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SUGGESTED ACTION PROGRAM FOR SPORTSMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Prepared in Division of Wildlife Research

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For many years, the Biological Survey has received requests for suggestions on what sportsmen's organizations can do to contribute their bit toward wildlife conservation and restoration. The Bureau is frequently asked to furnish a speaker for meetings where current programs are discussed and where diversified opinions are expressed as to what should be done. As there is a definite need for live organizations of sportsmen that can direct their activities into constructive channels, the Biological Survey believes the time is opportune to suggest courses of action that will more definitely include the sportsman in community, county, State, and national wildlife-restoration programs.

Sportsmen as a group are not technically trained in the field of managing wildlife resources. Many of their activities need technical advice and direction to be of most benefit to game species. Some local meetings are arranged more for entertainment or for the personal enjoyment of members. There is a place for such activities, but with so much available energy in local communities it seems that more thought and effort should be given to directing willing groups into channels where wildlife and real conservation would directly benefit. The sportsman could greatly increase his service to the community and later point with pride to particular accomplishments.

To extend its usefulness to conservation organizations, the Biological Survey herewith presents in more or less outline form the fields of activity it believes possible in any local sportsmen's organization.

I. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

a. Publications

The Biological Survey, as a cooperative measure, is prepared to send out on request certain published bulletins on wildlife subjects, make available current issues of The Wildlife Review, and furnish a list of the Bureau's available publications telling how they may be procured. The Wildlife Review, issued at irregular intervals, abstracts published articles from all sources containing information on wildlife management. These would be valuable to club officers or entertainment committees for keeping members informed. Much of the Bureau's information can be used profitably in directing sportsmen's local activities.

b. Motion Pictures

Motion pictures on wildlife subjects are available for sportsmen's meetings. Application for lists of those available for circulation and how they may be obtained should be made to the Bureau or to the Regional Offices.

c. Beneficial and Harmful Wildlife

The Bureau is prepared to furnish on request information on the beneficial and harmful forms of wildlife and on their economic importance.

II. IMPROVING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WILDLIFE

Probably the greatest opportunity for sportsmen's groups lies in improving environment to increase the food and cover available for wildlife. Work of this kind needs careful planning and the advice of informational specialists from the Biological Survey or from State conservation commissions or game departments. Where fisheries improvement is under consideration, advice should be sought from State and Federal fisheries agencies. Sportsmen's groups can best help in --

- a. Planting suitable duck foods in marshes of the area served by the club.
- b. Seeding suitable ranges with shrubs and grasses for big-game use.
- c. Planting native trees and shrubs for improving wildlife environment.
- d. Furnishing labor in developing publicly owned refuges.
- e. Assisting private landowners in planting hedgerows separating cultivated fields. These have value as travel ways and cover for

II. IMPROVING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WILDLIFE--Continued.

game and as windbreaks and for erosion control and may bring some income from the nuts and fruits in addition to providing food and cover for wildlife.

f. Fostering for game the rehabilitation of abandoned farms not in sufficient acreage for public management. Sportsmen can arrange through leases for maintaining game-propagation units and participate in harvesting the game surplus.

g. Benefiting game fish by--

1. Removing, with contributed labor, obstructions in streams, as unused dams affecting fish migrations, and constructing fish ladders in small streams, if State funds are not available. The advice and assistance of State and Federal fisheries agencies should be obtained before undertaking.
2. Planting natural fish foods, as freshwater shrimps and their cover plants.
3. Furnishing labor and material to screen irrigation ditches.
4. Assisting Federal and State planting programs with labor and transportation.
5. Improving streams by developing pools and building fish shelters.

III. GAME AND FISH RESTOCKING PROGRAM

It is not always possible with the State's limited funds and personnel to maintain for annual sporting purposes the desired game and fish supply. Sportsmen's organizations can render good service in raising funds to supplement State fish and game programs in the purchase, transportation, and transplanting of big-game animals, upland birds, fur animals, and fishes.

There is an opportunity for furnishing eggs of upland birds to farmers and 4-H Clubs for rearing, with such compensation as may be mutually agreed upon for the work. The Biological Survey has neither eggs nor game birds for distribution.

Every sportsman is willing to help the State program in restocking local game areas with upland birds and fur animals.

It is possible to develop and profitably operate small fish-cultural units for stocking local streams and lakes. Examples of club activities in operating rearing pools are reported from all sections of the country.

IV. EMERGENCY WINTER FEEDING

Local winter freeze-ups and prolonged snow, sleet, and ice conditions may make emergency feeding necessary if desirable local populations of game are to be maintained. The local club can carry on--

- a. Waterfowl feeding with wheat, corn, and other grains when birds are caught in freeze-ups.
- b. Upland-bird feeding where snow, sleet, or ice covers natural food.
- c. Deer and elk feeding where winter range is insufficient to support present numbers and where snow conditions are more severe than normally.
- d. The construction of feeding, watering and shelter stations.

V. PREDATORY ANIMALS, RODENTS, AND BIRDS

Sportsmen, as a class, are not trained to recognize in the field the status of all forms of wildlife as beneficial or destructive. Many are interested solely in the sport rather than in nature in general. Not all of the so-called "bad actors" among wildlife are harmful, except under unusual conditions. Proper control measures should be local and confined to destructive individuals. Sportsmen's clubs can--

- a. Cooperate with State and Federal programs by assisting men hired especially for control work.
- b. Leave actual control operations to men designated and trained for this work.
- c. Report known depredations of predators to the local game protectors or experienced control hunters.

VI. GAME-LAW ENFORCEMENT

One of the best evidences of good sportsmanship is shown in club activities designated to promote respect for game laws and regulations. Sincerity in working for more sport requires that members--

- a. Report violations of Federal and State game laws to the nearest United States game management agent or to the nearest State game protector, as the case may be.
- b. Encourage good sportsmanship and respect for game laws and provide training in the safe and proper use of firearms.
- c. Seek the nonpolitical appointment of qualified game protectors and game technicians.

VII. FEDERAL AND STATE WILDLIFE ACTIVITIES

Through statements to the press, bulletins, and talks by public officials, it is possible for all sportsmen's clubs to become familiar with the yearly program of Federal and State conservation organizations. Certain meetings of the club should be devoted to--

- a. Analyzing yearly reports of Federal departments affecting local wildlife conditions.
- b. Studying State conservation commission or game and fish department reports.
- c. Studying all activities and programs that may vitally affect local game populations.
- d. Recommending to various administrative units changes in regulations and laws for improving local situations, keeping in mind the broader State and national programs.

VIII. STATE AND NATIONAL CONSERVATION GROUPS

The strength of the present wildlife conservation movement depends upon active participation by every individual directly interested. Little can be done by each one working independently. It is important that sportsmen join local sportsmen's organizations, maintain their membership, and make their efforts count by cooperative effort with others having similar objectives. To be most effective, local clubs should affiliate with county, district, State, and national wildlife-conservation groups. Delegates should be sent regularly to meetings where sportsmen's problems are presented for united action.

