



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

Final Position Statement

Conservation Law Enforcement

Regulating activities of the public is a major element in management of natural resources, particularly wildlife. An increasing human population means that, in the future, more people will have fewer resources to share. Public information efforts, however extensive or imaginative, will not by themselves sufficiently protect our natural resources from public abuse. Imperative to perpetuation and sustained use of natural resources is a sound legal system that combines equitable laws and judicious law enforcement. Effective enforcement of laws governing natural resources depends upon personnel properly trained in both legal and biological aspects of their profession.

The policy of The Wildlife Society in regard to conservation law enforcement is to:

1. Encourage public agencies to recruit, fund, and equip an adequate staff of law enforcement officers to enforce wildlife-related laws and regulations.
2. Urge public agencies involved with enforcement of wildlife-related laws and regulations to employ broadly trained professionals, preferably university graduates in wildlife biology, ecology, conservation education, and law enforcement who are Certified Wildlife Biologists.
3. Recommend that public resource agencies provide ongoing training exceeding that required by statute for their law enforcement employees in order to maintain and upgrade their professional skills and increase their understanding of wildlife biology and habitat relationships.
4. Encourage conservation law enforcement officers to affiliate with resource-oriented professional societies.
5. Encourage close coordination and cooperation between conservation law enforcement officers and resource managers to identify and resolve resource exploitation and habitat damage situations. Cooperatively design and implement short- and long-term solutions that combine education, engineering, and enforcement.
6. Recognize, support, and commend the often difficult and dangerous work of conservation law enforcement officers.