

WellBeing International  
**WBI Studies Repository**

1969

## Protection of Wildlife

Leonard Hall

Follow this and additional works at: [https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/acwp\\_wmm](https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/acwp_wmm)



Part of the [Animal Studies Commons](#), [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), and the [Politics and Social Change Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hall, L. (1969). Protection of wildlife. In C. Burke (Ed.), *The Power of Positive Programs in the American Humane Movement: discussion papers of the National Leadership Conference of The Humane Society of the United States: October 3-5, 1969, Hershey, PA* (pp. 21-27).

This material is brought to you for free and open access by WellBeing International. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the WBI Studies Repository. For more information, please contact [wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org](mailto:wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org).



Local animal welfare organizations need us for help with all kinds of problems relating to handling of animals, humane programs, and society and shelter operation and management.

The U. S. Government needs us. Legislators call on us for information relating to animal problems with which to answer correspondence. Government agencies seek our advice and cooperation in dealing with issues involving animals. Our representatives are on the U.S. Sanitary Livestock Commission – now known as the U.S. Animal Health Association – and the Task Force working on seal harvest methods in the Pribilof Islands. We work with the USDA on Public Law 89-544 and we have investigated, at the request of Congress, how the Federal Humane Slaughter Law is being implemented in slaughterhouses.

We are needed by humanitarians for advice and information on every aspect of humane work.

Domestic animals need us and our continuing campaign against surplus breeding.

The nation's schools need us for the production and distribution of classroom material aimed at developing attitudes of kindness in the young.

The animal control workers of America need us because, through our National Humane Education Center, we can train them in the best techniques and methods of doing their job.

Animals exploited in entertainment, in science education, in food production, and animals cruelly treated in transportation and biomedical research desperately need the help and relief we are bringing them.

We are needed to develop – through publicity, making people aware, and organization of subsidiary units – an ever-growing corps of adult humanitarians who will take action against cruelty in our society.

I kind of wondered what Henry Bergh would think if he were here today. I think he would be amazed, and very sobered. I believe, however, that with the perspective that he had then he would agree with me, and with others of you, that the time was never better to have our work surge ahead.

We must create a broad climate of goodwill and dedication. We must put aside the petty differences. We must really throw ourselves into the battle for a brave and courageous but a kind and non-violent world. We must put out the fires of hate in a world in scary turmoil, and build a world based on the concept of Dr. Schweitzer: respect for every living thing. Let us not forget in the humane movement, this means respect for each other as well as respect for the animal kingdom.

## **Protection of Wildlife**

**By Leonard Hall**

**Naturalist and Conservation Writer**

**Caledonia, Missouri**

There seems to be, and I'm sure it is true with all of you, a feeling that the time has come when we must expand our area of concern to include wild birds and animals, as well as the domestic animals and pets which are part of our interest today.

On the basis of this assumption, I'd like to cover the following points in my discussion. First, all those sound and logical reasons to include a broad interest in wildlife in the program of the humane society. Second, some specific areas and problems that might engage our interest and action. Third, how can the humane society—an organization which is created primarily for action at the local level—and its members function in the field of wildlife conservation?

In this discussion I want to refer you to a chart done by, perhaps, America's first great animal ecologist because what we are really talking about is Aldo Leopold's biotic pyramid, or Pyramid of Life, which we must keep in balance if man is to continue his life on this earth.

In approaching the first question—should wildlife be one of our interests—it seems to me that we are at once brought up against a problem which not only our wildlife but people of the entire world are facing today. This is the problem of pollution of the air, of our soil and water, brought about by the very technology that allows us to boast the world's highest living standard today.

To put the matter bluntly, during the past half century or so, applied science has literally plunged recklessly ahead, piling one scientific breakthrough on top of another, and one material gain on top of another—apparent material gain—without ever projecting ahead to determine the final consequences of these so-called scientific advances.

We have an agriculture today that is actually a monoculture, the culture of individual crops in vast areas. What is happening in

agriculture is that we are very rapidly breaking down the original biological structure of our soils, destroying the soil fauna and flora which are the basis of all other life. Instead of utilizing the elements provided by nature for normal, healthy agricultural production, we are forcing ever higher yields of poorer quality crops through the use of poisonous herbicides, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers which, themselves, can become poisons when they pile up in the soil and when they spill over into our lakes and streams.

Now, these may kill a pest for the short term that you are aiming at, but they allow stronger pests to multiply and the balances of nature are upset. All of you who have read Leopold's book, *Sand County Almanac*, know what happens to the biotic pyramid when you attack any of the levels of the biosystem or the ecosystem, whichever you want to call it. And while this is going on, our energy producing machines are releasing an ever-increasing tonnage of deadly pollutants into the air while cities and industries poison the water on which we literally depend for life and, in large degree, for oxygen production. Barry Commoner, biologist and author of a book that I hope every one of you will read, *Science and Survival*, in the greatest statement that any scientist has so far made about the concern that scientists must have about the future of life on this planet, says that modern man carries strontium 90 in his bones, iodine 131 in his thyroid, DDT in his fat, and asbestos and coal dust in his lungs. And don't forget that every animal about which we are concerned on this continent is affected in the same way—not only on this continent. We all know that the walrus of the Arctic and the penguin of the Antarctic are already too high in DDT in their fat to be safe for use as meat, just as, incidentally, I read the other day that mother's milk in the United States could not be shipped in interstate commerce under today's limitations of DDT in milk for babies. We have gone that far.

This picture isn't a pretty one. When we think of wildlife, we're apt to think of our endangered species first, then of species that interest chiefly the hunter or the commercial killer. In the domestic field we think about those 6,000 sheep that were killed out in Skull Valley, Utah when nerve gas got loose from an aerial drop and drifted in the wind. The interesting thing to me is not those 6,000 sheep—it's easy for sheep breeders to go out and breed 6,000 more sheep—but here is a vast area in the State of Utah which is now a complete life desert; nothing lives there. This also doesn't include the thousands of acres that caught the drift of this one nerve gas accident where life or countless life forms have since been destroyed and will not be replaced for a long, long time to come.

Actually, sadly, this is the kind of destruction that goes on relentlessly day after day in America as a result of such seemingly harmless and normal operations as heavy fertilization of a corn field

with 12-12-12 and nitrogen and anhydrous ammonia, or the spraying of an alfalfa field with a chlorinated hydrocarbon to kill an aphid but also killing everything else that visits that field or lives in it, or the DDT that the Forest Service has finally quit using, or the fogging of a suburb for mosquitoes during the summertime, or the fogging of estuaries for sandflies that bother our well-to-do but thin-skinned anglers. Now, the destruction here comes not only in the kill of harmless or even beneficial life forms but also in the build-up of harmful and poison resisting life forms.

There is no magazine published in America that doesn't have some article in almost every issue on the environmental problem. There is no newspaper that doesn't have two or three articles every day. And this is a wonderful thing. Whether it will save us or not we don't know.

Meanwhile, the biocides that we are pouring into our lakes and rivers and oceans are reducing the process of photosynthesis in marine algae—perhaps already by as much as 75%—thus causing a reduction in oxygen production in the world's atmosphere that could become catastrophic because a great deal of the oxygen that you and I breathe is produced by marine algae. And this is made worse by the steady destruction of our forest lands all over the world. Two-thirds of the world's forests are gone, and they will never be restored.

At the same time, and this is even more serious, the proportion of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases every single day. This gas traps the heat through what is known as the greenhouse effect and this will eventually cause, if it's not already causing, a steady rise in earth's temperature that can eventually melt the polar ice caps, raising the level of the oceans and eventually flooding every coastal city on this planet, every city on every seacoast in the world.

Now, you think this isn't happening. But I read a symposium on the polar bears just within the last two or three days and one of the things brought out was the shrinkage of the ice floes which are the polar bears' habitat. Now, why? Why is this, unless it is from this increase in carbon dioxide which is gradually raising the earth's temperature?

Soon you will see that we have already gone a long way toward impoverishing this pyramid of life. We have cut off most of the carnivores at the top or we have let many of the herbivores, the hoofed mammals, explode; we're killing some insects and encouraging others; in our agricultural lands, where we had two or three hundred plant species, we're cutting them down to one and destroying the biological richness of that soil. This has already resulted in the extinction of many higher life forms in our time. I'm not talking about evolution. We all know that any animal that outlives its purpose on the planet becomes extinct. This has been done by the hand of man.

When we review the list of vanishing wildlife, we realize that all of these creatures today are being destroyed, literally, by the hand of man. Some through deliberate changes that we make in the landscape which limit or destroy their living space; some through outright persecution or overkill, and we know where these happen. Sadly enough, some by overkill of predators that allow population explosions of hoofed mammals like the deer.

Finally, we find many groups of concerned and interested citizens—national and international in scope—who work directly or indirectly to alleviate or correct these conditions. Now, most of them have their own field of interest. There is the Audubon Society; their field of interest has broadened out far, far beyond birds. There is Defenders of Wildlife; this is the organization, probably, whose interests in its field are the closest to your interests in the humane society.

The Wilderness Society is not primarily interested in wildlife and yet the Wilderness Society comes the closest, I think, of anybody to creating true wildlife refuges. Most wildlife refuges today are places where you lure animals in and feed them and then go in and shoot the surplus.

The Sierra Club is interested in many fields. One of them certainly is the protection of wildlife; another is the protection of and expansion of wilderness. So, it's plain that there are many organizations who have small areas of interest, at least, that are in common with ours.

There are others who are interested in conservation, like the National Wildlife Federation, who had a primary interest in hunting. That was their only interest. Today they realize that if they don't get in there and pitch in the field of the human environment and in the protection of wilderness and in keeping our streams and lakes clean, free of pollution, there isn't going to be any hunting and there isn't going to be any fishing. So, they have made a fascinating switch in their biggest areas of interest, I'd say within the last two years, and this is a wonderful thing.

But it's also plain that any organization with the humane interest of The Humane Society of the United States can certainly afford in the field of wildlife to throw its not inconsiderable moral influence and its weight into the ring on the side of, let's call them, the angels. And this is the preservation of our environment and the preservation of all of our wildlife in a sane and healthy manner.

What are specific areas and problems which might engage our interest?

Here we see the need to seek out and encourage every effort to improve the life environment—in our neighborhoods, and in the state, and in the nation. We ought to work to do away with long-lived pesticides like DDT, and we're making progress in this

field. Certainly, we should be working on it as well as the National Wildlife Federation. They are working on it because it kills fish, but there are reasons other than that—it might kill us, too. We should work for an agriculture—and this is probably the hardest of all—based on sound, natural principles rather than an agriculture whose primary purpose is to enrich the coffers of the great chemical companies of the United States. We have to work for unpolluted water for domestic use and certainly for recreation.

We have to work for clean air to breathe, even in cities where there isn't any wildlife. We're going to have to work for an end to the unwarranted and dangerous manufacture of poisonous herbicides and pesticides. I don't say that we can ever grow crops again without fertilizers or without herbicides and pesticides in America, but we've got to find the ones that aren't going to kill us 20 years from now, or kill our children 30 years from now. The research hasn't been done, and I'm a little scared that it isn't being done. We have to end the dangerous manufacture of certain war weapons like nerve gases—and there are much more horrible ones than that, you know. Some of them have already been dumped into the sea in so-called concrete containers that are going to last forever.

These are all aims that humane societies everywhere can work for. At today's rate of population growth, it's utterly imperative that we create more parks for recreation and to preserve scenic beauty, that we have more carefully managed forest lands (in spite of what the foresters say, we are still destroying our forests), more untouched wilderness areas of good size where plant and animal life may continue unharrassed by human intrusion.

We must work to end actual cruelty to animals, a condition which is always unnecessary and very often due to ignorance or commercial greed. As an example of what I mean, we should urge an end to the slaughter of the blue whale and other endangered aquatic species. A moratorium of 25 to 50 years on whale harvests might get the blue whale back over the edge; otherwise, it will be extinct in another generation or less. We must fight the stupid poisoning programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management against such so-called predators as the coyote and other rodents, programs which kill countless beneficial forms of wildlife.

We should make severe penalties mandatory for killing bald eagles. We should work to close the season on polar bears around the whole Arctic circle (and, interestingly, I'm quite sure that Russia would go along with us on this, and I think Canada would, and the only problem that we would have so far is with Norway) until we are sure that we have a surplus of polar bears. I think we ought to try to keep all wildlife right up to the edge of its habitat; not so that it's starved but so that it's full.

We still have a totally stupid and unscientific bounty system in many states, and in every one of them we know that it is unnecessary; we know that it is just a means of buying a certain group of voters out in the back country. We certainly should join the campaign on a nationwide basis to close the roadside zoos, where I think probably more cruelty to wild animals is practiced than in anywhere else in America.

What we're ever going to do with regard to that jetport and the Army Engineers and their draining of the land north of the Tamiami Trail I don't know. If we can't do something, the alligators will drown and, with them, about 60 species of the most magnificent birds that this continent has and what other aquatic life is almost impossible to say.

We should stop the baiting and killing of chained raccoons. This is still common in backwoods country all over the United States. We should join in a survey of the illegal use of snowmobiles. Now there are almost a million snowmobiles in the United States today. One thing they're used for is to go into the north woods when the deer have yarded and move from one feeding area to another. These deer are run to death with snowmobiles, slaughtered and the carcasses thrown away because it's out of season to bring them in. And we're destroying many terrifically fragile areas in the national parks through the use of these machines.

Probably the most difficult area of all is the protection of our wild waterfowl whose numbers are going down steadily—decade by decade—in America. The hunters protest, you know, that this is all habitat destruction. A lot of it is habitat destruction, but still you can maintain your duck numbers equal to the habitat if you send enough ducks north every spring to replenish the flocks to at least what they were last year. There is not one duck hunter out of one thousand in America that can identify ducks—not one. So they shoot anything and everything that comes along. Last year because of the illegal kill of mallards and wood ducks, they said they were going to end the season. They opened it again this year, through political pressure, and there's no doubt they'll kill just as many illegal ducks this year as they did last year. This is going to be a tough thing to work on — but only people like us can work on it, or Defenders of Wildlife, and one or two others.

There are other areas wide open for action. But how can an organization like this, now chiefly at least devoted to the humane treatment of domestic animals, play its part? The answer here isn't easy. It seems to me, however, that the Society might make an analysis of all the organizations in the United States who have some parallel interest to ours in the field of wildlife. Many of these organizations (I think of two right away—Defenders of Wildlife and the Audubon Society) have expert legislative services which keep

their memberships informed of exactly what's going on in government. Some of them have active programs in such fields as ending the poisoning campaign of predators. I believe it's true that in many instances in humane societies we have to work as individuals because we're scattered, but you can work as individuals. I can get an answer to letters to our congressmen if I write them about one of these problems. They feel they have to answer you. Of course, I have a twice a week newspaper column so I don't have any trouble with these matters. My newspaper is starting to write editorials on conservation—a good, conservative, Republican newspaper that for years wasn't interested in matters like this at all. But they get so many letters about the column that I write that now we have editorials in the St. Louis Globe Democrat on conservation, on the preservation of wild species, on the creation of wilderness areas, on not damming the rest of our rivers, on saving the Everglades. They would never have thought of this five years ago. You can do the same thing, but you have to do it with letters to the editor—and that's a powerful influence in America. The membership, however, has to have information to do this and that is the task of the national organization; there is no other way you can do it. Defenders of Wildlife has fifteen pages of legislative information in their magazine every other month on bills that most of you people would be interested in—every single one of these bills—and they will tell you where it is, what committee it's in, where it stands, and then you can decide what to do about it.

There's no doubt in my mind that such proposals as this have been discussed by the membership of the HSUS for a good many years. It seems to be that the forces of wildlife destruction and of environmental destruction are closing in on us. Not only do we have inhumane treatment of wildlife, we have to think of what's going to happen to the next generation and to the generation after that. They won't be here. Most of the top biologists in America today think we have five generations to go at the absolute utmost before we're gone.

Now, the time for action is here. A world without wild creatures would be a very sorry place. I think we'll all agree to that, and a world without any human beings would be even sorer. But the interesting thing about a world without human beings is that there wouldn't be a soul here to care about it if there were no human beings. And, with that, I think I've said enough.