



Windows to Wildlife



Volume 2

Number 3

Summer 1995



A Publication of the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee

Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative: Funding for all of Idaho's Wildlife

As a young child, I can't tell you how many hours I spent down by the pond behind my parents' house playing in the water, naming the animals that lived there, and watching and learning about wildlife. Here, I found comfort in watching the blue herons perched in the trees above, the screech owl who I named Spooky, the polliwogs that metamorphosed into frogs, and the nesting killdeer which faked broken wings as I approached their nests. Here, I developed my interest and love for wildlife. As I return to this same area 20 years later, I want other children to have a chance to experience what I did, and more. I want to help provide opportunities to watch, learn about, recreate alongside of, and enjoy wildlife.

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, along with state wildlife agencies and conservation groups, including the National Wildlife Federation, the Audubon Society, and others, is spearheading a nationwide campaign to create an adequate and reliable funding source to support wildlife

conservation, recreation, and education by establishing a user-pay, user-benefit funding mechanism. The campaign is called the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative (Initiative) and the goal is to generate \$350 million a year through a small surcharge (0.25 -5%) on the wholesale price of recreational equipment and supplies commonly used by birders, outdoor photographers, hikers, and others who enjoy feeding and observing wildlife. Taxable items could include bird seed and feeders, camera gear, binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, hiking boots, and camping equipment. The average Idahoan who participates in wildlife recreation would likely spend less than \$5 per year on this surcharge, or less than the cost of a fishing or hunting license.

Funds from the Initiative will be dedicated to wildlife diversity projects focused on wildlife conservation, recreation, and education. The money will be used to prevent wildlife species from becoming threatened or endangered, to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreational opportunities, and to educate the public on the importance of wildlife. The Initiative will not only address the needs of nongame wildlife, but also lead to more and better wildlife viewing sites, photo blinds, observation towers, hiking trails, public-use facilities on wildlife lands, wildlife education programs for youth and adults, and other sorely needed recreational facilities. These funds will not only strengthen every facet of the

The Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee is comprised of the following agencies and organizations:

- Idaho Department of Fish & Game • U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service • Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation
- Idaho Audubon Council • U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
- Idaho Department of Commerce • Department of Transportation
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

See Initiative, cont. page 7

Notable Events & Activities

Bowhunters Support Nongame Wildlife



The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) would like to thank the Northern Chapter of the Idaho Traditional Bowhunters for their commitment and dedication to the Nongame Wildlife Program, specifically the harlequin duck.

The club recently held a fundraiser by sponsoring a traditional bowhunter's archery shoot, with members raising in excess of \$400 for the nongame fund. At the club's request, the funds will be used to study the harlequin duck, which is being considered for a threatened or

endangered species listing. The money is the only current funds available for the harlequin duck study.

Some members are also getting involved with the project by participating in voluntary harlequin survey counts with IDFG personnel on the Lochsa River. "We really want to do our part to put a little something back," said club treasurer Scott Gasperin. "We also wanted to show that our interests are not geared solely towards consumptive use. That's the reason we chose the Nongame Wildlife Program."

This was the first time the fundraiser has been done by the club, but it appears as though this may become an annual event. "We really enjoyed working with the Department of Fish and Game," said Gasperin. "We would like to hold this event annually and continue to contribute to the Department's Nongame Wildlife Program."

Anyone interested in finding out how they or their group can help the Nongame Wildlife Program should contact Christine Saxton at (208) 334-2920 in IDFG headquarters, or call their regional office for more information. Those people interested in more information regarding the Northern Chapter of the Idaho Traditional Bowhunters should contact Paul Bogar at (208) 746-2686.

Windows to Wildlife

is a quarterly publication of the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee.

Christine Saxton, Editor

Submissions and comments are encouraged and welcomed. Articles should be 50 to 400 words in length and be submitted along with your name, address and telephone number. Please direct your articles to the Editor at:

Windows to Wildlife
Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
P.O. Box 25
Boise, ID 83707
Tele: 208-334-2920

Deadlines for submissions are as follows:

Winter . . . November 1
Spring February 1
Summer May 1
Fall August 1

Wow! Insects Do the Neatest Things

Mantid lovers may be interested in two letters in a recent issue of *Birding* (Vol. 26.6:376). The letters refer to preying mantids in New Mexico and Texas catching and eating hummingbirds. The first letter is accompanied by a photo showing a preying mantis hanging off of a hummingbird feeder, holding and apparently feeding on a "young Rufous Hummer".



In 1992, another biologist received a call from a party in Safford, AZ wanting to know if mantids had venom. The caller had observed a preying mantis sitting on his hummingbird feeder, catch a female black-chinned hummingbird, apparently bite it, and the hummer died in about 10 minutes. The mantid then chowed down for the next 3-4 hours before finally dropping the corpse.

Idaho's Bookshelf



- A) **Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide** - \$6.95 (includes tax, p&h). Full-color, 104-page guide to the best 94 public-access wildlife viewing areas in Idaho. L.B. Carpenter. 1990.
- B) **Birds of East Central Idaho** - \$6.95 (includes tax, p&h). Includes abundance rating, habitat, and distribution. 119pp. Hadley B. Roberts. 1992.
- C) **Birds and Birding Routes of the Idaho Panhandle** - \$3.95 (includes tax, p&h). A Watchable Wildlife Publication. 64pp. S.H. Sturts and S. Schultz. 1993.

To order, send request and payment to:
Nongame Program, IDFG, Box 25, Boise, ID 83707.

Project Updates

New Elk License Plate Still In the Works

by Evin Oneale, Information Specialist

The second in a series of special Idaho wildlife license plates still needs approval, according to IDFG Nongame Wildlife Manager Wayne Melquist. "We're still coordinating with the Transportation Department to work out



the details," Melquist commented. While it has always been the intent of the IDFG and Citizen Nongame Wildlife Committee to have a series of wildlife plates, a legislative amendment may be necessary to clear up existing language in the law in order to proceed.

If the new wildlife plate is approved it will feature the Rocky Mountain elk set against a mountainous backdrop. The first wildlife plate, depicting Idaho's state bird (mountain bluebird) and state flower (syringa), has been very popular with Idaho motorists. Proceeds from the sale of the wildlife license plates benefit the IDFG's Watchable Wildlife Program.

Trumpeter Swan - A Portrait of Grace

Known to you and I as "the ugly duckling", the trumpeter swan blooms into a beautiful, white bird full of grace and poise. If you are lucky, you may glimpse one of these magnificent swans gliding across the waters of the Henry's Fork in eastern Idaho. The area is home to roughly 2,800 wintering swans from Canada, Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.

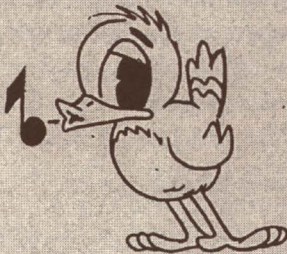
The Trumpeter swan is the largest of waterfowl, weighing up to 35 pounds, and the heaviest flying bird in the world. An adult trumpeter may be identified from the more abundant tundra swan since it is considerably larger, with a flatter head and bill profile. The trumpeter also lacks the yellow bill spot of most tundra swans.

Trumpeter swans live on lakes, rivers, wetlands and estuaries. They rarely go ashore to forage, preferring to feed in the water where they eat stems, leaves, and tubers of aquatic plants, invertebrates, and very rarely, small fish. During the first few weeks of life, young swans (cygnets) feed at least partially on invertebrates.

Trumpeters may find a mate and form a pair bond as early as age two. In the wild, they have nested successfully at age three, but may delay first breeding until age five or older. In April or May, a pair builds a huge reed nest or "remodels" a muskrat's house by scraping a hollow in the top. Up to eight eggs are laid, although clutches containing four or five eggs are most common. The eggs hatch in 32 days. Usually, few young survive; they stay with their parents until the following spring. About the time the cygnets hatch, the adults molt their flight feathers and cannot fly for a few weeks until new ones grow. Trumpeters require large nesting territories; they do not like to nest within sight of each other.

Idaho's resident population of trumpeter swans declined drastically due to over-harvest, loss of nesting habitat, and disturbance and is listed as a species of special concern by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Did You Spot A Rare Bird?



Please report any unusual sightings by calling Idaho's **Rare Bird Alert**

Hotline at:

208-236-3337 (Southern Idaho) or
208-882-6195 (Northern Idaho).



**Total Bluebird License
Plates
Sold as of June 30, 1995**

9,264 Plates

The Mower and the Weed Patch

by Paul Schiff, Education Supervisor

I thought that maybe when things slowed down a little, I'd mow that half acre behind the old barn. With the garden in and my spring obligations to smallmouth bass and wild turkey met, I might find a weekend when I could borrow the neighbor's bush hog and reclaim that ragged patch of ground.

A short walk through the hip-high weeds sent dandelion fluff flying. Blackberry thorns scraped against my jeans and slowed my pace. Small, bright yellow birds, goldfinches in summer plumage, dashed among the dandelions and thistle, feeding on the tiny seeds. In one corner of the weed patch I found an old elm stump and sat a moment. Soon, dozens of these bright, cheery birds were all about me, causing me to re-think my perception of these weeds.

I stood to explore the weed patch further. A ball of brown fur not much larger than a tennis ball charged through the weeds at my feet. The less than half-grown cottontail rabbit was motionless now in its new hiding spot, invisible except for the sparkle of a large, dark eye.

As much of a nuisance as they can be in the green beans, and as much as I like to eat fried wild rabbit, I still had trouble with the image of a bush hog meeting that small rabbit.

Last spring, I'd planted some white pine seedlings along the fencerow at the back of the weed patch. They could

hardly be seen. I found a healthy specimen in the corner and pulled some weeds and grass from around its base. This year's new growth was bright green, and the seedling was nearly twice as tall as it was last spring.

There were some old locust posts where the back fence line had been. A small, brown bird paused at the edge of a hole in one old post. The little wren had an insect in its mouth. The bird disappeared into the small hole, only to reappear and again hunt the weed patch for insects.

A clump of dark green foliage down the old fencerow bent and swayed with the weight of another bird. A tufted titmouse was attacking the first mature fruit on a stand of wild asparagus. The titmouse took off as I approached, to deposit the asparagus seed in someone else's fencerow somewhere down the line, where a new asparagus patch would grow.

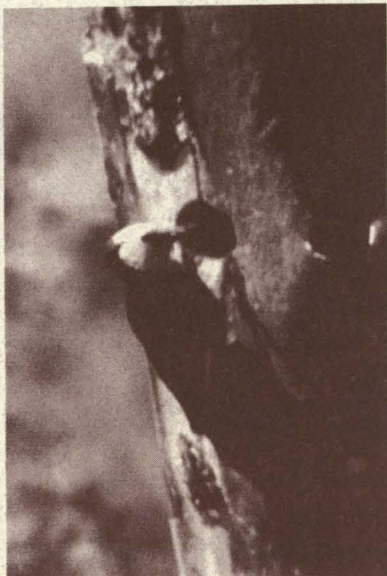
I pushed the tall, leafy fronds aside and found a couple of six-inch spears. I broke them off at their base and put them in my pocket for a salad with supper.

As I started back toward the house, the evening calm was broken by the coarse crow of a ring-necked pheasant. I'd heard the old rooster crow earlier, across the creek. This second call was from the far corner of my weed patch.

Mowing the back half acre could wait.

Woodpeckers and Damage Control

Courtesy of Audubon Leader



Woodpeckers seen in the woods are pretty, but when they start making holes in your home, they quickly lose their charm. There may be several reasons for this behavior. In the early spring, woodpeckers will drum on hard surfaces. They will stop once a territory has been set up. It is possible that there are insects under the shingles and these are a food source for the bird. In many suburban areas, dead trees are cut down leaving few places for woodpeckers to make a home or a winter roost!

To discourage woodpeckers from damaging a building, patch up holes and place heavy plastic on top of the

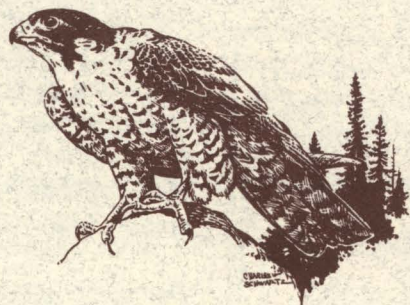
areas so that the woodpecker cannot get a grip. Make a strong solution of cayenne pepper and water, put it in your garden sprayer and spray the area where the woodpecker has been. The pepper will sting the bird's tongue and encourage it to move elsewhere. The solution should be reapplied after a rain. In addition, use streamers or other items that will flap in the wind to scare the bird.

Woodpeckers are a protected species and permission must be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before a bird can be destroyed.

Rare Wildlife Report

Peregrine Falcon - On the Road to Recovery

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), announced on June 30, 1995 that it is publishing a Notice of Intent to propose removing the American peregrine falcon from the Endangered Species List. This Notice of Intent is a call for information about the status of the falcon throughout its range. Data collected during the 60-day comment period will help the USFWS decide whether it is appropriate under the Endangered Species Act to propose the peregrine for delisting. If accomplished, this would be at least the eighth species nationwide to be legitimately recovered under the Act and removed from the list. In Idaho, it would be the third species for which the USFWS has taken formal action towards removing from the list of threatened and endangered species - all within the last year - out of seventeen listed species statewide. The other two species are the bald eagle and the MacFarlane's four o'clock - a plant found in west-central Idaho.



Peregrine falcons nested in Idaho up until 1975, before they were lost due to accumulations of pesticides in their bodies - specifically DDT. The last known nesting attempt by wild peregrines in Idaho was on the South Fork of the Snake River near Swan Valley in eastern Idaho.

In 1978 & 1979, experimental

attempts were made to reintroduce the peregrine falcon in the Snake River Birds of Prey Area by cross-fostering young peregrines in prairie falcon nests, but the effort was discontinued. In 1982, The Peregrine Fund, in cooperation with the USFWS, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and the Boise Cascade Corporation, began peregrine recovery in Idaho by using the hack box method. The hack box method involves placing young peregrine chicks in a screened box until they are old enough to fledge, then releasing them into the wild. Since 1982, 236 young peregrine falcons have been successfully released in Idaho. In 1985, the first pair of wild peregrine falcons bred in Idaho. The IDFG has coordinated nest monitoring throughout the recovery process since that time.

The recovery goal in Idaho was set by the USFWS at 17 pairs, with additional goals identified over larger portions of the country. Idaho had 14 known wild pairs of peregrines in 1993. Additional undiscovered pairs likely exist. Since 1985, Idaho peregrines have fledged 114 young. Even though Idaho is not quite at recovery goal levels, the 559 pairs of peregrines estimated to occur in the Rocky Mountain/Southwest recovery area far exceeds the recovery goal of 185 pairs for the region as a whole.

Endangered Idaho Plant "Downlisted"

By Don Smurthwaite, BLM

Only a few years ago, the future for a bushy, purple-flowered plant, MacFarlane's four o'clock (*Mirabilis*



macfarlanei), looked bleak in Idaho. In the late 1980s, only one population of the plant, named after the Salmon River boatman who discovered it in the 1930s, and the time of day it blooms, could be found in the state.

Now, new sites where the plant is flourishing have been located; plus, it has been successfully transplanted to three other areas in the state. Monitoring shows that the plant's population is stable. The result is that MacFarlane's four o'clock was downlisted from an endangered status to a threatened classification by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"This is an example of the Endangered Species Act working the way it was intended to," says Roger Rosentreter, BLM botanist.

"We have gotten past the stage where we are to be pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for two or three years for the use of the present generation, whether it be the forest, the water, the scenery. Whatever it is, handle it so your children's children get the benefit of it."

- speech delivered in 1911
Theodore Roosevelt

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I D A H O
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Watchable Wildlife Summer Hot Spots

North: McArthur Wildlife Management Area - **Waterfowl, Moose, White-tailed deer** - 600 acres of marshy lake surrounded by very scenic coniferous forests. Coyotes, moose, and white-tailed deer are often seen at dawn and dusk.

Directions: Take U.S. 95 north from Sandpoint for 17 miles. Turn west onto County Road A4 for 0.1 mile.

North Central: Mallard-Larkins Pioneer Area - **Mountain goats** - A 30,000-acre area of high-elevation lakes and coniferous forests which is part of a larger area under consideration for wilderness designation. Featured attraction is Black Mountain which has a large herd of mountain goats.

Directions: From Orofino, head east for 23 miles to Idaho 11 and turn north. In 6 miles you will reach the town of Headquarters which is the starting point for several trailheads. Obtain maps from regional Forest Service office in Orofino.

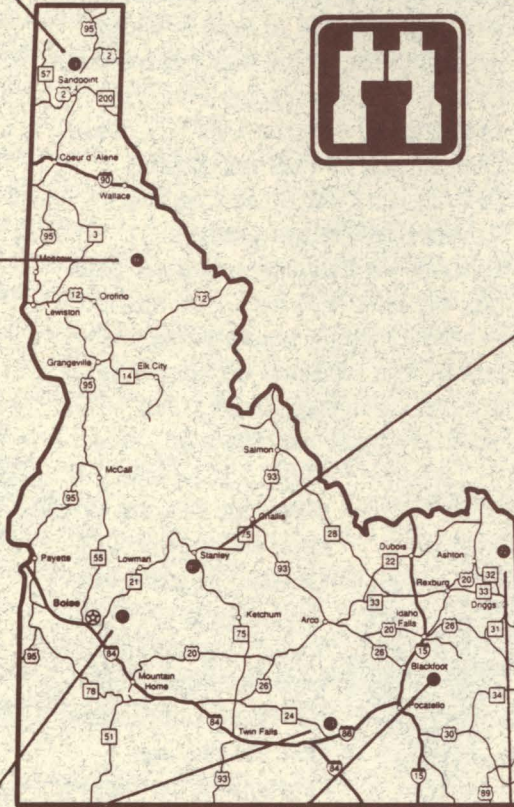
Southwestern: MK Nature Center - **Rainbow trout, Butterfly gardens, Muskrats** - A river observatory and wildlife interpretive area.

Directions: From Interstate 84, exit onto Broadway (Boise) and drive north about 3 miles. Just after crossing the Boise River, turn right onto Park Blvd. and go 0.3 miles. Turn right onto S. Walnut Street and immediately turn left into the Idaho Department of Fish and Game parking lot.

South Central: Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge - **White pelicans, Waterfowl** - This area extends for 25 miles along the Snake River starting at Minidoka Dam and includes all of Lake Walcott. The refuge has Idaho's only nesting white pelicans.

Directions: From Rupert drive 6

miles northeast on Idaho 24 and proceed through Acequia. Turn east for 6 miles on County Road 400 N. to the refuge headquarters.



where Idaho 47 crosses Warm River.

Directions: From Ashton on U.S. 20, take Idaho 47 east for 8 miles to the Warm River fish observation platform. Continue on Idaho 47 for 14 miles (you will pass the Mesa Falls overlook in 5 miles). Turn right onto Hatchery Butte Road and Siding. Turn left onto Forest Road 291 and drive 3 miles to return to U.S. 20. Island Park Reservoir is just 2 miles north.

Central: Sawtooth Fish Hatchery - **Steelhead, Chinook salmon** - The Sawtooth hatchery features a room for viewing adult fish, an information center, and an observation platform. If you are visiting the area between July to October 1, travel northeast of Stanley to Indian Riffles to view migrating chinook salmon in a natural stream setting.

Directions: The hatchery is 6 miles south of Stanley on Idaho 75 (1 mile south of the Redfish Lake turnoff).

For more information about Idaho's Watchable Wildlife Viewing Areas, write to *Windows to Wildlife*, IDFG, Box 25, Boise, ID 83707 for the Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide (\$6.95 includes tax). In this handbook, 94 sites throughout Idaho are clearly described with locator maps, driving directions, best times to view wildlife, and the types of animals found there.

Southeastern: Lower Blackfoot River - **Birds of prey, Mule deer** - Smaller version of the Snake River Birds of Prey Area. Plan to visit the area between May and November as the road conditions are poor in winter and early spring.

Directions: From Blackfoot take U.S. 91 north 7 miles and turn right onto Wolverine Road. Travel east for 10 miles to Wolverine Creek where the route starts. Turn right and cross the creek onto Cedar Creek Road. Follow this road for the next 10 miles as it parallels the river canyon's rim.

Eastern: Warm River Fish Observation/Island Park Siding - **Trout, Osprey, Moose** - Highly scenic mountain drive. Look for brown, rainbow, brook, and cutthroat trout from a fish observation platform



Initiative, from page 1

wildlife program in Idaho, but they will also reduce the need to divert funds from ongoing programs to finance new programs desired by a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts.

The Initiative is fashioned after the very successful Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration Programs which, last year, provided Idaho \$6.3 million in federal excise taxes to support game and sportfish conservation programs. Sportsmen and women took it upon themselves to support these programs through license fees and surcharges on sporting equipment. The results have been remarkable. Today, most people have more opportunities to see game animals than at any other time in their lives. The fact remains that hunters and anglers have been the principal financial supporters of a broad array of programs benefiting a variety of wildlife species.

The success of the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative hinges on gaining the support of Congress, as well as the backing of companies that manufacture and sell outdoor equipment. This will only happen if you, their constituents and customers, make your wishes known.

We urge you to voice your strong support for this far-reaching conservation endeavor by writing letters to outdoor manufacturers and congressional representatives to let them know that you are willing to pay a small surcharge to ensure the future of wildlife. For additional information concerning the Initiative, please contact Christine Saxton or Wayne Melquist at (208) 334-2676.

Summer Wildlife Seasonal Corner

- Townsend ground squirrel aestivate.
- Prairie falcons leave nesting area.
- Salmon spawning begins.
- Frogs active in uplands.
- Bull frogs calling.
- Mosquitos hatch.
- Monarch butterflies out in full force.
- Garter snakes in grassy areas.
- Nests and dens in old trees.
- Kokanee run in south Idaho.
- Barn swallows gather in early August.
- Barn swallows leave in late August.

Thank You From the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee!

The Watchable Wildlife Program would like to acknowledge people and organizations who have contributed to it, financially or otherwise, between March and June, 1995. If we missed your name or misspelled it, please let us know so we can correct it in the next issue. We depend greatly on citizen's contributions through the state tax checkoff and direct donations and would like to recognize and thank everyone.

Watchable Wildlife Supporters:

Shelley G. Alden
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Our Special Thanks Go Out To:

- **TCI Cablevision** for providing airtime for the Nongame Wildlife Income Tax public service announcements.
- **Idaho Traditional Bowhunters** for holding a traditional archery shoot and donating over \$400 to the Nongame Wildlife Program. We appreciate your support!
- **Golden Eagle Audubon Society, Potlatch Corporation, Albertsons, U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society** for sponsoring the Western States and Provinces Nongame and Watchable Wildlife and Western Working Group, Partners in Flight meeting. We would also like to thank **Bruce Haak, John Gatchet, Lou Nelson, Matt McCoy, Al Larson, and everyone else** who provided time and support in helping make the meeting such a great success!
- **Ieva Krisjanson** for providing the cover artwork.

If you know of someone who would like a subscription to *Windows to Wildlife*, or if you are moving and have a change of address, please fill out this form and send it to:

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- Birds of Idaho Field Checklist.
- Caribou Poster.
- Animal Track Poster.
- Wild Trout - Idaho's Living Gems Bumper Sticker.
- Other information (state subject) _____

- Support publishing of *Windows to Wildlife*.**

Here's my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____ to support publication of these brochures and *Windows to Wildlife*. Please continue to protect our natural resources and educate the public on the importance of our state's wildlife.

Name _____

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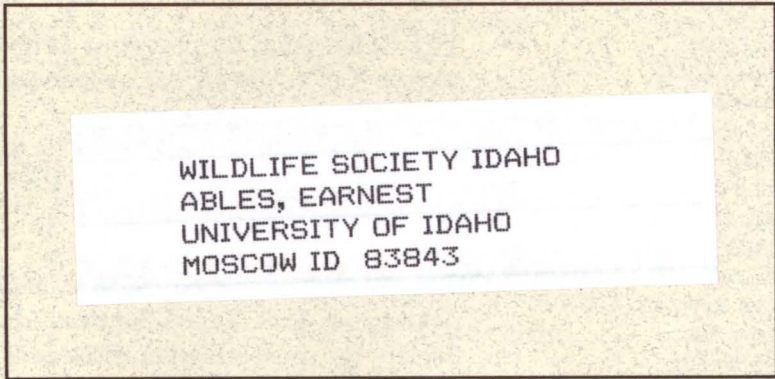
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