "Ok, let's go over and see them.." So we went over there to Fred Cunningham was the manager over there.

Interviewer: Fred Cunningham, yea.

Doug Travis: He was the manager. A disgruntled person. He was. He did not like people over there. He said that they did every damn thing to him but put a snake in his bed.

Interviewer: The people did not like him, you are saying?

Doug Travis: The people did not like him.

Interviewer: They did everything except put a snake in his bed.

Doug Travis: They did everything to him. If it don't work out good, they'll set the damn woods on fire. They don't care about the woods. I would have to use all my men to get it put out.

Interviewer: So if he was not maintaining the roads they would light the woods on fire?

Doug Travis: Yea, there were over 100 cemeteries over there.

Interviewer: And he had to maintain the roads going to them.

Doug Travis: Yea, and if they had bury somebody and the road was bad they would fuss at him. So any how, we went over there at the old headquarters and I told him what the situation was. I said, "Would you be opposed to it?" And he said, "Well no, I don't care if they kill all the deer over here. I am a water fowl man. I want to be managing water fowl. I don't want to fool with these old deer." He is from Wisconsin. Any how, he said, "No, I wouldn't be opposed to it." He said that he would have to take it through _____. I said, "Would you do that for us?" And he said, "Yea, I will." I said, "How long do you think it will take to get word?" He said, "A week to ten days." And I said, "Ok, we'll contact you." He said, "Yea, now you know you will have to get the Kentucky Department." I said, "That's no problem." So we ran an emergency radiation through. And that was back in the middle of the summer, I guess. And they had the first season that year. And they had about 300 people there. They had people from all over the country to come in and to want to kill the falla deer.

Interviewer: Uh Huh.

Doug Travis: That was the only place in North America for years that you could shoot a falla deer in an open season. The Walla Ranch down in Texas....the exotic ranch down there. They had a booth in Washington one year when I was up there at the NRA convention. And the falla deer that I had killed, I had a picture of it in my billfold. Well, they had that booth and everything. And had white ones, they had black ones they had some that were some type of red. And they had all the different color ones up there and how much is cost to take them. They were booking hunts right there. And I said, "Let me show you what I killed." This was in the spring and I had killed this that fall. And after they looked at it. He looked at me and said, "What ranch was this on?" And I said, "That wasn't on ranch. That was over on Kentucky woodlands." He said, "No, fella you are wrong. They only allow shooting of those deer on private ranches." I said, "Yea, there is." And I showed him. He said, "And this was with a deer tag?" And I said, "Yea, this was with a deer tag. We had to have a hunting license and a deer tag." And back then it was about \$1000 a deer.

Interviewer: So he thought he had the market covered and then he realized there were other areas.

Doug Travis: But this was the only place....until they stopped it. It was the only place in North America that you could shoot a falla deer in just a regular open deer season. Well, I got three...I got one that did not have a palm on its rack.

Interviewer: Those racks are nice.

Doug Travis: It looks like an African deer or something. It was a great big old deer. Well,

Interviewer: Can you tell me anything about the managers over there that you have not already covered? I know you have known a lot of them because you have been around since 1947. Maybe the thought process behind the thought process the transfer from the Tennessee Valley Authority. Was it a reluctant transfer or was it something they approved of?

Doug Travis: I think most of them approved of it. Most fish and wildlife people approved of it because they thought....a lot of them did.....a lot of them stayed there. And they done what they was doing because there was not a big change in personnel from the Fish and Wildlife to TVA.

Interviewer: So some of the employees just transferred over to the Tennessee Valley Authority?

Doug Travis: That's right.

Interviewer: And stayed put there.

Doug Travis: And stayed put right there.

Interviewer: And some of the management probably when on to other areas, I guess.

Doug Travis: That was kind of a peaceful change. Of course, the people....when they started talking about TVA coming in and what they were going to do. It sounded great and a lot of the people were behind it. Well, by the time that it happened everybody got to talking and so many people became involved in it that shouldn't have been involved in it. And then when it came to the time that this actually happened they were many of the people that lived there that were disgruntled and they didn't want it to happen. They did not use the right _____ thing. They just took whatever. And would have had to have done that because by that time the people that were so upset about it. They are still as upset right now as ____.

Interviewer: Right. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was over there. To your knowledge, we didn't use eminent domain. We just bought what we could from the Birmingham Oil Company. What did you call it?

Doug Travis: Hillman Land Company.

Interviewer: Hillman Land Company. Yea, the Hillman Land Company. And then there were rentholders that were within the refuge and just lived with the folks that were rentholders. And well, the relationship with the service to your knowledge a pretty good relationship with the community?

Doug Travis: Yea, the relationship was good. It was real good.

Interviewer: I was good.

Doug Travis: Of course, it was different. The top people determine what sort of relationship is going to be.

Interviewer: Right. So when a new manager came it might change for a little while.

Doug Travis: That's right.

Interviewer: Then some managers come and it works out.

Doug Travis: Some people like some better then they did others. All in all, I think, they all did a good job.

Interviewer: From my understand was that a lot of the local folks over there worked a lot hand in hand with the refugee folks.

Doug Travis: They did. They helped them with management. They helped them with fire control. They really helped them with a lot of things.

Interviewer: Yea, a lot of them actually worked for the refugee at Hillman. They were a big employer.

Doug Travis: I don't really know. But I would say that there was maybe 35 or 40 people. And then they had some cropping done.

Interviewer: I heard that at one time it got a little controversial when apparently the livestock free ranged at one time. And the service had to have a change in policy and they had to tell folks to hem there livestock up. And that got a little heated there.

Doug Travis: It did because they felt like some of the people involved especially the bigger land owners over there....they thought they were instrumental in getting the service to do that. Ok. Then they got mad at each other.

Interviewer: Yea, because a lot of folk did not have a lot of land so they would let there cows and hogs run wild.

Doug Travis: They had plenty of land and it did not help them Because they had plenty of land. But it did hurt little people.

Interviewer: Yea. And they made them fence their livestock in and that cause some problems. I had read that somewhere. Well, why don't you tell me a little about turkeys and turkey hunting on the refugee or in the area.

Doug Travis: Well, there have been turkeys there since the Indians were here, I guess. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service they wanted the stock of turkeys to remain uncontaminated. They did not want any new stock brought in and they didn't allow it as long as they had it. And they hadn't brought any new stock into the turkey flock here until TVA took over. We started trapping turkeys...I don't remember exactly when.....but most of the turkeys that we trapped went to other places....went out of state. Because they went out of state to improve blood lines and other turkey flocks. I know that I have taken them from here to Puduka and put them on airplanes there and sent them other places.

Interviewer: So turkeys from Kentucky woodlands were being...

Doug Travis: They were the purest birds on the continent so the Fish and Wildlife Service....they would never be contaminated....they would not let any new stock in. And they used them to improve other stocks. And what happened in the process is that they allowed the gene pool to get so old that these birds were perhaps gone. We did make a change. It was defiantly a different bird. Everybody that has ever hunted them. Will still say they are the hardest birds to kill that we had on the continent.

Interviewer: So you are saying that too many birds were taken out of Kentucky woodlands and it depleted.....

Doug Travis: There weren't many birds taken out. They had lost a great lot of birds there. People see 25 or 30 birds in the field and think that's a lot of birds now. But so far as the total number of birds most of those of us that have helped trap them and hunted them and everything up there. I say that we have probably less than 500 birds when TVA took over and we were still having a season. At that time there were probably only 8 or 10 states that were still having a turkey season and we were one them. We were killing 10 to 14 birds per year. That is all we were killing. That really didn't hurt anything because they were down so low then it didn't make any different. But had we not gotten blood in here to turn this thing around there wouldn't be any birds in there now. They were so wild...if that is the proper term....if you flush a hen off a nest, you might as well take the eggs with you or whatever because she will never be back. One spring we found two nest....because there were two nests that we found over there. And we spent time going back and sat there with those two turkeys to try and hoping to see them. And we never did. So they were big bird....big black walker birds. Beautiful birds. The edge of the tail feathers were just chocolate brown and they had some more iridescent color in them than any other bird.

Interviewer: So they were definitely different from what you see today?

Doug Travis: It varies. The first turkeys that we brought back to Kentucky came from Mississippi. And that was one of the first things we were asked to do. We had to _____ them, we had to feed them, we had to do it. We got them from Mississippi. I don't remember how many birds we got. We went down there to trap them. We were using _____ net then. We trap them up there for years in just a net trap which was hard work. The mortality rate was high so they would die when they got in those traps. Then they came from Mississippi....they came from way on down. They were swamp birds. They didn't have the population over there either.

Interviewer: They didn't?

Doug Travis: They didn't. In two years, we took them. Turkeys are clanish in ways. When you release turkeys, you don't want to release them where there are other turkeys. You want to put them where there are not any turkeys. They didn't get along as well as they should. The swamp birds just could not make it in the hills over there. So the next birds we got we got from Missouri. It's a different bird.

Interviewer: Yea. Well, you had mentioned once before about song birds on the Kentucky woodlands. What could you tell me a little about that?

Doug Travis: Well, I've been a birder for a long time. The Wilkeson group that are really big into birding. But most of these people that I am talking about _____ turkey season. I don't hunt the _____ season. I don't hunt there as much as I used to because I've got other places to hunt. And I just don't. The thing is when they opened up turkey hunting I know I missed a year. I know people who during turkey season in the spring come all the way across the country from California or New York to add to there lifelong bird count. Of course my thinking at the time was to ask him, "Why do you...can't you do this in California? Can't you find these in California?" Of course, I knew the finches were out. These people tell me this is the best place in North America to get a Warbler sign. In the spring when the Warbler's are moving back north, they are flying in the Cumberland River and the Tennessee River into Kentucky.....right to the place where those rivers get together. And they just follow it north. They can identify them better and they can add that bird to there list. They do strange things. In all the years I have been over there, I have never added a lot of birds to my list from out there. I don't know why. I have always been interest in counting Warblers when I was turkey hunting. Another bird from across Kentucky Lake which was a summer tanagers. These summer tanagers and these other tanagers across Kentucky Lake and I spent summers on _____ Creek on Kentucky Lake and I never seen a summer tanager there. So there are a lot of things like that. The bottoms over there are a lot of sparrows. So they would come in in the fall. We had a reason amount of waterfowl on the south edge of the Kentucky woodlands there. Mr. Rode Ellis had a piece of bottom land up there that was real good _____. They had a rolling white fowl flock there. I don't know how many birds. I think they had a thousand geese there for a lot of years and never killed a lot of them. They decided that

TVA was going to take over and make some changes. They wanted to change the waterfowl flock which was on the Cumberland River side. And they wanted to keep it but they were going to cover it up so they got things ready across on the other side and of course it never happened for them. The birds instead of coming on down and jumping over, they stopped at Cross Creek. They went on the Cross Creek into Tennessee.

Interviewer: Right. Cross Creek's refuge was put there as mitigation for losing part of Kentucky Woodlands.

Doug Travis: You know, the island could....most people don't know there is an island out there in the Cumberland River....rode them around. They were Roosevelt's back prior to the Civil War.... they would roll out guns..... for the Southern government. There was a place for geese but they never killed any.

Interviewer: I am going to wrap up with just a few questions for you, Doug. Basically, what has been the high point of your career that you can think of?

Doug Travis: I have had a lot of high points. I don't know whether working with as many people as I have worked with and I have been recognized for doing that. I have nationally or internationally....I guess the high point of my career was five years ago....four years ago, in New York at....I was voted the top hunter safety instructor over service in North America. Talking about high points, nobody would think that as one but me.

Interviewer: I know what you mean.

Doug Travis: I have had an opportunity to do a lot of things. I have gotten to hunt in North Alaska. I got to hunt a lot of places. . I got to do a lot of things as a result of being in the fish and wildlife.

Interviewer: Well, I don't like dwelling on the negative, but I will just ask you this. Have there been any low points?

Doug Travis: There is always...I feel this now...If someone asks, I always tell them. That my job with the game and fish, it has had some lulls but it hasn't had many because I have enjoyed everyday. I have always had a good working relationship with people with my supervisors. And I haven't been one of those people that everything was secure that I didn't have to worry about anything. That everything was going to go along fine which it did. I didn't have any problems at all with my boss or with the game and fish department until the last few years. And we started getting in some people who I felt like didn't really have any _____ and certainly _____. That was within the last four years. It has been great. People ask me all the time why I don't retire. I am in my 57th year and if I was retired I would be doing a lot of things _____.

Interviewer: Right.

Doug Travis: And I enjoy it. The people that you work with. Either the people you work with on the job and the people that are out there in the field, I said this thousands of times that I never felt like I just work for the game and fish department. I feel like I have worked for the people of Kentucky. I really feel like that. All the adults that I have worked with and the hundreds of thousands of young people.....it goes up to about three hundred thousand. Which that is great. That's great.

Interviewer: That is probably why you have been working 57 years.

Doug Travis: That's right. I still like to get up and get out there working. And I like for people...if I am talking to a group....I may not know anybody there it may be some other state. I like to tell them....in about two minutes why I am doing this. Because I don't want to be talking about something I don't know anything about. You can't do it. It's stupid to even try. So when I tell some people things, I tell them that I have been there and done that.

Interviewer: Well, Doug, I would say that over the last 57 years you have been involved with some interesting and some famous characters. I know for a fact Fred Bear being one of them. Could you tell me a little about some of those folks over the years...some of the folks you have been involved with.

Doug Travis: Well, of course, Fred. We were good friends. And I always got a Christmas card from Fred. Dr. Julius Newton from Michigan State, he was a close friend of mine. He was one of the pioneers of outdoor education. We shared a lot of meeting and we shared a lot of time over there on the woodlands. There was other people right off the top of my head that I heard that.....I have known governors and senators and doctors and lawyers and all kinds of people. And I always felt like that in the duck blind or in an airplane....everybody's equal. Everyone of them.

Interviewer: Any kind of closing comment today that you would like to give?

Doug Travis: I would like to say this. It has been a pleasure being here and it has been a pleasure to do this. And I will say that our state agencies take a lot of flack and the federal agencies get a lot of flack, but there is no reason for us to be here but for the resource and the people who are using the resource. We could have the best resource management that there can be but if we don't have people that can use those resources we lose it. We have been criticized because if you are doing anything, you are not going to please everybody. There are too many people. The wildlife area is so different. It doesn't matter whether it is on state or federal level. The change, I think at one time, fish and wildlife people looking forward to change and lot of people. They were looking forward to change in education and a lot of things. But they are changing. Younger people. When I came into the

fish and wildlife work in 1947, there weren't any young people in fish and wildlife. Everybody was old. I was one of the youngest men in the state. And now I am the oldest one that I know.

Interviewer: Inaudible.

END TAPE