

CALIFORNIA SECTION WILDLIFE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Editor:

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DAVIS MEETING

The third annual meeting of the California Section of the Wildlife Society was held January 26 and 27 on the Davis Campus of the University of California. It was a very successful meeting with approximately 200 members and guests attending. Many persons said that it was the best meeting we have ever had, and congratulations should go to all those who worked to make the meeting the success it was. An excellent banquet was held on the evening of January 26. Robert Boone, Supervisor of Federal Aid, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave a short and interesting talk on the Federal Aid Program which was followed by a showing of colored slides on Wildlife taken by members "of the section, and a movie on the Desert Bighorn by Don McLean. The banquet was preceded by a social hour in which refreshments were served. During the social hour Ade Zajanc gave a demonstration of devices used in scaring birds in depredations work.

In the editor's opinion, two of the papers presented at the meeting were particularly outstanding. The first, by Jack Rhein on the social aspects of Law Enforcement in Wildlife Management, was an extremely well thought out exposition on the importance of research men and law enforcement men seeing the other man's viewpoint. He brought out the fact that a research man often gets personally wrapped up in his study and may be at times, unduly sensitive to criticism of his work. Jack had some very good suggestions for obtaining a smoother working relationship between law enforcement and research men and it provided all present with food for thought.

The second paper on "The Importance of Aquatic Habitat in the Management of Waterfowl Areas" by Howard Leach presented the preliminary findings of the water fowl food habits study. This study is based upon the analyses of 6,300 duck gizzards by the food habits laboratory. This paper stressed the importance of native food plants to waterfowl management. It was brought out that dry farmed grain fields provide food for geese, mallards, and sprig, but little food for widgeon, teal, gadwall redhead, and spoonbill. The conclusions reached were that there should be a balance reached between the production of cultivated crops and the maintenance and management of aquatic habitat for the production of food which forms the bulk of the diet for most species of ducks.

John Cowan's paper on "Mourning Dove Productivity and the use of Wire Cone Nesting Sites" has stirred up a lot of interest, and workers in different parts of the state are trying these wire nesting cones. John's paper was presented by Starker Leopold due to John's illness. I understand he had ornithosis and is now fully recovered.

We were honored in having William Hamilton, the distinguished mammalogist from New York present at our meeting.

At the business meeting, the new officers were announced as follows: President - Frank Kozlik; Vice President - Carol Ferrel; Council - Bill Graf and Wally Macgregor. There was a tie in the council race between Chet Hart and Wally Macgregor which was decided by flipping a coin.

The membership voted to eliminate the Section dues and finance the operation of the section by the collection of a registration fee at the annual meeting. Under the present set-up all members of the Wildlife Society who reside in California are automatically members of the California section. Members of the society in adjoining states who wish to be affiliated with the California section may do this by informing the Secretary-treasurer, Henry Hjersman, California Department of Fish and Game, 926 J Street, Sacramento 14, California. President Frank Kozlik announces that Henry Hjersman was appointed Secretary-treasurer of the section replacing Carol Ferrel.

The fourth annual meeting of the section will be held December 17 and 18 at the Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. Ray Dasmann is program chairman and Dave Thomson is in charge of local arrangements.

TRAPPING DEER ON THE SAN JOAQUIN

by Henry A. Hjersman

California Department of Fish and Game

The trapping of deer is anything but a new technique in California. Early trapping was done with bulky California Portable Traps, which were portable in name only. They did trap deer, but their weak points were seized upon to design an efficient, economical, and truly portable trap named for the designer, Melvin H. Clover. This trap is now in use in many states and in some foreign countries.

Why go to all the trouble and expense of trapping deer and what is accomplished? The prime purpose for pursuing such a program is to study the movements of deer, either migrationally or on their home ranges. Other information derived from trapped animals are weight, condition, various body measurements, and as a source of parasites or blood and serum for disease investigations.

Migration studies are based upon trapping on the winter range, placing identifiable marks on the deer so that information regarding the marked animals will be returned by hunters. In addition, these marks are made large enough so that they may be seen by the field worker, thus allowing the recording of locations and plotting the migrational movements.

This type of trapping and study has been continuing on the San Joaquin River winter deer ranges since the winter of 1951-52. The return of ear tags by hunters have demonstrated that these deer move many miles to their summer ranges and, also, despite sharing common winter ranges, their summer ranges may be distinctly separated. Sight records have shown that some of the deer wintering on the north side of the San Joaquin River cross the river in order to reach their summer ranges, while others remain on the north side.

The latest effort has been to mark deer so that their individual movements can be observed while on the winter range, as well as fulfilling the requirements for migrational studies. This is one segment of a cooperative intensive range

management program and its evaluation. Overage brush is being treated by several methods; such as mashing and burning during either spring or fall, burning without prior preparation, and just mashing. Forage production and consumption by deer is being measured, and also, the response of the deer to the treated and check areas.

The present study is a joint undertaking of the U. S. Forest Service, the University of California, Region IV, and project W51-R of the Department of Fish and Game. The Fresno County Sportsmen's Association has cooperated fully in past endeavors, donating bulldozer work and rewards for the return of ear tags.

During the past winter, 176 deer have been trapped; checked for general condition; sex and age; ear-tagged with a standard sheep tag in one ear and a cattle tag with a large flasher disc in the other ear; ears cut in readily observed patterns; and a bell hung around the neck with a leather strap. The cattle tag, bell, and strap are colored with combinations of designs so that these and the ear-cropping patterns allow individual recognition in the field. By and large, it has been found that deer remain in a rather small area while on the winter range proper, similar to movements of deer on resident ranges.

It is hoped that this study of deer in response to improving their habitat will tell us whether or not such expenditures are justifiable from an economic standpoint. The popular belief is that the way to greater abundance in deer numbers is to provide fresh green shoots of good forage species each year. But, will the effort pay a return in that many more deer winding up in a freezer? Time will tell - the ear tags too!

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In the December newsletter, an article on color marking of White Geese by Frank Kozlik was printed. The above article is a continuation of the policy of printing articles thought to be of general interest to members in the section. The Editor would appreciate receiving any such articles for inclusion in future newsletters. Any article of general interest along the lines of Wildlife management would be greatly appreciated and should help obtain a better understanding of your work among your colleagues in the wildlife field. If the members of the section would like to see these articles continue, they must submit them for publication.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Dick Genelly will be leaving the Davis campus to accept a position teaching Wildlife Management at Humboldt State. The staff up there is really growing and Dick is the envy of many of his cohorts.

There have been several changes in the staff of the Game Management Branch office in Sacramento. Harvey Russo is now Assistant Chief of the Branch, and Bill Dasmann is Coordinator of all the Departments deer work. Carol Ferrel is the new P. R. Coordinator.

Jerry Mankins has submitted the final report on the Bartons Flat deer herd and is working toward a masters degree at Fresno State. He will soon be transferred to antelope studies in northeastern California.

Ernie Hodson has been moved from Willows to Markleville.

Henry Hjersman gave a talk on Conservation, Wise Use of Natural Resources at Humboldt State College during Conservation Week.

The chukar section of the Upland Game Studies project has been terminated, and Harold Harper, Bill Bailey, and Bev Harry are now working on mourning doves.

Harper is working out of Bakersfield in charge of the work in the southern part of the State. Bill Bailey has move to Paso Robles and is working in the central coast counties. Bev Harry moved to Guinda, but is moving again the first of the month to work as an AGM in the northwestern district of Region IV. Morris Anderson will replace Bev on the Upland Game Studies and will be located in the vicinity of Gridley.

Word has it that Seth Benson had his Zoology 113 class up in Strawberry Canyon and found a striped skunk in one of his traps. Seth hoped it would react like his pet skunk, but evidently it didn't, and Seth got a good dose.

Kaj Westerskov of New Zeland paid a visit to the University of California and Fish and Game Offices recently. He is on a round-the-world trip and stopping to see men working on game management in the different areas he is visiting.

Bob Lechleitner is finishing up his work on the black-tailed jackrabbit which he has been conducting for a doctorate.