

Who Was Wayne W. Sandfort?

Wayne W. Sandfort was a leader in wildlife management and research in Colorado and a long-term member of The Wildlife Society (TWS). At the 2013 CMPS Annual Meeting, the Student Travel Grant program was renamed the Wayne W. Sandfort Student Travel Grant Program. The reason: Wayne was the first President of the Section, one of the organizers of the Section, and he was interested in students.

Born in Humboldt, Nebraska, Wayne attended Colorado State University, where he obtained both his undergraduate and graduate degrees. Wayne was the first student in the Colorado Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. After one year at Colorado State, he joined the U.S. Army where he spent three years in the 139th Engineering Forestry Company.

Wayne fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and was for some time behind German lines. He completed his army career operating a rest and rotation center for armed service personnel.

Wayne worked for 33 years with the Colorado Game and Fish Department as an Upland Game Biologist, leader of statewide Upland Game Bird Surveys, Game Research Chief, State Game Manager, and Assistant Director. He retired in 1983.

Wayne was knowledgeable and interested in all aspects of wildlife management but was best known for his work with upland game birds, especially pheasants. He was instrumental in initiating many research projects in Colorado and he was the author of numerous publications on wildlife. Wayne mentored many employees of the Department, always supportive of their professional careers.

The Wildlife Society was a big part of Wayne's life. In 1955, he became the first President of the Central Mountains and Plains Section, Regional Representative to TWS from 1970-1973, and Vice President of TWS in 1974-1975. Wayne was a Charter Member of the Colorado Chapter, and served on numerous committees at all levels of The Wildlife Society.



Wayne received various TWS awards, including an Honorary Membership in 1991.

In 2009, he received a special citation from Governor Bill Ritter for his extraordinary service to Colorado. Throughout his career, he attended the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, where he was actively involved with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Wayne loved to hunt and fish. He especially enjoyed hunting sage-grouse in northwestern Colorado and fishing at Bonny Reservoir in southeastern Colorado. Wayne was a long-time member of the Colorado Wildlife Federation, and served as President in 1985.

Wayne passed away on November 10, 2011 at the age of 87, and was survived by his wife of 62 years, Virginia (Ginger); three children Del, Cal, and Melissa; five grandchildren; and two great granddaughters. He will be remembered as a kind and caring person, devoted to wildlife and their habitats.

Len H. Carpenter
Fort Collins, CO
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