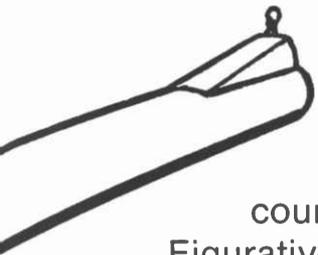


THE HUNTERS OF THE HUNTERS

by
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There are those who would put a rifle bullet through the first hunter they encountered, strap him across the hood of the car, and have his head mounted in their dens, provided, of course, he was a healthy specimen.

Figuratively speaking.

And it is precisely the figures that should worry the nation's hunters — including Arizona's 160,000 — and the agencies charged with managing wildlife.

For the numbers and influence of those who oppose any kind of hunting are growing. Hunting, they say, is cruel, immoral, and destroying what is left of our wild animals and birds.

This may seem ironic to the hunter. From the beginning, wildlife conservation in this country has been championed by the sport hunter. Sport hunting has almost single-handedly borne the costs of wildlife management and research. And it has been the hunter, typically, who has fought for limits on the number of animals taken and to preserve the habitat of wild animals. Much of their activity has benefited non-hunted species as well. But the practice of sport hunting no longer goes unquestioned.

There are now at least 25 organizations across the country that oppose hunting, many of them increasingly militant and questioning practices that, until a few years ago, were accepted without challenge. Not only do they threaten hunting, but in addition, they are attacking many things that people do to animals including predator control practiced by ranchers and the government, slaughterhouse procedures, inhumane treatment of pets, and the use of animals in rodeos. These groups, as a whole, have been referred to by some as "The Animal Liberation Movement" which seeks an end to "speciesism" or so-called discrimination against non-humans.

Now the nation's 16 million hunters, whose purchase of firearms, ammunition, and licenses provides the bulk of the support for wildlife management agencies in every state in the union, may not feel endangered by their opponents. But they might be a bit disarmed by recent studies that show hunting declining in importance compared to other forms of outdoor recreation.

The U.S. Department of the Interior found recently that, while the number of hunters 12 years old and older had increased 5 percent, the number of hunters per capita nationally dropped from 9.6 to 9.2 percent in the 5 years from 1965 to 1970. Current data indicates this per capita figure may now be closer to 8 percent. Further, the percentage of younger people who hunt appears to be declining even more rapidly, with the statistics showing a drop of nearly 16 percent over 5 years in the 18- to 24-year-old age group.

Add this to a national survey that showed 75 percent of college students expressing some degree of anti-hunting or anti-hunter sentiment, and it would seem that both hunters and the wildlife management agencies that serve the hunters had better start some long-range planning for their own preservation.

Traditionally, the hunter has taken the position that the anti-hunters as a group are "ignorant of the facts." If only, the hunters declare, these biologically ignorant, neo-sentimental, and often politically motivated Bambi lovers could be exposed to the truths of hunting, their minds would be changed.

Traditionally, too, the game management agencies have taken a very defensive view of the anti-hunting phenomenon. Dependent on the sale of hunting licenses as their primary source of revenue, they have been understandably protective of sport hunting.

But this defensive posture of hunters and wild-



"I have some really exciting news for you. It's the story of the formation of a new club — the Hunt-the-Hunters Hunt Club. It's a world-wild organization — and it even has its own motto — 'If you can't play a sport, shoot one.'"

**--Cleveland Amory
Founder
The Fund For Animals**



life managers does not help them deal with this threat to their avocations and professions.

To begin with, both hunter and wildlife manager must understand whom he deals with when dealing with the anti-hunter. Not much literature exists on this breed of cat, although he or she is not particularly elusive. They've just been ignored until their numbers grew to the point that they demanded recognition.

My own work compared the attitudes toward hunting — and toward wildlife in general — of a group of deer hunters in Michigan, members of the Audobon Society (which neither supports nor condemns hunting) of that state, and the Michigan chapter of the Fund for Animals (whose founder and most famous spokesman is the critic, Cleveland Amory).

Studies had already been done on hunters, most of them depicting the hunter as typically a male, between 30 and 40 years of age, and of middle income and moderate education.

Who, then, was the anti-hunter? How did his attitudes toward nature compare with the hunter's? Was there any common ground for the two groups?

Some of the results were predictable, some of them surprising.

Although income wasn't tapped, the study showed the anti-hunting group to be mostly female (66 percent compared to the Michigan deer hunters who were about 85 percent male), and well educated, almost half of them having attained a college degree.

Much more frequently than their hunting counterparts, the animal sympathizers tended to come from a large city or a suburb of one. This greater separation from nature was reflected in many other facets of their general background.

Fewer of the anti-hunters than hunters, for example, had witnessed the slaughter of a farm animal for food.

Whether or not members of the family hunted when the respondents were growing up was also a factor, with nearly 60 percent of the "antis" reporting that no member of their families hunted, compared to the hunters, 85 percent of whom reported that a family member hunted.

Hunters reported that 88 percent of their fathers and 79 percent of their mothers approved of hunting. Of the anti-hunters, only 32 percent reported that their fathers approved of it and a paltry 17 percent reported maternal approval.

Just as few of the "antis" had ever witnessed the killing of a farm animal, very few had ever experienced the shooting of an animal in the wild. Forty percent of the anti-hunters had never seen a wild animal shot and 81 percent had never shot one themselves. On the other hand, only 2 percent of the hunters had never witnessed the shooting of a wild animal and only 5 percent had never done the job personally.

The Audubon Society members (*Named after naturalist and bird taxonomist John James Audubon, the society that bears his name has come to embrace many environmental activities in addition to bird-watching with which many still associate it. Audubon, himself, was a hunter.*) provided an interesting comparison with the hunting and anti-hunting groups. Audubon members represented the entire range of attitudes toward hunting. A fair percentage had seen farm animals killed for food, 24 percent reported never having seen a wild animal shot and 52 percent reported not having shot an animal personally.

The aversion to killing was further expressed among those who oppose hunting in a greater tendency for such persons to be plant eaters. Fifteen percent of the respondents from the Fund for Animals said they were vegetarians, compared to 3 percent for the hunters and 4 percent for the Audubon members. And 66 percent of the "antis" said they had at

least considered abstaining from flesh, while only 13 percent of the hunters and 25 percent of the Audubon members had weighed the matter.

But most important, from the standpoint of the hunter and the game manager alike, the portrait drawn of the anti-hunter by this research is one of an individual whose dislike of hunting is not only strong, but broadly based as well. The picture is not one of an individual whose attitude is based on a single fiber of feeling or rationale, but whose dislike has many, many strands.

Those who oppose hunting do so because their parents didn't like it, all right, but also because:

— They believe that animals are capable of experiencing as much as and sometimes more pain than humans.

— They object to an animal's suffering at the hands of man, especially so when the suffering is inflicted in the name of sport or recreation.

— They believe that sport hunting is threatening certain wildlife populations.

— They have put considerable thought into the subject and object to hunting because they view it as immoral and senseless.

— They are not fond of guns in general. Eighty percent indicated that substantial controls are needed over the ownership of guns or that private ownership should be outlawed altogether.

— Their opposition to hunting is not a recent development. It seems that, just as many a hunter will declare that he's been one all his life, the anti-hunters would probably report their life-long aversion to the sport. "Have you always felt as you do about hunting?" we asked our sample. "Yes," replied 89 percent of

Threats	Group Means and Ranks ()		
	Hunters	Audubon	Fund for Ans.
Loss of habitat due to human developments	1.16(1)	1.22(1)	1.14(1)
Pollution	1.71(2)	1.38(2)	1.32(3)
Illegal hunting	2.12(3)	1.96(4)	1.31(2)
All-terrain vehicles (snow-mobiles, jeeps, etc.)	3.14(5)	1.92(3)	1.76(6)
Unsound wildlife management practices	2.34(4)	2.30(5)	1.52(5)
Commercial trapping	3.20(6)	2.83(6)	1.41(4)
Legal sport hunting	4.39(8)	3.54(7)	1.89(7)
Predation by other animals	4.31(7)	4.56(8)	4.33(8)

TABLE 1. *Group Means and Rankings for Threats to Wildlife. Scale: 1 = "extremely serious" 5 = "not serious"*

the hunters. "Yes," replied 72 percent of those who opposed it.

Now, it is one thing to find that someone opposes a given activity and refuses to take part in it. It is quite another if they would forbid others from taking part. That is precisely what those who oppose

tion appears to increase. And, while this growing concern does not necessarily conflict with hunting, it in some ways competes for the attention of wildlife managers. In short, we are shifting from a society in which hunting is the primary value of wildlife to one in which the esthetic and existence values are dominant.

When America was first settled, and men were few and animals many, the intrinsic values of wildlife were overshadowed by more practical considerations. Wildlife was hunted either for the living it afforded or because of the economic threat (in the form of wolves or bears to ranchers and farmers) it represented.

Later, with the frontier gone, along with the buffalo, the passenger pigeon and many more species, hunting became a sport, a skill handed down from father to son. What had been a necessity became a luxury. Wildlife became a man-controlled and managed thing, with men "harvesting the surplus" of what essentially had become a crop.

Now, with more and more Americans isolated in cities from the back country, seldom exposed to the process that brings meat to their table, protected from the harsher realities of nature, the appreciative values of wildlife appear to be taking the upper hand

"We cannot afford to overlook the wave of anti-hunting sentiment or to charge it to the ranting of an impotent, lunatic minority. It has, in fact, become a real political force, not only in the state and nation, but in international wildlife affairs."

--A. Starker Leopold, zoologist and hunter, address to the San Antonio Game Coin Hunters Convention, 1973.

hunting would do. If the Congress of the United States were composed of Michigan members of the Fund for Animals and a vote on a bill to outlaw hunting were introduced, it would pass overwhelmingly. Indeed, with such a congress of 100 members, it would pass with 68 "ayes," 16 "nays," and 16 abstentions.

Bound to hunting opposition as he is by this very thick, many-stranded cable of beliefs and experiences, the person who opposes hunting isn't about to be set adrift if one of those strands is cut. If he believes that hunting is endangering animal populations, and the hunter provides evidence that it isn't, the opposed will object to the suffering the animal endures, and so on. So the prospect of "educating" opponents of hunting, of changing their attitudes with pamphlets and data and speeches doesn't seem at all good.

What is more, the background of Americans in general tends to be shifting toward that found in the anti-hunting group. This is not to imply that, as the country becomes more citified, its inhabitants will automatically become opponents of hunting. But it is precisely this growing, urban populace to which hunter and game manager alike must turn for support in the future.

We know that the human population is increasing and will continue to do so in this country for at least the next couple of decades. At the same time, the supply of wildlife habitat and wildlife is decreasing absolutely or proportionately as a result and will continue to do so as long as the human population and its consequent environmental impacts grow. As the supply of wildlife resources declines relative to human numbers, the public's concern for its protec-

Reasons	Group Means and Ranks ()		
	Hunters	Audubon	Fund for Ans.
They are part of the ecological balance upon which we are all dependent.	1.60(2)	1.17(1)	1.15(1)
People enjoy viewing wildlife.	1.53(1)	1.67(2)	1.63(2)
People enjoy just knowing that they exist.	2.01(3)	2.09(3)	1.70(3)
They are of scientific value.	2.31(5)	2.31(4)	3.10(6)
They play an important part in our cultural heritage (songs, legends, etc.)	2.57(6)	2.54(5)	2.49(4)
They provide hunting recreation.	2.14(4)	3.79(7)	4.85(9)
They help the economy by attracting tourism.	2.72(8)	3.20(6)	3.71(7)
They are a source of food and furs.	2.59(7)	3.80(8)	4.61(8)
Animals may have souls like humans.	3.61(9)	4.04(9)	2.66(5)

TABLE 2. *Group Means and Rankings for Reasons Wildlife are Considered Important. Scale: 1 = "extremely important" 5 = "not important"*

over hunting. And this trend can be expected to continue as long as viewing wildlife becomes an unusual experience for more and more Americans. In 1970 the U.S. Department of Interior found that bird-watching, wildlife photography, and nature walks accounted for 786 million recreation days, compared to 204 million for hunting.

Currently, the wildlife management establishment is overwhelmingly oriented toward serving one wildlife interest group—the hunter. In many ways, it could be described as a hunting fraternity of sorts, and as such in no way represents the society at large in background and interests. Consider that only about 1 percent of the management dollars and 4 percent of the research dollars spent by wildlife management agencies go to projects related to animals that are not hunted. Again, this is not surprising considering the fact that it is the hunter who pays the costs of management. But the catch lies in the fact that the game and fish agencies of the nation are usually charged with the responsibility for managing all wildlife for the benefit of the animals and the general public. Hunters are only a small fraction of the general public.

If the public finds that its own demands for wild-

life protection and management for other than hunting purposes goes ignored, then its members will likely migrate to private, special interest groups, many of which are opposed to hunting. Thereby, the wildlife manager is cut off from what might have been potential support and the hunter finds increased opposition to his sport.

The tragedy, of course, is that all wildlife interests share a number of goals. We found substantial agreement among hunters, Audubon Society members, and anti-hunters concerning the most important threats to wildlife and its most important values (see Tables 1 and 2). Hunters and non-hunters alike wish to preserve the diversity of wild animal populations and they believe that loss of habitat is the greatest single threat to wildlife. Similarly, they agree that wildlife is essential to maintaining a balance in nature's life support systems upon which we all depend.

The crux of the problem lies in devising a mechanism for paying the costs of non-game wildlife management. Some states are trying special excise taxes on soft drinks or the sale of personalized auto plates as sources of revenue. Other proposals have ranged from appropriations from general tax funds, to requiring special recreational licenses for use of public

Comment . . .

Mr. Shaw has presented a convincing dissection of the underlying factors contributing to the abyss which presently exists in the portion of the public with a wildlife value.

This division is historic in origin. Pioneers in wildlife conservation such as Roosevelt, Hornaday and Leopold pondered the problem of preserving the resource with a philosophical split in the support. The dream of conservation leaders has been to unite the factions into one mighty immovable force. This never occurred except in isolated instances and the coalition was not lasting.

The antihunting sentiment has increased in recent years as indicated in the paper. The reasons given, however, are questionable in any view. For example, Mr. Shaw indicates a reduction in the resource is responsible for the increased public interest in wildlife and antihunting sentiment. The accelerated growth of antihunting sentiment in the last ten years is not proportional to the loss of wildlife resources. He surmises the scarcity of an item, wildlife or otherwise, is relative to the worth assigned by the public. This factor is not a significant contributor to the obvious changing mores of the public toward public hunting.

The social trend of urbanization and the associated isolation from nature can be more accurately described as isolation from the biological realities of life. The American public is an urbanized mobile mass with lots of spare time and a TV set to keep them informed. The wildlife programs finding acceptance on the tube or the front page of the paper have not been

accurate documentaries on the needs of wildlife, but anthropomorphic spectaculars. Consequently, we have not an uninformed public, but worse, an illinformed public.

For this reason, it is unusual to meet an individual concerned with protection of wildlife habitat rather than protection of a particular species from hunting. This is true of the hunting and non-hunting public.

In most states, the thrust of wildlife management is protection of the natural habitat rather than modification of the same to favor a game species. Most often modification of the natural environment will be at the expense of other valuable species and normally is economically infeasible. Habitat improvement usually occurs as a vegetative modification designed to restore the natural habitat and thus the native wildlife population.

The only viable method for funding wildlife management has come from the hunting public through license sales and taxes on firearms. Alternative funding programs have been unsuccessful or rejected in Arizona and, to my knowledge, in other states as well.

When the program funding is disregarded and the best interests of the wildlife resource are considered, hunting and non-hunting arguments become rather academic. With a comparable fund, but without hunting, the wildlife management program and wildlife populations would remain essentially the same.

**--by Bud Bristow
Director, Southeast Arizona Region
Arizona Department of Game and Fish**

Comment . . .

Mr. Shaw's central thesis that the hunter is a steadily shrinking minority is indeed obvious and has been for some time. What perhaps is not so obvious is the influence of the hunter on the majority of the people who seek to enjoy wildlife in non-consumptive ways.

The impact of the hunter on the person who merely wants to see or photograph wildlife goes far beyond the numbers of wild animals killed each year by hunters. The many backpackers, hikers, walkers, birdwatchers, photographers, canoeists, and climbers find that most species of wildlife flee far in advance of them. For them to enjoy wildlife, as they have every right to do, it is necessary that the wildlife be somewhat closer than the killing range of a .300 magnum.

For an animal to be terrified at the sight and smell of man is not an instinctive reaction, but a learned one. To prove this, one has only to recall the lack of fear displayed by bighorn sheep, elk, moose,

or bear in the national parks where no hunting has been allowed for many years. Such animals are not tame; they merely have had no experience with man as he behaves in the other 95 percent of the U.S. where hunting is allowed.

The chief reason for the hunters' continued dominance of the wildlife management policies of the state and federal governments is their monetary support, which admittedly is large. In fairness to both the hunter and the non-hunting public, each should contribute to wildlife management and habitat acquisition and improvement in proportion to their numbers. When this occurs, the influence exerted on the various wildlife management agencies will be proportionate too.

by Steve Johnson
Field Representative
Defenders of Wildlife

lands, to taxing wildlife-related supplies such as binoculars, bird seed, and photographic equipment.

Whatever financial solution is found, the wildlife manager is going to have to adopt a broader role than he has taken in the past. Protection and management of endangered species deserves much more attention from all wildlife agencies. To gain support of an urban public, managers should concentrate on techniques for making wildlife more accessible for metropolitan residents. Suitable planting of shrubs and trees in parks and on private land can accommodate a great number of birds and smaller animals. Habitat for migratory waterfowl can be provided in cities. Why should people have to make their way to sewage treatment ponds in their communities to view the tremendous variety of birds stopping over (*as is the case in Tucson, for one*)? Managers might also

do well to develop techniques for increasing the visibility of wildlife for those who appreciate the very sight of wild animals and birds. And why shouldn't the agencies conduct conservation and wildlife appreciation camps for children and teachers, or teach courses for adults on environmental principles?

True, many of these actions are being taken by some of the agencies around the country, but all deserve more emphasis. The outcome of the struggle between hunters and their opponents may well be determined by the success of the wildlife managers in developing a program that is responsive to a wider range of interests. With an expanded base of public support, which can come from providing for a broader spectrum of public needs, wildlife management can do much to protect the interests of all wildlife enthusiasts — be they hunters or not.

