

*falscopied to Sen. Church Attn: Fred Hatch.
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mail 7-20-79*

IDAHO CHAPTER

Wash. DC.



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
from Sen. Church's - Boise Office. Roff

EXTRA COPY

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
SUITE 611
7101 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20014

July 20, 1979

Honorable Frank Church
Room 245
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Church:

This responds in part to the July 6th request from Mr. Fred Hutchinson of your staff concerning the wildlife values in the Jersey-Jack area, Nezperce National Forest, Idaho County, Idaho. Maps which accompany the text are being sent under separate cover.

The following description of the wildlife values at the Jersey-Jack area is the result of correspondence with several Chapter members. People who provided information for the letter did so as professional wildlife biologists, not as employees of their respective agencies.

The Salmon River breaks are an important wintering area for the elk herd of the Salmon River basin. Over 50 percent of the elk between Mackay Bar and Corn Creek winter in the Dixie Tail and Jersey-Jack areas. The upper limit of their winter range is about 5,000 feet above sea level. Many of these wintering animals summer in the higher elevations of Jersey-Jack and the Mallard RARE II area.

Mule deer and white-tailed deer winter along the breaks and summers throughout the Jersey-Jack Unit. Specific information on deer populations in the Jersey-Jack area is very limited; however, at least 49 mule deer and 30 white-tailed deer winter along the breaks between Jersey Creek and Little Mallard Creek.

Nine moose are known to winter along the breaks between Jersey Creek and Little Mallard Creek. Suitable winter moose habitat is minimal in the breaks. However, information on moose is quite limited for the area.

At least 16 bighorn sheep winter along the lower break elevations between Jersey and Little Mallard Creeks. These and other bighorns use the entire breaks area year-round. Also, at least eight mountain goats winter along this portion of the breaks.

Some of the other wildlife species which use the breaks and Jersey-Jack area both seasonally and year-round area:

Blue grouse	Mountain bluebird (Idaho State bird)
Ruffed grouse	Western bluebird (FWS)
Spruce grouse	Great gray owl (FWS)
Chuckar partridge	Piliated Woodpecker (FWS) ?
Bald Eagle (Endang. Spp.)	River otter (FWS, BLM)
Golden eagle	Pine Marten (FWS)
Red-tailed hawk	Fisher (FWS, IDFG)
Goshawk	Wolverine (FWS, BLM, IDFG)
Merlin (FWS, Audubo. blue list ¹)	Lynx (FWS, BLM, IDFG)
Kestrel (Andubo. blue list	Bobcat (FWS, BLM, IDFG)
Lewis Woodpecker	Mountain lion

The information available about Jersey-Jack wildlife is not adequate to make sound management decisions. We do know that the population is exceptionally diverse, that the area is vital to elk and mountain sheep and that most human disturbance of the lands is harmful to the wildlife there. However, much more information is needed. We recommend that a Federally-funded wildlife study, similar to the one being done for the Gospel—Hump Wilderness, be carried out on Jersey-Jack and the Dixie Tail.

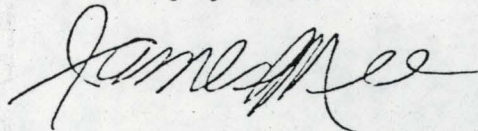
In the Salmon River breaks vicinity the Idaho Chapter supports the protection of big game summer, intermediate and winter ranges. Thus, the Dixie Tail, Jersey-Jack and Mallard RARE II areas should be managed as one tract, since big game use the areas as a unit to satisfy their annual habitat needs. The Chapter members also recognize that not all portions of the state must necessarily produce the greatest possible abundance of huntable wildlife. Our members willingly forego intensive wildlife management on such lands in order to keep the natural ecosystem there in tact. The Dixie Tail, Jersey-Jack, Mallard RARE II area is one of those ecosystems. Major wildlife resources of national significance exist there because of a diversity of old growth forest,

1/ Appears on "species of concern" lists for Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Audubon Society (Audub. blue list) Bureau of Land Mgmt. (BLM) or Idaho Dept. Fish and Game (IDFG).

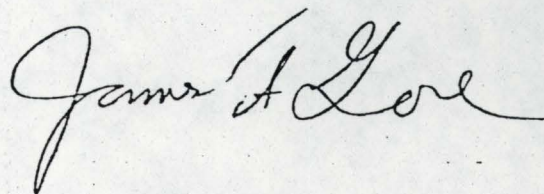
shrublands and grassy meadows. Much of this diversity would be lost in the presence of logging, roading, dispersed and intensive livestock grazing, fire suppression and some activities of mineral development. Accordingly, we recommend that the three areas be made a part of the River of No Return Wilderness.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these comments. We would be pleased to provide you with similar information on other areas of the state.

Sincerely yours,



James A. Nee
Secretary - Treasurer



James F. Gore
Chairman
Envtl. Issues Comm.