

WILDLIFE SERVICES - NEW DIVISION OF THE BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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The Division of Wildlife Services was activated July 1, 1965, as a successor to the Division of Predator and Rodent Control. It assumed the animal control responsibilities of the Bureau, and is to have new and added responsibilities in the fields of wildlife enhancement and pesticides surveillance. Animal control, the traditional responsibility of the Division, is undergoing fundamental changes.

It is the purpose of this paper to discuss both the old and new responsibilities of the Division of Wildlife Services and to project the thinking and philosophy that is shaping the new Division.

In assessing the progress made to date in implementing the new functions of the Division, it is important to understand that available funds through June of 1966 were appropriated for animal control. These funds cannot be diverted into new programs beyond legislative intent. The full implementation of the new responsibilities will depend on future congressional appropriations.

WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT

First, let us discuss wildlife enhancement, an approved function with a rather large, all inclusive, title. The following discussion should define this term as far as it applies to functions of the new Division at this time and stage of planning.

The basic objectives of the wildlife enhancement program will be:

1. To explore ways of managing wildlife for abundance and diversity on a basis compatible with other land uses and other needs of man.
2. To improve conditions for both game and non-game species on all classes of land.

3. To increase hunting and similar wildlife oriented recreation opportunities.

4. To provide assistance in managing non-game species for the enjoyment of the non-hunting public and to stimulate and encourage an increased understanding and involvement of the general public.

These objectives will be accomplished by providing technical assistance and liaison to agencies, organizations and individuals. Emphasis will be placed on working through agencies whose programs influence management on large blocks of land, whether public or private. Initial efforts will be on military and Indian lands with primary emphasis on migratory species.

The role of wildlife management on Federal lands is determined by the administering agency, and to a large extent, by the availability of professional services. The Bureau will provide these services, working through cooperative agreements with Federal and other agencies that look to the Bureau to provide supporting expertise to existing resource staffs.

The Bureau's role in relation to the 800 million acres of public and Indian lands will be to furnish technical information and specialist services to Federal agencies administering such lands; to serve as a coordinator and liaison between Federal agencies and State Game and Fish Departments; and to promote, organize, establish, and sometimes supervise wildlife programs on public land where no program now exists.

There is one relatively unexplored area that poses a real challenge to the new Division. Traditionally, management has come to mean a direct responsibility; propagation of game animals, the direct manipulation of habitat and the establishment of harvest regulations. A broader view would assume an indirect responsibility for developing broad, social, economic and legal programs that would result in favorable conditions for game and its habitat, provide public hunting and prevent conflicts. It is in this area that the Division can make its greatest contributions by bringing the talents, not only of the Bureau, but of other agencies and institutions to bear on very complex social and economic problems.

An increasing portion of the public, in fact, a great body of people enjoy wildlife for pure enjoyment or non-consumptive purposes as opposed to consumptive use or hunting. This public embraces the protectionist groups and includes the backyard enthusiasts, the birdwatchers, the photographers and city dwellers whose only experience with wildlife is to feed pigeons and watch squirrels in city parks. This public, represented by many groups, is not served specifically by any agency. It should and will be served by preparation of educational material on game and non-game species and information to assist this segment of the full enjoyment and management of these animals right to the backyard.

The new Division of Wildlife Services, by carefully reappraising and re-examining current programs, will plan to devote some time and atten-

tion to wildlife enhancement beginning in Fiscal Year 1967 (July 1, 1966 - June 30, 1967). The emphasis will be, as previously stated, on military and Indian lands with primary emphasis on migratory species. Clearly there is no need or intent to duplicate or compete with existing programs of other State or Federal agencies. Efforts of the new Division will be to fill existing gaps in wildlife programs and contribute additional services in areas of need.

PESTICIDES SURVEILLANCE

Now let us move on to pesticides surveillance and discuss this subject which is to be a function of the new Division. This program to the extent practical will be designed to accomplish the following:

1. Insure that no more than the minimum acceptable adverse effects to wildlife resources result from pesticides operations conducted on Interior lands, and assure the exemplary planning and conduct of such operations by:
 - a. Providing technical assistance in planning.
 - b. Insuring that operations are carried out as planned.
 - c. Evaluating, or providing for the evaluation of ecological effects of specific operations selected for study on the basis of appropriate criteria.
2. Provide technical assistance as requested or by existing agreement or authority to other Federal agencies in planning and evaluating impact on wildlife of pest control operations on other Federal lands, or in other Federally administered programs.
3. Provide leadership and technical assistance to States, as appropriate, to facilitate development of their proficiency and responsibility for evaluating and prevention of hazards to wildlife from pest control operations within their borders. The State of California, in particular, is well advanced in pesticides surveillance and will undoubtedly provide helpful experience and knowledge for development of the Division's program.
4. Gather data regarding effects of specific operations that will be useful to the National monitoring program and execute the required field sampling of wildlife organisms according to the National plan.
5. Field test findings developed in more limited research programs; and, through experience, suggest directions needing further specific research.
6. Work jointly with the companion Fishery Surveillance program to develop a general level of proficiency in pesticides wildlife evaluation so that both field personnel and the public may seek authoritative information or assistance with confidence.

At this time there is no one that can adequately define a pesticides surveillance operation. It means much more than making an observation for dead animals following a pesticides application.

The Division plans to get into the surveillance business on a limited basis during 1966. The initial effort will be in training personnel assigned to the surveillance program, in developing adequate reference systems and in developing sound programs with definite standards, all of this in co-operation with other agencies having similar responsibilities. The intent is to have proposals reviewed by Bureau specialists and by experts in the Public Health Service, the Department of Agriculture and by private industry. In short, the Division will proceed from the most sound base possible.

ANIMAL CONTROL

The control of animals, which for one reason or another, may exert an adverse influence on the interests of man is a resource management function not unlike production, harvest, and habitat manipulation. Animal control as a management tool is needed to:

1. Protect human health by preventing the spread of animal-borne diseases.
2. Protect human safety by controlling bird numbers in the vicinity of airports, both military and civilian.
3. Reduce economic losses to livestock and agricultural industries resulting from animal and bird damage.
4. Reduce animal and bird damage to property in industrial, urban and residential areas.
5. Reduce depredation on game animals when requested by the State or agency charged with land management responsibility.

In March, 1964, the Secretary of Interior's Advisory Board on Wildlife Management reported on their review of "Predator and Rodent Control in the United States", and made recommendations now commonly referred to as the Leopold Report. In June of 1965, Secretary Udall accepted the report as a guidepost to future animal control activities but indicated that the Department did not intend to abandon responsibilities in animal control. However, animal control activities will only be conducted where there is a demonstrated need, employing efficient, economical, selective, and safe control methods based on sound ecological principles.

No longer is it possible to think in terms of "beneficial" or "detrimental wildlife", but only in terms of how each animal fits into the particular environmental situation at any given time and place. All species are at one time or another either "beneficial" or "detrimental"

to the best interests of man, and in some instances a single species is both. Control, or more properly management, must depend upon time and circumstance. No longer will the control of any species or any category of wild animals be an objective.

On close examination, it is not the responsibility of the Bureau to determine "demonstrated need" for animal control. This is the responsibility of the land and resource managing agencies, through planning and zoning concepts, to determine how land will be used. If animal control is needed to accomplish the planned management administration of a land area, and if such animal control is included in the plan for such land, the control will be available under the supervision of this Bureau and the Division of Wildlife Services as a service to accomplish a resource goal. By the same token, it is not a responsibility of this Bureau to determine when downtown buildings have been sufficiently defaced or when pigeons pose a public health problem and require control. This is a responsibility of the city fathers and of the local health officials. When in their judgement control is needed the Division can perform it or supervise it as a service function. The same with rabies suppression, the prevention of human plague outbreaks, and similar health problems which are responsibilities of local, State, and National health officials and require medical judgements. It should be under their guidance that a control program is carried out and their judgement as to the degree of control necessary in each case.

This will take the Division and the Bureau out of the business of promoting, conducting, evaluating, and defending its own work. Animal control is a service that can be provided when and where necessary.

In all of its control activities, the Bureau will give consideration to the total environment, including the impact on other forms of wildlife, especially those considered as threatened species.

SUMMARY

The Division of Wildlife Services is a new Division of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. This new Division is charged with the responsibilities formerly vested in the Division of Predator and Rodent Control in addition to new responsibilities in wildlife enhancement and pesticides surveillance.

New concepts, guidelines, and approaches are being developed for animal control. This function is being updated to better serve the varied interests of our modern society. New responsibilities in wildlife enhancement will be undertaken in a small way during the current year. These efforts will be primarily on military and Indian lands where the States are not active and a need exists for these programs. The second new function, pesticides surveillance, will also begin on a limited basis during 1966. Initial efforts in this field will be in training personnel and developing adequate reference systems and standards.