

witnesses he may have contacted. Frequently the term "on or about" is used in referring to time. For example, on or about 5:00 p. m. I saw John Doe shoot and kill a drake pintail. If shooting time for migratory waterfowl closed at 5:00 this type of statement would be inconclusive evidence since opposing counsel could contend that it might just as well have been before 5:00 as after. In case it was not permissible to have doves in possession between the 5th and 15th of March, the following statement is admissible: "on or about" the 10th day of March but between the 5th and 15th, I found John Doe in possession of 10 doves. Insofar as possible the officer-witness should be alert but easy and dignified on the witness stand. He should sit erect, with feet on the floor and with hands folded easily in the lap or on the arms of the witness chair. Under no circumstances should the officer allow himself to indulge in nervous mannerisms, or in any way react so that the jury will be disconcerted or annoyed by his acts. He should maintain an even temper and not be evasive or argue with either the opposing counsel or the court. His personal appearance should be above reproach. Such items as shined shoes, clean, well-pressed clothes and be freshly shaven are absolutely necessary.

After testimony is complete the officer should leave the court unless he has been asked by the court or prosecuting attorney to stay. Staying in court after testimony may create the impression that the officer is over-anxious to convict and over-concerned about the outcome of the case.

TEACHING WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION

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It has long been apparent that no organization, public or private, can be any better nor gain more public acceptance than that which its "customer" is willing to give it. In our case we are dealing with a rather unusual commodity—wildlife. Few, if any, of our "customers" feel any actual responsibility, either moral or actual, for the perpetuation of the sports of hunting and fishing. The public knows there is an organization within the State charged with the conservation of these resources, and to the average citizen this organization, except in the vaguest sense, consists of one or two wildlife officers in the local community. These officers are in fact the heart of the body of our wildlife conservation program. Upon their professional ability to properly discharge their duties rests the success or failure of an entire program. It then behooves those in administrative capacities to give to these men every tool with which to build a sound, constructive program in the local community.

One of the most efficient tools which we may give to our field representatives is knowledge of the materials with which he must daily work. The enforcement officer in wildlife management work is no longer one who is placed in his position of office by political patronage. He is indeed a "professional" man in every sense of the word. He no longer deals with enforcement alone, but must be proficient in many allied fields of conservation. It is to him, and often him alone, that the public looks for the answers to their problems concerning wildlife conservation. If he does not have the training, the ability to give reasonable answers to these questions, the whole organization suffers in the eyes of the local community. The entire organization is usually judged by the ability of the local representative.

In South Carolina the Wildlife Resources Department has recognized the value of well trained personnel in the field. Several years ago a search was instituted to find better methods of training the enforcement man in all phases of wildlife resources conservation. One of the first steps was to acquaint him with the commodity with which he works. It was found that one of the weaker

points in most of the officers was lack of knowledge in correctly identifying waterfowl in the field. It can be, and often was, embarrassing to the Department when an officer could not identify to the hunter the particular duck which he had killed. It was even more embarrassing when the officer, pursuing prosecution in the courts, could not accurately identify the evidence. After considerable discussion between the representative of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the administrative personnel of the S. C. Wildlife Resources Department it was decided to enter into a rather intensive training program to assist the field personnel in becoming more adept in aging, identifying and otherwise becoming more familiar with the game birds with which he works.

At the start of our program we had only a few color slides and a very limited supply of mounted specimens. Our purpose from the beginning was to concentrate on one or two outstanding features in coloration or conformation of the bird at hand so that feature would definitely point out the variety of wildlife with which we were dealing. It was found that in many instances in the identification of waterfowl that the "wing patch" was a constant, unchanging method of telling what kind of duck it was. In all of our teaching simplicity has been the keynote. For identification purposes we divide the ducks into three classifications, large, medium and small. If a duck is a "big" duck with a certain coloration of wing patch or a certain conformation of head we can identify it. Comparatively we may classify our birds as medium or small. If the bird at hand has a light blue shoulder patch and is a "small duck" it will be a Blue Wing Teal. If it is a "big duck" with a light blue shoulder patch and a large, distinctive bill it is a Shoveler. By comparison of these outstanding characteristics and repetition of these points we attempt to teach recognition by one or two simple features.

It has been found that more intimate knowledge of the hunted bird gains more interest in the overall program by the hunter. The identification of the various species of waterfowl, the methods of aging doves, rails, quail and other upland game birds has found a tremendous interest in the hunters themselves, and such knowledge in the hands of the warden has without doubt given him a professional status with the groups to whom he presents these facts.

A complete set of wing mounts, color slides and mounted specimens is now at the disposal of the enforcement officer of South Carolina. The program designed for the training of a few professionals has been successfully used in gaining interest in our wildlife resources by garden clubs, sportsmen's clubs, youth groups and others throughout the State. There is no limit to the number of uses to which a program of this kind may be put. It can encompass mammals and fishes as well as birds. It is easy to tie up management with identification and is often highly desirable. The cost of materials used is nominal, the returns high.

In actual presentation of the program, we usually start with a test of the knowledge of the audience. We have sufficient material so that we can make the test tough or easy depending on the audience. The participants are allowed to grade their own papers, and usually the grades are low. This builds an initial interest, and in the case of conservation personnel an appeal is made to their professional pride. Repetition of salient identification features soon makes for perfection in properly identifying the bird at hand. The program has been well received in several Southeastern States where presented. Seasonal requests from sportsmen's groups are heavy.

The one addition to the program as now used would be the publication of a pocket sized reference that could be easily carried in the field. Material for such a reference book would be easy to obtain and in my opinion would fill a need with enforcement personnel. Such guides as Kortright's *The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America* and Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* should be standard equipment for the officer in the field, but a small pocket guide would be of tremendous value.