

The Value of Student Membership in the American Society of Range Management

RECENTLY a friend asked me, after glancing through a copy of the Journal which was lying on my desk, why I was a member of the American Society of Range Management. He knew that I was a student of wildlife biology and was unable to see any direct connection between the science of range management and that of wildlife management. When one considers that this man had been born and raised on a cattle ranch in northern Arizona, it may be possible to appreciate my surprise at his question. Had he been reared in an urban community or had he come from a part of the country where range problems are of little

local interest, there might have been some excuse for his question.

In answering, I explained to him, as he should certainly have realized by now, that the science of range management is by no means an independent one. On the contrary, scientific range management includes the coordination and application of the researches of a wide variety of specialists. Backing the rancher in his efforts to produce livestock profitably while maintaining the range at its highest possible level of productivity are botanists, agronomists, ecologists, chemists, foresters, animal husbandmen, biologists, meteorologists, and engineers, to mention

but a few. Since each of these professions, as well as others, play a vital part in range management, it is only natural that students as well as practitioners in these fields should be interested in knowing how their work fits into the overall picture of the utilization and conservation of our range resources. The American Society of Range Management with its *Journal of Range Management* acts as an ideal medium for the exchange of ideas



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and researches of these many fields and for the dissemination of practical knowledge.

The activities of the Society are by no means restricted to scientists or specialists. Since the Society is dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of the range and consequently of its products, many businessmen, economists and bankers, in areas where the economy is directly dependent upon a healthy livestock industry, have become active and

interested members. The public as a whole often benefits from the varied programs presented by the Sections in their regular meetings. The program of the December, 1950, meeting of the Arizona Section is a case in point. In addition to talks by various technicians and laymen on range problems, the Section members and invited public heard an address by Dr. Irving P. Krick, noted meteorologist, on the potentialities of artificial rainmaking, a subject of vital interest to everyone in the arid Southwest.

On a more personal basis, I have found, while a student, that the Society and the *Journal* are a valuable source of information in my own field, wildlife management. Much of the wildlife in the west, both game and non-game, is found on the same rangeland used in the production of livestock. Many of the conditions essential to good livestock management, abundant forage and dependable water sources, for example, are likewise factors essential to proper wildlife management. If the range is allowed to deteriorate with a corresponding lowering of its carrying capacity for livestock, the wildlife populations on the range must suffer also. Since wildlife populations are less easy to control than those of domestic stock, the wildlife left on a deteriorated range may wreak further havoc with vegetation before nature can take its course of range improvement. An unwise or misguided predator control program may result in more harm from an increased rodent population than in good from the eradication of the predators. Conversely, wise management that increases the carrying capacity for domestic stock means more and better wildlife on the range. Information such as this is as important to a wildlife ecologist as it is to a rancher or range technician. Is it any wonder, therefore, that a potential biologist in the west should be interested in range manage-

ment? The American Society of Range Management is as valuable to me as any of the organizations devoted exclusively to the field of wildlife management.

It seems to me that the manner in which membership in the Society is valuable to me could, with a few variations, be applicable to students and technicians in any of the aforementioned fields. It is because of this universality of

appeal that the American Society of Range Management is fast becoming an important factor in the advancement of the multiple science of range management. For my part, I hope the Society continues to grow and to expand the already high degree of useful service that it is rendering today.—*James B. Elder*, Student, Department of Zoology, University of Arizona, Tucson.