

IMPORTANCE OF FCCA ORGANIZATION ON GAME AND FISH

By RHETT McMILLAN
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The startling fact about the art of communications is that we employ it every day without conscious realization of its usage; a thing so common as to be apparently absent because of its universal presence.

And so, when communications become truly absent, then do we fully appreciate the true meaning of its vital role. Radio communications in Game and Fish are daily in danger of being absent.

The I and E Divisions of the Game and Fish Agencies have long been the home ground of its communication efforts. Now, however, another facet of communications has appeared on the scene—that of two-way mobile radio systems.

This type of communication is, however, 100% internal, and is geared to the explicit needs of the Agency. Those of us who have it want to depend upon it and those of us who do not have it, want it, period!

Most of us tend to identify two-way communications with other types of the art. This is a mistake of major proportions because two-way communications are a property needing to be owned, trained, and fully understood as an added tool or weapon of the Agency.

This roundabout approach to my subject is done in an effort to draw you into an awareness of two things:

- (1) If your Agency already has a communications system, then you should know there are things going on which can wreck it, or if you are planning a system, you should know these things beforehand.
- (2) There is a National Organization known as the Forestry Conservation Communications Association, which exists solely for the purpose of representing your Agency in communication matters.

The FCCA was originally formed by the National Association of State Foresters to represent the Foresters before the Federal Communications Commission in Washington. This formation was an act of self preservation in the matter of protecting frequencies and showing needs, caused by the rapid development of the art, to the Commission.

The Foresters exhibited great fortitude and understanding in the creation of FCCA because they included a niche for conservation in the structure. But the subsequent swift advent of so many independent Game and Fish Agencies soon overflowed the small allotment for conservation, and soon there was a conflict within the FCCA in the matter of frequencies and representation before the FCC.

These matters came to a head in 1957 and were subsequently solved this past June at Boston when the new constitution of FCCA was ratified and the International Association assumed its rightful responsibilities and representation on an equal basis.

Now the problem becomes one—not of having a National representative communications body—but rather one of not properly using and participating in its functions!

Under the new FCCA constitution, each state will be represented by a State Communications Committee, made up of one representative from the State Forestry Agency and one member from the State Game and Fish Agency. The third member will be elected by the first two members from some third State Conservation Agency.

It is up to the individual State Game and Fish Agency to make certain it has a representative on the State Committee, for these State Committees form the regional committees, which in turn, form the body of the National Association.

It is extremely important that you in the higher levels of Game and Fish administration, allow time to listen to the reports brought back by your State Committee representative. Let him take part in the various hearings before the Federal Communications Commission in Washington and participate in the day-to-day business of the FCCA.

FCCA in its field of communications, is engaged in a desperate and continuing protective and conservation effort of its own—that of guarding the public domain of the frequency spectrum, from the ever encroaching activities of the “wolves” of selfish business interests.

Work for FCCA and it will work for you!
If you don't believe it—TRY IT.
That's all we ask.

WHERE ARE WE GOING WITH WETLANDS AND ESTUARIES?

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Before we know where we are going we must see where we have been. So let's look a few minutes at the road behind us. It is necessary to look just 20 years back, when administration and law enforcement were the primary activities of most of the State Game and Fish Departments. Technical people were absent, or few in numbers. Budgets generally were on a shoestring basis. Wildlife and fishery habitat was more plentiful, and as is typical with our American way of life, the public attitude was casual.

Today things are different. The resources we manage are under pressure of the tremendous competitive demands for water and land use to serve an expanding economy and population. Following our American way of doing things, it will be left up to the public to decide whether the resources can survive.

To date the results from the public's interest look encouraging. In the past few years, we have witnessed an impressive amount of conservation legislation that has been adopted by the Federal and State Governments.

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 is one of these accomplishments. Perhaps the greatest impact of this act in this region has been the increased activity in our estuarine and offshore fisheries by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. In conjunction with most of our estuarine areas are the increasingly important coastal wetlands and marshes. Seventy-two percent of the over nine million coastal fish and saline wetland acres in the United States are located along our southeastern shores. Therefore, the future management and use of this nationally significant commercial and sport fisheries and wildlife area poses a complex problem.

We may be sure that the developers have or will have well-documented surveys of the areas in which they are interested. In June, 1958, for instance, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, one of the speakers pointed out that “hundreds of thousands of acres of reclaimable submerged lands border the United States coastline from New Jersey to Texas” and also reclaimable swamplands in other areas, including fully 159,000 acres of tidal flats and shallows in San Francisco Bay, *now under study!*

In the past, the South Atlantic and Gulf coastal areas have by interstate compacts made headway on multiple State commercial fisheries problems.

The recent establishment of an Estuarine Committee in the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission will no doubt prove to be a forward step in fish and wildlife conservation in the Southeast. With only one exception, the committee is composed of a fisheries and wildlife technician from each State, along with representation from both Federal Bureaus. Maintaining an appropriated share of both fishery and wildlife resources in our estuarine and coastal marsh areas in advance of competitive public use presents a real challenge to this committee and the Marine Fisheries Commission, as well as all conservationists.

Another Federal act to meet a land-use problem was the amendment to the Duck Stamp Act, approved by the President on August 1, 1958. As most of you know, this provides that all Duck Stamp receipts, after the payment of printing and issuing expenses, be used for acquisition of wetlands and other