

man who sweats out a "blue bird" day will bang away at high flying birds, wounding many more than he kills, or hook up his motor and run back and forth to trample the rafts of resting and feeding birds, which is a detestable thing to do. Also noon closing would eliminate the all too common practice of getting the bag limit in the morning and returning in the afternoon for another limit. One objection to the plan is that afternoon shooting is the best. It certainly is, if one disregards the closing hour and shoots until he can no longer see. All birds now carry watches! Regardless of the closing hour, a minute or so afterward ducks will fill the sky! Therefore, it is submitted that a noon closing hour would be fair to all concerned.

Now a word about the people who enforce the game and fish laws, in our society there is not a more dedicated group of people. They know no hours—only the job that must be done. It makes no difference if it is day or night, good weather or bad, or toil and privation, the work goes on. Even if all who fish would obey the laws, there would still be a big job for conservation agents in game and fish censuses, propagation and stocking, and improvement of habitat of facilities for the enjoyment of generations yet unborn. I am sure that I am speaking for countless thousands of sportsmen when I say that my hat is off to those who strive so earnestly and effectively in the preservation of something which gives so much pleasure to so many.

A STATE OFFICER'S VIEWS OF THE GAME AND FISH LAWS

By AUBREY FOWLER

Chief Enforcement Officer, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

The only reason I can see for the existence of game and fish laws is to insure that there will be continued abundant wildlife available to the license holder. This is brought about by formulating and applying the laws toward management and conservation of wildlife resources rather than as restrictions on, or privileges granted to the sportsman. Departments should be operated so that any justified increase or decrease in the season lengths or bag limits would be discerned first by department personnel and not by the sportsman. The Commission, or law-making body, would not then be subjected to pressure groups demanding changes in the laws to meet changing field conditions, and to changes department personnel feel are inefficient. A very active and convincing information service must be maintained to prepare the sportsmen for any changes and to keep them aware of conditions which might necessitate future changes. If the Department, through the Information and Education services, can obtain and retain the confidence of the sportsmen, these changes in laws will be agreeably accepted as necessary to continued good hunting and fishing.

I feel that the season, bag limits and hunting methods permitted should be as liberal as possible, without endangering the future supply. We sometimes have to aim the law concerning one specie at protection of another specie. We had to prohibit rabbit hunting at night to make the deer law enforceable in our state.

We have heard some wildlife management personnel advance their convictions that some species of wildlife need no protection of any sort through seasons or bag limits, to maintain a continuous supply. If this is true, and restrictions by law are to be removed, the sportsmen should first be convinced of this by education and information methods.

We in our state take the view that all laws are to be enforced rigidly and that there is no degree of guilt in violating these laws. Neither do we have any degree of prosecution effort, only vigorous in all cases. We do recognize intent, and sometimes make recommendations to the courts as to the severity, or lightness, of the penalty to be inflicted. If a conviction does not promote respect for the law, or does not tend to prevent violations, it probably would be better never to institute proceedings.

We are very fortunate in Arkansas in that only our Commission is empowered to make game and fish regulations. The Commission meets each month and can make any necessary changes, immediately. We have a policy whereby any proposed change, not of an emergency nature, is referred to a Regulations Committee for a months study before action by the Commission. This Committee consists of the Director, Chief Biologist, Chief of Enforcement, Commission Attorney and Education and Information Chief. After thorough discussion, the Committee will make recommendations to the Commission.

We also take up these proposed changes with our Enforcement personnel out in the state, as they know the existing field conditions better than anyone, and also know best whether a law will be workable or enforceable. We have around a thousand years of enforcement experience accumulated among these men and we would be foolish not to utilize this experience.

Because of public sentiment, we are unable to enact some regulations which would be most advantageous to the sportsman. However, we are making headway on these problems through our Education department's efforts, and through attendance at sportsmen's meetings and explaining the advantages to be gained. If a Conservation Department could have a complete new start, I believe that the best course to follow in setting up all regulations and laws governing wildlife would be to first obtain the best qualified foresters and game and fish biologists available. Have these men, along with the enforcement personnel of each locality, make a survey of existing field conditions concerning wildlife supply, at present, carrying capacity of the habitat, and improvements that can be feasibly made to increase the food and cover and carrying capacity for the most desirable species of wildlife. After this has been done, recommendations could be made to the law-making body, which ideally would be an independent Commission. The Education and Information division would disseminate the facts to all field personnel and to the public, explaining the conditions and goals. I firmly believe that *all* affected divisions of a department should be consulted on regulations, and most of all, the enforcement officer, who is the departments contact with the sportsman, should be convinced by the biologists that proposed regulations are based on accumulated facts, and not on suppositions or theories. Too often, no attempt is made to do this, resulting in a lack of cooperation between these two most important divisions.

I believe that if this course is pursued, the department will find that its laws and policies will be accepted by the sportsmen as sound and necessary to good hunting and fishing.

FEDERAL OFFICERS' VIEWS ON GAME AND FISH LAWS

By PAT W. CLOSE
U. S. Game Management Agent

Mr. Chairman, members of the Southeastern Game and Fish Commissioners and fellow sportsmen:

I am more than pleased to have been given the opportunity to discuss this subject in general, as viewed by a Federal Game Agent.

In addressing you today, I do so as a member of a profession I am happy to have been affiliated with for 21 years. Like others in conservation law enforcement, I am proud to identify myself as a law enforcement officer in the field of conservation, which I believe to be equal of other law enforcement agencies in importance of our man made laws. State game and fish laws and conservation problems are very important and near and dear to the hearts of all Federal Game Agents, for reason that we were all at one time State Game Wardens. To qualify for a position in our organization as game agents, we are required to have had at least four years general and specialized experience in conservation law enforcement. In jocular terms, we are often referred to as "Retired Game Wardens."

We are presently faced with a wave of lawlessness that has no precedent. It is not confined to any state, nor is its focal point in any particular group or