



Wildlife people & a spirit of cooperation. Special section, [Vol. 12, No. 6] [November/December 1988]

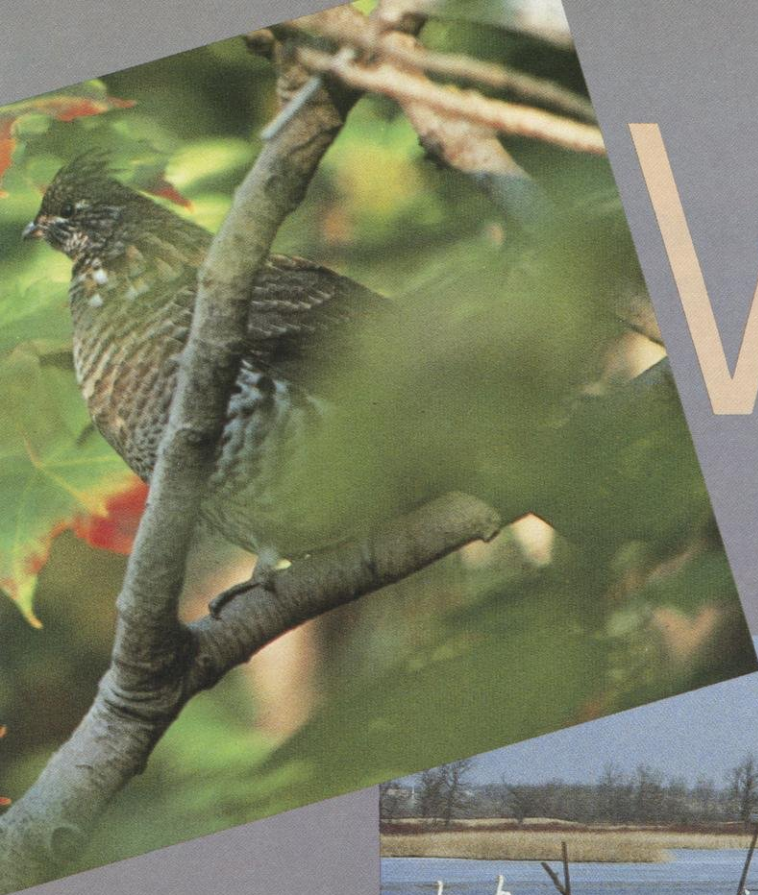
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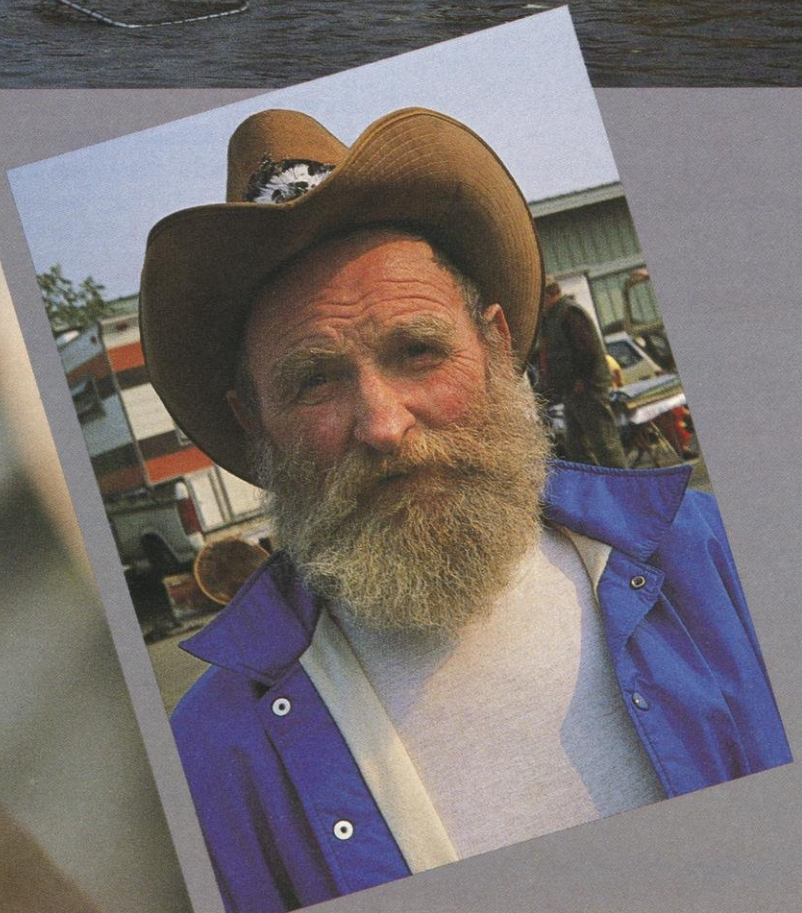
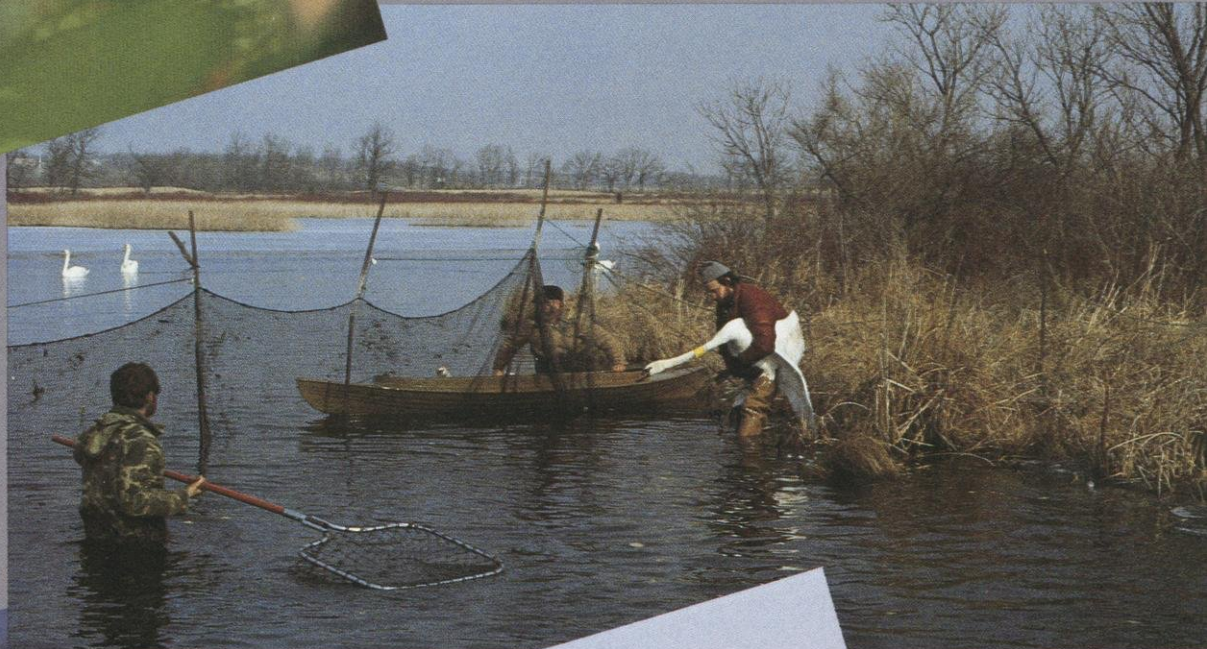
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WILDLIFE PEOPLE

& A SPIRIT OF
COOPERATION



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David L. Gjestson,
project coordinator.

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A recent restocking success — wild turkeys. ►
Photo by Dale Ligman

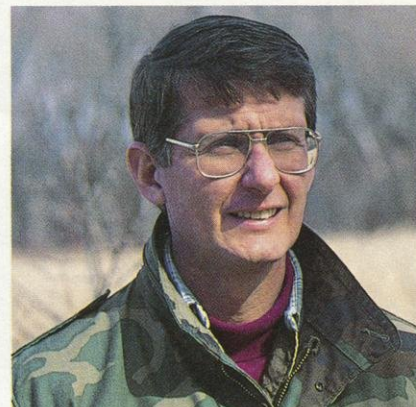
A dedication to our many friends

We composed this special publication to express our personal thanks to the thousands of people who freely give their time, energy and money to benefit wildlife and many other natural resources of our fine state.

Wisconsin's conservation movement is firmly rooted in tradition — dedicated hunting, fishing and sporting clubs that fostered our earliest programs to protect wildlife.

Commitments by these pioneers stopped the unrestrained killing of game species. Self-imposed fees (license sales) provided funds for state agencies to hire professional wildlife managers, conservation wardens and researchers as well as acquire properties and implement management programs that benefit all wildlife — game and nongame species.

Many other groups equally interested in wildlife have joined ranks with hunters. Environmentalists, including hikers, canoeists, campers and nature lovers spawned renewed interest in conservation, photography, bird feeding and protecting endangered species. This vital mix has produced a public hungry to watch wildlife and committed to protecting and managing wild resources into the future.



Steve Miller.

Photo by Robert Queen

In paying tribute to our friends and comrades, we run the risk of inadvertently overlooking some groups. If we have missed yours, it's unintentional.

Even a state which heralds such rich, natural bounty as ours needs to occasionally pause to give thanks to those who care enough to help us manage our wild places, to foster strong outdoor ethics and savor our long-held wildlife traditions.

On behalf of wild animals, wild places and our wildlife managers, thank you!

Steve Miller, director, Bureau of Wildlife Management



Madison Audubon Society

Mark Martin

Early on a Thursday morning in late October, a semi-trailer pulls into an empty parking lot at the Madison Army Reserve Headquarters. Simultaneously, three cars filled with sleepy people gather in front of the Reserve's empty warehouse. Soon, a large farm truck loaded to the top with 50-pound bags arrives. In a matter of minutes, this quiet lot is a frenzy of activity.

Madison Audubon Society (MAS) is selling birdseed.

By Friday evening thousands of seed bags will be unloaded, stacked, and readied for distribution.

Saturday morning, an army of local Auduboners invades the Army Reserve Headquarters. Jim Young, a wildlife photographer, commands more than 50 volunteers who are busy filling birdseed orders. It takes coordination and a lot of lifting to load 50-pound sacks of birdseed by hand into vehicles at a rate faster than one car per minute. When the weekend is over, MAS will have distributed 280,000 pounds of birdseed in Madison, and at satellite depots in Baraboo, Stoughton, Arlington and Mount Horeb.

The birdseed sale benefits our feathered friends and Madison Audubon since it is the organization's biggest fund raiser. The seed sale began 12 years ago when the first seed was sold out of Jerry and Carol Luetkens' garage. Then, a garage-full of seed seemed like a lot.

Carol has been involved with Madison Audubon Society for over 15 years and is employed as the chapter's executive secretary.

Wisconsinites are big Audubon supporters — sporting 17 chapters statewide including the 2,800-member Madison chapter. The Madison



Selling birdseed raises funds for education, field trips, and environmental advocacy.

Photo by Don Sylvester

Audubon chapter formed in 1949. Like the other state chapters, the Madison group is committed to further public understanding of wildlife resources locally and nationally.

To meet this goal, much of Luetkens' time is spent lobbying legislators and agencies on environmental and conservation issues, many of which relate to wildlife matters. This past year, Audubon strongly supported funding for a wildlife education position — Project WILD — in the governor's budget.

Madison Audubon also helped draft rules to protect birds of prey from traps intended to catch furbearers. Luetkens effectively worked with the Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Trappers Association to forge rules that protected birds and the sport of trapping.

A current MAS goal is fostering public education about urban pesticide use and its harmful effects on urban wildlife. Luetkens has worked with DNR's wildlife disease staff spe-

cialist on this issue and she prompts regular news coverage of pesticide issues and forums.

The Madison chapter's commitment to wildlife also included supporting the National Wildlife and Disease Health Lab, recommending building additional space for the Wildlife Ecology Department at UW-Madison, helping pass both the Endangered Resources tax checkoff and the Endangered Species Penalty Law, and supporting a ban of lead shot for hunting waterfowl. Madison Audubon also has a representative on the DNR's Waterfowl Advisory Committee.

The society depends on an excellent Board of Directors and many hard-working volunteers to tackle this wide variety of issues. Many times Ken Wood, administrative assistant, can be found on the phone helping out a member or providing direction for an office volunteer.

Regular communications inform members of chapter activities. A monthly newsletter and monthly meetings often feature wildlife issues. One recent fall meeting featured a talk on the reintroduction of moose to upper Michigan.

The society also has a gifts and grants committee that has provided funding for Cooper's Hawk research, an annual crane count and republishing the Department of Natural Resources' popular booklet, "Birds of Prey."

Other activities include conducting symposiums and leading more than 25 field trips each year. These trips usually include one or two to the southern states or Central America.

Madison Audubon also maintains two properties totaling 180 acres. Goose Pond Sanctuary, a state natural area, and Otsego Marsh are managed to provide excellent habitat for wildlife as well as places for people to observe and appreciate wildlife.

Mark Martin is a natural areas specialist in DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources. His family also manages Audubon's Goose Pond Sanctuary in southern Columbia County.

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

John Nelson

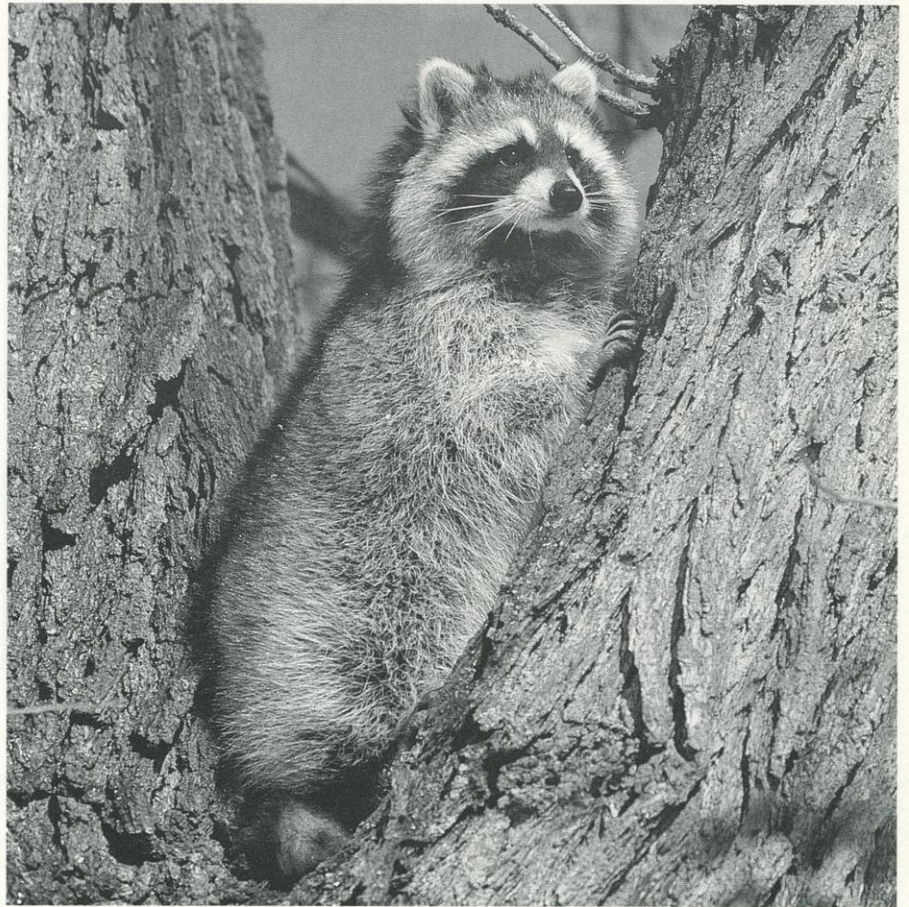
They were "hopping mad," according to Les Woerpel, first president of the former Wisconsin Federation of Sports Clubs.

Several federation members, including Woerpel, had left a meeting of the old Wisconsin Conservation Commission. The details of the 1943 deer season had been set, and the federation believed the deer season was based on politics, not biology. Woerpel and the others were very frustrated. They concluded Wisconsin needed a statewide organization of sports clubs to take the politics out of conservation. After several organizational meetings, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF) was off and running.

The federation was affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation, but the local group didn't waste any time grabbing on to statewide issues. It worked to maintain public rights in navigable waters, gun ownership and water quality. In its early history, the federation vigorously opposed creating a huge shallow flowage on the Little Eau Pleine River in southwestern Marathon County. By continued lobbying, the flowage idea was later dropped. Now, those game-rich bottomlands are the George W. Mead Wildlife Area.

"We think one key is having the Natural Resources Board appoint the DNR secretary; that minimizes political influence in conservation issues," says Jerry Laudon, current WWF president. "That has been one of our priorities since the Department of Natural Resources and the board were created back in 1967."

Laudon quickly points out other federation issues: passing a statewide ban on hunting waterfowl with lead shot, supporting mandatory blaze orange clothes during the gun deer season, protecting wetlands, and ensur-



The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation strongly supports conservation education by funding Project Learning Tree, Project WILD and sponsoring National Wildlife Week each March.

Photo by Herb Lange

ing adequate public access to Wisconsin lakes.

Members stood united with the department on these issues, but there have also been differences. Laudon noted that there had been disagreements on what constitutes adequate financial support for hunter education and shooting range programs. "And we still wish the department had taken a stronger stand on a trailer access for Beaver Lake," he added.

Despite differences, WWF continues to strongly support the department, especially its education programs. The federation raised \$50,000 to help build the MacKenzie Environmental Education Center at Poynette. Annually, WWF gives two scholarships worth \$800 each to University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point students. WWF also donated \$1,000 to the de-

partment for Project WILD and Project Learning Tree resource education programs.

Laudon believes the federation really shines by representing conservationists in the legislative process. WWF members have served on various department and legislative committees including one on surcharges, fines and forfeitures, and the legislative committee on natural and recreational resources.

"We're proud of our accomplishments," Laudon says, "but we can't get complacent. Our membership has increased dramatically in recent years, and issues are more complex," said Laudon. "We must better recognize our membership's needs to lead them into the 1990s and beyond."

John Nelson is DNR's public information officer in Milwaukee and liaison to the WWF.

Pheasants Forever

Jon R. Bergquist and Rick Young

THINK HABITAT! This key to wildlife survival is the catch phrase for Pheasants Forever, one of the new groups on the block that believes habitat improvements will rebuild pheasant populations. Chartered in 1982 in Minnesota, Pheasants Forever expanded to Iowa in 1984 and Wisconsin in 1985. Currently, there are 240 chapters in 19 states, more than 42,000 members nationwide.

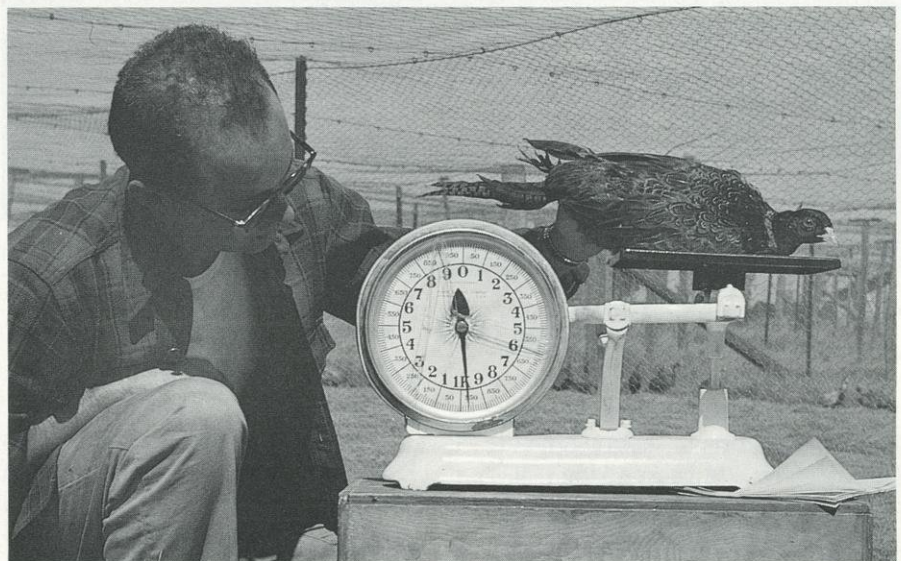
Pheasants Forever expects to raise more than \$2,500,000 in 1988-89 for upland wildlife habitat development. Funds will be devoted to educating the public about habitat management, which is vital for restoring U.S. pheasant populations and to cooperate with federal, state and local authorities working to improve pheasant habitat.

The lifeblood of Pheasants Forever is the local chapter. Each retains all funds raised (exclusive of membership fees) and determines how these funds will be invested in local projects. Pheasants Forever is adamant that the organization promote *wild* bird populations, not private hunting preserves. Hence their national stance prohibiting stocking pen-raised birds and demanding that all hunting rights on Pheasant Forever project sites are retained by the landowner.

Whenever possible, chapter-generated funds are matched by others or are dovetailed with federal and state farm programs to extend and enhance wildlife benefits. Active partnerships involving both conservation professionals and landowners help secure high-quality habitat at a reasonable cost.

Currently, Wisconsin has 12 Pheasants Forever chapters and some 2,000 members, a threefold increase since 1987. Wisconsin chapters have raised more than \$90,000 for habitat

Jon R. Bergquist, is DNR's waterfowl specialist and liaison to Pheasants Forever. Rick Young is Pheasant Forever's Eastern Field Representative.



(top) Pheasants Forever works to rebuild pheasant populations by restoring nesting cover, planting food patches and providing shrubs that grow into brushy cover. Photo by Jon Bergquist
(bottom) Local chapters sponsor pheasant research as well. Photo by Dean Tvedt

projects in the Badger State.

The national organization gives local chapters seed corn and sorghum seed that is donated to farmers who agree to plant winter food patches for pheasants. Many chapters give farmers grass seed to plant pheasant nesting cover; shrubs and trees to improve winter bird cover on their property.

Landowners interested in improving pheasant habitat on their land and individuals interested in joining Pheasants Forever can contact a local chapter; Rick Young, Pheasants Forever's eastern field representative, Rt. 1, Box 266, Lake Geneva, WI 53147 (phone: 414-248-1707); or Pheasants Forever, Box 75473, St. Paul, MN 55175.



Safari Club International

Tom Smith

Given a rich wildlife and outdoor heritage, it's not surprising that Wisconsinites like to gather at conservation clubs across the state. Some groups are purely local; some have banded together to form county alliances; others have regional and national interests. A small number are even continental in scope, but one group is truly international: the Safari Club. It's likely the world's most active hunting organization, with more than 75 chapters in the United States, Canada, and Europe including three chapters in Wisconsin.

You might think its members are only interested in hunting in exotic places like Africa or India. Not so. Club interest extends far beyond hunting. Safari Club members have long recognized the importance of sound wildlife management and education in maintaining our total wildlife resource.

The Safari Club International Conservation Fund sponsors and supports several outdoor education programs every year. One workshop, "Adventure in Outdoor Education," co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, strengthens teacher skills in outdoor education activities. Each year 60 to 70 teachers and school administrators convene at the Wausau School Forest to receive expert instruction in shooting, nature photography and backpacking.

Similarly, the Safari Club sponsors a natural resource management workshop annually in Wyoming. This American Leadership Wilderness School is offered free of charge to teachers and educators from Wisconsin and other parts of the country who want to study wildlife ecology, management, and conservation; hunting safety; and outdoor ethics. All tuition and transportation costs for Wisconsin participants are paid by the

Tom Smith is DNR's district wildlife supervisor in Milwaukee and liaison to the Safari Club.



Banding wild turkeys: one of many Safari Club activities to promote wildlife conservation.
Photo courtesy of Safari Club International

Safari Club Conservation Fund, Wisconsin Chapter.

The Safari Club sends 30 or so highschool students to the Wisconsin Outdoor Leadership School each year. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and the U.S. Forest Service, the week-long session trains kids in a multitude of outdoor skills like pistol and black powder shooting, sport fishing, edible wild plant foraging and wilderness survival skills.

The Safari Club contributes financial support to the Project WILD education program, and local chapters bankroll scholarships for University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point students preparing for wildlife management careers.

In addition to its educational programs, the Safari Club funds Department of Natural Resources management activities like black bear research; purchasing all-terrain vehicles to aid law enforcement; underwriting hunter education films; buying osprey nesting structures; supporting turkey and pine marten reintroduction; buying prairie grass planting equipment; covering costs to develop waterfowl habitat; and paying for pheasant propagation, research and management. The club generously donates money to other groups that rehabilitate wildlife.

So you see, Safari Club members are not all world-class, big-game hunters. Members are from all walks of life and varied outdoor interests; a true cross section of Wisconsin sportsmen and women who share a common exhilaration in the challenges of wildlife management, conservation and sport hunting. They are working, welcomed partners with the Department of Natural Resources and other conservation groups.

To find out more about the Safari Club contact Jeffrey L. Engel, Director of Public Relations, Safari Club, 16555 Bluemound Road, Suite 110, Brookfield, WI 53005 (414) 785-0599.





Wisconsin Bowhunters Assoc.

Frank Haberland

Wisconsin hunters are avid archers by any standard: 210,000 licensed bowhunters, third in the nation behind the more populous states of Pennsylvania and Michigan, and our archery deer harvest of 42,651 in 1987 was second only to Michigan's take. Wisconsin's bow deer archers enjoy one of the longest seasons in the country, up to 89 days annually. For encouraging this popular, successful sport, the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association (WBH) should take a bow.

Officially formed in 1941, WBH has roots in even earlier state archery groups such as the Wisconsin Archery Association, Wisconsin Field Archery Association and Wisconsin Instinctive Bowmen. These groups were instrumental in convincing state game managers to establish the nation's first bow season for deer hunting in 1934. Bowhunting struggled for recognition as a legitimate hunting sport in those early years, but WBH changed that, partly because the association has kept outstanding leadership throughout its history.

Twenty-three directors from 10 districts provide statewide representation. An annual convention is held in a different area of the state each year to provide additional statewide perspective. WBH conventioners form positions on proposed DNR bowhunting regulations. The officers of WBH enjoy a close working relationship with the department. DNR managers actively seek and consider WBH's counsel.

WBH stresses getting practical experience and education, complying with all hunting laws and regulations, learning hunter ethics, and earning and maintaining a positive high image for bowhunting. They also recognize the importance of defending all hunting groups from their detractors,

Frank Haberland is a big game specialist with DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management.



Bows, quivers and hunting togs may have modernized, but Wisconsin deer archers maintain a proud, old tradition. The nation's first bow season for hunting deer started here in 1934.

Photo by Robert Queen

and WBH members often attend public hearings and meetings to lend support.

The association is well aware that bowhunting, as a sport, must serve more than its members to survive. From its inception, WBH has funded a landowner payment plan to recognize the importance of hunter-landowner relations. When a member bags a deer, bear or coyote on private land and sends \$5 to WBH, the organization matches the contribution and sends the landowner a check for \$10 in the member's name. The organization has paid out over \$100,000 to landowners. WBH also offers scholarships for its workshops and scholarships for students pursu-

ing natural resource careers.

WBH holds an annual field shoot called the Necedah shoot, the largest event of its kind in the nation. Members meet experienced bowhunters, learn about the best bowhunting equipment, and shoot under natural conditions at life-size targets. At the meet and the annual convention, members can attend talks by nationally recognized bowhunting experts.

Membership in the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association now exceeds 10,000 people, the largest organization of its kind in the nation. The WBH is a strong force in shaping Wisconsin's hunting policies and enriching the bowhunting experience.





The Ruffed Grouse Society

Dan Dessecker and Tom Bahti

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to improving habitat for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other forest wildlife. Currently, the society has more than 100 chapters, representing 20,000 members throughout North America.

Though officially headquartered in Corapolis, PA, Wisconsin sportsmen and women might well be considered the heart of the Ruffed Grouse Society. Wisconsin supports more than 4,000 members and 24 state chapters.

Since its inception, RGS has sponsored research vital to better understand the habits and management methods that will sustain woodland wildlife populations. Now, techniques for assessing forest quality and selectively cutting mature trees can assure a mix of quality timber as well as nesting cover, food and shelter for grouse and woodcock.

Through professional meetings

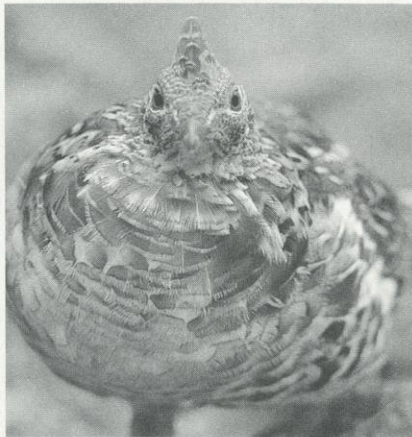
Dan Dessecker is a regional biologist with the Ruffed Grouse Society. Tom Bahti is DNR's area wildlife manager stationed in Green Bay.

(left) The venerable ruffed grouse.

Photo by Herb Lange

(below) Sexing grouse by examining rump feathers.

Photo by Tom Bahti



Woodland wildlife like grouse need a mix of trees, shrubs and open spaces.

Photo by Stephen J. Lang

and weekend seminars, the society shares these proven techniques with professional resource managers and private landowners who can enhance wildlife conditions while sustaining timber yields.

To show people what habitat improvements look like, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, and the Department of Natural Resources worked with landowners in southern Oconto County to prepare a Habitat Demonstration Area. Here, groups can tour small tracts of forested land where mature aspen, maple, ash and birch were cut back; these two- to

five-acre patches sport young aspen and plenty of wildlife.

Local RGS chapters spend considerable time giving talks, leading workshops and sharing how-to publications with people owning as little as 20 acres who would like to improve wildlife habitat on their property. The society has hired professional wildlife managers who work with DNR wildlife managers to provide one-on-one consultations with Wisconsin's private forestland owners.

A new service, the Ruffed Grouse Management Area Program, assists federal, state, county, and corporate landowners who are considering improvements on large tracts that would help ruffed grouse. The society provides both technical assistance on land management decisions and financial assistance to defray the cost of habitat work. The program is barely two years old, yet managers in 27 areas including more than 65,000 acres of Wisconsin's forestland have enrolled.

These forest improvements take a long time to plan and take several years to bear fruit, but it's a commitment that will help ensure ample opportunity for future grouse enthusiasts to enjoy this magnificent bird.



WILDLIFE & PEOPLE

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS IN IMPROVING WILD PLACES FOR WILD THINGS.

— **N** Wisconsin Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation —

Ed Frank

The Wisconsin chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (WI-NWTF) is growing almost as rapidly as the Wisconsin turkey flock. Only seven years young, the Wisconsin chapter boasts 12 local chapters with 2,133 members. It's a measure of this state's enthusiastic reintroduction to wild turkeys.

In just 15 years, the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) in Edgefield, SC, has called in 51,000 members dedicated to the wise conservation and management of the American Wild Turkey.

Funds from memberships, donations and banquets bankroll turkey research, management and education programs. A national bimonthly newsletter, *Turkey Call*, and a quarterly Wisconsin newsletter, *The Quill*, alert members to the latest gobblings about turkey management.

Wisconsin hunters are having a ball learning the habits of this elusive quarry, trying their luck at calling in gobblers and tramping the rolling hills of southern and western Wisconsin where the turkey is reestablishing its woodland turf.

Turkey federation members are working with rod and gun clubs to meet hunters needs. The federation advocated a wild turkey stamp to provide funds for the fledgling program; members volunteer to teach

Ed Frank is a farmland wildlife specialist with DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management and liaison to the turkey federation chapters.



By restoring turkeys, we're reintroducing Wisconsin hunters to a unique excitement this elusive quarry brings.

Photo courtesy of the National Wild Turkey Federation

turkey hunter workshops and clinics; and they sponsor banquets and raffles to thank landowners who improve turkey habitat and grant hunting privileges on their property. Turkey hunter education clinics are now held at 50 Wisconsin locations in February and March. They include instruction

in the bird's natural history, turkey identification, landowner-hunter relationships, hunter safety, regulations and hunting techniques.

The Wisconsin chapter works closely with DNR wildlife managers to develop turkey hunting laws and regulations. Federation members advocate protecting the wild turkey resource first, followed closely by promoting a high quality turkey hunting experience conducted in a safe, responsible manner.

The NWTF funded a three-year research project at UW-Madison, to investigate how an important turkey disease, called Mycoplasmosis, is detected and transmitted. NWTF may also help finance a DNR research project to examine which farm crops turkeys use and estimate how hunting pressure changes turkey populations.

Turkey hunting, and the national and state affiliates of the turkey federation have had a very positive influence on Wisconsin's wild turkey restoration. We've only had experience managing six spring turkey hunting seasons; fall hunting is scheduled to start in seven zones in 1989 and a considerable region of second-class turkey range has yet to be stocked. Yet the Department of Natural Resources has hopes that the WI-NWTF will continue to grow and expand along with this wily bird that is providing exciting hunting opportunities.



— **T**he Friends of Crex —



Visitors learn how prescribed burning maintains grasslands for sharp-tailed grouse at Crex Meadows. Friends of Crex volunteers staff the interpretive center and assist with guided tours. An estimated 100,000 visitors come to Crex each year to hunt and view wildlife. Photo by Dennis Yockers

Jim Hoefler

Sunday, October 18, 1987 was one of those picture post card fall days. The sky was clear; the trees at peak color; the meadows alive with wildlife. Maybe that's why more than 1,000 people turned out for the fifth annual Crex Meadows Open House at this state wildlife area north of Grantsburg in Burnett County.

By early afternoon, the parking lots were jammed with cars, and hundreds of people were milling around the buildings. The scene would have been utter confusion if not for the Friends of Crex. Throughout the day, 12 to 15 Friends of Crex volunteers

Jim Hoefler is the wildlife interpretive manager at Crex Meadows Wildlife Area.

answered questions, gave directions, directed traffic, gave out free coffee, and kept the audiovisual programs going. They did whatever they could to make visitors feel welcome.

Assisting with the open house is but one example of how the Friends of Crex work with DNR staff at Crex Meadows. For the past three years, members have staffed the visitor center for 16 weekends each year. They've also updated lists of birds and plants found on the property, gathered information on scores of neck-collared geese and leg-banded sandhill cranes, and supplied slides for the Crex Meadows slide collection.

The Friends of Crex was organized in 1985 to provide financial and volunteer assistance for the wildlife in-

terpretive program at Crex. In three short years, this 350-member group has raised thousands of dollars. Most of the money is used to purchase equipment and supplies for the interpretive program.

The friends are currently purchasing several large (4'x 8') colored maps of Crex. The maps will help orient visitors. The group's most ambitious project is raising \$100,000 to partially fund a new wildlife interpretive center at Crex.

Through the Friends of Crex, the public is more aware, appreciative, and understanding of the wildlife and wildlife management activities at Crex. That makes DNR property managers' jobs easier and more rewarding.



WILDLIFE & PEOPLE

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS IN IMPROVING WILD PLACES FOR WILD THINGS.



Coyote

Photo by Herb Lange

Abbotsford Sportsmen's Club, *Abbotsford*
Adell Sportsmen's Club, *Adell*
Alliance of Dunn Co. Conservation and Sports Clubs, *Dunn Co.*
Alma Rod & Gun Club, *Alma*
Argyle Rod & Gun Club, *Argyle*
Ashford Sportsmen's Club, *Ashford*
Arkansaw Fur, Fish & Game Club, *Arkansaw*
Ashippun Sportsmen's Club, *Ashippun*
Associated Conservation Clubs of Trempealeau Co., *Trempealeau Co.*
Athens Fish & Game Assoc., *Athens*
Atwater Sportsmen's Club, *Atwater*
Audubon Society chapters:
Aldo Leopold (Stevens Pt.)
Burnett County (Danbury)
Chappee Rapids (Marinette)
Chequamegon
Fond du Lac County
Fox River Valley (Appleton)
Hunt Hill (Spooner)
Kettle Moraine (West Bend)
La Crosse
Lakeland (Lake Geneva)
Madison
Milwaukee (N. Milwaukee)
Northeast Wisconsin (Green Bay)
Sand County (Adams)
Sheboygan
Winnebago (Oshkosh)
Wisconsin Metro (S. Milwaukee)
Avoca Rod and Gun Club, *Avoca*

B
Badger Sportsmen's League, *Milwaukee*
Baraboo Bowmen, *Baraboo*
Baraboo Pistol League, *Baraboo*
Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve, *Suamico*
Beaver Dam Conservationists, *Beaver Dam*
Berlin Conservation Clubs, *Berlin*
Binversies Sportsman's Club, *Sheboygan*
Black Bear Sportsmen's Club, *Argonne*
Black River Bowman, *Greenwood*
Black River Correctional Camp, *Black River Falls*
Black River Sportsmen's Club, *Black River Falls*
Black River Sportsmen's Club, *Owen*
Bluebird Restoration Assoc. of Wis., *Kansville*
Bohemian Valley Sportsmen's Club, *La Crosse County*
Bonduel Conservation Club, *Bonduel*
Bong Field Trial Assoc., *Kenosha County*
Boscobel Area Sportsmen, *Boscobel*
Breed Sportsman Club, *Breed*
Briarton Game Club, *Briarton/Bonduel*
Brillon Conservation Club, *Brillon*
Brown County Sportsman's Club, *Green Bay*
Brown County Conservation Alliance, *Green Bay*
Brownsville Sportsmen's Club, *Brownsville*
Brule River Sportsman's Club, *Brule River*
Buck Lake Sports Club, *Weyerhaeuser*
Calumet County Conservation Alliance, *Calumet County*
Cambria Rod & Gun Club, *Cambria*
Cascade Sportsman's Club, *Cascade*

Case International, *Racine*
Cassville Conservation Club, *Cassville*
Cazenovia Sportsman Club, *Cazenovia*
Central Wisconsin Sportsmans Club, *Marshfield*
Chase Sportsmen's Club, *Chase/Pulaski*
Chequamegon Bird Club, *Medford*
Chequamegon Sportsman's Club, *Prentice*
Chelsea Conservation Club, *Chelsea*
Chippewa Rod & Gun Club, *Chippewa Falls*
Chippewa Valley Archery League, *Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls*
City of Alma Wis. Conservation Corps., *Alma*
Clark Co. Conservation Alliance, *Neillsville*
Clifton Sportsman's Club, *Clifton*
Clinton Conservation Club, *Clinton*
Columbia Co. Sportsman League, *Poynette*
Columbus Sportsman Assoc., *Columbus*
Crystal Lake Sportsman's Club, *Kohler*
Dairyland Fox & Coon Hunters Club, *Neillsville*
Dalton Rod & Gun Club, *Dalton*
Dane Co. Conservation League, *Dane County*
Denmark FFA, *Denmark*
Door Co. Fish, Farm & Game Club, *Sturgeon Bay*
Dotyville Hunting & Fishing Club, *Dotyville*
Douglas Co. Fish & Game League, *Douglas County*

Ducks Unlimited chapters:
Ashland
Beaver Dam
Boscobel
Cable
Cecil
Columbus
Cox Meadows
Eagle River
Ft. Atkinson
Hayward
Horicon Flyway (Horicon)
Horicon Marsh (Mayville)
Iron River
Jefferson
Lake Mills
Menomonie
Middleton
Minocqua
North Bend
Northeast Wisconsin
Oconto
Dunn Co. Fish & Game Assoc., *Menomonie*
Durand Rod & Gun Club, *Durand*
East Shore Conservationists, *St. Peter*
Eau Claire Rod & Gun Club, *Eau Claire*
Eau Galle Sportsman Club, *Eau Galle*
Edgerton Conservation Club, *Edgerton*
Ellsworth Rod & Gun Club, *Ellsworth*
Elm City Bowhunters Club, *Sheboygan*
Evansville Conservation Club, *Evansville*
Exeland Rod & Gun Club, *Radisson*
Fairwater Rod & Gun Club, *Fairwater*
Farmers & Sportsman's Club, *Sheboygan*
Field & Stream Sportsman's Club, *Mayville/Farmersville*
Flambeau Area Sportsman's Club, *Butternut*
Forest Sportsman's Club, *Mt. Calvary*
Fort Atkinson Wisconsin Club, *Ft. Atkinson*
The Friends of Cray, Inc., *Grantsburg*
Park Falls
Pike Lake
Platteville
Plymouth
Portage
Prairie du Chien
Richland Center
Rhinelander
(Manitowish Waters
Mercer-Winchester)
Sawyer
Shawano
Sheboygan
Stevens Point
Superior
Three Lakes
Washburn
Watertown
West Bay (Green Bay)
Wittenberg
Wyocena
Yellow River (Spooner)

G
Gays Mills Area Sportsmen's Club, *Gays Mills*
Gillett Sportsman's Club, *Gillett*
Glazers Sportsmans Club, *Sheboygan*
Goodfellow's Rod & Gun Club, *Eden*
Grantsburg Rod & Gun Club, *Grantsburg*
Great Lakes Sport Fishermen, *Sheboygan*
Green Bay Duck Hunters Assoc., *Suamico*
Green Bay Pointing Dog Club, *Green Bay*
Green Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, *Green Bay*
Green Co. Conservation League, *Green County*
Green Valley Rod & Gun Club, *Green Valley - Cecil*
Grelton Sportsman Club, *Grelton*
Hatfield Rod & Gun Club, *Hatfield*
Hayward Rod & Gun Club, *Hayward*
Hebron Rod & Gun Club, *Hebron*
Heritage Conservation Club, *Elkhart Lake*
Highland Sportsman Club, *Highland*
Hillpoint Rod & Gun Club, *Hillpoint*
Honey Creek Rod & Gun Club, *Leland*
Horicon Marsh Bowmen, *Mayville*
Horicon Marsh Sportsmen's Club, *Mayville*
Horicon Rod & Gun Club, *Horicon*
Howards Grove Rod and Gun Club, *Howards Grove*
Hustisford Rod and Gun Club, *Hustisford*
Iowa/Grant Conservation Club, *Iowa/Grant Counties*
Iron Ridge Sportsmen's Club, *Iron Ridge*
Izaak Walton League chapters:
Benton
Beloit
Green Bay
Sheboygan
Watertown
Woodruff
Jackson County Wildlife Fund, *Black River Falls*
Janesville Conservation Club, *Janesville*
Jefferson Sportsmen's Club, *Jefferson*
Johnsonville Rod & Gun Club, *Johnsonville*
Jonesdale Sportsmen's Club, *Jonesdale*
Juneau Rod & Gun Club, *Juneau*
Kelly Lake Sportsmen's Club, Inc., *Suring*
Kendall Sportsmen's Club, *Kendall*
Klondike Sportsmen's Club, *Klondike/Coleman*
Knight Rod & Gun Club, *Iron Belt*
Koenigs Conservation Club, *Sheboygan Falls*
Koshkonong Habitat Restoration Group, *Milton*

Kelly Lake Sportsmen's Club, Inc., *Suring*
Kendall Sportsmen's Club, *Kendall*
Klondike Sportsmen's Club, *Klondike/Coleman*
Knight Rod & Gun Club, *Iron Belt*
Koenigs Conservation Club, *Sheboygan Falls*
Koshkonong Habitat Restoration Group, *Milton*



Building cormorant nesting platforms. Photo courtesy of DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources

La Crosse Co. Conservation Alliance, *La Crosse*
Lake Delton Sportsmen's Club, *Lake Delton*
Lake Mills Conservation Club, *Lake Mills*
Lakeshore Bow Hunters, *Fond du Lac*
Lancaster Conservation Club, *Lancaster*
La Valle Sportsman's Club, *La Valle*
Lebanon Sportsmen's Club, *Lebanon*
Lee Lake Conservation Club, *Pound*
Lena Sportsman Club, *Lena*
Lincoln Hills Boys School, *Irma*
Lincoln County Sports Club, *Merrill*
Little Suamico Sportsmen Club, *Little Suamico*
Lowell Rod & Gun Club, *Lowell*
Loyal Sportsmen Club, *Loyal*
Machickanee Sportsman Club, *Oconto*
Madison Retriever Club, *Oregon*
Manchester Rod & Gun Club, *Manchester*
Manitowoc Co. Fish & Game Protective Assoc., *Manitowoc*
Mapleton Sportsman's League, *Mapleton*
Marinette County Alliance, *Marinette*
Marsh Haven Nature Center, *Waupun*
Marshfield Fox & Coon Hunters, *Marshfield*
Marshview Hunting Club, *Sheboygan Falls*
Mattoon Sportsman's Club, *Mattoon*
Mazomanie Bird Dog Club, Assoc., *Mazomanie*

Merrimac Sportsmen's Club, *Merrimac*
Mondovi Conservation Club, *Mondovi*
Morgan Sportsmen's Club, *Morgan/Oconto Falls*
Mosinee Sportsman's Alliance, *Mosinee*
Muscoda Sportsmen Club, *Muscoda*
Muskie, Inc. (Between the Lakes Chp.), *Sheboygan Falls*
Navarino Nature Center, *Shawano*
NE Wis. Springer Spaniel Club, *Green Bay*
Neosho Sportsmen's Club, *Neosho*
New Fane Sportsman's Club, *Fond du Lac*
New Franken Sportsmen's Club, *New Franken*
Nicolet Sportsman's Club, *Wabeno*
North Amer. Versatile Hunting Dog Assoc., *Madison/Milwaukee*
North Fond du Lac Rod & Gun Club, *N. Fond du Lac*
North Freedom Rod & Gun Club, *North Freedom*
North Wis. Rod & Gun Club, *Ashland*
Northwest Rod & Gun Club, *Boyceville*
Oakfield Conservation Club, *Oakfield*
Oakland Conservation Club, *Cambridge*
Oak Ridge Club, *Brandon/Fond du Lac*
Oconto Co. Sportsman's Club Alliance, *Oconto County*
Oconto Falls Sportsmen Club, *Oconto Falls*
Oconto Sportsman's Club, *Oconto*
Oneida Bow Hunters, *Rhinelander*
Oregon Sportsman's Club, *Oregon*
Oshkauta Conservation Club, *Poynette*
Over The Hill Club, *Mayville/Lomira*
Peaks Lake Retriever Club, *Green Bay*
Pepin Conservation Club, *Pepin*
Peterman's Hunting Club, *Sheboygan*
Pheasants Forever chapters:
Dane County
Jefferson County
Marathon County
Northeast Wisconsin
(Green Bay)
Sauk County
Sugar River Valley
Plymouth Bird & Garden Club, *Plymouth*
Polk County Sportsman's Club, *Polk County*
Potoul Sportsman's Club, *Potter*
Pumpkin Center Sportsmen Club, *Pumpkin Center*
Racine County Conservation League, *Racine County*
Random Lake Rod & Gun Club, *Random Lake*
Red River Sportsmen Club, *Red River - Shawano*
Reedsburg Outdoor Club, Inc., *Reedsburg*
Riverside Hunting & Fishing Club, *St. Cloud*
Rhine-Plymouth Field & Stream, *Plymouth*
Rib Lake Fish & Game Club, *Rib Lake*
Richfield Sportsmen's Club, *Richfield*
Ridge Runners Sportsman's Club, *Cascade*
Rock Dam Sportsmen Club, *Rock Dam*
Rock River/Koshkonong Assoc., *Ft. Atkinson*
Roxbury Gun Club, *Roxbury*
The Ruffed Grouse Society chapters:
Appleton
Ashland
Cable
Durand
Eagle River
Eau Claire
Fond du Lac
Green Bay
Janesville
Madison
Marinette
Minocqua
Muscodia
Neillsville
Prescott
La Crosse
Park Falls
Rhinelander
Rice Lake
Shell Lake
Tomahawk
Wausau
Wautoma
Wisconsin Rapids
Rusk Co. Wildlife Restoration Assoc., *Ladysmith*

S
Safari Club International, *Madison/Milwaukee*
Sand Co. Foundation, *Sauk County*
Sauk Co. Sportspersons Alliance, *Sauk County*
Sauk Trail Conservation Club, *Cedar Grove*
Shawano Co. Conservation Assoc., *Shawano County*
Sheboygan Falls Conservation Club, *Sheboygan Falls*
Sheboygan Rifle & Pistol Club, *Sheboygan*
Shullsburg Conservation Club, *Lafayette*
Shawano Fish & Game Club, *Shawano*
Silver Lake Sportsmen's Club, *Kenosha County*
Smerke's Sportsman's Club, *Sheboygan Falls*
Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, Ltd., *Milwaukee*
Southern Brown Co. Conservation Club, *Greenleaf*
Southern Clark Co. Sportsman's Club, *Granton*
SW Wisconsin Sportsmen Club, *Grant County*
Spring Green Rod & Gun Club, *Spring Green*
Stitzer Sportsmen Club, *Stitzer*
St. Croix Co. Alliance, *New Richmond*
Stoughton Conservation Club, *Stoughton*
Sundowners Coon Hunters, *Plymouth*
Suring Sportsman, *Suring*
Suscha Fale Sportsman's Club, *Haven*
Tainter Lake Sportsman's Club, *Colfax*
Theresa Rod & Gun Club, *Theresa*
Thorp Sportsmen Club, *Thorp*
Trempealeau Co. Wis. Conservation Corp., *Trempealeau County*



Netting and tagging wild turkeys.

Photo by Joseph Butsick

Triangle Sportsmen's Club, *Walworth*
Tri-County Archery Club, *Grant, Lafayette and Iowa counties*
Trimble Rod & Gun Club, *Ellsworth*
Twin City Rod & Gun Club, *Neenah/Merasha*
Union Rod & Gun Club, *Kewaskum*
U.A.W. Local 833 Conservation Comm., *Kohler*
Viola Rod & Gun Club, *Viola*

W
Walworth Co. Alliance, *Walworth County*
Waterfowl USA, *Stevens Point*
Washington Island Sportsman's Club, *Washington Island*
Watertown Conservation Club, *Watertown*
Waukesha Co. Conservation Alliance, *Waukesha*
Waumandee Sportsmen's Club, *Waumandee*
Waupun Sportsman's Club, *Waupun*
Westby Rod & Gun Club, *Westby*
Wescot Sportsman's Club, *Fond du Lac*
Westgate Sportsman's Club, *Eau Claire*
Wetlands for Wildlife, *West Bend*
Wetlands Conservation League, *Stevens Point*
White Clay Lake Sportsman's Club, *Cecil*
Whitetails Unlimited chapters:
Antigo
Eagle River
Marshfield
Rock River (Jefferson)
Shawano

Whitetail Bowhunters, *Johnsonville*
Winnebago Conservation Club, *Oshkosh*
WINX Club, *Neillsville*

Wings Over Wisconsin chapters:
Beaver Dam
Columbus
Eden
Kieler
Mayville
Tri-County
Waupun
Winooski Bowmen Archery Club, *Plymouth*
Wis. Amateur Field Trial Club, *Merrill*
Wis. Assoc. of Field Trial Clubs, *Mazomanie*
Wis. Association of Sporting Dog Clubs, *Milton*
Wis. Bear Hunters Assoc., Inc., *Merrill*
Wis. Bowhunters Assoc., *Eau Claire*
Wis. Conservation Congress, *Durand*
Wis. Conservation Corps, *Madison*
Wis. Hound Hunters Assoc., *Sauk County*
Wis. House Outdoorsmen, *Waukesha*
Wis. River Sportsmen Assoc., *Mazomanie*
Wisconsin Sportsmens Assoc., Inc., *Racine*
Wisconsin Trappers Assoc., *Land O' Lakes*
Wis. Chpt. National Turkey Fed. chapters:
Alma (2 chapters)
Bangor
Boscobel
Clifton
Dousman
Genoa
Onalaska
Oshkosh
Plymouth
Prairie du Chien
Tomah
Wisconsin Waterfowlers Assoc. chapters:
Fond du Lac
Fox Valley
Madison
Pike Lake
Racine
Shiocton
Waukesha
Wausau
Wisconsin Wildlife Society, *Madison*
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, *Watertown*
Yahara Fisherman, *Madison*
Yellow River Hound Club, *Parkinstown*
Zachow Sportsmans Club, *Zachow*



Canada goose

Photo by Stephen J. Lang

Sponsored by the professional wildlife managers of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources.

Wisconsin Assoc. of Field Trial Clubs ■

David L. Gjestson

"Whoa!" barks the trainer; the animal immediately does as it's told. It starts to move its leg just a fraction of an inch. "Whoa!" the trainer demands. A judge sees the movement and marks his notebook.

Nope, we're not judging horses here. We're judging bird dogs. "Whoa" means a pointing dog should cease *all* action and remain standing. It's a word you'll hear frequently if you attend a bird-dog trial. In Wisconsin, most of these bird-dog events are coordinated by the Wisconsin Association of Field Trial Clubs (WAFTC), an organization you should know about and one the department has worked with for many years.

Founded in Milwaukee in 1947 and incorporated in 1959, WAFTC originally formed to unify and coordinate the various pointing-breed dog clubs that use state-owned property to hold their field trials. Today, WAFTC includes over 30 dog clubs and some 2,000 members.

Don Didcoct, the late president of WAFTC, remembered the early days before dog clubs and the department worked together as a group.

"Some pretty strong discussions took place when several clubs wanted to use the same property on the same date. However, once WAFTC began coordinating events with DNR, those problems disappeared," he said.

But WAFTC does more than schedule events. It helped develop complete rules for dog trials and training, and suggested technical guidelines to DNR managers for coordinating dog trials. Other WAFTC veterans, like Durwood Stevens, Kent Lipsey, Jim Gleash, George Wilson, Dale Smythe, Cliff Galster, George Sokup, Steve Spencer, George Krauss, Roger King and Al Francois devel-



Don Didcoct was devoted to training Brittany spaniels and improving the quality of bird dogs in Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of Judi Didcoct

oped a statewide training program for hunting dogs and coordinated the use and management of dog trial grounds located on DNR land.

The dog training seminars add a dimension to the hunt and reduce losses from unretrieved game.

To date, more than 4,000 students and 5,000 friends and relatives have attended the sessions. Some graduates returned in following years to show off their "trained" dogs.


The bird-dog community lost a true friend this summer when Don Didcoct, 51, died following a lengthy illness. He felt very strongly about his sport.

"These training courses provide a bridge for understanding public hunting needs and the professional needs

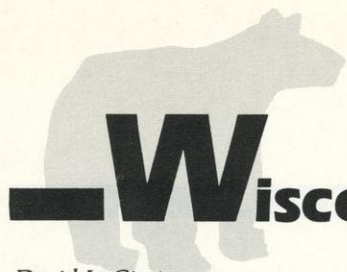
A special tribute to some of dogs' best friends

WAFTC involvement with the DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management has served as a catalyst for other organizations that are interested in dogs to establish liaison with the department. The Wisconsin Association of Sporting Dog Clubs is one such group. Led by President Don Bongle and their very active spokesman and houndsman Corky Meyer, this rapidly-growing group is promoting enthusiasm for all breeds of Wisconsin sporting dogs as well as promoting legislation designed to protect hunting dogs and the hunting sport.

One devoted sporting dog enthusiast, Don Didcoct, was a special friend of the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He knew DNR's system well and his skillful communications were very influential in statewide decisions on dog trials and training activities. He was recognized as a top Brittany spaniel breeder and skilled field trial judge as well as being very active in several conservation organizations. His limitless energy and dedication to hunting dog training and wildlife conservation will be missed.

of wildlife management. This kind of a relationship benefits all who relish those few wonderful days of bird hunting with a trained dog." 

David L. Gjestson is a wildlife staff specialist with DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management and liaison to field trial clubs.



Wisconsin Bear Hunters Assoc. Inc.

David L. Gjestson

They talk with fondness about hounds like Rambo, Moon, Ron's Thunder and Boos. When they say "drop the tailgate and let'r go," they're talking about dogs, not about dumping a load of bricks off the pickup. They see more kinds of wildlife working their bait station during one season than most people see in a lifetime. These are Wisconsin's bear hunters, a unique group of outdoor enthusiasts.

Over 650 of them belong to the Wisconsin Bear Hunter's Association, Inc. (WBHA); an association devoted to:

1. promoting and fostering the wise use of Wisconsin's natural game resources, particularly the black bear.
2. conducting educational programs, meetings, field trips and dog training, which further recognize the black bear as an outstanding game animal.
3. cooperating with all conservation organizations to further propagate and conserve game and habitat.
4. conducting activities to encourage active membership and interest in black bears.

Long-time member and former organization president Dale Decker has enjoyed a close relationship with the Department of Natural Resources. WBHA has quickly responded when the department wanted its views about bear management or proposed research. Decker attended numerous meetings and offered testimony at both department and legislative hearings for many years.

WBHA members raised more than \$9,300 to support black bear research conducted by the Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point during the past 10 years. The research has answered basic questions about black bear habits, hibernation, reproduc-



tion, and survival: information managers use to set hunting seasons that sustain healthy populations.

So, the next time you travel through northern Wisconsin during late September, don't be surprised when you see an old pickup alongside the road and some covered hunters yelling, "Hey, Rambo!" "Come, Moon!" "Yo, Thunder!"

(top) Cubs are ear-tagged and tracked to learn more about their habits and ranges.

Photo by Joseph Butsick

(bottom) Hounds are raised and rigorously trained to track adult black bears.

Photo by Dean Tvedt

David L. Gjestson is a wildlife staff specialist in DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management.





The Wisconsin Trappers Assoc.

Chuck Pils

Name the outdoor organization with a keen interest in the polar bears, Nanook and Norton; the adopt an eagle nest program; and the Sportsmen's Responsibility Award?

I'll bet you didn't guess the Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA), but it's true — and this diverse group of woodsmen, outdoors women and adventurers is celebrating its organization's silver anniversary this year.

Wisconsin trappers of all sizes and ages, from Milwaukee to Superior, participate in this physically-demanding outdoor enterprise that requires considerable time and effort. Trappers use their keen knowledge of the outdoors to try and outsmart the elusive beaver and fox.

Several WTA trappers have worked closely with the department on a wide range of activities. They've adopted an eagle nest from the Bureau of Endangered Resources and helped develop and teach a trapper education program that is used throughout Wisconsin.

DNR's Natural Resources Board recognized this dedication in 1983 by awarding the WTA the Sportsmen's Responsibility Award for its help in developing regulations to reduce the accidental trapping of birds of prey.

The trappers are active in communities as well. They help trap nuisance animals around homes and farms, and they contribute to social causes that help animals. They donated \$100 to help Madison's Vilas Park Zoo purchase polar bear cubs named Nanook and Norton.

The WTA holds annual spring and fall meetings that are a mixture of business, trade show and old-fashioned rendezvous with members hawking trapping supplies and just plain chewing the fat. The fall meetings are especially fun to attend. Where else could you pick up 50 gal-



Trappers earned a place in our history, heritage and future. Last year, Wisconsin trappers harvested \$8.5 million worth of muskrats, raccoons, mink, red foxes, beaver and eight other furbearers. Trappers also remove nuisance animals from homes and farms. DNR photo

lons of fox urine, with or without heat?

Just who are the members of the WTA and why do they join?

About 2,000 of the 17,530 licensed Wisconsin trappers in 1987-88 belong to the WTA. People join to help ensure the survival of trapping in Wisconsin. WTA members are fiercely proud of their trapping heritage and are extremely concerned about animal rights activists who promote tighter controls on trapping in Wisconsin. The WTA officers do not hesitate to let federal and state legis-

lators know how they feel about this subject. DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management maintains a formal liaison with WTA and fosters trapping education.

The "average" Wisconsin trapper is hard to describe. Milwaukee Journal writer Jay Reed took a crack at it after a trapper was criticized in a Milwaukee paper for trapping coyotes in southeastern Wisconsin.

"I am acquainted with a number of trappers," Reed said. "A couple of them are the best people I have ever known in my life. None is a ghoul. None is a fiend. Some fought in a war that was said to be for the preservation of freedom and the right to do a lot of things, including trapping.

"And none has said either, that trapping is a sweet, clean, patty-cake, garden-type of activity. They know better."

Gerhardt Wille might just be as typical a WTA trapper as one could find in Wisconsin. He is skilled at trapping foxes. Wille even prepares his own lures and scents to draw foxes to traps. Wille is in his 50s, has a ruddy, weather-beaten face complete with a straw-colored beard and a waxed mustache. Don't try to out-grip him while shaking hands! Wille's handshake feels like a friendly squeeze from a calloused vise-grip and would make Hulk Hogan wince.

The WTA vibrantly represents the fur trade: a heritage that was primarily responsible for settling our state. Today, the WTA is active in conserving Wisconsin's fur resource, protecting trapper rights, educating trappers, increasing public awareness of trapping issues and promoting the benefits of this historic pursuit.



Chuck Pils is DNR's furbearer specialist in the Bureau of Wildlife Management and liaison to Wisconsin trappers.

Conservation Congress

Robert O. Ellingson

Each year, during January's stabbing cold, some very hardy travelers wend their way to a central Wisconsin rendezvous. On Friday nights when most Badgers are bundled up at the home hearth, this band is on the road, braving the bitter weather to meet at a mid-state motel. They are warmed by thoughts of fly fishing on a hot summer day, flailing the waters for muskie, concealing beaver sets in marshes and roaming woodlots for elusive whitetails.

They are members of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, a group created by state law to advise the Natural Resources Board on conservation matters and help shape sound state policy on outdoor activities — hunting, fishing, trapping — and a clean environment.

Congress representatives burn the midnight oil in January, listening, questioning and debating proposed conservation policies. The congress' committees shape the issues that members carry back home to sportspersons. These proposals will then be mulled over wherever hunters and anglers gather — in hundreds of rod and gun club meetings, at Friday night fish fries, at barber shops and in taverns.

Each spring, statewide hearings in every county poll public reaction to proposed fish and game rule changes. The hearings are an important tool for resource managers and legislators who want to gauge the public pulse before changing natural resources policies. Each county also elects Conservation Congress delegates at the spring hearings. Virtually any county citizen of voting age can become a delegate or help choose one. It's a great chance for people who are genuinely concerned to help protect Wisconsin's natural resources.

Congress delegates meet in June

Robert O. Ellingson is the Conservation Congress liaison for DNR's Bureau of Information and Education.



To better understand policies on controlling rough fish, Conservation Congress members viewed a carp removal project on Lake Kegonsa. Congress committees represent sporting views on conservation and environmental matters.

Photo by Dean Tvedt

to forge the next year's conservation agenda and debate Conservation Congress positions that will be shared with the Natural Resources Board and the legislature. Conservation issues of statewide interest are passed on to the congress' committees, which discuss them at length with DNR program managers. The committees home in on timely aspects of their favorite outdoor activities. It's especially rewarding for folks who have a keen interest in one kind of outdoor recreation. Study committees specialize in these resource management issues — big game (deer and bear), endangered resources, hunting with dogs, upland game, turkey management, migratory waterfowl, fur harvesting, environmental practices, enforcement skills, Mississippi River management, Great Lakes fishing, trout, warmwater fisheries (lakes and rivers), forestry and parks. The con-

gress also maintains an executive council and management committees on public information and awards, community outreach, rules and resolutions and legislative matters. The council reviews committee findings and recommends advisory questions which are added to DNR proposals for action at the spring hearing.

The Conservation Congress also works with the state legislature as part of the DNR rule-making process. After the Natural Resources Board recommends changes in conservation policies, congress members testify before legislative committees on behalf of outdoor enthusiasts.

Squeezed between the fall hunt, trapping and ice fishing seasons, committee members prepare again for the annual mid-state rendezvous and a new season of conservation conversation on a cold night.

The Society of *Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus*, Ltd.

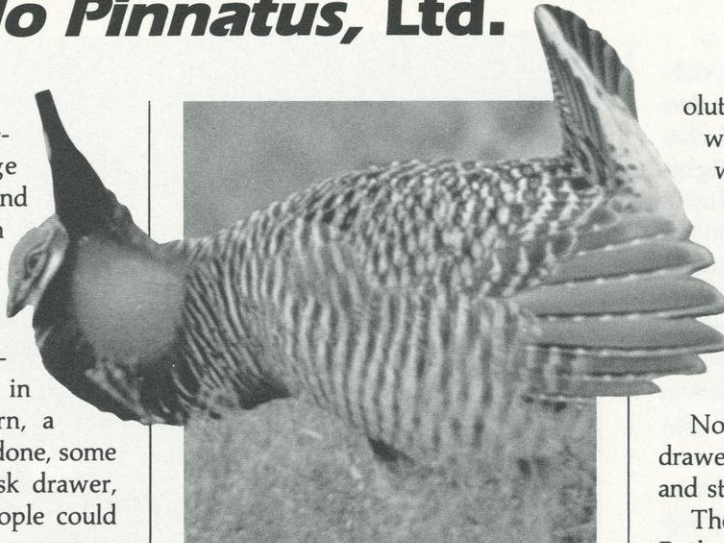
Jim Keir

DNR cooperators sometimes have very strange origins. In this case, luck and chance teamed up with careful planning and dedication to save a beautiful bird. The trail included a chance encounter of two Wisconsinites in a New York City tavern, a bookkeeping chore left undone, some papers forgotten in a desk drawer, and a name that most people could neither understand nor pronounce. This strange formula became the Society of *Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus*, Ltd. of Milwaukee, an organization founded to protect and preserve Wisconsin's greater prairie chickens.

Let's begin at the beginning. It was December 1960, at the King Cole Bar in the St. Regis Hotel, New York City. Far away, in central Wisconsin, the few remaining prairie chickens were struggling through the winter on a few remaining acres of habitat. This once-abundant species was losing the battle on the wintry grasslands.

Fortunately, in December 1960, people were beginning to understand. Dory Vallier returned to the hotel from a board meeting of the National Audubon Society. She was aware of the grim situation prairie chickens faced back home as she sat down for a nightcap at the King Cole Bar.

Willis Sullivan was there too, having returned from a theater performance. The two Wisconsinites hailed each other in the bar, exchanged holiday greetings, and chatted into the night. The conversation drifted to talk of the prairie chicken. This was the first Sullivan had heard of the problem, and he was intrigued. A trip



A greater prairie chicken on the booming grounds.
Photo by Jim Keir

to an observation blind on a chicken's booming ground the following April, arranged by Vallier, was all it took to convince Sullivan there was a real cause worth fighting for.

A few months passed and a small group started planning a new organization. Sullivan was involved, as were Ferdinand Hinrichs, Guido Rahr, and John Best. Land donations to be strictly managed for the prairie chickens would be the lifeblood of the program. To encourage those donations, the organization would have to be tax-exempt. But tax-exempt status was not easy to achieve, nor could it be obtained quickly — and the chickens needed help now!

Enter Paul Olson of the Dane County Conservation League, whose associates would soon form a double-barreled partnership with the society to save Wisconsin's prairie chicken. Olson also has strong contacts with a third organization, the Wisconsin Conservation League (WCL).

The league had been very active a few years earlier in restoring Horicon Marsh. The group had even purchased a parcel of land in 1954 in central Wisconsin for prairie chicken management. But by 1961, WCL was running out of steam, and a farewell announcement had been issued to its members. Olson had composed a res-

olution to dissolve the group and was ready to file the document with the state. Formal dissolution would relinquish WCL's tax-exempt status.

Sullivan read of WCL's impending fate in the newsletter. He contacted Olson and asked if the dissolution resolution had been filed.

No — it was still in Olson's desk drawer; WCL was technically intact and still had its tax-exempt status!

The rest was a simple formality. Both groups met. The WCL inducted these new prairie chicken supporters from Milwaukee into the league, and voted to rescind the resolution to dissolve. Then, the old officers resigned, one at a time, while electing the new members in their places. A new tax-exempt organization was born!

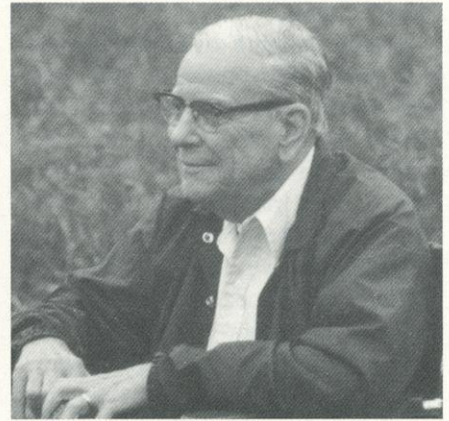
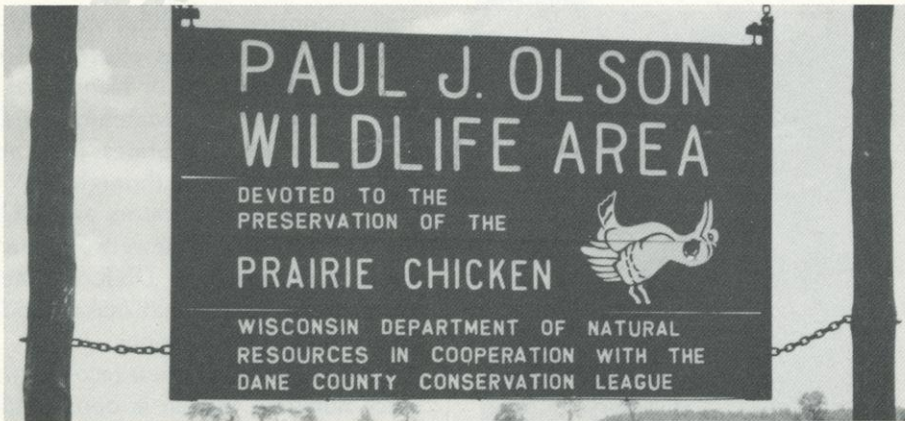
The new members had already decided a different name was in order, a name that would attract attention. They chose to use the Latin scientific name of the greater prairie chicken: the Society of *Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus*, Ltd. was off and running.

Donations began to flow in, land was purchased (nearly 7,000 acres), and the project became one of the country's greatest wildlife management success stories. A lease arrangement with the Department of Natural Resources allows its Bureau of Wildlife Management to manage these lands for the price of matching the annual property taxes.

Today, the prairie chicken has staged a population explosion as recounted by Frances Hamerstrom in her book, *Strictly for the Chickens*. Much of this success was made possible by the Society of *Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus*, Ltd. and its partners — the Dane County Conservation League, the Wisconsin Conservation League and dedicated volunteers. Without them, Wisconsin would most certainly have lost its prairie chickens.

Jim Keir is DNR's wildlife manager in Friendship.

Dane County Conservation League



The Dane County Conservation League devotes time, energy and money to a wide variety of fish and wildlife projects. Paul Olson (above) convinced the organization to help restore prairie chicken habitat in central Wisconsin. Photos courtesy of the Dane County Conservation League.

Joe Haug

They were called the “gold dust triplets,” but their real names were Paul Olson, Arnold Torgeson and Harold Starkweather: three enthusiastic outdoorsmen who were the early movers and shakers of an organization so active on the conservation scene, a Wisconsin Conservation Department employee once asked it to stop competing for statewide award programs because it won so many!

The Dane County Conservation League (DCCL) is now composed of 550 active members dedicated to conservation projects. Its list of accomplishments is long and impressive, including creating the state’s first public hunting grounds (Deansville) in 1939, improving streams and wildlife habitat, conducting youth education programs, and making legislative appearances.

League President Bill Holets has his hands full these days directing a variety of activities. Pheasant pens near Verona need to be relocated due to highway expansion, Sugar River improvement projects are unending, hunter safety courses need scheduling, etc.

Many people around central Wisconsin ask how DCCL got so far north.

Joe Haug is DNR’s area wildlife manager in Wisconsin Rapids.

The relationship between the league and the prairie chicken began in the spring of 1958 when some of the league’s founding fathers — Paul Olson, Gene Roark and Buzz Holland — spent a morning watching a remnant flock of prairie chickens “boom” on Buena Vista Marsh in Portage County. The conservationists were guests of Fred and Fran Hamerstrom, who spent their careers happily delving into the intricacies of prairie chicken biology.

Paul Olson recalled that day: “I came off the marsh BUG-EYED. Here was something so grand, so exciting, I could put my restless energy to work.”

An inspired Olson persuaded the DCCL board to start a movement to save the chicken. The board embraced the idea and formed an operating committee — the Prairie Chicken Foundation — “to guarantee the continued existence of the prairie chicken as a native Wisconsin bird.” And did they operate!

As with any good cause, the movement gained momentum as the plight of the chicken was made known. DCCL made good use of a newsletter to generate interest; fundraisers and personal appeals generated money.

“It all just worked,” stated a modest Olson. The successful venture can be measured in acres. The league ar-

ranged the purchase of more than 7,000 acres of prairie chicken habitat by 1976. Today, the group’s range totals 4,304 acres entirely funded by private and corporate donations. The project stretches from the Town of Leola in Adams County through the northern and eastern townships of Carson, Grant, Pine Grove and Buena Vista in Portage County and into the towns of Sigel and Sherry in Wood County.

Purchasing land was one thing; improving and maintaining prairie chicken habitat is another. As individual parcels were acquired through the years, the league either donated or leased its lands to the department. This teamwork secured a foothold on the central Wisconsin landscape for the prairie chicken.

The department is extremely thankful and more than just a little proud to have had the good fortune to work with the league over the past 30 years. Indeed, the Wisconsin prairie chicken success story is recognized nationwide as one of the most successful private-governmental conservation efforts in the United States.



Ducks Unlimited

Daniel G. Olson

A sign hanging over my friend's desk reads, "It's better to light one small candle than curse the darkness." I asked him about the expression. He heard it from Bob Jonet, a Ducks Unlimited (DU) national trustee from Green Bay, who heard it from an old DU volunteer, who heard it from an old duck hunter back in 1937. This year, we are again reminded of the darkness waterfowl faced. Then, they called it the Dust Bowl; now they just call it the drought. Either way, it's raising havoc with continental duck populations.

In 1937, a handful of concerned duck hunters gathered around a table at a Milwaukee restaurant, and each pledged a few hundred dollars to help out ducks.

"We are going to send this money to Canada," the guys said, "because that's where our ducks come from." Waterfowlers well knew in 1937 that neither Canada's national nor provincial governments had financial resources to manage wild ducks. And our government had no legal authority to spend U.S. dollars in Canada.

After a slow but dedicated start, the Milwaukee group organized, calling themselves More Game Birds for America, which later changed to Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

In 1937, the Canadian prairies had millions upon millions of pothole lakes, perfect duck habitat except for one small problem; there was no water. Rather than complain that their few dollars couldn't solve a huge problem, DU leaders started a trend that would become their trademark: they tackled one small project at a time.

It's truly amazing that this fledgling, private duck organization went on to establish a worldwide network of volunteers which now raises funds unparalleled by any other conservation organization. DU fund-rais-



Bolstering duck populations is a serious business, but it has its light moments. DU bought these duck crossing signs to mark roads where hens walk their young broods to water.
Photo courtesy of Ducks Unlimited

ers are held in cities of millions and in small unincorporated villages of 30. DU is proud that roughly 80 cents out of each dollar contributed is earmarked for its conservation program.

In 1977, Wisconsin created its own duck stamp to raise more money for duck production projects. The new law committed 33 percent of these new funds to Canada's summerberry marsh project which is managed by DU. This cooperative effort has generated more than \$1 million from Wisconsin duck hunters and continues to be the foundation for the Manitoba project.

To date, Wisconsin leads the United States in the number of cooperative DU projects as well as total

dollars donated for habitat work. Almost \$947,000 was allocated to the Department of Natural Resources for Matching Aid to Restore States Habitat (M.A.R.S.H.) through 1987.

DNR administrators and DU staff recently reviewed 39 new projects proposed by DNR wildlife managers, which would make good use of these DU donations.

Despite this year's near record-low duck numbers, not all is doom and gloom for waterfowl resources. The most comprehensive plan ever undertaken by the United States and Canada — the North American Waterfowl Management Plan — is now under way. This 15-year effort aims to restore duck populations to levels of the 1970s when 100 million ducks migrated up and down the four continental flyways. Matt Connolly, executive vice president of DU, will chair the Implementation Committee for this historic plan. DU will commit more than \$300 million to the plan during the next 15 years. One of the most ambitious proposals would change land use practices on 3.6 million acres of Canadian prairie currently farmed.

While conservation organizations do their almighty best to help waterfowl, the sad thing is that about 750,000 acres of wetland are lost annually in North America to a host of changing land uses. It is hard to prevent these losses when society has such little regard for water, wetlands and waterfowl, which brings me back to the sign on my friend's desk.

We owe those early duck pioneers a whole lot of credit for lighting that candle. I'd hate to think where we would be if not for those kind, hardy and gutsy conservationists. It would have been easy for them to say, "Ah, the heck with it, the job's too big." It would be easy for us to give up today, but ducks are worth the work.

Daniel G. Olson is a regional director for Ducks Unlimited.

Wisconsin Waterfowlers Assoc.

John Wetzel

Wisconsin Waterfowlers Association Director Ken Cook and DNR Wildlife Manager Bill Ishmael smiled as the hydraulic arm reached out and removed another swath of brush.

They were watching a Rousseau boom mower efficiently sculpt a dike on Theresa Marsh in Washington County. The new machine, donated by WWA, will speed dike maintenance and, more importantly, free up personnel to develop more waterfowl habitat projects, potentially increasing Wisconsin's duck populations.

Smiles on the faces of waterfowlers and waterfowl managers have been rare the past few years. Drought, habitat loss and low duck populations have dramatically cut hunting opportunities and seasons.

But waterfowlers are optimists. Who else prays for cold, rainy mornings to spend five hours crouched in a marshy blind? Despite recent tough seasons, those who followed the recent growth and development of WWA have been smiling — they know Wisconsin's waterfowling future is in some very good hands.

This group of waterfowlers has set its sights on being a local, hands-on organization. By planting food belts, restoring wetlands and teaching sportsmanship, WWA secures the opportunity for future generations to enjoy Wisconsin's waterfowl heritage. In its short four-year history, WWA's 15 chapters and 4,000-plus members have compiled an impressive list of accomplishments that span the state and are recognized nationally.

The enthusiastic members:

- conduct and sponsor waterfowl education and steel shot seminars
- sponsored production of hunter education videos including "Calling Waterfowl to the Decoys" and "Gunning Waterfowl with Steel Shot"
- began the "Adopt-a-Marsh" pro-

John Wetzel is DNR's Mississippi River wildlife biologist and liaison to WWA.



Censusing the hunt is an important method of monitoring duck health and population trends.

Photo by Dean Tvedt

gram allowing chapters to adopt and co-manage a local waterfowl area

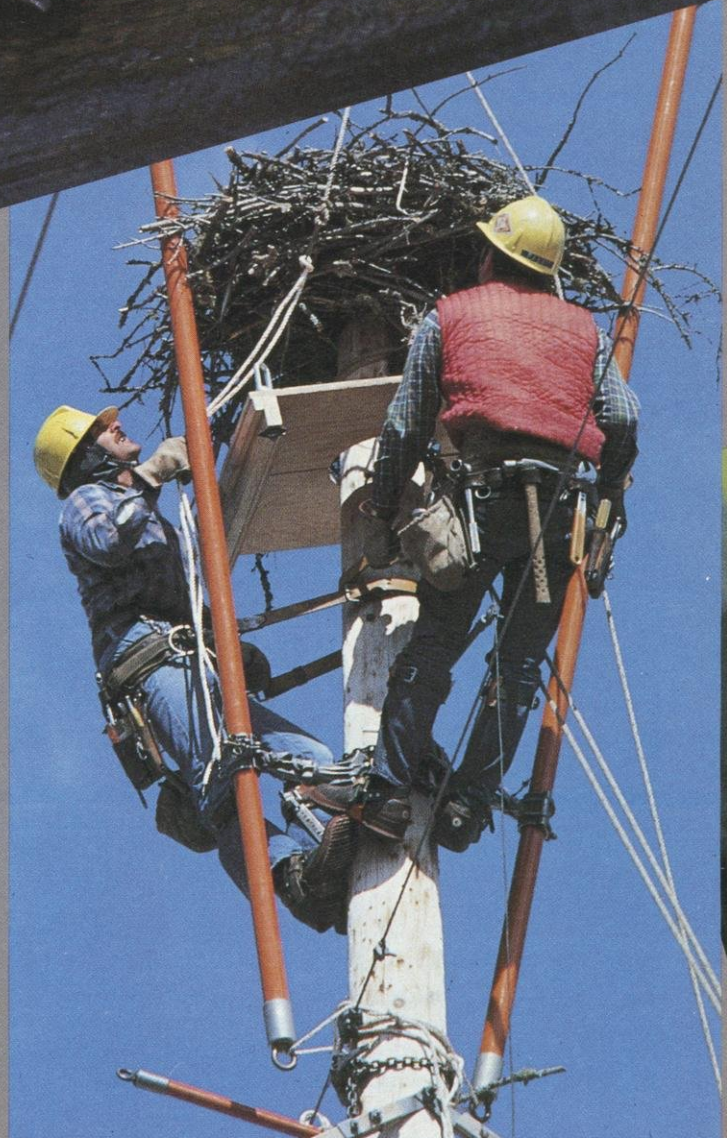
- sponsored the Woody Condo Program — the state's largest wood duck housing project
- provided funds for waterfowl development projects statewide; donated drills to plant prairie grass and provided other equipment to build better nesting cover on public and conservation reserve program lands
- provided public pamphlets — "Construction, Installation and Maintenance of Wood Duck Nest Boxes" and "Natural Cycle of Wetlands and the Management Practices for Waterfowl"

- provide early review of Wisconsin's waterfowl hunting season regulations
- counsel and lobby the legislature to better protect wetlands

The Bureau of Wildlife Management extends special congratulations to two individuals who provided the early spark and guidance for WWA — Gerald (Jerry) Solsrud, WWA's first president, and Robert A. Kieckhefer, the current WWA president.

For more information on WWA write: Wisconsin Waterfowlers Association Inc., P.O. Box 792, Waukesha, WI 53187-0792.





(clockwise from upper left—continuing onto front cover) Ducklings by Scott Nielsen, ruffed grouse by Tom Martinson, trapping mute swans courtesy of DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources, trapper Gerhard Wille by Chuck Pils, measuring young wood ducks by Dave Misterek, erecting osprey nest platforms courtesy of Wisconsin River Power Company, turkey trapping by Joseph Butsick.