

possibly be the solution to our overall problem of interdepartmental cooperation. Why not consider setting up three phases of an employee's probationary period. Two months could be spent working with a game biologist, two months with a fisheries biologist and two months with an enforcement officer. At the end of this six months period we should be able to evaluate this man's work and determine if he is the type person who could be counted on to cooperate with other divisions within the department.

Interdepartmental cooperation is no longer a desirable trait of an employee. It has now become a required characteristic. Only those enforcement officers who are willing to assume this characteristic can expect to have a future in wildlife conservation.

There are those who will tell you that complete cooperation between the various divisions of a conservation agency can never be accomplished. That this is an impossibility. Each time I hear this I think of a sign I once saw which read . . . "According to the theory of aerodynamics, and as may be readily demonstrated through wind tunnel experiments, the bumblebee is unable to fly. This is because the size, weight and shape of his body in relation to the total wingspread makes flying impossible . . . but the bumblebee, being ignorant of these scientific facts, goes ahead and flies anyway . . . and makes a little honey every day."

ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS RELEVANT TO JUVENILE LAW VIOLATIONS

By JAMES L. BAILEY

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Missouri Conservation Commission

My talk concerns juvenile delinquency in relation to wildlife law enforcement. First — I want it *clearly understood* that my remarks are not intended to reflect in any manner on the many fine boys and girls of good character and excellent behavior, who are engaged in various worth-while activities, particularly wildlife and forestry conservation. The youth groups and individuals who are doing a tremendous job in assisting us in many areas of our responsibility in the conservation of our outdoor resources and who *understand* that our most difficult task is to restrict the behavior of persons who seek to *destroy* what we are attempting to *preserve*. Without the encouragement, help and understanding of these youthful citizens, conservation law enforcement would have a much darker future.

It is unfortunate that many good kids often bear the brunt of adult misunderstanding, suspicion and criticism as a result of the shameful actions of the "incorrigibles" of their own age group.

I am reluctant to use the term "juvenile delinquent" in reference to the teenage "rabble rousers" who have little interest in anything *except to cause trouble*. It doesn't seem to emphasize in strong enough language the vandalism, the destruction of property, the atrocious and despicable crimes committed by this ever-increasing number of "misguided" young humans who, under the protective blanket of statutory and judicial impunity, roam our streets, our alleys and highways and prowl our fields, our streams, our forests, and back roads in search of someone to rob, or assault; or something to steal, deface, kill or destroy.

The hardened individuals, the ruthless gangs or the immoral groups that cause other law enforcement officers to tear their hair in despair are usually the same ones that we must deal with, *often single handed*, in our efforts to control the behavior of our resource users and in our attempt to protect the facilities provided by our agencies for the enjoyment and use of fishermen, hunters, campers, and others who seek outdoor recreation.

If you're 40 or older, you can recall when the teenagers were referred to generally as "adolescents" and their behavior depended to a great extent on the kind of parental management and home life they

were subjected to; when the practice of "spare the rod and spoil the child" was a determining factor in the good or bad actions of the youngster, and the fear or threat of the "reform school" was a strong deterrent to those who might have criminal inclination.

Until recent years, the "delinquent" was dealt with in a strong and forceful manner on a local basis and without psychiatric consultation. Court action was not influenced by conferences with social reformers and doctors, and protective procedures had not been established for the so called "misunderstood," "under privileged," "frustrated" juvenile law breakers.

The glamor of special attention and the defensive consideration shown youthful criminals by modern society in my opinion, encourages them to repeated disregard of moral and civil laws and creates a negative attitude towards authority, and breeds a growing disrespect for property and persons. The protection of "anonymous" publicity accorded their destructive acts and unlawful actions and *their knowledge* that the laws or juvenile code in many states provides that court records are available for inspection *only* by special court order and eventually, when they reach legal age, may be destroyed — *without doubt*, inspires many teenagers to commit all the outrageous crimes their "bean size" brains can devise. The head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation said:

"The increasing volume of criminal acts by young people — spurred on by lenient treatment received — has presented a clear barometric reading of what we are now witnessing. From 1960 through 1964, serious crimes committed by our youth increased at twice the rate of the age group's numbers."

According to the F. B. I. annual crime report, 37% of the serious crimes solved by police in 1964 — and only .24% were solved — involved youths under 18 years old. This age group, comprising 15% of the population, committed 43% of the property crimes. The crime rate in the United States since 1958 has increased six times as fast as the population. The sharpest increase has been in the suburban and rural areas, *which concerns us as conservation law enforcement officers*. The nation-wide arrests for persons under 18 for all offenses, except traffic violations, were up 17% and 30% of all suburban arrests involved young people. Fifty-seven (57) law enforcement officers were killed in 1964 and one of every 10 were assaulted. Yet there are those who seek to disarm all law enforcement officers, including us.

Various reasons are given for the explosive increase in youth crime rates. Perhaps, it is a combination of many things; however, I believe the basic cause can be found in the home and the modern techniques of child raising. Unfortunately, the psychiatrist's couch has replaced the old fashioned "woodshed therapy" rendered with a limber switch or a razor strap. Today tranquilizing pills are too often administered instead of the "external medication," the "hickory tea" that made good citizens of you and me. And while we're reminiscing — a few of us can remember when our record of "deportment" determined at the beginning of each new term of school, whether we occupied a choice desk at the back of the school room, near a window, or was squeezed into a "hand whittled" seat on the front row close to the teacher. The word "deportment" has been replaced on today's grade cards with the modern term — "social adjustment." You will recall when we were told by our parents that, if we got a whipping at school, we'd get another when we got home — and *we DID! Not so today!* Instead of lining up at the final ring of the old iron school bell and marching in order to their seats — many of our kids are rushed to school in a shiny limousine and as the electric buzzer sounds, dumped out on the front steps with a fat allowance for Pepsi Cola, hamburgers, and French fries — and told if the teacher so much as disturbs one little greasy strand of their "duck tail" haircut, that Papa will sue!

Instead of singing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," or "America the Beautiful," and reciting the Lord's Prayer, as once was the standard practice — now it is a "juke box jive" in the "rec room" or a lewd joke from a "hip pocket paperback" that is apt to linger in the mind of the student as he begins his day in school.

In place of "Blind Man Bluff" or other group games at recess — the

in-between class activity often consists of "smooching" in the back seat of a "hot rod" on the parking lot—or carousing unrestrained in the corridors.

Some of you can remember when to be caught smoking a Bull Durham cigarette or a piece of grape vine in the "odious edifice" on the back of the school yard meant getting punished or possibly expelled. Nowadays in some of our over-crowded schools, you just *might* get in trouble for stomping out a filter tip on the tile floor at the classroom door.

A few years back, the only IQ tests given were those written on the blackboard by the teacher in the morning before school began. "Special classification interviews" were voluntary classroom recitation—and *vocational aptitude* was determined by the student's after-school and summer vacation employment. Peddling Cloverine Salve, selling garden seeds, or the Grit magazine, was the beginning of many successful business careers a couple of generations ago. The Gordon Profile test or the various other personality and job preferment examinations had not yet been dreamed up.

The seat of much of the trouble today is lack of responsibility—and too much free *time*. We, you and I, came straight home from school, because we had chores to do and when we "fooled around" besides all the reasons we had to give, it meant splitting kindling by lantern light and carrying in wood in the dark. Many times a "welt raising reprimand" was administered. About the only blisters some kids get today are those resulting from shifting gears on a customized hot rod, playing a pinball machine, or lifting a set of hubcaps; and, *obviously*, they are not on the area of their anatomy where we got ours.

Perhaps some of our problems wouldn't exist, if each morning and night there were cream separators to turn until the little gadget on the handle stopped clicking to signal proper speed had been reached to start pouring in the milk—or if there were thorny weeds to pull from a backyard garden—or hogs to slop—or crosscut saws to drag through a seasoned log—or calves to learn to drink skim milk from a battered bucket. If on Sunday, before or after church, their Dads still cut their hair on the back porch—and if picture shows opened only on Saturdays and there were no drive-in movies—there would be no serious juvenile problems. None of us wants to revert to the "horse and buggy" days—although it would be nice if we could get the salary we are now and which we once dreamed of making, but which we can't live on today.

What we should do first, is to conduct a self-analysis to determine how much we, as enforcement officers and private citizens as well, are *contributing* to the situation. We might ask ourselves if we are actually following the dictates of our *upbringing*, and what *we know should be done*, particularly when we are serving as *leaders* of youth groups or acting in *judgment* where child misbehavior may be concerned. Are we apathetically sitting back in our easy chairs with the attitude of—let "George" do it—fearful of reprisal from the "Ann Landers," the "Abigail Van Burens" and other so-called intellectuals who profess to understand the psychology of today's adolescent non-conformists?

I will agree, perhaps, we should not place the entire blame on the "bewildered belligerents." The real reason for many of our problems may be laid on the doorstep of the *indifferent*—the *unconcerned*—and the *irresponsible* parents. Too many parents are afraid to say NO and many kids are growing up with no clear cut idea of *what is right* and *what is wrong*. They leave this responsibility to the school and the community. Many parents who boast that they can trace their ancestors back 300 years—can't tell you where their son or daughter was last night.

We can't overlook the ever-increasing "do-gooders" that are drifting into juvenile crime work. They are so engrossed in their social worker's ideas—they cannot comprehend the *psychology* of evil. They give out such "soft headed" statements as—"There's no such thing as a 'bad boy,'" and keep trying to tie the 'can of crime' to society—while the young punks smirk, hone their switch blades and go *unpunished*. J. Edgar Hoover said, "The public is beginning to gag on the steady sociological diet of excusing the conduct of teenage hoodlums because society has failed them."

We have tried Big Brother clubs and palsy-walsy officers. We have

tried "country club" type reformatories with *no walls* — swimming pools — and movies every night. We have tried baseball fields, tennis courts, and weekend outings in the woods and other supervised entertainments. We have tried probation — lectures — and other "wrist slapping" punishment — or mollycoddling efforts at discipline — and still the hoods continue to multiply. As Mr. Hoover said, "Despite the dedicated efforts of church and civic leaders and others who have a sincere interest in the proper development of our young people, the failures continue to mount." "Meanwhile, the question puzzling most people is what caused the principle and morals of some of our youth to degenerate to near animal level. Of all factors involved, one of the most damaging is the false teaching which tends to blame society for all the frustrations, woes and inconveniences — real or imaginary — visited upon our young people."

While most of the kids, thank goodness, are born straight and stay that way — the late Senator Hennings' committee reported that 20% of the American youngsters between 10 and 17 *now* have juvenile records. *One out of five*, and it is increasing! Why? Who or what is to blame?

We can't lay it to "under privileged." In terms of *creature comfort*, our kids are the most *privileged* of all. The boy who robs to get a new four-barrel carburetor for his hot rod is not *under privileged*. The kid who steals a case of dynamite or buys a sackful of cherry bombs to blow all the fish out of the creek is not *under privileged*. The 15-year old who sets our forests on fire, or slashes tires, or commits other acts of vandalism for "kicks" is not *under privileged*. Juvenile law breakers are as numerous in the upper income brackets as in the poverty ridden class. Instead of *under privileged*, it can be charged to a festering cancer of hostility towards authority and disrespect for the law of the land — encouraged by lack of proper home life, parental control, influence or interest. Mr. Hoover stated, "Teenagers and their parents have been subjected to a foolhardy theory which condones rebellious conduct against authority, law and order, or any regulatory measures which restrict their whims, wishes, desires, and activities. This astonishing belief has spread into the school room, the living room, the court room and into the streets and the countryside in the form of wild drunken brawls and a complete and revolting disregard of decency and the rights, privileges and property of others."

The majority of the crime committed by teenagers in violation of wildlife and forestry laws has the *sanction of their elders*. Their parents help dress — store — cook — or sell the illegal game they bring home. Some are brought up under an antagonistic environment towards game, fish and forestry regulations and the belief that it is their inherent right to do as they please with our wildlife resources, that conservation laws are made to be disobeyed — the only crime is to be *caught*. They are often encouraged to set wild fire to spite conservation-minded neighbors — or to cause trouble for the local conservation department. Most of our juvenile violations are maliciously inspired and parental motivated and/or adult encouraged. Many times the parent is a partner in a fish or game violation and when caught places the blame on his under-age child.

Why is not Norman Rockwell's barefoot, freckle-faced boy with straw hat, overalls, can of worms, and puppy dog no longer much in evidence along the dusty lanes leading down to the old "swimmin' hole"? I'll tell you why! He has been run off the creek by a band of long-haired hoods dressed in skin tight jeans and black leather jackets — with a pocket full of cherry bombs or a telephone contraption or other illegal devices — to take fish — instead of the cut pole and bent pin hook that was formerly associated with "kid fishing."

During the past fiscal year of 1964-65, over 18,000 wildlife and forestry law violations were reported by the Missouri conservation agents. Of this number 4,889 — or approximately one out of every four — were prosecuted. A large number of persons found in violation were under-age individuals who were reprimanded or lectured in the field by the officer; however, 172 cases involving persons under 17 years of age were presented for action to the juvenile courts. With a few exceptions, they were *lectured and relaxed*.

Occasionally, we find a young lad out hunting with a brand new

present — a rifle or shotgun that cost \$50 or \$75 — but no license. Some parent was agreeable to buying an expensive gun and ammunition, but failed to go the rest of the way and purchase a \$3.00 permit for the boy, authorizing legal hunting activity. As a rule, it is embarrassing to the young boy who proudly presents his new gun to the officer for inspection — only to learn that he's violated the law by not having a hunting permit. Often it is necessary for the agent to seize the gun for evidence of the violation — particularly if there is any belligerence shown by the individual. And when the boy goes home and gets through explaining *his* version of the incident to his Dad and shows the seizure receipt for the new gun given him by the officer, you can imagine the attitude of the parent when the officer later contacts him to discuss the violation and return the firearm. Conservation officers can relate many unpleasant and discouraging experiences in this regard. Quite frequently, the parent calls or visits the court officials before the agent has the opportunity to tell them the facts. This protective action on the part of the adult often results in encouraging the youth to a further disrespect and disregard of all laws. He has *learned* — the "old man" will intercede. His first impression of "justice" has been sadly warped by what could be termed as a "fix." The seed of contempt for our judicial system has been planted in his young mind. Its growth will be nurtured each time he avoids prosecution for future misdeeds. Too often, court officials are influenced by the popularity of the parent, rather than the behavior of the young violator.

Each of us with experience in this field of law enforcement — can recall when so-called "insignificant" game law violations were treated with indifference by court officials — and the offense and officer belittled, it was the beginning of a crime spree by the teenager, because he had learned that his Dad obviously had "pull" and was agreeable to his misbehavior. But, most important to him, that the courts — because of his youthful age — would excuse his unlawful activities. As a result of his "young years," he could do pretty much as he pleased. In other words because of statutory exemption, and official and parental sympathy, he had a license to disregard regulations, be contemptuous of enforcement officers, and he could *now* show the rest of the "gang" how easy it was to avoid trouble with the "strong arm" of authority.

Whenever our young people once "get by" with "outwitting" the officer — so to speak — trouble begins. Sometimes it ends on a sad note. Quite a large percentage of our teenage hunting accidents occur while the boys are violating game laws. If you could read some of the gruesome reports sent in by agents following their investigation of gun accidents, you would be sick at your stomach. Some accidents could possibly be prevented by *cracking down* on juvenile disregard of wildlife and forestry laws. A number of the gun fatalities involve young men who have previous records as trouble makers for conservation officers and other law enforcement agencies and their illegal activities generally are well known to their elders.

State-owned and managed recreational facilities suffer much abuse from under-age hoodlums. *Vandalism* results in destruction of valuable state property and increases maintenance costs. At one of our forestry towers in central Missouri, a gang of young beer drinkers repeatedly rammed a trash barrel with their car until the container was completely flattened. New picnic tables were crushed and the lookout tower damaged. It took more hunting and fishing permit dollars than is represented by license holders in this audience to repair the damage. This type of vandalism has reached such proportion in Missouri, that it is a practice now of both the Conservation and the Highway Department to beat up, or deface, new trash barrels to discourage further damage or destruction, before installing them at roadside parks or picnic grounds. Theft of valuable fire detection equipment, two-way radios, and other expensive items resulting from break-ins by teenagers at our forestry lookout towers are not uncommon. Rarely is the property recovered, although it would seem to be of little use to the thieves. It, no doubt, satisfies their desire to do something wrong, regardless — and without reason.

Recently in southwest Missouri, four high school students maliciously drove their car through the doors of a new garage at the Goodman fire

tower. Thanks to some fine investigative work by the local conservation officers and the county sheriff, the culprits were apprehended and the Newton County Magistrate "lowered the boom" on the driver with a substantial fine and 30-day jail sentence — to be served. Since I prepared this paper, another incident occurred.

On August 20th, a seventeen year old boy broke into a fire tower in the St. Louis area, threw the delicate fire-finding instruments out, broke all the windows and destroyed all other equipment and furniture in the cabin. He gave as his reason that he got mad when his companion, a fourteen year old girl, refused to submit to him.

During the investigation, the boy's mother, in presence of her own fourteen year old daughter and other children, said it wasn't the youth's fault, that he was a *good boy* and if the girl had been agreeable to his sexual advances he wouldn't have become frustrated and committed the vandalism. She placed all the blame on the little girl in a language I can't use here.

Magistrate Judge Mundwiler felt differently about it. He fined the lad \$100 and committed him to six months in the Jefferson County jail, eligible for parole in 60 days, provided he makes restitution to the Conservation Department for the \$235 damage resulting from his malicious emotional actions.

Littering of public use areas is a serious and costly problem. Desirable action has been taken by several of our prosecuting attorneys and magistrates, *when* we have been fortunate in apprehending the culprits.

Magistrate Judge Hugh P. Williamson of Callaway County told me that nearly 500 sacks of beer cans, etc., had been picked up along the highways near Fulton by quote "volunteer workers" that appeared in his court for traffic and other violations. Sixty-five sacks, a 130 bushels of litter resulted from "court assignment" to "clean-up" duty on the Little Dixie Community Lake in Central Missouri. On this area, an ex-convict, a graduate of Algoa Reformatory, and a 15 year old girl were caught by Agent Clyde Wilson and charged with littering. Not only were beer cans scattered around their parked car, they also admitted that the latex contraceptives found nearby and presented by the agent as evidence in court, had been discarded by them.

In southeast Missouri, Judge M. E. Montgomery in addition to a fine, sentenced a young man to jail who was caught throwing beer cans and other litter on a local community lake picnic grounds in Scott County. The jail sentence was stayed on condition that the offender work in cleaning up the trash on the area — *under the supervision of the conservation agent*. He was also placed on two-year probation. Needless to say, court action of this nature will assist greatly in teaching some of our younger generation better outdoor housekeeping manners and respect for state and private property — but it *will not solve* the problem entirely.

Conservation agents work *alone — after night* — and in the very remote or backwoods areas of their districts. Most always the people they come in official contact with are armed with knives — guns — gigs — or other instruments that can be used to inflict bodily harm.

Quite a collection of home-made billies — knives — belly guns — and other cunningly devised death-dealing gadgets have been seized from potentially dangerous teenage "rabble rousers" while involved in hunting and fishing violations — particularly in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas.

This gadget — a home-made chain billy — was taken from a youthful "watch dog" on the bank of a river at 2:00 a.m. in the morning. His buddies were engaged in illegally seining a prominent fishing hole. Fortunately, the lone agent did not get hurt. Can you believe this weapon was made for just *this one occasion — only?*

Here are a few of the weapons my men have been threatened with while carrying out their duties. (Display)

Although we recognize the problem and endeavor to take every precaution, most of our really serious enforcement difficulties develop when in the process of apprehending youthful violators. Thus far, we have been successful in coping with most of them. I regret that in one

instance a life had to be taken. The court ruled that it was justified — but had the young lad been properly punished for *previous* unlawful conduct — his record was extensive in this regard — perhaps the killing in protection of the officer's life would not have been necessary. I understand that the boy's father is now under indictment for cattle stealing.

Much can be done to eliminate or curb some of these ever-increasing problems we are having with these "pampered pubescents," who are carrying out premeditated crimes. The time is at hand for us to adopt a more realistic attitude toward this critical problem. We have tried the charitable approach and it has failed. We need more stringent laws — such as confiscation of automobiles and other personal property used in connection with crimes. Revision of our juvenile code to permit publicity of the crimes and the names of the offenders and to establish more responsibility on the "delinquent parent" is much needed. However, the trend of our law makers seems to be towards providing more protection for the criminal and less for the enforcement officer. Crime costs the American people \$22 billion a year — 9 times the amount contributed to our churches. For every dollar spent on child education, \$1.11 goes to crime.

If you haven't already done so, I'd like for each of you to read an article reprinted from the American Legion magazine in a recent issue of the Reader's Digest, titled "Open House for Young Hoods." It explains how a Montana judge is slashing the juvenile crime rate by meting out large doses of "punishment and publicity." A survey of court records in his district (population — 31,000) for an 18-month period, shows that felony cases have dropped 49% and traffic cases 75%. Judge Lobel states — "Those who condemn my methods are long on criticism, but short on producing evidence that their own theories have resulted in the slightest reduction in youth crime.

"Our crime problem is critical because our court systems have become infiltrated by dreamers. They hold that juvenile offenders are sick, have no free will, are made worse by punishment, are gravely damaged by publicity, and can't choose between right and wrong unless a psychiatrist guides them.

"They believe every young punk who robs a gas station, or snatches an old woman's purse or assaults an innocent girl is a mental case who can only be reclaimed through 'treatment.' They want to tear down our prisons and build hospitals, our reformatories, and construct 'playgrounds.' In my opinion, these 'progressive' notions push crime rates higher," Judge Lobel said.

Although it is not easy to confess — perhaps the trouble is not the teenager — but US. We cannot afford to tolerate or excuse one infraction of the law as *insignificant*. Our courts cannot encourage delinquency by "kid glove" treatment on the basis that they are not in sympathy with the law that is violated — or that *enforcement action* may make someone angry or lose a few votes.

We cannot glamorize the young punks' unlawful actions by leniency or by granting special impunity. We must get away from this "easy kid stuff" and start treating the youthful criminals with something besides "Cuticura soft soap" and "closed door psychology."

As Mr. Hoover said, "No doubt, society has failed our youth, but not in the way many seem to think. Rather, the dereliction has been in the failure to teach them the meaning of discipline, restraint, self-respect and respect for law and order and the rights of others."

Time is at hand to take stern action — to dignify in the mind of these "pampered pilferers," and these "undisciplined degenerates" the *position or office* of every policeman, prosecuting attorney, city judge, magistrate, probation officer, conservation agent, highway patrolman, circuit judge, and school administrator. And endeavor to teach this unrestrained segment of our younger generation respect for the laws of the land, and the property of private citizens.

I would like to emphasize again that this juvenile delinquency *problem* is not ours alone — not the school administrators, the church, or the law enforcement officials. It is everybody's problem — and to reach any satisfactory solution, we all — private citizens and enforce-

ment officers alike — must work and act together. We must accept our responsibility as parents and know where our kids *are* and *with whom*, and *what they are doing*. We cannot afford to ignore much longer this threat to our right of peaceful enjoyment of our property and pursuit of happiness. We must insist on enactment of more stringent laws and stricter enforcement. We must cast aside our dangerous, indulgent attitude towards crime, filth, and corruption.

No one can deny that motion pictures are defiantly pursuing a bold courtship with obscenity. No one can deny that television is bringing lurid portrayals of violence and sadism into our family rooms. We must admit, also, our tolerance of the sensual trash that is racked on the shelves of our newsstands, book stores, and libraries — and which are available to fill the minds of our children. Billy Graham said, "We must watch what we put in our minds as carefully as what we put in our stomachs. You are what you eat. You become what you read."

In Timothy II, in the New Testament, in the third Chapter, the Apostle Paul predicted our present "*perilous times*," when he said — "For people shall be lovers of their own selves — *disobedient of parents — unthankful — unholy — without natural affection — fierce — and despisers of those that are good — lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.*"

In closing, our youth needs *strength — not weakness*. They need *discipline — not indulgence*. They need guidance from law-respecting parents and the environment of a decent home, untolerant of misbehavior.

If we will recognize our civic obligations to uphold the rightful actions of *all* law enforcement officers, and abolish our *attitudes* of apathy and complacency towards our responsibilities of good citizenship and our duties as parents — as educators — as officers. If we try hard enough and cooperate with one another — we may not "cure" the "under privileged" — the "ultra sensitive" — the "misunderstood" — but we may "re-rail" some of the better kids who have an occasional tendency to "jump the track."

It has been nice talking to you. You have been a most attentive audience. I apologize for taking so much of your time.

SUPERVISION OF A GAME WARDEN TRAINEE

By H. H. PITTMAN, JR.

Virginia Game Warden

Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries

First, I would like to make a few remarks about Virginia's system of selecting a game warden trainee. This system was developed after a careful study of North Carolina's fine recruitment program, as well as those of the Virginia State Police and other Virginia agencies.

An ad is placed in newspapers with statewide coverage — "Game Wardens, age 21-34, height 5' 8" to 6' 4", high school graduates. For other information, contact your nearest Virginia Employment Service." When an interview was granted, they were required to bring to the Virginia Employment Service their birth certificate, verification of being a high school graduate or equivalent, criminal history report, medical history report, the written examination they had taken to cover ability, aptitude, wildlife background knowledge and personal adjustment. Persons passing the above test and qualifications were invited to appear before an oral examining board and also required to complete a strength and agility test. During our last recruitment, out of about 500 applicants to apply for game wardens, approximately 100 were asked to appear before the Board.

The Board consisted of three employees of the Law Enforcement Division, one from the State Merit System and one from the Wildlife Section of one of the State universities.

A background investigation was run on all the men who were