theWildSide e-Extra
Electronic Newsletter of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
AUGUST 2011

Pioneer Biologists

Duck and Fletcher's Baseline for Diversity

By Rich Fuller,
Senior Information Specialist

From 1938 to 1942, Lester Duck, Jack Fletcher and other wildlife biologists embarked on a quest with a simple, but weighty task – to survey all organisms in Oklahoma considered "game" species or "furbearers." Les Duck, director of wildlife restoration and research for the Oklahoma Game and Fish Department during the early 1940s, was appointed to the western portion of the survey, whereas Jack Fletcher oversaw eastern Oklahoma.

Research collected from Duck and Fletcher's statewide study provided the foundation for their 1943 landmark 144-page book, *A Survey of the Game and Furbearing Animals of Oklahoma*, and map, "A Game Type Map of Oklahoma." These publications have become what might arguably be Oklahoma's most important and prolific biological research ever published.

Lester G. Duck

Jack B. Fletcher

wildlifedepartment.com

According to Richard Hatcher, Director of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, he and his fellow wildlife classmates called A Survey of the Game and Furbearing Animals of Oklahoma the "'The Bible' of Oklahoma wildlife," while studying at OSU. "I've heard there aren't too many copies of Duck and Fletcher's book in existence, so it's one of my rare books I'm hesitant to let people borrow," Hatcher said.

The purpose of this survey was to make an adequate inventory of wildlife resources of the State of Oklahoma. Through this work, the Game and Fish Commission hoped to know exactly what it had and exactly what could be done toward making the best possible use of this resource.

The Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act provided the funding needed for Duck and Fletcher to set out on their research journey. Along with recognition of the need for conserving soil due to the Dust Bowl era was a grass roots effort to help bring back some of the birds and wildlife lost to drought and lack of habitat. Duck and Fletcher's research enabled the Game and Fish Commission to acquire information to establish a progressive program of game management, compatible with existing social and economic conditions. Duck and Fletcher's map is now used as the baseline to current and future research involving Oklahoma's potential natural vegetation and living organisms.

For more information on Duck and Fletcher's research and how it is helpful today, call the Wildlife Department (405) 521-3856 to purchase a $3 copy of the January/February 2011 edition of *Outdoor Oklahoma*.

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Wildlife Fundamentals

Missing from American History Textbooks: The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

By Andrea Crews, Senior Biologist, Responsive Management

If you ask a school-aged child, "Why did the settlers come to America?" They would most likely answer in relation to Pilgrims seeking religious freedom. That motivation was true of some settlers, but others were lured by the wide-open spaces of America, unlimited opportunities, and the freedom of a new start.

One freedom enjoyed by colonists was access to game. Under the British monarchy of their homeland, much of the land and all the game which lived on it, were controlled by the rich and elite few, Hence the term, "King's Deer."

Photo, Nels Rodefeld

Early Americans threw out the old British game laws. In our country, wildlife belongs to the people.

Unfortunately, the next hundred years of American history were marked by unregulated commercial hunting and loss of wildlife habitat as land was cleared for development. By 1917, deer hunting was banned as only 500 deer were spotted statewide in Oklahoma.

The resolution to this crisis came from conservation-minded hunters across the country suggesting self-taxation. Hunting license fees were established to support game management, which eventually extended to fishing licenses to support fisheries management.

To raise additional funds, hunters and firearm manufacturers agreed to a federal excise tax. Authorized by the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, these funds are earmarked exclusively for use by state wildlife agencies, for wildlife research, habitat acquisition and management programs. A few years later, the Dingell-Johnson Act of 1950 (and the Wallop-Breaux amendment in 1984) created funding for fisheries management and boating access with an excise tax on rods, reels, other fishing equipment, and marine fuel. Together, these pieces of legislation support the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.

The United States' system of funding for wildlife and fisheries management, often called the North American Model of Conservation, is the envy world-over. No other country has achieved such a well-protected and successful approach.

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Watchable Wildlife

Three T's to Tempt Hummingbirds

By Rachel Bradley, Wildlife Diversity Specialist

Hummingbirds are one of the most sought after birds during the summer months. They are seen beginning in early April to late September in Oklahoma. It is easy to attract hummingbirds by purchasing a hummingbird feeder. To best tempt hummingbirds into your backyard remember the three T's to tempt hummingbirds.

1. Tasty Food
Sugar water is not an exact match to plant nectar, but it is very similar, easy to make, and fairly inexpensive. The perfect ratio is one part sugar to four parts water (1/4 cup sugar for 1 cup water). Although it will not hurt, it is not necessary to add red food coloring because most feeders can be purchased with red on them to attract the birds.

2. Tubular Flowers
Hummingbirds are highly attracted to insects and vibrant-colored flowers aside from sugar water. They use their keen eyesight to locate food, so for best results plant bright red, orange, pink, purple, or dark blue. Hummingbirds prefer tube-shaped plants in which their bills may fit. Examples of "hummingbird flowers" are: trumpet creeper vines, salvias, petunias, bee balms, lobelia, phlox, four-o-clocks, pentas, and penstemons.

3. Tidy Feeders
The most important tip to feeding hummingbirds is to keep the feeders clean. The sugar water is a perfect medium for growing yeast and bacteria. These organisms can establish themselves on feeders and sour the sugar water in a matter of days. In the summer heat, it is recommended to change the sugar water every two to three days. To clean the feeder, simply use soapy water and a bottlebrush to remove yeast in the plastic or glass reservoir. Also consider using a little white vinegar around the feeder for a minute or two to kill yeast on the outside of the feeder. Be sure to rinse it thoroughly before refilling sugar water and placing outside.

Place feeders outside April 1 and keep them up through October. Hummingbirds begin fall migration heavily the last three weeks of September when days get shorter. Keeping the feeder up through October will assist late migrants. For more information about hummingbirds, please visit Species Spotlight on wildlifedepartment.com.

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About Us

Our Mission

The Wildlife Diversity Program - a program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation - monitors, manages and promotes rare, declining and endangered wildlife, as well as common wildlife not fished or hunted. Oklahomans help fund the Wildlife Diversity Program through an annual state income tax check-off, the purchase of wildlife conservation specialty license plates, product purchases and individual donations.

Please send comments to wildside@odwc.state.ok.us.

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Editor

Rachel Bradley

Contributing Staff

Melynda Hickman, Russ Horton, William "Buck" Ray, Curtis Tackett, Mark Howery, Larry Weimers

Outdoor Calendar

August

5-15: Hunting University Fall Hunting Classic at Bass Pro Shops in Broken Arrow. Advice from hunting experts, Binocular and scope trade-in, using scents and calls, Hunter appreciation weekend. All events are free and open to the public. For more information contact Patrick Daniels at (918) 355-7605.

August

20: Byron Hatchery Watchable Wildlife Area Nature Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The biologist on duty will be happy to visit with visitors about wildlife in the area or take a walk with you on the nature trail. For more information about these events email mhickman@zoo.odwc.state.ok.us or (405) 990-4977

August

27: Sand Springs Ducks Unlimited Fall Fundraiser at Case Community Center (1050 W. Wekiwa Rd., Sand Springs, Okla. 74063). Doors Open at 6:00p.m. Dinner Starts At 7:00p.m. Auction At 8:00p.m. Single Ticket (includes one year membership in DU) $45.00 Couples $55.00 For more information contact Steve Quay at (918) 245-1477 or Bob Green at (918) 241-5546.

September

24-25: Wildlife Expo at Lazy E Arena from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.