

From Wildlife Policy to Social Justice: Rethinking Wildlife Management in the U.S.

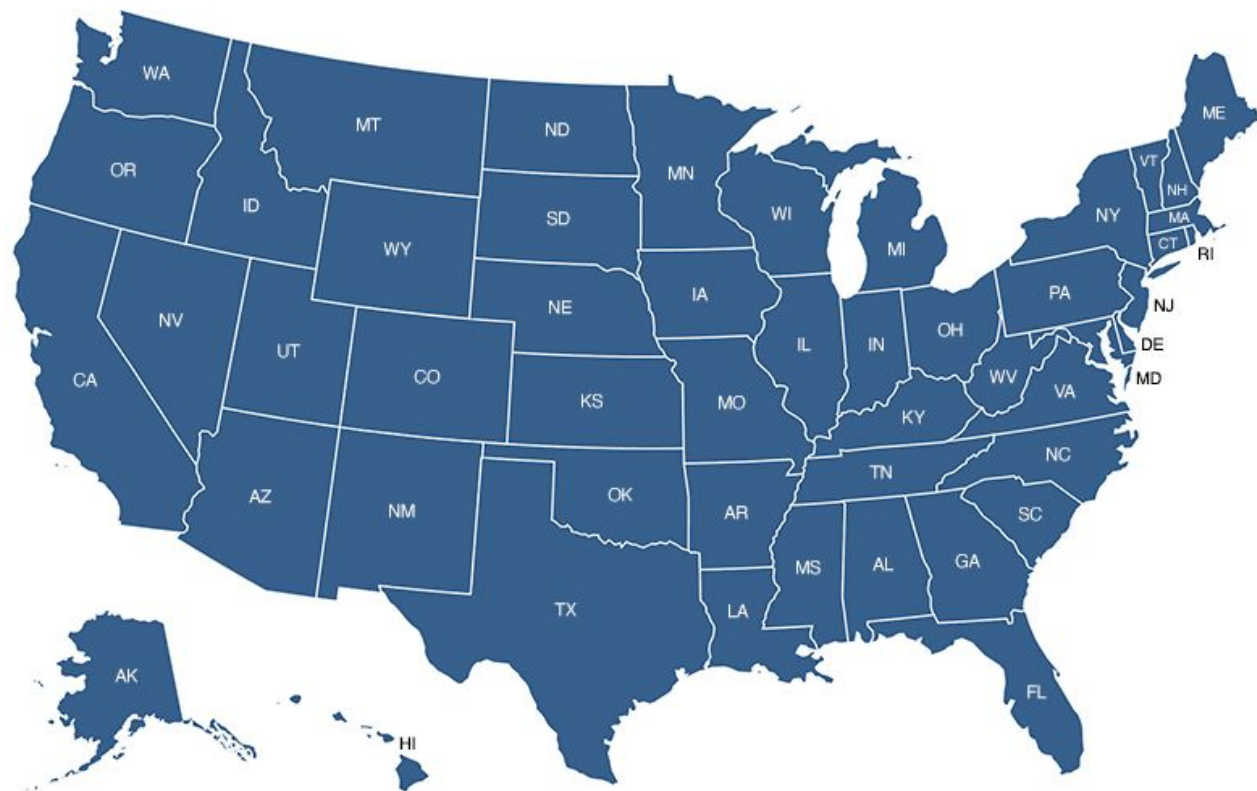
Kevin Bixby, Wildlife for All
Michelle Lute, Project Coyote

Deja Vu?



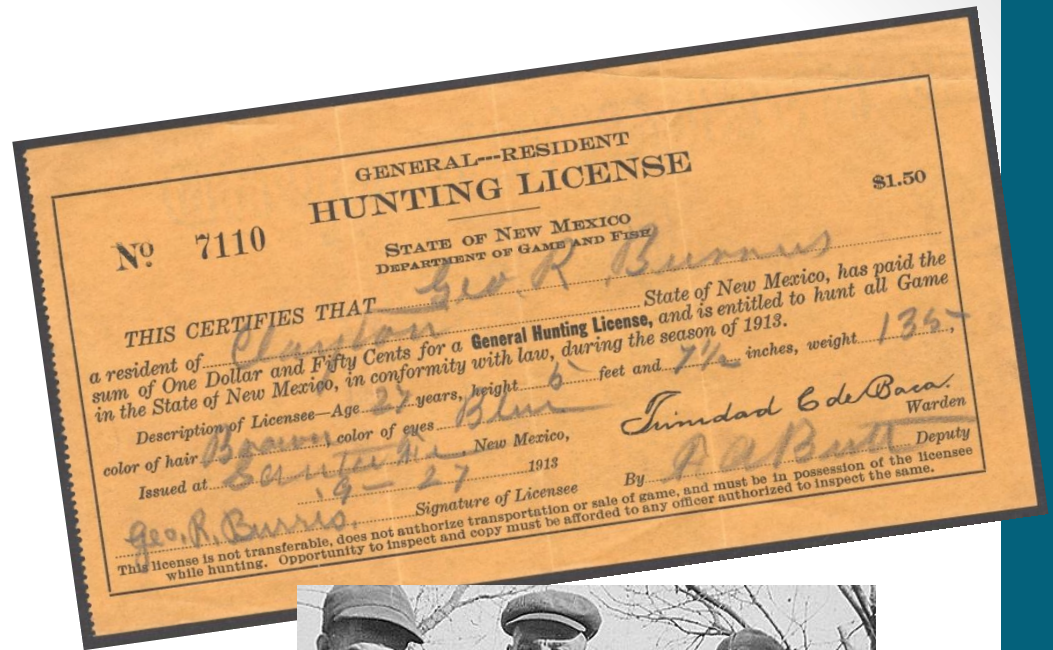
Why wildlife policy matters





The System

- Laws
- Institutions:
 - State agencies
 - State commissions
- Funding:
 - License fees
 - Federal grants



A New Paradigm

[WHAT WE DO ▾](#)[WHY IT MATTERS ▾](#)[WHO WE ARE ▾](#)[RESOURCES ▾](#)[MYTH BUSTERS ▾](#)[MEDIA ROOM ▾](#)

Wildlife For All is a national campaign to reform state wildlife management to be more democratic, just, compassionate, and focused on protecting native species and ecosystems.

- **Democratic**, because wildlife is held in the public trust and everyone should have a voice in wildlife decisions.
- **Just**, because wild animals deserve to be treated fairly as members of the community of life.
- **Compassionate**, because wild creatures are sentient beings worthy of our empathy and respect.
- **Ecologically focused**, because of the urgent need to protect species and ecosystems in the face of a global extinction crisis.



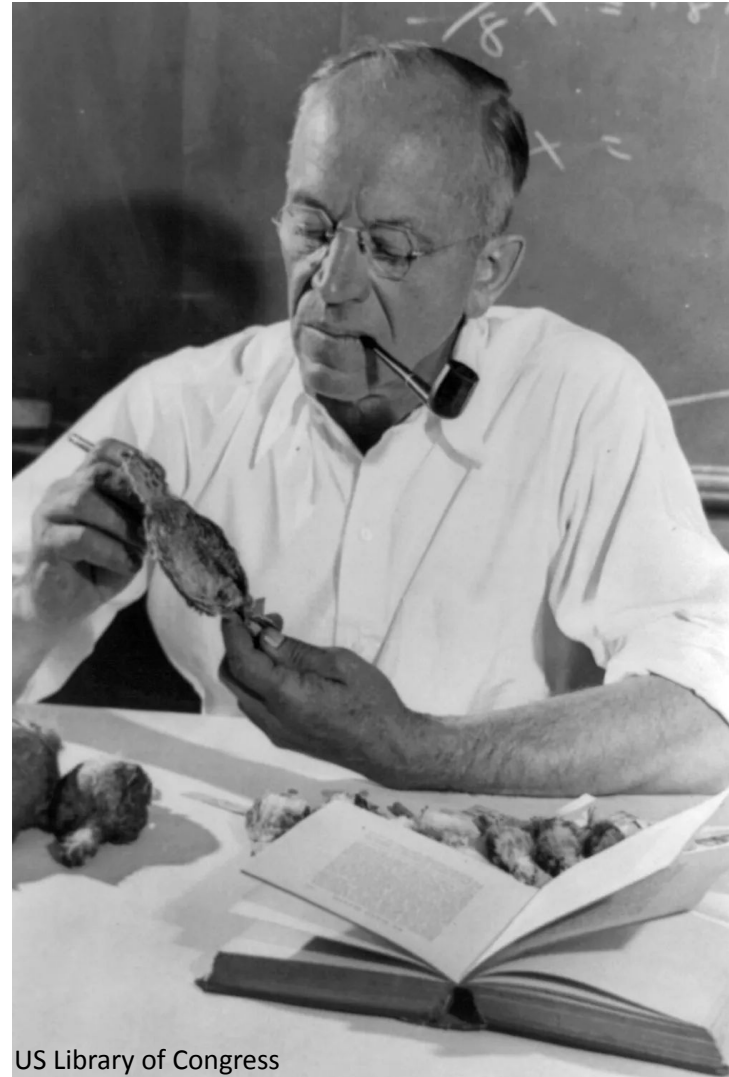
Understanding wildlife policy and process



Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

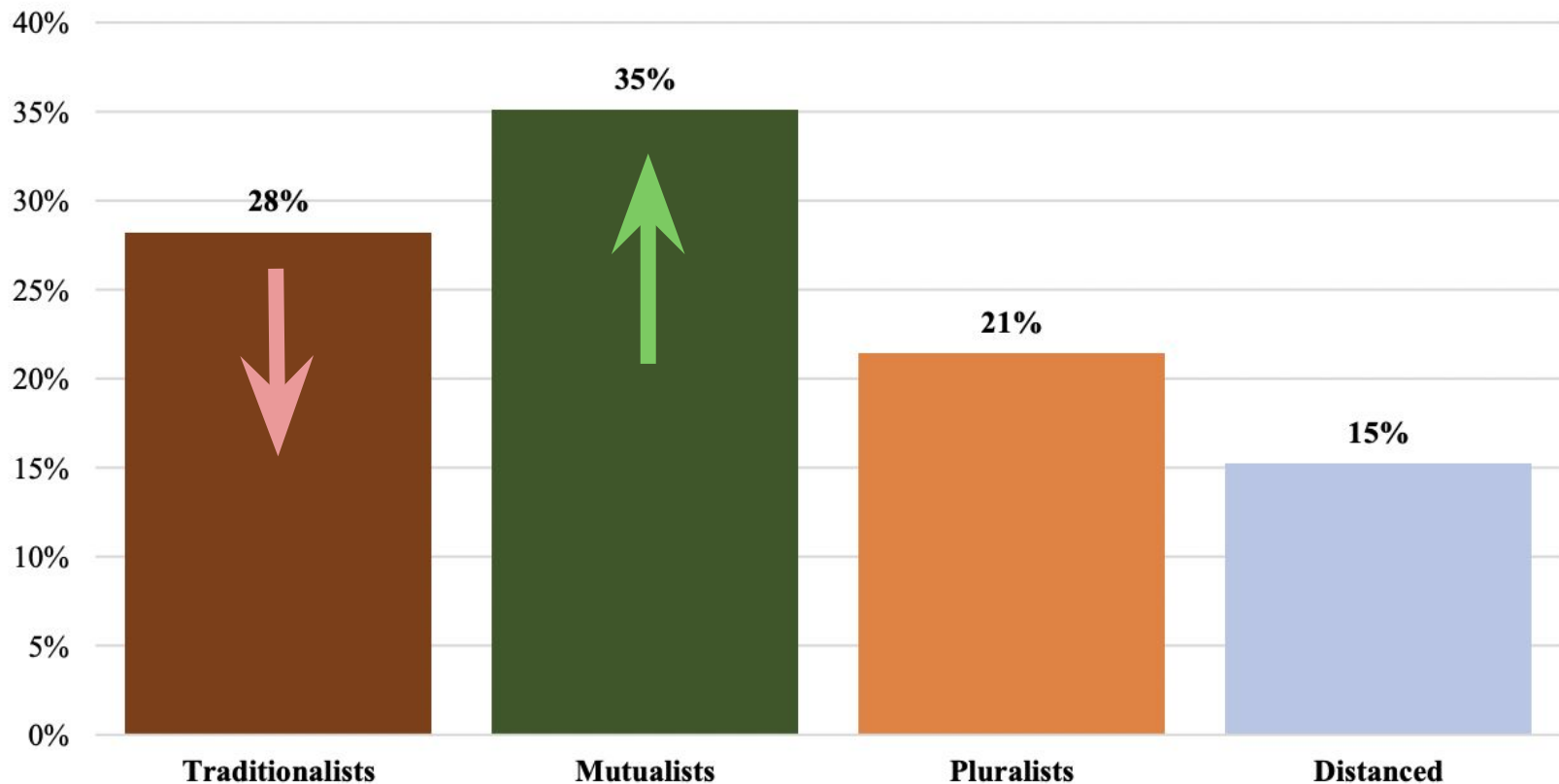


Understanding wildlife policy: Then and Now



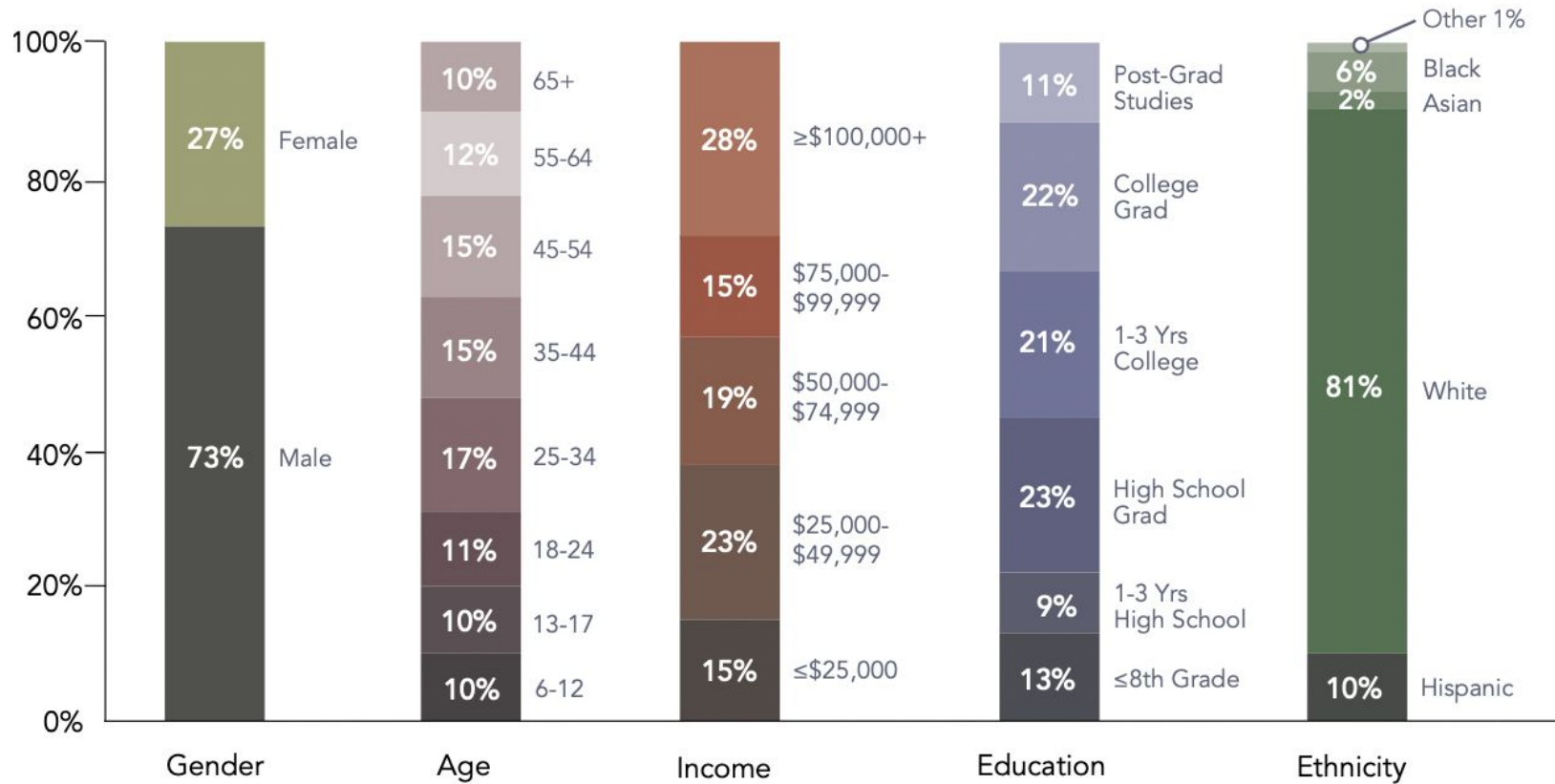
Understanding wildlife policy and public values

Figure 2: Wildlife value orientation types across the United States





For more information on methods for creating this typology, see Teel and Manfredo (2009).


Who benefits?



Understanding wildlife policy



WISCONSIN  INDEPENDENT



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Members of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board

Wildlife management:

1. Undemocratic
2. Unjust
3. Lacks compassion
4. Does not prioritize
biodiversity protection

Hunters Control Wildlife Policy

- U.S. population (USFWS, 2020):
 - Hunters = 5%
 - Anglers = 9%
- 46 state wildlife commissions:
 - ~411 seats total
 - Hunters or anglers $\geq 70\%$



	Hunters	Anglers	Public
% Male	89	68	48
% White	99	84	78
% Hispanic		10	17
% ≥ 45 years old	57	58	52
% Traditionalists	38	79	28

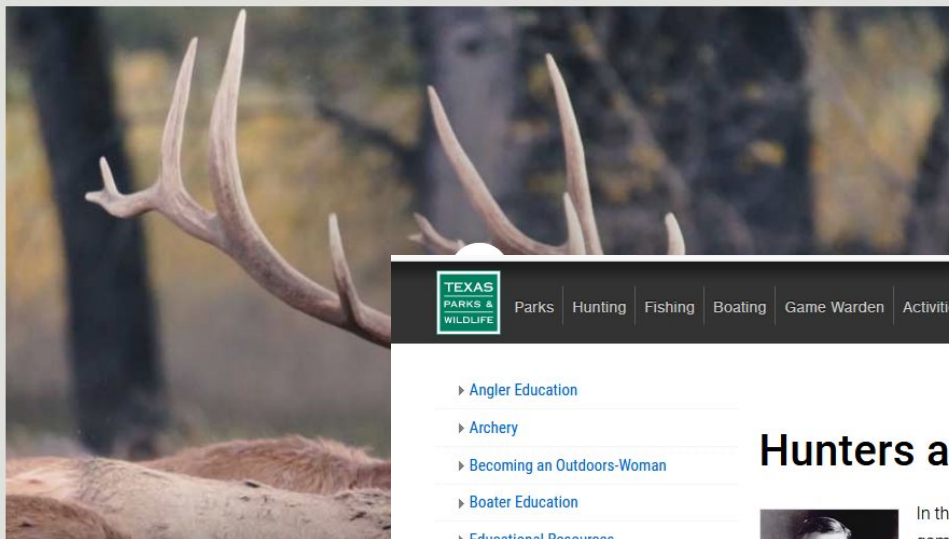
Wildlife is a Public Trust

- Nobody owns wild animals.
- The trust includes all wildlife species.
- The trust beneficiaries include all people
- Government is the trustee
- Trustees have a duty to protect and manage the trust for all beneficiaries, including those yet to be born.
- Trust management requires democratic governance

ELK NETWORK

HUNTING IS CONSERVATION - PAID
FOR BY HUNTERS

CONSERVATION | MARCH 17, 2017



Parks

Hunting

Fishing

Boating

Game Warden

Activities

Wildlife

Land

Water

Media

Calendar

Regulations

Education

Volunteer

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[1 - Introduction](#)

Hunters as Conservationists



In the late 1800s and early 1900s, wildlife was in trouble. The demand for wildlife products such as furs, game meat and feathers was at an all-time high.

Hunters supported laws to prevent over-hunting and protect the health of wildlife populations for future generations. Hunters led the way in the restoration of America's wildlife.

Early leaders in conservation, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Aldo Leopold, were hunters. President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national parks, developed conservation programs and started the wildlife preserve program. Aldo Leopold wrote the book on modern wildlife management. His methods are still used today, and conservationists worldwide quote his books.

Conservation groups formed over a hundred years ago, and conservation groups today, support safe and ethical hunting. Many members of conservation groups are hunters. Hunters still lead the way in conservation. Millions of people hunt and also contribute to the welfare of wildlife in America through licenses and taxes on hunting equipment. Responsible hunters follow game laws and a code of ethics. Many hunters belong to conservation organizations and actively contribute time, money and effort to help wildlife populations.

Paying for Wildlife

- Hunters have contributed **over \$5.5 billion** for conservation in less than 60 years.
- Hunters annually pay **over \$372 million a year** for conservation.
- Hunters do more to aid wildlife than any other group in America.

Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937

- Redirected a tax on firearms to states for wildlife restoration
- Important source of funding for state wildlife agencies
- \$1.1 billion disbursed in FY22

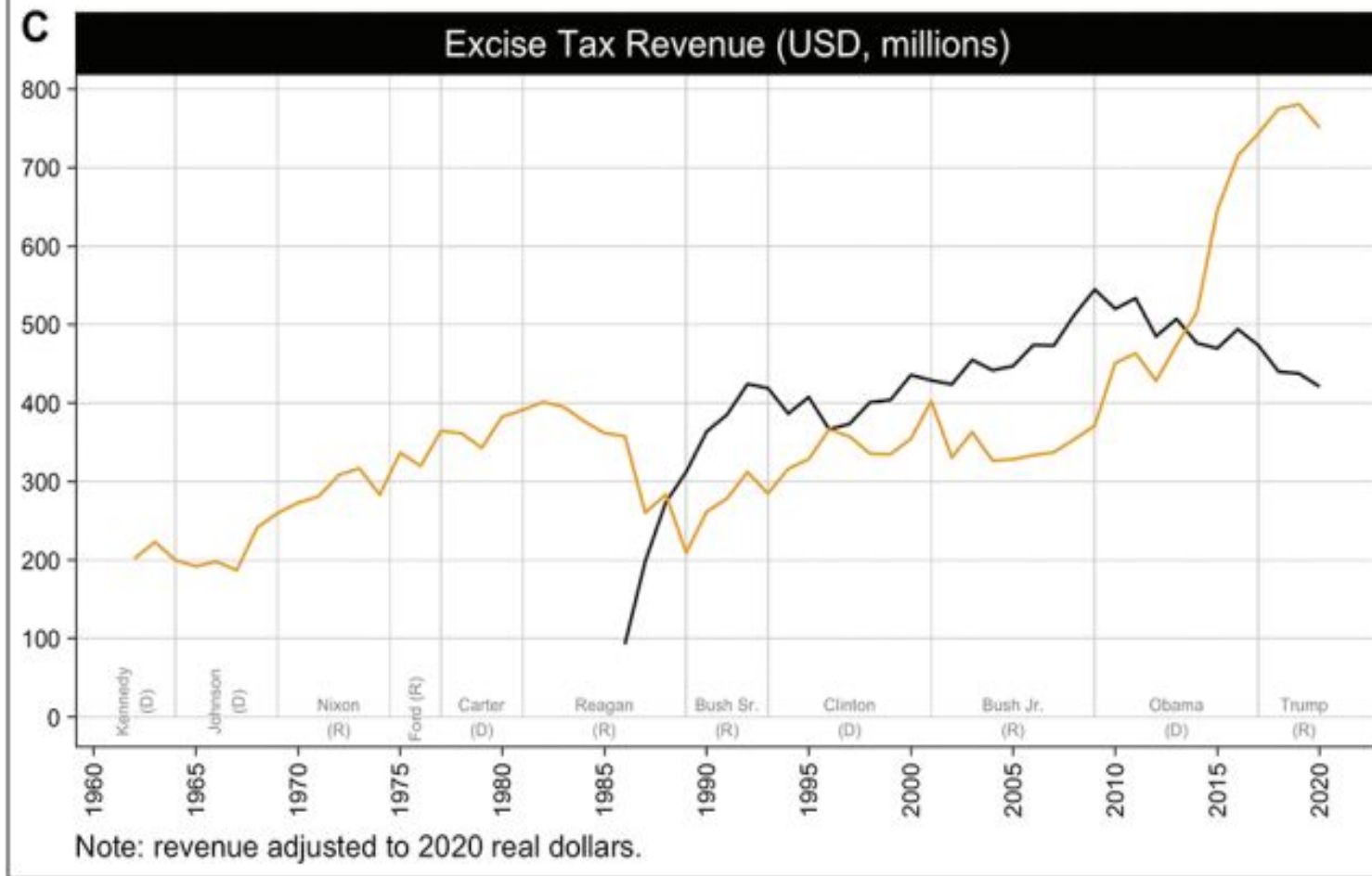
Mutual benefits:

- Hunters benefitted:
 - Solidified role of hunters as primary “users” of wildlife
 - Most PR funds used to promote game species and hunting
 - Created incentives for agencies to sell more hunting licenses
- Agencies benefitted
 - Diversion prohibition kept money with agencies
 - More licenses sold = more PR funds

Hunting has declined for decades...

- 1960: 8% of U.S. population
- 2020: 4.6% of U.S. population

While gun sales have exploded



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- ## Partner With A Payer
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- # Partner With A Payer
- An initiative of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program with state and industry partners*
- Partner with a Payer strengthens the ties between the people who make a successful conservation partnership work – the manufacturers that pay excise tax through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Acts, the state agencies that conserve wildlife and habitat across the country, and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



How Sportsmen, Sportswomen and Industry
Helped Save Wildlife Species

FEBRUARY 5, 2021

HOW SPORTSMEN, SPORTSWOMEN AND INDUSTRY HELPED SAVE WILDLIFE SPECIES

American hunters have the unique position of being the original conservationists. In the early 20th century, many wildlife species in the U.S. were facing an uncertain future due to unregulated over-harvesting of many species and habitat destruction. Sportsmen and women watching this unfold led the call for new approaches for the responsible management and use of these resources.

Featured Articles

JUNE 9, 2022

NSSF Opposes USFWS Scientifically Unjustified Traditional Ammunition Ban

NEWTOWN, Conn. – NSSF®, the firearm and ammunition industry trade association, categorically rejects the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Proposed Rule (PR) published today. The...

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MAY 24, 2022

N.Y. Judges Irritated, Skeptical of Antihunting Group's Claims That Happy the Elephant is a Human

Human judges at the New York Court of Appeals appeared irritated that human attorneys representing an antihunting group clogged up their docket to argue that...

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MAY 5, 2022

Firearm Industry Surpasses \$15 Billion in Pittman-Robertson Excise Tax Contributions for Conservation

NEWTOWN, Conn. – NSSF®, the firearm industry trade association, marked a milestone achievement when firearm and ammunition manufacturers topped \$15 billion in contributions to the Wildlife

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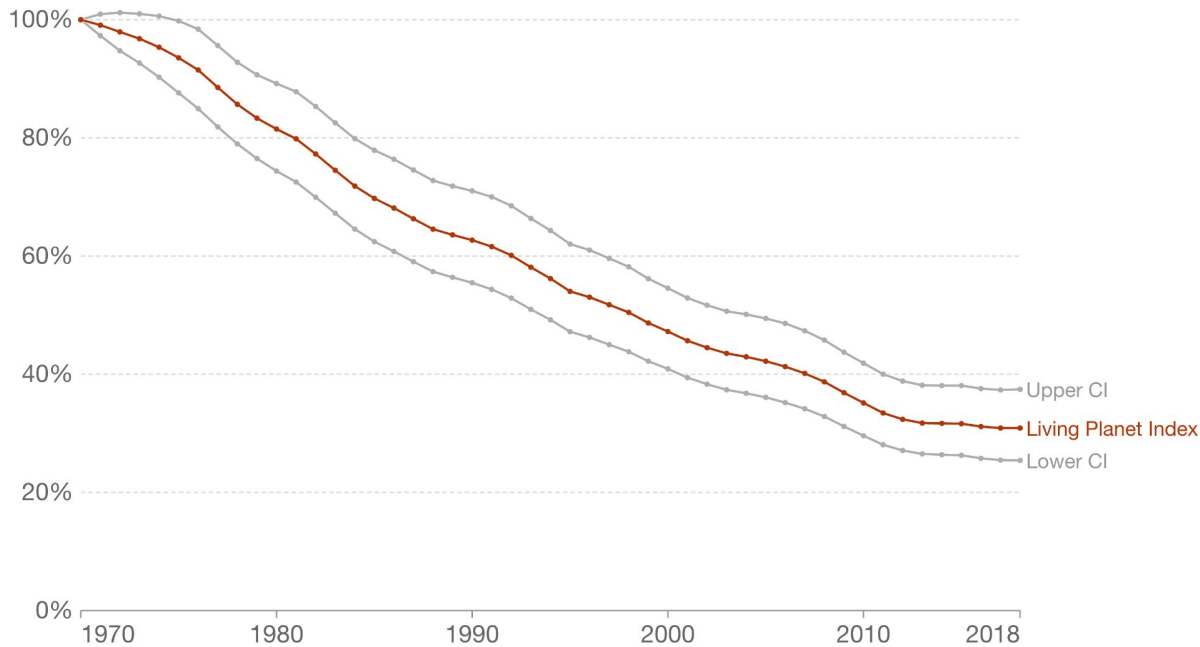


Wildlife management is UNJUST

Living Planet Index, World

The Living Planet Index (LPI) measures the average decline in monitored wildlife populations¹. The index value measures the change in abundance in 31,821 populations across 5,230 species relative to the year 1970 (i.e. 1970 = 100%).

Our World
in Data



Source: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Zoological Society of London

Note: 95% upper and lower confidence intervals are shown in grey.

OurWorldInData.org/biodiversity • CC BY

1. Population: A population is a group of individuals of the same species that live in the same geographic area. A species will often have multiple or many populations, each living in a different area.

Wildlife management LACKS COMPASSION



Conservation or Game Management?

State Wildlife Agency Activities:

- enforcing hunting regulations
- administering license sales
- providing hunter safety & education programs
- recruiting more hunters and anglers
- securing access for hunting and fishing
- constructing and operating shooting ranges
- operating fish hatcheries and stocking programs
- suppressing predators to increase game populations
- acquiring and managing land
- improving habitat
- conducting research and public education
- protecting non-hunted species
- responding to complaints.

Non-Native species



LETTER FROM IDAHO APRIL 4, 2022 ISSUE

KILLING WOLVES TO OWN THE LIBS?

The predators were reintroduced to the state in the nineties—and have been the object of political controversy ever since. An aggressive new law allows people to hunt or trap as many as they can.

By Paige Williams
March 28, 2022

The New York Times

PLAY THE CH

OPINION
GUEST ESSAY

A Slaughter of Wolves Like This Hasn't Been Seen in a Century

Jan. 17, 2022



Montana, DENNIS FAST / VWPICS / UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

America's New War on Wolves and Why It Must Be Stopped

Hunting of wolves is again legal in the Northern Rockies, where running them over with snowmobiles or incinerating them in their dens is now permitted. The Biden administration must stop the slaughter of these wolves and protect their recovery from the brink of extinction.

BY TED WILLIAMS • FEBRUARY 17, 2022

SCIENTIFIC
AMERICAN

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ECOLOGY

Wolf Populations Drop as More States Allow Hunting

Repercussions of planned and anticipated wolf hunts and traps could ripple through ecosystems for years to come, scientists say

By Tess Jooose on September 7, 2021

A more just future...



Michelle Lute

Guiding Principles for Reform

- Wildlife should be treated as a public trust
- Wildlife decision-making should be democratic, transparent, informed by science, and include explicit value statements
- The individual interests of all organisms to exist and thrive should be respected
- Consumptive uses and users should not be privileged
- All wild species have ecological value and should be protected as part of natural ecosystems
- The public benefits broadly from the existence of wildlife, and should share in the cost of protecting it.

Wildlife for All Goals

- Build a national coalition (and movement) of wildlife governance reform advocates
- Raise awareness about the problems with state wildlife management
- Catalyze and support state level reform campaigns
- replace the current wildlife management paradigm

Policy Reform Goals

- revise outdated statutes and policies
- establish new, broad-based sources of funding for wildlife conservation
- abolish wildlife commissions, or reform them to be more representative
- enforce public trust duties of wildlife policy makers

Achievements

- national conference on reforming state wildlife management in 2018
- launching of campaign in 2021
- national coalition established
- conference presentations, media coverage, controversies
- better commission appointments in WA, CO, etc
- reform related bills introduced or passed in NM, MD, WA, NV, etc.
- leveraging federal initiatives to drive reform, i.e. RAWA

What You Can Do

- Empower yourself to be a multispecies justice advocate.
- Become familiar with the nuts and bolts of state wildlife governance, in general and in your state. Share what you learn.
- Build power by joining with others.

www.wildlifeforall.us

kevin@wildlifeforall.us

Questions?



Photo Joe Newman

End of Presentation