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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
A NEW IMPLEMENT

With our wildlife resources growing slimmer by the month, an alarmed nation is resorting to a new implement to sow the seeds of conservation. The implement is education. In some states it has blossomed into a vast complex, costing more than $100,000 annually in some areas. It is simpler and less expensive. In some states it isn't even an implement, but in most it is fresh off the assembly line and still stiff with newness. But regardless of the age or size of this machine, like the people, it's here to stay. More and more conservationists have come to realize that education is the only solution to the relentless shrinkage of our natural resources.

Although Mr. Average Citizen is the chief beneficiary of conservation, he's strong enough, must be reminded of it. And one simple reminder won't do the job. His responsibility to nature's endowments must be placed before him firmly, entertainingly and—constantly. Since little Grammar School Johnny of today's Average Citizen of tomorrow, the same dish must be placed before him. In other words every man, woman and child in the nation must be reminded that the burden of salvaging our wildlife rests on their shoulders. A long-range, comprehensive program is the only vehicle which can successfully carry this load.

Here in Florida we are at last assembling the framework for such a machine. FLORIDA WILDLIFE is one of the first essential parts. The ideal educational setup is an efficient composite of information, oral and printed training, and old Florida-bred publicity. FLORIDA WILDLIFE will carry the bulk of the information load. Anyone who knows the facts of our wildlife situation quickly realizes that too many people aren't acquainted with those facts. Distributing them by word of mouth would be a destructively slow process. So the only immediate alternative is to present them through the medium of a regular publication. The publication will disseminate game and fish facts entertainingly enough to be enjoyable and yet impressively enough to be effective, it will be a success. We hope FLORIDA WILDLIFE will be able to do just that. If it can, one vital cog in our conservation education program will be rolling.
"Just plain lousy."
"Mighty sad, can’t we do something about it?"

Comments like these were the rule, and there were virtually no exceptions.

All this in spite of the fact that water-fowling had been dropping steadily for three years. Why? What has happened to the flocks of mallard, ringneck, black ducks and other waterfowl that once cloaked the sloughs and marshes of the Southland? Quite obviously they are dead, but, again, why?

There are scores of reasons why our migratory birds are dying. But they are reasons hard to put a finger on; they are reasons that can’t be set down in a simple algebraic equation. The migratory fowl, like your Knight of the Road, is a hard customer to keep tabs on. He’s on the go too much. Experts don’t even hazard a guess as to how many waterfowl North America can claim. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employs hundreds of trained observers to make yearly flyway estimates and comparisons. But they frankly admit there is no reasonably accurate means for a census. However, it doesn’t take an expert to know that each year is bringing poorer and poorer shooting. The boy who crouches, wet and cold, in the blind can tell you that.

Roughly, the rising mortality rate of the duck and goose can be attributed to four basic situations:
1. Decreased productivity.
2. Lack of wintering and feed grounds.
3. Pollution and disease.
4. Increased hunting pressure.

The first reason is probably least important, but it deserves to be dealt with. Most authorities agree that under- optimum condition the Alaskan and Canadian breeding grounds are capable of producing good hunting for years to come. But are they producing now? It’s hard to tell. Evaluation of production of a breeding ground can be accomplished only by extensive and intensive studies. Such studies can’t be accomplished overnight. It’s pretty apparent, though, that here in the United States our duck and goose population is dwindling. The marshes that make for breeding grounds are growing fewer and less tenable; adequate feeding areas are becoming more scarce; and predators and hunters are taking their toll of breeding stock.

The Department of Interior and sporting and conservation organizations are now rallying to the cause. Slowly but surely biologists are gaining production data on the migratory fowl. Spring reconnaissance over the principal breeding areas on the continent are being made. The number of paired and single drakes of each species are recorded and correlated with the total numbers observed. Glutton sizes in nests are noted. Hatching success is recorded. Later, breed counts by age classes are computed to provide average survival data. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has asked state waterfowl biologists to follow the same procedure in all cruising and breeding areas during the peaks of pre-resting, resting and resting and breeding season. A review of the averages of all these areas would then provide a practical and satisfactory index to the character of each breeding year. Regulations could then be adjusted accordingly.

However, those are proposed and attempted corrective measures for what is probably the duck hunter’s least troublesome problem.

The majority of waterfowl experts—and a goodly share of the huntmen—place the blame for the duck drought squarely on the Southland. The heaviest losses, they claim, take place each year during migration and wintering periods. During these periods, ducks and geese must have ample food supplies and safe resting places. Unfortunately, drainage and reclamation projects have cut such spoils to a tragic minimum. Thus, in a nutshell, has had the effect of flinging great hazards of waterfowl together at a few favorable points; thus concentrating hunting, intensifying lead poisoning and disease factors and drastically reducing food supplies.
LAKE OKEECHOBEE

They’re beginning to get hungry again in Florida’s old reliable inland ocean. After a sluggish April the black bass have suddenly started hitting. Fishing is best on the west and northwestern sides in the grassy fringes of the lake. The area around Observation Island and Bare Beach have been particularly good to the angle. Start your search and you’ll find your best luck with a silver, deep water angler’s or bringing in up to nine-pounders with a “shimmer-rigger.” Fair strings of bream are also being caught in the deep water. They seem to have a liking for worms.

SUNWANEE RIVER

When the black waters of the Sunwanne began subsiding in May the bass, bream and stump-knockers started striking. There’s fair fishing all along its winding course, but it’s best particularly good in the stretch west of Branford. The black bass seem to have a yearning for live bait. Fishermen who want the limit in a hurry are doing splendidly. The bream are taking fresh water shiners and worms are producing the biggest strings of stump-knockers. A two boat party fishing near Old Town recently returned with string of 80 stumpers. Big bass were suspected but far was a seven-pounder taken north of Old Town.

STEINHATCHEE RIVER

This stubby little river which separates Taylor and Dixie counties has long had the reputation of being one of the choice fresh water fishing grounds in Florida. And it’s living up to that reputation again this year. Limits of black bass, red breaks and blue bream are being pulled out of its waters every day. Bass are being taken on a plug or live shrimp and the perch and bream show a preference for worms. You’ll get the limit quicker on the Steinhatchee if you start wettling your hook about daybreak.

HILLSBORO RIVER

Dry weather has brought down the water level of this little Hillsboro county stream and brought the fishing up to a peak. Bass are hitting both fly and plug, with catches thus far for up to 11 and 12 pounds. Bream are biting bluegills, and everyone has been taking time. A few gobs of perch have been reported on the upper end of the river near Crystal Springs.

LAKE TALQUIN

If you can make your trip during the middle of the week you’ll find superlative fishing on this North Florida lake. Shellscknocks, bream, and bass abound in Lake Talquin, but on weekends you’ll find it pretty crowded. It is one of the favorite recreational haunts of week-end fishermen from Tallahassee. Good bags of both bream and shellscknocks are being taken with sunnies and brownies. The black bass are hitting a silver minnow, but plenty are taking the larger shiners. Fishing is producing better results than any other.

LAKE IMONIA

The fishing in Lake Imonia, on the Georgia border, north of Tallahassee was seriously affected by locks being driven down the Ocklawaha River. In the season, but the water level now has dropped back to normal, and for the post past weeks fishing has been good here. Bream are doing splendidly. Fishing for bass has been reported good on the southeast tip of this lake. Biggest bags of bass have been landed in the late afternoon.

FISHING CREEK

This little stream flows through Highlands and Glades counties and is not generally known over the state. But it is still one of the fishing paradises of Southwest Florida. A 40-inch striped bass is not considered exceptional experience but you can find a good year-class of bass for bass, they are also knocking the water out of the stream to get to the little fishy population on strings. Species are black bass and the warmouth perch are jumping at top water lures. Best spots: Cypress Lake and Lake Talquin.
Fifty years ago when Grandpa felt the urge for a noisy shoot of Florida venison he merely stepped onto the backyard, balanced his old break-loader across the fence, checked the windage with a smear of toilet-seat paste and waited for a 400-pound buck to cross his path and visit the corn. But today he would find a little different situation. In most areas of the state he could trade his break-loader for a machine-gun and a squeal of Alamo sound, and chances are he'd still have to buy his fresh meat at the corner market. In the first place, there is a better than even chance that the old gentleman would have to travel scores of miles from season to season, all this a pretty dismal picture. Well, it isn't exactly dismal; but on the other hand, it certainly isn't a robust, blooming portrait. With the aid of the Federal government, however, we may hope to add a touch of color to the canvas before the current decade is too far gone. Under commission plans and the Pittman-Robertson program, I have been assigned two deer and hope for the best. Several private hunting clubs throughout the state offer good deer hunting and a few, good turkey hunting. But, unfortunately, most of us can't "cut the mustard" financially. Most of the better clubs charge from $10 to $50 per day—and in some cases more—for the privilege of stalking your buck or waiting your turkey flock. If you do much hunting, that runs into a tidy sum. So much so, in fact, that at the end of one season your economy-minded spouse would probably be moved to beat you about the ears with a lead-bound copy of the family budget.

The figures I quoted earlier may give you some idea of what the hunter is up against in the way of space. But let's break it down even further. Florida contains some 35 million acres of good solid terra firma. Roughly, half of this, we have estimated, is fenced, and the other half is declared by law to be "off-limits" to any and all classes of game. Only about 10 to 20 percent of that remaining portion is well inhabited by game. That leaves us with roughly two and one-half million acres of good, well-fenced, and well-guarded hunting land. Next year approximately 100,000 hunters will don hunting coats and invade the fields of Florida. A little quick division shows that will leave each with an average of 25 acres over which to hunt. Spread that to cover 4 months and a dozen varieties of game and you'll find it wears pretty thin. Of course, this is a state-wide average. In some counties, the local sportsman would be elated if he could claim 6 acres of hunting area all his own.

What then is the hunters alternative? He can either go to a good, out-of-state hunting ground, patronize a private hunting club, or keep feeding his dogs and hope for the best. Several private hunting clubs throughout the state offer good deer hunting and a few, good turkey hunting. But, unfortunately, most of us can't "cut the mustard" financially. Most of the better clubs charge from $10 to $50 per day—and in some cases more—for the privilege of stalking your buck or waiting your turkey flock. If you do much hunting, that runs into a tidy sum. So much so, in fact, that at the end of one season your economy-minded spouse would probably be moved to beat you about the ears with a lead-bound copy of the family budget.

Therefore, the best answer for the ordinary, not-so-well-heeled sportsman lies in public hunting ground. There he can hunt shoulder to shoulder with his wealthy companion. And that is as it should be. Our wildlife is a heritage we should all share equally.

Public controlled hunting areas also constitute the simplest and most feasible method of game management. They permit conservation agencies to regulate the harvest of game and maintain sufficient breeding stock at all times. This insures good hunting without endangering the game. Fifty percent of a deer stock can be killed off each year without serious consequences, but let the kill run over
GAME and FISH VIOLATIONS

Judges throughout the state have handed out 283 sentences for violation of game and fish laws since March. More than half of the offenders were charged with fishing without a license. Almost two-thirds were charged with possession of undersized fish, and slightly over half were penalized for exceeding the bag limit on fish. Other violations included possessing decoys, dynamating fish, shooting fish in a wire trap, possessing turkey net set, and hunting from a state highway. Of those found guilty, six received suspended sentences and seven deferred sentences.

In Broward county, where Judge Beren H. Anderson presides, 34 violators were handed sentences to top every other county in the state. Nassau was second with 24 convictions. Davie was third with 20 and Hernando followed with 14.

The following is a detailed list of prosecutions since March. Court costs have been added to the fines to show total costs to the offender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Violator</th>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>Fine</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Arresting Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>Possessing decoys</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>Bakersfield</td>
<td>Officer Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Doe</td>
<td>Dynamating fish</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Officer Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Brown</td>
<td>Shooting fish in wire trap</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
<td>Officer Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Davis</td>
<td>Possessing turkey net set</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
<td>Officer Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Brown</td>
<td>Possessing undersized fish</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Officer Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Lee</td>
<td>Hunting from a state highway</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>Tampa</td>
<td>Officer Brown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Editor's Note: Due to lack of space we are unable to print the total list of violations in this time. The remainder will be listed in the next issue.)

JUNE, 1947

FLORIDA STATE LIBRARY
Commission to Fete Outdoor Writers

Florida's conservation program will be in the national spotlight Saturday, June 7, when the State Game and Fish Water Conservation Plan takes its turn at recognition. Commission plans its program to be the most important and notable conservation program to be awarded the annual Outdoor Writers of America convention in St. Petersburg.

The commission has been given the honor of sponsoring the President's Dinner to start the final day of the Gulf Stream Rendezvous. Speakers for the evening will include Ellis Davis, commissioner from the Fish Division, and J. Howard Pols, executive director of the IGFA.

Dr. Allen, executive secretary of the Florida Outdoor Writers and coordinator for the convention, was the first to appear before the commission and explain the program. Dr. Allen said: "The purpose of the program is to show the visiting writers a good time. The annual convention, which moves from state to state, won't be held in Florida again for 47 years."

More than $50,000 worth of materials has been laid out for the convention. Also included in the awards will be a fish fry, a barbecue, a "waterfowl," two banquets, four cocktail parties, three under-covers, a fishing tackle show, three breakfasts, innumerable bass fishing trips, beach parties, fashion shows, prize作文 exhibitions, and parade of Florida's most gorgeous hunting beauties.

Sportsmen's Clubs

(Continued from Page 3)

The Kissimmee Sportsmen's Association has hit upon an idea that's a switch up on red-headed dividends. At a meeting in April, the organization passed a resolution providing $50 prizes for the bestest gator fish and the heaviest smallfish caught by club members in Osceola County during the month of May. The action was taken as an effort to stimulate the removal of the pests and smallfish from the lakes and streams in that locality. Since these two piscatorial species are serious predators, club members believe this is a conservation step in the right direction. Other clubs throughout Florida might well follow the Kissimmee organization's lead.

James B. Oster, president of the Sportsmen's Club of Dale County and one of Florida's best known conservationists, died in Miami May 8 of a heart attack. He was a founder of the Dale County Wildlife Club and his five terms as president of the State Federation, Oster served as an official of the club for 15 years, constantly aiding the conservation movement in South Florida.

The recently organized West Side Sportsmen's Club of Gadsden County has elected James Downey of Dothan president. Kenneth Crum was named secretary and treasurer. The club was organized at a meeting at Tallahassee.

Downtown Country Sportsman's Club is laying plans for an outdoor supper early in June. The supper will be held June 16, and theRep. Bobbie Howard will be the featured speaker. The club will meet at 80 members, and hopes to double that figure by fall.

Waterfowl Crisis

(Continued From Page 8)

All that the Fish and Wildlife Service has to say about the report of state and fish departments, sportsmen's clubs, and hunters themselves. A Department of Interior spokesman recently declared that teamwork was the key to an effective waterfowl program. This teamwork shouldn't be hard to get. Newsprint all over the nation are rapidly realizing that is a waterfowl crisis. They realize there is something isn't done and done quickly the famous "duck depression" of the mid-sixties will be playing a repeat performance.

They Fish for Jewelry

Down in Broward County a group of enterprising fishermen have taken one of the near worthless inhabitants of the waterways and made him the principal product of a thriving new industry. The much-maligned garfish is now providing raw material for one of the top jewelry manufacturers in the state. The manufacturer has found that scales from the gar produce some of his finest custom jewelry and gem pieces. He believes that some of the gar will be played a repeat performance. The fish are caught they are decapitated (LOWER RIGHT) and placed in the drums for boiling RIGHT. Water is then pumped into the drums to separate the cooked fish from the scales, which settle to the bottom. This bulk of gar produced more than twenty gallons of scales, which sold for an average of $4 per gallon.
SPORTSMEN'S

From Florida's

Hunts and Fishing

Hunting Seasons To Be Decided At June Meeting

The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission will meet in June to deliberate on the revision of hunting regulations and set dates for the 1947-48 seasons. Commissioners and their representatives will meet in Tallahassee and then proceed to the Big Cypress where they will confer with sportsmen's clubs in several counties in an effort to get a composite picture of the hunting situations over the state.

Commissioners have solicited all outdoor clubs and regional representatives of the sportsmen's clubs to be present at the meeting. Discussions will be conducted on matters dealt with by the Commission such as hunting seasons, rates of game and fish licenses, etc. All interested sportsmen are invited to attend the meeting.

Hunting Accidents For Last Season Total Twenty-five

Four persons were killed, seven seriously injured, and 14 hurt slightly in hunting accidents last season, according to figures released by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

Commissioner Dick Meininger, in charge of the accident reports, said that the decrease in the number of accidents was due to the increasing use of safety equipment and the greater awareness of the dangers of hunting.

The accident figures for the past season are as follows: 4 killed, 7 seriously injured, and 14 hurt slightly. This is a decrease from the previous year when 20 accidents were reported.

The Big Cypress Hunting Club of San Antonio voted to affiliate with the Florida Wildlife Federation at a meeting May 16 at Cannon Ranch. Club membership now stands at 25. Guests at the meeting included L. G. Bruce, Game and Fresh Water Fish Commissioner from the First District, D. Frank Smoak, chief law enforcement officer for the Game and Fish Commission, and E. C. Wimer, executive secretary of the Federation.