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PLANNING FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT--AN OUTLINE

Prepared in the Section of Wildlife Surveys
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Introduction

Wildlife specialists, county extension agents, and officials connected with State conservation departments are frequently asked to assist in outlining plans for developing wildlife habitats in connection with land-use problems. Private landowners are showing an increasing interest in improving their properties for wildlife, not only because of the recreational pleasure and enjoyment they and their friends gain from association with wild animals, but also through recognition of the esthetic and economic wealth that the presence of wildlife contributes to the community. While many Federal and State wildlife-restoration projects are under way to rehabilitate desirable game and fur species, through the provision of refuges, establishment of management areas, and improvement of environmental conditions, a great part of our wildlife population is dependent for its existence upon the action of private individuals. In response to the many requests for improvement plans, an outline for planning wildlife management has been prepared and is here presented. As it is impracticable to set forth specific management plans, however, without a detailed technical study of areas under consideration, this leaflet suggests topics that ought to be considered in developing such plans. Before attempting to establish a game-management project it is essential to appraise both existing and potential conditions and to visualize the possibilities on the basis of the fundamental points here presented for consideration.

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Survey of Resources

I. What is wildlife management?

Wildlife management is the conscious and intelligent manipulation of habitat, providing for or improving the production of the various species, and controlling abundance and utilization to aid in attaining desired results.

II. What is the status of the present resources?

A survey of conditions on each unit or area is essential to develop the following basic facts:

A. Condition of existing habitat.

1. Food resources.
2. Vegetative cover and other shelter.
3. Topography.
4. Soil and water.
5. Climatic conditions.

B. Present wildlife population (examples).

1. Fur animals--red fox, mink, marten, muskrat, beaver, raccoon, skunk, opossum, otter, weasel, badger.
2. Upland and small game--pheasant, grouse, partridge, quail, rabbit, squirrel.
3. Big game--deer, elk, bear, antelope.
4. Predators--coyote, wolf, bobcat, gray fox.
5. Migratory game birds--duck, goose, snipe, woodcock, rail, mourning dove, band-tailed pigeon.
6. Other wildlife--insectivorous and seed-eating nongame species, rodents, hawks, owls, snakes.
7. Fishes--trout, bass, crappie, perch, pike, pickerel, catfish.

C. Limiting factors.

1. Present land use.
2. Desirable utilization of wildlife species.
3. Community and individual interest and attitude.
4. Other limiting factors--prevalent parasites, diseases, predators, poaching.

Management Objectives and Their Accomplishment

I. What are the general objectives?

A. To formulate and correlate plans for better land utilization.

1. By an initial study of the unit or area to determine where improvements would be desirable.

2. Through supervision and advice from agricultural colleges, county extension agents, and wildlife specialists.
 3. By consulting bulletins on wildlife, forestry, and agriculture.
- B. To insure permanence of basic natural resources--soil, water, flora, and fauna--and arrange for adequate control or adjustment of--
1. Domestic-stock grazing.
 2. Timber use and silvicultural practices, including brush clearing.
 3. Water uses--domestic, irrigation, flood control, mosquito control, drainage, pollution, and sanitation.
 4. Cropping practices and rotations.
 5. Public use.
- C. To produce optimum conditions for the wildlife population and arrange to provide suitable environmental conditions, as:
1. Stream, pond, and cover improvements where needed.
 2. Adequate food supply--suitable herbage, grasses, shrubs, trees, and marsh and aquatic vegetation.
 3. Adequate nesting, rearing, resting, and breeding sites.
 4. Sufficient refuges to preserve natural breeding stock.
 5. Maintenance of balance between populations and requirements of the various species.
 6. Predator and rodent control where necessary.
 7. Adequate fire protection and guards against harmful trespass.
- D. To assure proper utilization of wildlife, by--
1. Providing for recreation--camping, boating, tramping, hunting, fishing, use of trails and roads.
 2. Establishing definite quantity, season, area, and trapping permits for fur animals, consistent with State laws and regulations.
 3. Establishing definite seasons, bag limits, and hunting restrictions for game species, consistent with Federal and State laws and regulations.
 4. Properly limiting the number of licenses and seasonal hunting permits.
 5. Establishing definitely the total wildlife crop to be harvested, allowing a safe surplus for breeding, the safety margin to be determined by rate of increase, extremes in climatic conditions, and health and vigor of the species.
 6. Establishing definite policies as to disposition of privileges, through free use, lease by acre or season, or sale of hunting and trapping permits.

E. To assure protection of personal and property rights, by providing:

1. Adequate patrol against fire, poaching, and trespassing.
2. Facilities to prevent damage by wildlife..

II. What are the specific objectives for each area or unit?

A. To provide returns to the community, by--

1. Obtaining locally scientific data on life histories, relation to environment, disease, management, and economic relationships, and providing facilities for obtaining, retaining, and interpreting data for use by others, especially in cooperative undertakings.
2. Determining and providing means of using to best advantage the attractant or advertising value of the area--residents should be given first consideration, then non-residents and visitors, if desirable.
3. Determining means of best acquainting the members of the community with the esthetic value of wildlife and providing facilities to encourage this appreciation.
4. Making wildlife management a community interest, through 4-H clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, garden, outing, hunting, and women's clubs, civic organizations, and educational groups.
5. Encouraging outsiders, either as organizations or individuals, to use the area for legitimate and appropriate purposes.

B. To provide returns to individuals through--

1. Recreational use, such as esthetic and social enjoyment, development of educational hobbies, hunting and fishing privileges.
2. Utilitarian use, such as in insect and weed destruction, erosion, water, and animal-pest control, property protection, and monetary returns.

Supplemental Information

Where can literature, information, and assistance be obtained on problems in wildlife management?

A. United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

1. Bureau of Biological Survey.
2. Extension Service.
3. Forest Service.
4. Soil Conservation Service.

B. United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

1. National Park Service.
2. Division of Grazing.

C. United States Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

1. Bureau of Fisheries.

D. State fish and game officials, State conservation departments.

E. Colleges and universities in the State.

F. County extension agents.

G. State or county planning boards.

H. Various local, State, and national associations interested in wildlife conservation.

