



COMPARATIVE SIZE of oyster as it grows to maturity. In center are several varieties of cultured pearls.

ARE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUR WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT RECOGNIZED?

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ABSTRACT

Law Enforcement is a difficult job, one that likely involves more different types of work than we find in any other department of our organization. At the top of his many duties, the Conservation Officer must be an official representative for the entire department's program in his assigned area. Since he must excel in good public relations in his own community, he must also have the ability (if given the opportunity) to help promote good relations throughout the whole organization. This is often difficult to do when he is considered by other departments as "just a Conservation Officer."

In order to command its due respect the Law Enforcement must upgrade itself as to education, training and personal characteristics. On the other hand, the abilities and accomplishments of the Law Enforcement Officer must be recognized by the Director, the Commissioners, the Fishery, the Game and Educational Departments. The salary of the officer must be sufficient to qualify him as a Professional man who will spend his entire time in the duties and interest of the Wildlife Department.

With effort and determination, these changes can be brought about in due time. As a result each department will be recognized for what

ever it contributes and all groups will benefit by working together for the unity and advancement of the Wildlife Conservation program.

Is your Law Enforcement Division represented in the same ratio as other department heads in your Wildlife Conservation Commission meetings? Are they given equal credit for any achievements or accomplishments which they may have assisted in or brought about solely on their own? If these questions are answered in the negative, then perhaps we are partially responsible for placing ourselves in this position.

If we want to state facts we must say that as conditions now exist in our respective states, the general opinion has been to consider the wildlife enforcement officers as a group of non-professionals. To be honest, I am sure that most of you would not disagree entirely with this statement. If you do not have an office to work from, or definite hours in which to do your job, and since you are on your own and are at a remote distance from your employer, you can become an easy target for criticism from within your department or from the public in general. It may be true that there is a small number of enforcement personnel whose only interest in conservation is pay day and his time and energy may be spent on some other occupation in which he is engaged. This small minority is bound to bring about nothing but adverse public opinion and reflect upon the Division as a whole.

If we are to attain professionalism and stature we must improve upon the ranks of our personnel in quality as well as ability. Further, the profession itself must earn the title of professionalism. We cannot allow even one individual officer to hold down two jobs, serve two bosses and owe more than one allegiance. If your duties are performed properly, being a conservation officer is a full time occupation, and if your duties and accomplishments are not sufficient to warrant full time work, then you are not functioning properly as an officer.

Law Enforcement can be one of the most effective management tools within a wildlife department. When we consider that we, by sheer numbers, have the best opportunity to make good or bad public relations, it is time that we show the public some of our achievements. It becomes important that we place our best foot forward. It may appear that we take the brunt of criticism but let us never become cynical. No employee of any game department is ever free of criticism whether it be enforcement officer, biologist or public relations man. We should take a firm look at what we have done, what we are doing, and keep in mind that we should never become satisfied with the status quo or just an average record. We should constantly seek for ways to improve ourselves and our objectives. This is our best assurance of keeping the law enforcement at its highest level of efficiency, and will insure good hunting and fishing for the future.

Most people have the general impression that the law enforcement division has only one duty to perform and that is the business of enforcing laws. This is our primary function but we have other responsibilities of secondary importance. For instance, when we look back about 65 years, we find that practically all of the wild turkey, deer and prairie chickens had been killed out in the State of Oklahoma. Other than quail and ducks, hunting was rather slim. However, it was in 1948 that the enforcement division initiated some of the early programs of restocking. At one time the ranger was everything—warden, educator, manager and administrator—or perhaps we could say the early day administrator was also a warden. In time wildlife needs became greater and more diversified, and as a result the need for specialists in specific fields developed.

For the ranger of yesteryear to try to hold on to his original responsibilities is similar to a barber trying to hold to his original secondary occupation as a doctor.

Enforcement has become a highly technical and skilled science. It should occupy a great part of our time. We should be thankful the specialists have come along to relieve us of a multiplicity of responsibilities, thereby permitting us to learn and attack the problems of game law violation with even greater enthusiasm.

Duties of an officer in addition to law enforcing are varied. He works with fisheries in inspecting ponds, rotenones, small lakes and ponds, promotes gun and water safety, assists in game and fish surveys and so on. Cooperation with other divisions is an essential part of our responsibilities. No division can be independent of the other without weakening the cause of wildlife conservation.

In order to gain the respect and recognition of the public we must keep in tune with the changing times. A few years ago a love for the work and enthusiasm for the organization was sufficient. However, if we want to improve our status and image, we must constantly seek to improve our qualifications through inservice training and education. At one time a high school diploma was sufficient, but at the present time we cannot overlook the value and prestige of a college education. This should be a requirement for future enforcement officers. Salary standards should be equitable and sufficient to meet the standards of the position.

What makes a good enforcement officer? He must be a man who likes people and is able to get along with those in his community. He must have a mature personality so that he will be taken seriously by the public and yet young enough to give vigorous service to the department. He must be in excellent health and one who takes pride in his appearance. He must be diplomatic, even tempered, honest, persistent, have a knowledge of laws and the methods of carrying them out. He must earn the respect and trust of people, and the ability to mix well with the public. No other person will have more phone calls, conversations on the street or wherever he may be than the conservation officer. He must maintain a strict personal code of ethics, defend his Department and Commission action in spite of what may be a personal disagreement. He should recognize the chain of command, and most important, should never air his grievances, disagreements, or department problems in public, with legislators, or outside the chain of command.

He should recognize his limitations and strive to improve them. *Most important*, he should recognize all employees are responsible for and accountable for specific duties.

No matter where you go you will always find people who want to talk about hunting and fishing, and you must be willing to listen to the stories and answer the questions at any time of the day or night. The above traits, added to good training and good equipment, will make an excellent start in placing the enforcement division in its rightful place. These changes will be gradual but they can take place and will be most effective in improving our division which in turn improves the whole organization.

We all want our state to have abundant hunting and fishing, but we cannot keep it that way without some type of law enforcement. Natural law in itself is not sufficient. With human nature as it is, man sometimes becomes our worst enemy in conservation. If he is allowed to operate as he wishes at any time of the year, day or night, then we can disregard future recreational opportunities for future generations. It is the business of law enforcement to maintain good relations in his area, and throughout his division, and to educate and convince his community as to the importance of conservation. If he has enthusiasm for the job and accepts his responsibilities to the public, a bright image will be automatic.

It is not my purpose to go into the technicalities of laws or means of enforcing them. It is sufficient to say that we should be provided good laws always remembering that good laws are a pleasure to enforce. If we ourselves are not convinced that a law is good and will not benefit the wildlife resources, then we should be able to comment through the chain of command on its uselessness and offer suggestions for improvements. Such opinions should not be discussed with the public, legislators, or outside the chain of command.

A law enforcement officer should be rated on the good arrests he makes, plus his other activities. We find that good cases always meet

with public approval while poor cases always bring criticism to both the officer and the department. He should work toward convincing the public that his job is not only to arrest violators, but to promote wild-life conservation as well. To prevent a violation is far better than to allow it to happen just for the sake of making a case. Also, laws and regulations should be carefully checked and rechecked for accuracy so that the public will understand thoroughly, and be able to rely on the contents.

Wildlife conservation is a big business in our state with its very existence depending on the people. Therefore a large responsibility is placed in the hands of those who control this organization. Every effort must be made to maintain and operate this business so that the stockholders will receive the best possible service and the best recreational facilities that their dollars can obtain. The potentials are great, the demands are many, but with all departmental segments working together as a unit these achievements can be accomplished.

WHAT OWAA MEMBERS CAN DO FOR THE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION SPECIALISTS

BY HURLEY CAMPBELL
Now President OWAA

Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here with you.

Let me say at the onset, however, that any resemblance between what I say in the next few minutes and the title of my talk as outlined in your program will be purely coincidental.

You see, when Steve Harmon called to ask me to be on the program he told me I could talk about the Outdoor Writers Association of America, about outdoor writers and the I & E section of the state's game and fish commission, about Southern Outdoors—just about anything, really.

I must confess it shocked me when, just a few days ago, I received this copy of the program listing my few moments of chatting with you under so impressive a title as "What OWAA Can Do For The Information and Education Specialist."

But, after so many years of friendship with Steve, I guess I should be prepared for anything as far as he is concerned.

One night down here in New Orleans he invited me out to dinner saying we would eat a seven-course "Cajun" meal. Now, I'm about 75% Cajun myself and, as many of you probably know, I go by the handle of Cajun at all OWAA meetings or wherever I meet writers from throughout the nation. But I must confess Steve had thrown me a curve ball with the "Seven-Course Cajun Dinner" bit.

It threw me even more when I discovered that a seven-course Cajun dinner consisted of a pound of Boudan and a six pack of Jax.

Just in case some of you might not know what Boudan is let it suffice to tell you that it is a very unique French type of sausage made here in Louisiana. I presume you know what a six pack is—or will before you leave town.

I think I should probably try to hit the subject as outlined in the title by bringing you up to date on what has taken place in OWAA during the past few years. Many of you, no doubt, still have bitter memories of some of the things pulled on you by members of our organization under the guise of outdoor writers in years past. Unfortunately, many of you were probably victimized by so-called writers in the past and had to take it because of the job you hold. Yours is a job that can get you more black eyes when you fail to cooperate with