

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

(TEXT OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY GOVERNOR LESTER MADDOX TO THE SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF STATE GAME AND FISH COMMISSIONERS, SHERATON BILTMORE HOTEL, ATLANTA, GEORGIA, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1970, at 11:00 A.M.)

It is a pleasure to welcome all the members of the Southeastern Association of State Game and Fish Commissioners and all of you who are here because of your interest in the conservation of our wildlife and other natural resources.

I have no doubt that you will have a productive and enjoyable conference in Georgia, and I look forward to the benefits which Georgia will derive from your pooled knowledge and skills.

It wasn't too long ago that the game warden in our state, and probably in yours, too, wasn't too popular. He was looked upon as a "lawman" who just wanted to "spoil everybody's fun."

A couple of decades ago, it was pretty common practice for a bunch of men to get together and go seining in a local river, taking game fish and rough fish alike, both large and small.

These same men might enjoy a winter "sport" of night-hunting for deer, rabbits and other game, using car lights to blind their victims.

Some people have even used dynamite, old crank telephones, illegal traps and other inhumane methods to take more than their share of our game and fish. In fact, such practices have still not been completely eliminated, but much progress has been made.

I heard a story about a fellow a few years ago who met the local game warden out on the streets, and with a big smile, he said, "Warden, I been meaning to come by to see you. You know, we got so much wild game now, they're just about taking over the farmland, so I thought you might be willing to give us an extra month to hunt in."

"Well, Jake," the warden replied, "I sure would be glad to do that if I could, but some folks might object if we added another month onto the calendar. So I guess you'll have to be satisfied with just hunting 12 months a year like you've been doing."

With fair enforcement of game and fish laws, along with scientific management and propagation our hunters and fishermen have a greater abundance of wildlife than ever before to challenge their sporting skills.

Almost every season, we are able to open up a new area to deer hunters, and even the amateur angler can usually put enough fish in his creel to make the frying pan stink.

Intelligent sportsmen have been able to put two and two together and figure out that the work of our nation's game and fish organizations, along with the efforts of other conservation groups, are producing more game and fish, and the great majority of hunters and fishermen are cooperating with these efforts.

Your success, along with the recently accelerated public interest in conservation in general, has changed the game warden's image from one of a "bad guy" to one of a "hero."

But, as the problem of poaching has been reduced, another threat to our wildlife has increased. That threat is pollution.

In Georgia, we have found, for example, that some of the fish in our coastal rivers have potentially dangerous amounts of mercury in them, making them unfit for consumption. But, we have begun an emergency study of this problem and hope to come up with some workable solutions within the very near future.

This particular incident of pollution was widely publicized, because of its

potential threat to human life, but there are other cases of pollution just as serious, however less dramatic, in my state and yours.

In an industrial society such as ours, with a level of affluence which allows us to throw away tons of materials every day, we are bound to have disposal problems. And as our population density increases, these problems are multiplied manifold.

When the automobile was still a curiosity to most people back in the early part of this century, the air pollution they caused didn't make much difference, but the more than 100 million cars, trucks and buses on our highways today do make a difference.

Back when most of our states had economies based on agriculture, a factory pumping a little pollution into a stream didn't cause too much concern. We had plenty of freshwater streams and very few factories.

But, things have changed. Nineteenth Century attitudes toward our environment during this Twentieth Century, if not changed, will assure us of a barren earth by the Twenty-first Century.

We can no longer think of the earth and her natural resources as being limitless. The general public must come to realize that the earth is a planet — a very small planet. The amounts of soil, water and air which we have are finite.

A lot of people have been critical of our space programs, saying that the flights to outer space are a waste of money when we have so many problems here on earth that need solving. I don't agree with these critics, and I think that one valuable lesson that has come from manned space flights is the need for environmental control.

On a space capsule, there are no rivers to bear the human wastes; there is no abundance of pure, drinkable water; the oxygen supply is severely limited; and there is nowhere else to go to get any of these essentials of life.

The planet Earth should be thought of as just a huge space ship with an ever-increasing number of passengers. And no matter how many passengers we add, the number of "supplies" we have on board will always remain the same, although perhaps not always in the same form.

We can convert one chemical compound to another, but we can't "create" one molecule of water, air or soil without using materials already existing on earth.

So, when all of these "new passengers" come aboard, we have two choices. We can either cut down on everybody's rations, or else find ways to use the supplies we have *without using them up*.

We should be able to take the gasses from the smokestacks of any factory and convert them into breathable air. The waste waters from cities and industrial centers could be purified and reused, again and again. Old bottles and paper, as well as other materials, can be reprocessed and used in new products. It is technologically feasible, even if not practical at this time, to control agricultural posts without polluting the soil, air and water.

I said we have two choices. Actually we have three. We could just get rid of some of our space ship passengers and keep all the available supplies for the survivors. Unless some humane means of population control are put into effect, along with sound resource conservation, some of the world's people will choose this third alternative.

It is already being predicted by knowledgeable men that the over-populated countries of Asia will be waging "food wars" by 1980, risking all to gain enough food from other countries to sustain their people.

But, personally, I am more concerned at the moment about those people within our own country who, rather than stealing food, are stealing the freedoms and liberty of all Americans and are polluting the great heritage which has been bought and paid for with generations of sacrifices by patriotic Americans.

Just as the poachers who use illegal methods to take more than their share

of game and fish are a threat to our wildlife, those poachers who use illegal methods to take more than their share of freedom and liberty are a threat to our free society.

In many countries, hunting wild game is a sport reserved for the privileged few. The same is true of voting and participating in government. But, in America, any citizen who wants to can hunt prized game and can influence the policies of his government at the polls and through peaceful protest.

But, just as some are not willing to follow the rules in hunting and fishing, which are designed to protect the privilege for all, some are also not satisfied with following the rules in shaping government policy, and so they resort to rioting, bombing, shooting, burning and other unlawful methods.

When you catch a man telephoning for fish, you lock him up; but, many who are caught rioting, burning and looting are allowed to go free to riot, burn and loot another day. Some public officials even praise these freedom poachers and compare them to great leaders of our history such as Patrick Henry and Nathan Hale.

As a result, more people are encouraged to go outside the law to "get their share of freedom."

I think game poachers and freedom poachers alike should be punished — fairly, but firmly.

And I would like to see Americans become just as concerned about the preservation of their rights as they are about the preservation of their rabbits.

I think it's great that law-abiding citizens get angry when they see so-called "sportsmen" violating the law — so angry that they are willing to get involved and report the violators to the proper officials and demand prosecution. But, I would like to see a lot more Americans get upset, too, when they see so-called "demonstrators" ripping cities apart, shooting down policemen, defiling our flag and violating one criminal law after another.

Every person who loves our wildlife should stand up for its protection and stand against those poachers who would destroy it. And every American who loves his liberty should stand up for it and stand against those poachers who would destroy it.

There is no natural resource in America more valuable than freedom.

I am confident that, just as you and other concerned Americans have prevented all of our wildlife from going the way of the passenger pigeon, you can also succeed in preserving the beauty of freedom for the generations of Americans yet to come.

I have seen what progress can be made when people get involved and work together.

When we of the Maddox Administration took office, we found a lot of poachers in state government. And just as you game wardens are not too popular with nighttime deer hunters and telephone fishermen, those who were illegally or unethically dipping into our State Treasury didn't like Lester Maddox too much either.

But, just as you now have the backing of the majority of the people in your efforts to conserve our wildlife, the Maddox Administration has the backing of the majority of the people in its efforts to conserve good government which serves all of the people equally, and doesn't favor a special few.

With a direct line of communication with the man on the street, I didn't have to conduct a lot of long, expensive investigations to find out where the poachers were and how they were operating. The people, themselves, came and told me, or they wrote and called to give me the facts.

With the help and cooperation of Georgia's rank and file citizens, we have been able to locate and destroy most of the illegal nets which were being used to trap tax dollars intended for the benefit of all.

The only nets we have left out are those which we used to trap visitors to our

state, and they're legal. They're baited with a mixture of natural beauty, Southern hospitality, a wonderful climate and lots of fun things to do.

If you find yourselves caught in one of these nets, don't fight it. Just enjoy it to the fullest for as long as you can. When you've stayed as long as your time will allow, you will be released unharmed, and richer for your experience.

Thank you.

“THE GENERATION GAP IN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS — AS SEEN FROM GOVERNMENT”

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I would like to address my comments this afternoon not specifically to any generation gap in conservation education or environmental communication, but rather to what the various resource agencies are doing or are not doing in the area of communicating to young people.

All of you can remember this past spring on April 22, to the Earth Day activities. In the Southeastern Region, our Bureau staff personnel participated in 61 separate programs at universities, high schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools. We contacted more than 21,000 young people, or more properly stated, 21,000 young people contacted us. I know that many of you in this room participated in this well publicized one-day or one-week environmental communications bonanza. Many of us carried the environmental quality message to literally thousands of people at one time.

The mass communications were wide open to any program that the young people in the colleges and universities were doing on Earth Day. Every newspaper, every television station, every radio station carried the message on April 22.

But what happened on April 23? April 24? April 25? or June 22? The problem with resource agencies in such a well developed well publicized program is the inability to follow up. Here we had a vast audience. We had people interested. At the college where I participated in the Earth Day activities, the students spent the whole morning in very useful busy work — cleaning up highways, doing filthy work along the highways and byways around Macon Junior College. In the afternoon they listened patiently to “learned” speakers discuss with them environmental problems. I talking to them about the rare and endangered species program and the need to maintain quality environment for endangered species and other species of wildlife. We talked about wildlife as species indicators to the quality of the environment in which man as well as wildlife must live.

There was virtually no followup. The resource agencies did not have the manpower to keep the momentum going while we had the attention of the young people of virtually the entire United States. I and E technical and administrative people combined cannot personally reach very many people because of our limited number and limited funds. To overcome this we must multiply our efforts through training personnel who can carry the message to young people — the personnel who contact them daily. This is the teacher in the elementary and secondary school. Here in Georgia, two conservation education workshops were developed about four years ago. Virtually every State in the southeastern United States has some type of conservation education workshop for teachers, either in their university or in summer camp sponsored by resource agencies.