

State Wildlife Management and Conservation

EDITED BY
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Preface

I've had the privilege of working for more than 30 years for a state wildlife agency, serving the public as a habitat biologist, wildlife biologist, supervisor of wildlife biologists, deputy wildlife chief, and the Wyoming governor's wildlife policy advisor. Throughout my career, I was struck that no one had ever chronicled the many and varied contributions of state agencies to the conservation and management of wildlife. State agencies were included as an important component of the total conservation landscape in seminal publications like Leopold's *Game Management* (1933), Trefethen's *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (1975), Krausman and Cain's *Wildlife Management and Conservation* (2013), and others. In addition, many individual states documented their own histories and contributions to wildlife management. However, a detailed and all-encompassing book describing state agencies' total contributions to wildlife conservation does not exist. The topic was a good fit for The Wildlife Society's scientific management book series with Johns Hopkins University Press, and after discussion and hundreds of hours of work, the authors and I are proud to present the following treatise to tell our story.

State wildlife agencies are as diverse as the species they're responsible for conserving. In Pennsylvania, Utah, and Nevada, terrestrial wildlife is the sole responsibility of the agency, but 23 other agencies oversee wildlife and fisheries management, and seven also administer state parks or forestry. Wildlife agencies in 15 additional states have broad responsibility for all natural resources, including environmental protection. Owing to the broad and complex array of responsibilities among agencies, this volume documents only the states' role in management of terrestrial wildlife. We

fully recognize the critical importance of state management of fisheries, parks, forests, and environmental protection. Because of the nature of this book series, however, we believe that other state responsibilities should be covered in future, program-specific books.

This tome consists of 15 chapters. The first four chapters present the history and current structure of state wildlife agencies, the legal basis for state management, the role of states in wildlife policy decisions, and the evolution of funding for state wildlife management. Chapter 5 details the crucial importance of state wildlife law enforcement. The next five chapters relate how states manage big game, small and upland game, furbearers, migratory game birds, and nongame wildlife. Chapters 11 and 12 outline the role of states in managing human-wildlife conflict and wildlife diseases. The use of human dimensions and field wildlife research by state agencies are discussed in chapters 13 and 14. The book concludes with a summary of the most important major challenges facing state wildlife agencies in the future. Intended for a variety of audiences, we believe that this book would be valuable as a standalone text for upper-level undergraduate or graduate courses designed to introduce students to state wildlife agencies.

For individuals who have a passion for wild places and wild things, don't mind long days in the field, and revel in the constant challenge of managing a publicly held trust resource, a career in state wildlife management might just be for you. This book can provide salient information to help you decide.

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