

attached to the Omnibus bill as a rider. The Kerr-Sikes proposal would make fish and wildlife and recreational values an integral part of the planning of federal reservoir projects. It could solve the problem of getting adequate appropriations for the needed wildlife and recreational improvements and modifications at such projects.

There will, of course, be some brand new bills of interest in the next session. Watch for introductions aimed at control of pesticide programs carried out by federal agencies or financed by federal funds, and new bills designed to improve the management of public lands in the west.

OUR WATERFOWL RESPONSIBILITIES

By ROSS LEFFLER

Assistant Secretary of the Interior

This is the second time I have had the privilege of addressing the annual conference of your Association. Two years ago, I took advantage of the opportunity of a similar meeting to lay down the basic principles of a philosophy which I deem is vital to the successful discharge of the fish and wildlife duties of the States and the Federal Government—the partnership approach.

What I had to say two years ago related generally to the research and management activities of our Government agencies in the fish and wildlife field.

Today, I want to get down to a specific—our waterfowl responsibilities—with particular attention to the waterfowl harvest. In this discussion, I want to deal not only with the responsibilities of our various professional conservation agencies, but also with the obligations which must be borne by the public if we are to have good husbandry for the resource upon which such an important recreational activity depends. By the public, I mean all people interested in wildlife resources in one way or another.

This is a timely subject. We're now in the annual period for gripes about the restrictions in the waterfowl hunting regulations. This occurs both in the lean and the fat years. No matter how much you liberalize, there are some who still complain each year.

For this complaining citizen there are just two courses of action. Either acquaint him with the plain facts of life about waterfowl conservation so that he will see how much disservice he is doing the cause of hunters generally, or just forget about him and keep conscientiously on your sound management course. I prefer the former because we need every ally we can get in our business; and a reformed character, you know, is always a real evangelist. Besides, we have a basic obligation in Government to provide people with a clear understanding of our conservation program.

Let's take a look at the current situation. We're now dealing with a declining waterfowl population. Drought conditions in the main "duck factory" in the prairies expanded drastically this year. Many birds were forced out of their regular nesting territory and moved northward into lower quality range where they would be expected to produce fewer young under the best conditions. But, this year they encountered unfavorable weather in the north and even fewer young could be produced.

The Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife conducted its usual comprehensive nesting ground surveys—inventories of production demonstrated statistically adequate to indicate correctly the kind of a crop to be expected for the hunting harvest.

Calling a spade a spade, the Service then forecast a serious decline in the supply of birds from the high of several years ago and recommended conservative seasons in order to return an adequate supply of nesters to the breeding grounds to implement the waterfowl recovery when conditions once again become favorable. There was consultation with Flyway Councils and with other advisers, and discussions with Canadian officials. Finally, the regulations were

adopted. In addition to shortened seasons, increased restriction was placed on the take of canvasbacks, redheads, and ruddy ducks which are especially seriously hit.

As expected—because it always has happened—there were some complaints. Numerically, the complainers were not many; but they were vociferous and sometimes vitriolic. Obviously, the critics did not have the true picture of the situation and apparently some of them did not want it. I might inject here that all information we have received to date about the fall flight has confirmed our original forecast.

The worst part of all this is that some good sportsmen also get confused by the cross-fire set off by these complaints and lose their enthusiasm about seeing to it that people generally obey the rules of harvest. Of course, that suits the "game hogs" fine. Their strategy of divide and conquer is then succeeding.

It is the legal responsibility of the Fish and Wildlife Service to guarantee the preservation of the resource; it also conscientiously seeks to provide maximum opportunity to hunt and otherwise enjoy migratory birds within the limits offered by that basic premise. It is also my conviction that—professionally—State and Federal attitudes about this cannot be anything but alike. Providing maximum enjoyment from greatest possible abundance of a renewable resource is the principal objective we all have.

The Service also has the responsibility to conduct and coordinate the waterfowl surveys which are necessary to guide the development of management regulations. As in many other areas, we share the task with other Government and private agencies. We have made and we will continue to make every effort to improve the machinery we use for this process. However, I do not need to tell you that it is the best system physically possible at this time; and it adequately forecasts all significant general changes in population, which is what we need when restrictions or liberalizations are called for in periods of shortages or abundance.

The Service also has a duty to provide better public understanding of current waterfowl situations and the system used to reveal them so there can be general support for the good management called for. Despite the increased and very successful efforts we are making in this direction through conservation education, this is too big a job for the Service by itself.

State Fish and Game Departments and private waterfowl organizations must make it their responsibility to conduct similar educational efforts so that citizens who are interested in the resource will recognize that we're all playing on the same team, and that we all have the same objectives for waterfowl management. Together, by telling enough people the story, we'll finally be able to get the public to realize that we are dealing with fish and wildlife facts and not propaganda and pressures. Then we will achieve public understanding of the role of the Service and the States in waterfowl management activity, and selfish critics will find it impossible to get audiences for their harangues.

There's more to this problem of meeting our waterfowl responsibilities than just achieving general understanding and support for our systems of evaluating annual production and converting it into framework of hunting seasons and daily bag limits. There is also a problem of getting complete enforcement and observance of the basic rules of hunting which are involved, rules which have been established on the basis of past experience to avoid excessive harvest of local populations and also to prevent the taking of an unfair share of the harvest by a selfish few.

Perhaps the most serious breaking of these rules of the game is baiting. Although they view with horror the idea of jacking deer, using salt licks and other illicit practices for taking resident game, some people feel waterfowl are their special property and they constantly press for and frequently practice baiting. Why? The simple reason is so they can get more than what would be their fair and normal share. You can be mighty sure that, having broken one law by baiting, these people are not going to worry much about breaking another by exceeding the limit. All this sets up a favorable climate for game pirates to sell their services for illicit practices and lends them encouragement

in attempts at market gunning. The duck hunter who baits under such circumstances really deserves no consideration. Let's not give him any.

I sometimes wonder, as we note more and more evidence of excessive gun pressure in this Flyway with its great urban centers, if the baiters are not just tipping the scales against us in our annual effort to return an adequate population to the nesting grounds and thus change the unfavorable trend in waterfowl which we have noted here for several years. We must awaken people to this threat and get public help in bringing to time the selfish group which is plundering the waterfowl resource.

The Service is most grateful for the assistance it is receiving from State conservation departments in carrying on the battle against the baiters. Here again, the big job is education. I'm confident that once our people understand what baiting is actually doing to this wildlife resource, there will be no sympathy for anyone who continues to practice it.

Yes. All of us do have responsibilities to be met if we are to continue to enjoy waterfowl hunting—a sport not just for kings but for all people in America. Let's take a close look at these responsibilities. They exist for our Fish and Wildlife Service, for the 50 States, and most of all for people generally.

In the final analysis, public responsibility, unquestionably, is the most important of all for upon it depends whether or not we can implement the waterfowl program. Only with public help is successful waterfowl management possible. But, I believe we can secure that public support if you and I, the States, the private conservation agencies, and the Federal Government work effectively together as a team to meet our waterfowl responsibilities. Let's each one of us make sure we do just that.

THE UNCONTROLLED USE OF PESTICIDES IN THE SOUTHEAST

By CLARENCE COTTAM
*Director, Welder Wildlife Foundation*¹
Sinton, Texas

INTRODUCTION

It is an honor and a genuine pleasure again to be privileged to meet with my friends of the Southeastern Association of Fish, Game and Conservation Commissioners. To meet and participate again with you and your technicians and research workers brings back many pleasant memories. Through your untiring efforts and united approach great progress has been made. Still, we have difficult and perplexing problems currently confronting conservation workers and administrators but, through a united approach, these problems are perplexities will be appropriately resolved.

While it would be much more satisfying and perhaps more conducive to good friendship if we could dwell on progress made. I believe we will contribute more to progress if we review annoying and difficult problems confronting us and attempt to find solutions that are in the broadest and most enduring public interest. Some of us seem to gravitate to some of these problems and controversies.

THE PESTICIDE ISSUE

The pesticide and specifically the fire ant control program in the Southeast is currently a major issue that needs clear thinking and united action of all conservationists. While the fire ant is currently found in but nine of our southern states, the problems and philosophies associated with control are of national and international concern and affect all of us. In fact, I am convinced some of

¹ Contribution No. 43, Welder Wildlife Foundation.