

The Gamekeepers: Wisconsin Wildlife Conservation from WCD to CWD. David L. Gjeston. 2013. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison, Wisconsin. 471 pages. No ISBN

Author David L. Gjeston has done a masterful job of capturing the history of wildlife conservation and, in particular, the work of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (formerly the Wisconsin Conservation Department or WCD) in protecting, restoring, and managing the wildlife resources of Wisconsin. Gjeston took on an incredibly complex task. He tells a fascinating story of wildlife conservation comprised of many layers of wildlife management from over a century and a half of evolving perceptions regarding wildlife uses, exploitation, restoration, problems, conflicts, and recreational opportunities that continue to the present.

Perhaps the most appealing part of this book is the approach that tells the stories of the people who have shaped Wisconsin's world of wildlife management, most notably the impact provided by Aldo Leopold, the founder of modern wildlife management. The early influences of Leopold's writings on game management and his later work, teachings, and research at the University of Wisconsin stimulated an entire generation of wildlife biologists who became notable in their own right, including Jim Hale, Ruth Hine, Frederick and Frances Hamerstrom, and Arthur Hawkins.

As a 40-year employee of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, I feel a special sense of camaraderie with my fellow biologists in Wisconsin—many of whom I have known and collaborated with over the years for management of common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), trumpeter swans (*Cygnus buccinator*), peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and other nongame wildlife species.

I especially liked the way that Gjeston provided both state and national conservation timelines (“Selected Chronology of Conservation Events Impacting Wildlife Management”) at the beginning of each chapter. Those summaries help immensely in understanding the evolving progress from game management to wildlife conservation extending to nongame species, such as the Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*). The chronologies also identify the major players in each era. For example, the first chart notes that the Wisconsin Conservation Department was established in 1927 and that Wallace Grange was the first Game Department Superintendent in 1928. Aldo Leopold published *Game Management* in 1933 and was appointed professor of game management by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. Those chronologies, by themselves, are valuable summaries that every student of wildlife management should read.

Another feature that Gjeston captured extremely well was the series of phases, or eras, that he uses to characterize the evolving field of wildlife conservation. There was the era of game exploitation in the 1800s in which wildlife was

perceived as an unlimited resource that could be taken without limit or concern for the future, followed by early efforts to create season closures and restrictions on killing of some game species and to hire game wardens to enforce those early laws. Then there was the era of game management in which research helped to shape the basis for managing game populations. Broadening concern for wildlife species beyond game species matured into a more holistic approach that included nongame and endangered species programs that addressed needs for wildlife ranging from peregrine falcons and bald eagles to common terns and rare invertebrates as well. This higher level of ecological sophistication and “holistic management” has significantly broadened the base of public support and involvement for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources beyond their traditional clientele of hunters, trappers, and anglers.

The book also addresses the continuing issue of “conservation controversies” that follows wildlife conservation at every turn. It pits “barbershop opinions” against scientific management in a legislative arena in which wildlife managers must constantly prove themselves both to some opinionated hunters and anglers as well as to legislators. In Wisconsin, there have been controversies regarding predator control, gray wolves (*Canis lupus*), bounties, introduction of exotic game species, stocking of ring-necked pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*), and the biggest hot button issue of all, white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) management. The author does an admirable job of covering these extremely challenging topics in which opinions often seem to trump science and frustrate wildlife managers who are trying to make decisions in the best interest of the wildlife resources involved.

Challenges to wildlife managers continue to morph into new directions as biologists cope with chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer, mercury and lead poisoning in common loons (*Gavia immer*), and managing timber wolves with annual hunting and trapping seasons in light of diverse citizen opinions on how to protect or manage those species.

Another important dimension of this book is the comprehensive inclusion of the many people who have contributed to Wisconsin's wildlife conservation history. The book is a “who's who” among Wisconsin's conservationists, biologists, wildlife managers, politicians, sportsmen, educators, and others who have left us a rich conservation legacy in Wisconsin.

It has been a pleasure to review *The Gamekeepers: Wisconsin Wildlife Conservation from WCD to CWD*. I grew up on a farm in central Iowa where I hunted pheasants and rabbits and trapped muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) beginning at the age of ten. I can identify well with those earlier stages of farmland game management. Now, as a wildlife biologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for 40-plus years, I sincerely appreciate the enormity and the importance of pulling together all of the information and “lessons learned” in *The Gamekeepers*. It describes more than a cen-

tury of accomplishments by pioneers of Wisconsin's wildlife management. It is important to capture that information while it is still accessible and while some of those pioneers can still share their memorable stories.

The Gamekeepers is not only a valuable historical reference, it also has a huge potential as a college text for conservation biology and wildlife management students—and not just in Wisconsin. The lessons learned there apply throughout the country. When I was a graduate student, I knew many wildlife management graduate students who wanted a career that dealt with wildlife, but they avoided the human dimensions. However, current wildlife management is mostly peo-

ple management! Human dimensions—including planning, setting policies, dealing with lawmakers and sportsmen's groups, tactfully handling controversy, developing public speaking abilities, public outreach, recognizing the value of conservation education, and developing broad perspectives beyond single-species game management—are all necessary for success in modern-day wildlife conservation programs. *The Gamekeepers* is a dramatic testimony to those broader dimensions of wildlife management.—Carrol L. Henderson, *Non-game Wildlife Specialist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155, USA.*