

REMARKS OF JOHN GOTTSCHALK, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES
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MAN AND WILDLIFE IN THE NORTHWEST

Members of the Conservation Congress:

I feel a bit like President Johnson must feel when delivering the State of the Union message, not only because I'm addressing a "congressional" body but because we've got some grave conservation problems to talk about. Also, I want to make a good impression, for this is my first speech in the fabled region of seacoasts, mountains, deserts and space--space to contemplate Life, to feel the constantly-more-rare peace of being alone.

While this is my first official speech in the Northwest, it is not my first visit by any means. Still, I look at this region with something of a detached view; I am not emotionally involved except in the beauty of this land. Thus, in terms of my subject, let me tell you how I see the Northwest through my particular spectacles, one glass labeled "Fisheries" and the other "Wildlife."

I see much of this region as the last great stronghold of the Outdoorsman. To be geographical, this opinion would give "stronghold" status to eastern Washington and Oregon, to Idaho and Montana--most of the area we call the Northwest. For as our population flowed westward in that great, continuing migration which began even before Lewis and Clark moved up the Missouri, the mystic goal of our journey seems to have been the Pacific coast. The human river flowed through

this Stronghold of Outdoorsmen--mostly recognizing its battlements only as obstacles--until the people came to Land's End; there they formed Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, the human enclaves that now reach down to the vast metropole of Los Angeles.

But now the people current has begun to reverse itself. The tide of populace, dammed by water, is beginning to back up into this vast, open space I've dubbed The Stronghold. Add a steady trickle of people coming in from the East and we have a slowly filling reservoir of humanity, people who are seeking not only outdoor recreation but the chance to live outdoors, with some space about them. Right now, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming are the greatest outdoor areas south of Canada--because there aren't too many people around . . . yet!

But with the burgeoning population that is building up nationally, the pressure here will rise. Local governments are going to discover . . . are, I think, now discovering . . . a danger to some of their natural assets. Thankfully, I see evidence that a few local governments are taking some positive action; they are planning and zoning, not only for recreation but for residential, industrial and cultural reasons. The challenge to counties and cities is great. And a major function of the Federal Government is to help cope with the challenge, in a working partnership.

This working partnership should be described as a search for quality rather than a study of techniques for exploitation. The

people who settled in small clusters in our Stronghold of Open Space were primarily exploiters, and I do not use the term in a derogatory sense at all. But they were the timber-based and the mine-based users of resources. The Northwest came late to our national exploitation, and what the miners, ranchers, lumbermen did was not a mistake at the time. But to continue thoughtless exploitation, in terms of what we have learned from mistakes elsewhere . . . this would be the greatest error we could make, because now we know the end results.

This is my philosophical (and admittedly biased) approach to our Northwestern resources; now let's get down to the job of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in working with people who live here. Let's start with . . . well, fish and fishing.

Our finned friends have been important to the economy of this region ever since the first nomads wandered into the Columbia Basin 10,000 years ago. From the great rivers and small streams came salmon and trout to assure a food supply as dependable and important as the buffalo to the Plains Indians; Lewis and Clark found the value of fish much more recently, but the river resources kept them going.

Now the purely food values are still great, but the sport fishery is building up steadily on the relatively clean waters and open spaces, where a cutthroat may rise to a well-placed fly even as the angler hears a shrill challenge of a bull elk slicing the stillness of a frosty September morning.

Now let me make it clear: the wildlife agencies of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and other States are directly shouldering

the management of fish and game in these areas, using their professional competence and ethical sense in doing it. The job of this Bureau I represent is that of partnership; partnership in research and fish hatcheries, in planning sound management. We work, of course, not only with States but with other Federal agencies, helping manage the fisheries on Indian lands, the great tracts under Bureau of Land Management custodianship, and on the National Parks.

Our fish hatcheries produce cutthroat trout, grayling, Pacific salmon, steelhead and rainbows that support heavy angling in accessible waters. Each Northwest hatchery is geared to its local need. For example, with Montana managing the waters of the Flathead drainage for cutthroats, our Creston hatchery in that State is propagating only Westslope cutthroat trout. But further down the watershed, we work with local wildlife agencies to rear Pacific salmon and steelheads. By such coordinated programs, we are producing benefits to both sport fishing and commercial interests in the Northwest.

Of course, much of our work here is less direct than fish stocking, but it is equally important in Federal-State-private conservation cooperation. Specially trained biologists spotted about the region provide disease identification and control treatments to State and private hatcheries. Others study salmon nutrition and disease at laboratories in Washington State; such research is producing new feeds that send larger, healthier salmon on their seaward migration. The almost dramatic improvement in catches since 1960 came from these improved diets, plus disease control.

We operate training schools in piscatorial husbandry--meaning hatchery management--for people from other agencies and the private sector. And we are proud of the cooperative fisheries units established at 20 universities over the past five years. These units are staffed by personnel of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, but the costs are cooperative, funded by State agencies and the schools. Here again we seek quality . . . to improve the ability of fishery managers for the public's angling pleasures.

This is only a summary of our piscatorial role in the Northwest, but I must cite a subtle threat to salmon and steelhead: the silt and sediment that is choking spawning gravels in our streams. Siltation is being studied by agencies like the Bureau of Land Management as well as traditional fisheries people; there is a truism that sometimes slips our attention because it is so true: that soil and water are not separate elements; each affects the other and both are vital to aquatic life.

And this leads into another land-water complex that is one of our major Bureau jobs: the national wildlife refuge system, particularly as it relates to this great Northwest of ours.

It may surprise you slightly to learn that there are 27 national wildlife refuges managed primarily for waterfowl in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and western Montana, covering about 400,000 acres. And there are two big-game refuges with nearly 259,000 acres managed primarily for antelope, bighorns, deer and bear. And there are nine little

refuges--mostly small islands--managed for colonial nesting birds . . . areas much more important than their 800-acre total would indicate.

I hope you noted my use of that phrase "managed primarily for" because we do not believe that any refuge is a single-purpose operation. What benefits a mallard benefits a frog and a redwing and most certainly a human. For in the last analysis, the primary management is for people . . . for their pleasure in seeing wildlife, hunting wildlife, photographing it or just knowing it's there.

And right here let me level with you. The refuge system in our Northwest has received a mouse's portion of our limited development money, because the lion's share--a pretty small feline--has gone into areas in heavily populated regions. We certainly haven't failed to see the immense values of refuges in this part of the country, however; over the past six years, nine major refuges have been acquired in the Northwest. We have acknowledged pragmatically that the Northwesterner naturally comes closer to a quality existence, right now, than do people in more crowded regions.

Our need here, as we visualize it at the moment, is not to demand "improvement" of the countryside, but to concentrate our efforts on maintaining the quality of life--all life--while recognizing that this quality must be shared with an ever-increasing number of people.

Now "quality" is a sticky word to define, so remember this is the way your Bureau sees it: We feel that our refuge system, here and elsewhere, has a vital role in quality outdoor experiences connected with wildlife. But how play the part?

Well, in the Northwest, we assume that more and more humans are going to enter the area, by birth and migration, on the coasts, in the mountains or across the great sweep of plains. Wildlife habitat will diminish; you can't have a house and a deer on the same half-acre. What we solemnly call "wildlife-oriented recreation" must become more formal . . . the Mountain Men are dead, and the time of stepping off the back porch to go hunting is just about gone also. Every year, a little more planning, a little more travel, is needed when you search for personal physical freedom.

But we want to operate refuges as a place for free creatures, basing our public-use programs upon individual experience rather than quantity visits. This would be difficult to explain to some audiences, but you will understand when I say your refuges should offer appreciation of Nature, not of handicrafts. They should be centers of self-education in wildlife conservation.

For our system is basically concerned with all living organisms, with the completeness of the wildlife community--plus man's proper role in that community.

We will, of course, continue to seek waterfowl habitat, using our Wetlands Program as a tool for preserving and shaping this particular necessity. We want to protect the best waterfowl acreage from drainage or other changes in the land-use pattern, to keep those acres available for wild production, for hunting, for study and other appropriate values. This, too, will be increasingly difficult as human populations build up.

Endangered species enter into our refuge work, of course. In the Northwest, Tule elk and Columbian whitetail deer are of current concern to us. The solution to their survival may be land dedicated to their use, in rather large blocks under extensive management.

Such management has worked for other species. Consider the once-endangered trumpeter swan. Red Rock Lakes Refuge in Montana, established for this noble bird, continues to serve it well and the species is flourishing again. But Red Rock Lakes also serves the Shiras' moose and the grayling--plus naturalists, birdwatchers and others of the human species.

Incidentally, we have a truly blessed problem in the Northwest. That is the Columbia Basin mallard flock, a recent phenomenon. We don't understand all its implications yet, but we'll keep trying until we do. There has to be a way to maintain a large flock of ducks while keeping down crop damage, and then to distribute an allowable kill according to equitable and sporting methods of hunting. And we'll find that way--though perhaps not to everyone's satisfaction.

Now this Outdoor Stronghold mentioned at the beginning has its paradoxes. When wild animals and domestic man live together, even in lightly populated regions, some form of animal control becomes necessary. Forest or range management inevitably requires certain limitations on wildlife numbers--and on livestock numbers, for that matter. While animal control measures should--and do--form the subject for a long speech, they must be touched upon here. The problem isn't as simple as coyotes versus sheep: porcupines are

menaces in established timber stands, seed-eaters gravely disrupt reforestation seeding, large carnivores cause livestock losses, ground rodents damage range restoration work and erosion control programs.

Thus, there is a demand for wildlife controls--which must be tempered with balanced judgment of values and by aesthetic interests. We must conduct our control programs--again involving cooperative work with State, local and private interests--with a great deal of finesse and some carefully calculated decisions. There are few stark black-and-white agreements here, and we are setting new standards based upon our projection of the Northwest's great future.

Listening back to what I've been saying, there has been a lot of stress on this area that is big, high, wide--and threatened in its wideness by an increasing number of people. But there's another, less obvious threat to wildlife and habitat: unwise use of chemicals in pest control or "weed" elimination. All of you in this audience are aware of chemical values and dangers, I think; most of you have read and thought about pesticides. But the wise use of chemicals is an individual responsibility, and even the well-read man sometimes fails to apply his book-learnin' to his daily operations.

Thus, part of our job in the Northwest is to protect wildlife and habitat from adverse chemical effects, especially upon lands managed by the Department of the Interior, but also upon all land in cooperation with other agencies and individuals. Right now, we're developing a broad program for appraising the effects of pesticides and herbicides on wildlife under field conditions, believing that

basic laboratory data being compiled at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center are only a beginning.

In our field studies of chemicals and their effects, we are naturally working with State and local officials, not only in wildlife programs but in the health and welfare fields. We are feeding our wildlife findings into the studies of other reactions to pesticides, while seeking pesticides that have less devastating effects apart from their target. We are deeply concerned with regional and national monitoring of pesticides and their residues . . . concerned indeed with pollution on the land, in the water and in the air. All pollution, wherever it occurs, affects all life.

I'm going to have to leap about here, to cover my subject. Note, then, that we are working on the Indian lands and the military lands in providing better wildlife as well as fisheries services . . . advice on how to have more deer, waterfowl, and other species. Our possibilities here are roughly ten times greater than our manpower and money, but we do have a goodly number of agreements with tribal and military chiefs for wildlife management plans on reservations and bases.

Our animal control work, pesticide studies, advice on habitat improvement and wildlife management . . . these are duties of what we named the Wildlife Services Division. Maybe it should be our Enigma Branch, for this group deals with social conflicts and clashing cross currents. Consider, for instance, the grizzly bear. As

a species, Ursus horribilis is in trouble. And the grizzly is a romantic figure in our legendry, a symbol of the Old West . . . but in part of western Montana, Ol' Silvertip is rough on livestock, particularly in the spring. It's only for a few weeks, but dollar values can run high.

So what can we do? It's easy: we capture the offending grizzlies. But is capturing them easy? Well, no, but after discussions with the Montana Fish, Game and Parks Commission and Montana University's Wildlife Research Unit, we have figured out how to immobilize an offending animal with narcotics.

Now up to that point, it wasn't too tough, at least on paper. Only--we got a sleeping bear by the tail. Before he wakes up--possibly with a headache--where do we take this grizzly? Who wants him, within a reasonable range of difficult transportation? So far, no one.

This is a pretty fair example of wildlife problems: broad numbers of people want "something done"--but not at the expense of their own area or, sometimes, pocketbook. It's a perfectly human tendency, a problem not only in animal control programs, or endangered species. My colleagues in the State wildlife agencies can match it with deer, pheasants or squirrels, with rabbits, pronghorns or elk. Let me quote, in translation, an old Spanish proverb--"God says: 'take what you want--but pay for it'."

This is a good motto for all of us who deal with wildlife, either as enthusiastic amateurs, trained professionals or interested people.

To have fish, be they cutthroat or carp, we shall have to pay by foregoing use of streams as sewers; to have big game we must pay in open lands that are not devoted to grain nor garages; to have song birds we must pay in habitat requirements and a restraining hand on the insecticide guns; to have hunting and fishing while human population mounts we must pay in restricted methods and in shooting freedom. You can adduce further personal examples.

My final word to you from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife . . . the final phrasing of this speech, not the last time you hear from me, I hope . . . is to remind you again that the Northwest is perhaps the last lush region of Outdoors America in terms of wildlife and wild space. It may, indeed, be the last stronghold of natural beauty over vast areas. And because it is difficult to define natural beauty--even more difficult than defining what each of us means by "quality"--let me end my exhortation with a quote from Aldo Leopold.

"The physics of beauty," wrote Professor Leopold in Sand County Almanac, "is one department of natural science that is still in the Dark Ages. Not even the manipulators of bent space have tried to solve its equations. Everybody knows, for example, that the autumn landscape in the north woods is the land--plus a ruffed grouse . . . The grouse represents only a millionth of either the mass or the

energy of an acre. Yet subtract the grouse and the whole thing is dead. An enormous amount of some kind of motive power has been lost."

Dr. Leopold's "physics of beauty" means that the sweep of landscape is dead if you subtract the eagle that flies above it, or the elk that grazes upon it. Plain and Mountain form a sterile panorama if within the picture no bighorn moves, no pronghorn tosses its head. The Columbia, the Rogue, the Salmon are only conduits for water if their aqueous passage carries no steelhead or chinook, no trout or turtle.

Natural beauty is a state of harmony with the land; so long as man lives within his proper relationship to landscape, there is beauty in desert, mountain, high plain or rocky coast. Admittedly, this is only human aesthetics--but so is the desecration of the countryside only a manmade ugliness.

You who live in the Northwest, and we who have a responsibility here, can plan and cooperate to maintain what is surely one of the finest regions on earth. We cannot limit migration nor cut off vacationers; even if we could, we should not. We cannot--at least I cannot--define the people-carrying capacity of this land, but we can work together for quality living, for wildlife and fish, for enlightened use of regional resources by mankind.

And thus we can maintain the varied landscapes, the lovely seascapes and the outdoor stronghold of wildlife and humanity.