

INTRODUCTION OF SENATOR JOHN SHERMAN COOPER

Mr. President, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen :

Our speaker this evening—by his very presence here—reflects the value, nationwide, of this convention. To take time out from the great problems of national defense, nuclear weapons, integration, the United Nations, Quemoy, Matsu and taxes in order to participate in a program devoted entirely to the management of game and fish surely indicates a keen and sincere insight into the importance of the proper utilization and management of our natural resources, particularly wildlife.

We all feel honored that he is here to bring to us the views of a non-professional in this field; yet fresh views and invaluable opinions from one in a high level of government and administration—one who seeks to understand our problems and programs and who helps to formulate the broad policies and legislation which are so vital to our way of life in general and to the careers and future of most of the delegates here assembled in particular.

Mr. Cooper has dedicated many years of his life to service to his community, State and country—not to mention his contributions to other nations of the world.

A native of Pulaski County, Kentucky, he first served as county judge. And to him goes the credit for promoting the first rural county agent program for the State started by his father. He has been a circuit court judge, an office to which he was elected while he was in military service.

He has been a delegate to the United Nations and was named Ambassador to India. And he is now serving in the United States Senate for the third time.

It is a real privilege to present to you the Honorable John Sherman Cooper, U. S. Senator from Kentucky. Mr. Cooper.

ADDRESS

By SENATOR JOHN SHERMAN COOPER
Kentucky

Southeastern Conference of Fish and Game Commissioners:

I want to thank you for inviting me to address the Southeastern Conference of Fish and Game Commissioners.

It is a pleasure for me to speak to this group, representing 12 States—men and women interested in and charged with the responsibility in your states of wildlife conservation—for yours is a vital part of the total conservation movement. Recently, I have had the pleasure of speaking to other conservation organizations—our State convention of Soil Conservation Districts, to groups interested in the Conservation Reserve of the Soil Bank, Small Watershed development, and better forest management. And of course, in Kentucky there is a constantly increasing interest in the development of water resources through the Corps of Engineers. And so, I welcome the opportunity of meeting with officials and leaders in wildlife conservation work.

1958 is the 59th anniversary of the first Governors' Conference on Conservation, which met at the White House in May, 1908. It was a conference called by Theodore Roosevelt, which Gifford Pinchot called "the first of its kind—not only in America, but in the world." Forty years later, Pinchot said of this first conference, "It may well be regarded as a turning point in human history, because it introduced to mankind the newly formulated policy of the conservation of natural resources. It spread far and wide the proposition that the purpose of conservation is the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time."

In his second Annual Message to the Congress, Theodore Roosevelt said: "Legislation should be provided for the protection of the game and wild creatures generally, on the forest reserves. The senseless slaughter of game, which can by judicious protection be permanently preserved on our national reserves for the people as a whole, should be stopped at once."

In 1903, the first Federal Wildlife refuge was created. And in 1905 the Congress gave the President general authority to establish areas for the protection of game mammals and birds on national game refuges.

In the transition from Teddy Roosevelt's time to today, there are other foundation stones on which your organization was built. You know them, but it is good to recall them for the record. One is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which vests the authority for the protection of migratory birds in the Federal Government. Another is the Duck Stamp Act of 1934, whose purpose was to secure revenues to acquire and develop a system of National Wildlife refuges.

The relationship of the Federal and State Governments in wildlife conservation was defined in the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937. It recognized the paramount interests of the State governments in fish and resident game by authorizing a program of Federal aid to the States in wildlife restoration. And, the Coordination Act of 1946 was enacted to give fish and wildlife conservation a place in the water resources development program of the Nation.

Another Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, while he could not be as active physically as Theodore Roosevelt, was animated by the same love of outdoor life. And in his administration, the legislation I have just mentioned to strengthen the wildlife resources was enacted.

It is against this summary background that I want to discuss with you conservation legislation enacted by the 85th Congress.

I am sure that you will agree with me that the new Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Public Law 85-624, which replaced the old Coordination Act of 1946, is the most important legislation in the interest of conservation of wildlife and fish enacted by the Congress in many years.

Mr. James T. McBroom, of the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior, said recently, "Our new Act can be one of the most valuable conservation laws to be put on the books during our lifetime." He went on to say that, ". . . the success or failure of operation under the new Act may pretty well determine whether we shall continue to have fish and wildlife resources in this Nation."

I think it is worthwhile at this point to examine his statement—and to point out facts which you know so well, which conservationists everywhere know—but which may get only passing notice from members of our population who think our natural resources are inexhaustible.

The population clock in the Department of Commerce lobby passed 175 million last week, up 25 million in 8½ years. It is estimated that population will reach 200 M in 1963, and 228 M in 1975.

Over 34 M hunting and fishing licenses were sold in the United States in 1957. The first National Survey of Fishing and Hunting showed that in 1956, 21 M fishermen and 12 M hunters travelled millions of miles and spent three billions of dollars in their favorite recreation.

We can well ask—how many fishermen and hunters will there be 8 years from now, when our population has reached 200 M, or in 1975, when it will be 228 M? And we can ask the sequel to the first question—will we have fish and wildlife resources adequate to meet the need?

For competitive demands to serve its expanding economy and population—demands hardly dreamed of fifty years ago—even five years ago—are being placed upon the lands and waters of the nation.

Since 1950, water demands for human use, for industry, have increased 40%—three times the increase in population.

And while land has been reclaimed—and cleared—the total acreage of farm land has not increased.

Highways, industrial developments, the expansion or explosion growth of the cities—are causing the wide open spaces to disappear.

Even with our present farm acreage, only 2.2 acres will be available in 1975 to provide food and clothing for each person, compared to 3.1 acres today. As cities invade the countryside, and industry develops, the demand for lands and waters will skyrocket.

If these needs are to be met, it is clear that our soil and water resources must be conserved; we must go further—they must be developed to the fullest extent.

Even so, if fish and wildlife resources are not included in the program of conservation and development, their living space will be destroyed.

The importance of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, passed in the last Congress, is that its purpose is to assure that fish and wildlife will be protected—will be developed as soil and water development goes forward.

The Act declares in its first section that wildlife conservation shall receive *equal*—and I stress the word “equal”—consideration, and be coordinated with the other features of water-resource development.

You may ask—how can wildlife conservation be given equal consideration with other conservation features? I will give some examples.

First—I will speak of projects planned by the Corps of Engineers, or any public or private agency, dealing with the impoundment of water by reservoirs, or any type of stream improvement, even dredging—which was not included in the old Act.

The new act provides that when plans are being drawn for such projects, the Corps of Engineers, or any public or private agency undertaking the work, must notify the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State conservation agencies.

The Secretary of the Interior and the appropriate State agencies are then empowered to make a report of their estimates of damages to fish and wildlife that will be caused by the project—and their recommendations for the acquisition of lands, and other features to be included in the project—to conserve and increase fish and game. The reports of the Secretary of the Interior and the States must be considered by the Corps of Engineers, other public or private agencies, and the Congress—in the same way as flood protection, navigation, and power are now considered as damages or benefits to the total project.

If the recommendations are found to be justified, the Corps of Engineers, or public or private agency, is authorized to acquire lands, to add to the engineering structures, such as dams and reservoirs—not merely to protect fish and game—but to enhance its development. And the cost of these improvements will be included in the total considered as damages or benefits to the total cost of the project.

This is a golden opportunity for fish and wildlife interests.

The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to set aside public lands for public fishing and shooting purposes (the old Act dealt only with public hunting) and requires that easements and roads be made available to reach these public “happy hunting and fishing grounds.” The Secretary is also authorized to accept gifts of land and money for the same purposes.

You may want to know if these new fish and wildlife conservation measures connected with river basin development include projects that have already been authorized by the Congress or the Government—and projects upon which construction is under way.

The law definitely embraces 650 authorized river development projects—on which construction has not been started. Also, it includes projects upon which construction has been started provided (1) the conservation measures are compatible with the purpose of the project and (2) where construction has not exceeded 60% of the total cost of the project. When one considers that authorized work—under construction and for the future—involves over a thousand projects throughout the United States, the scope and opportunity for fish and wildlife protection are apparent.

A second important feature of the Coordination Act of 1958 is its application to the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954. As you will remember, this program is within the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture. But planning of local watersheds is initiated locally, with the help of the Soil Conservation Districts of the States, and with technical assistance given by the State agencies and the Federal Soil Conservation Service. These watersheds must be approved first by the States, and the costs are jointly borne

by farmers, and local interests in the watersheds, and by the State and Federal Governments.

My State, Kentucky, and your States, have taken the national lead in this work. In the States represented here, applications are the highest—372. One hundred and nineteen projects have been approved—covering 7,000,000 acres and 43 are under construction.

I have just been informed today, that the Department of Agriculture will announce in a few days that it will bear 50% of the cost of approved fish and game conservation measures in these watersheds.

But approval must be given by the local bodies initiating the watershed development, by the States, and by the Committees on Agriculture of the Congress.

I could detail many more opportunities that are available for fish and game conservationists, but time does not permit. I will note conservation cost sharing practices under the ACP program, for such wildlife development measures as stocking of fish ponds, planting of cover crops, and trees, and breeding pits and marshes.

I must mention tree planting under the forestry and ACP cost sharing programs. Two hundred and seventy-five thousand acres of trees have been planted in the Nation, and 82% of the planting has been done in the States represented here this evening.

Before closing, I would like to say that the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1958 is your Act. It falls in line with the President's recommendations. But its actual text is the result of your consultations and recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior. And the Act itself was approved, prior to its submission to the Congress, by every State Fish and Wildlife agency, by every Governor, and by the Izaak Walton League, the Wildlife Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sport Fishing Institute, the Wildlife Management Society, and many other private bodies.

And I do want to pay special tribute to the Secretary of the Interior, Fred Seaton, for his leadership and never-failing interest in this Act, and in the field of conservation. Needless to say, with all this support, the bill passed the Congress unanimously, and was signed by the President.

Altogether, the 85th Congress has been called a "do-a-lot" Congress by conservationists—one noteworthy for having enacted more important conservation legislation than any other in recent history. The Isaac Walton League has said it made an outstanding record. I hope you agree.

But, the challenge remaining before us is immense. I believe these new laws will provide the basic framework needed, and with your help, with the work carried on by each State Conservation Department, the challenge can be met.

The South and Southeast particularly have unique opportunities. Nearly 10 M acres of the national forests are in the Southeast, as are 7,355 miles of stream and 65,000 acres of lakes. Last year, sportsmen made over 2 million visits to the Southeast alone—eight times the number of only ten years ago.

I must pay a tribute to my own State, Kentucky, for its fine program. The State game departments and the Forest Service have worked together in developing a fine cooperative wildlife program. This has been accomplished by cooperative game stocking, increased law enforcement, and habitat management.

There are other deep values inherent in the conservation of fish and wildlife resources which you understand. They are the values of the healthy body, character and spirit.

Theodore Roosevelt gloried in the tonic to body and spirit which outdoor life provides. In 1900, he said to the New York Legislature:

"Hardy outdoor sports, like hunting, are of value to the national character, and should be encouraged in every way. Men who go into the wilderness, indeed men who take part in any field of sports, with horse or rifle, receive a benefit which can hardly be given by even the most vigorous athletic games."

In his Second Annual Message to the Congress, Theodore Roosevelt said:

"It is my hope and belief that, in the years to come, we may yet achieve the conservation goal, which has been defined as ' . . . a state of harmony between man and nature.'"