

**\*\*ATTENTION\*\***

*This document is provided for historical purposes only.*

*Documents contained in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Document & Publication Archive may contain dated and/or incorrect information. The WDFW Document & Publication Archive is provided as a service to those interested in the history of fish and wildlife management in Washington State.*

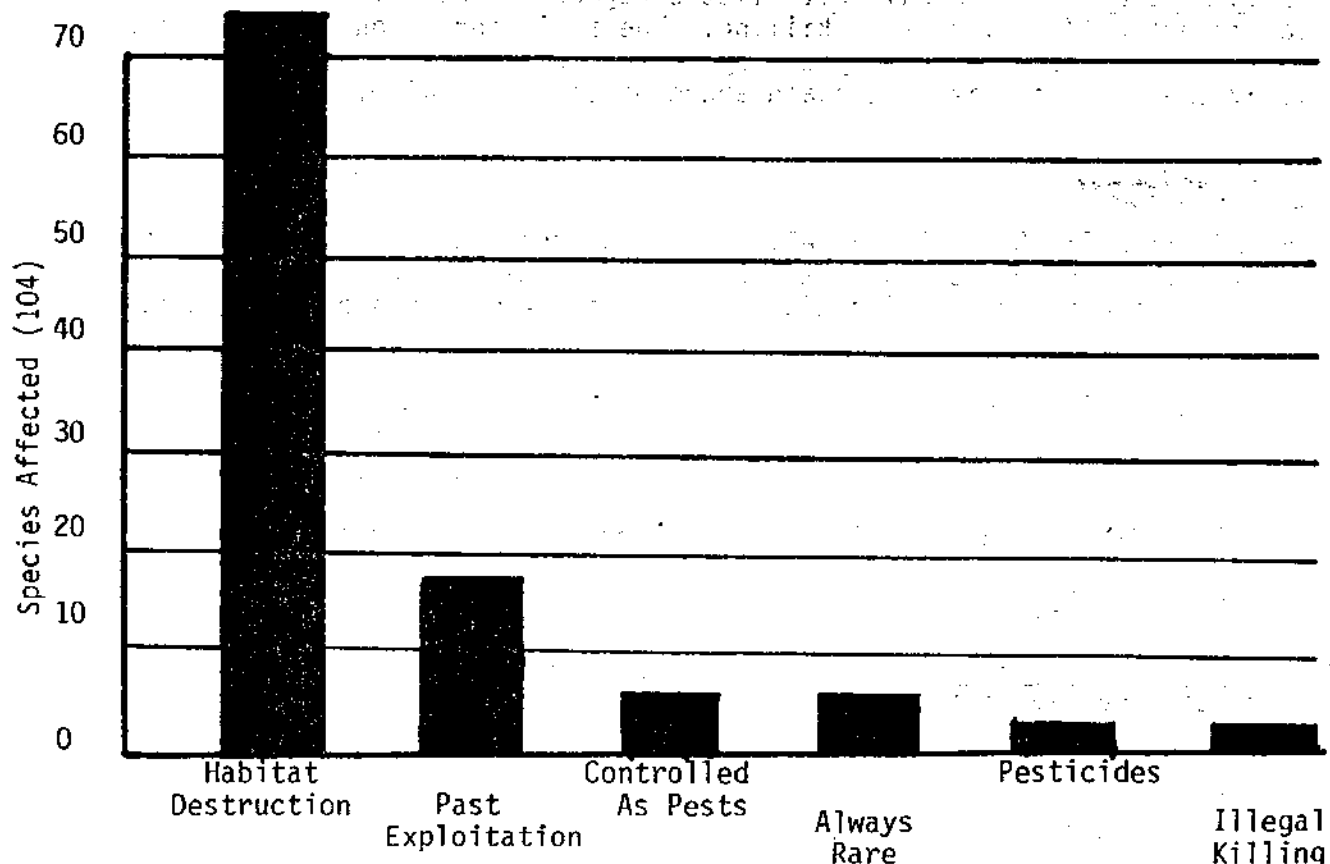
# HABITAT IS THE KEY TO WILDLIFE SURVIVAL



What is habitat? Habitat is simply defined as food, cover, water and space. Each species have unique habitat requirements, some more exacting than others. Muskrats and ducks need marsh areas, ruffed grouse prefer large wooded areas interspersed with brush and open spaces. Deer enjoy a variety of living conditions: forest lands that have a mixture of young and mature timber, brush and grassy areas and farmlands with fencerows, marshlands and woodlots.

When one of the habitat conditions is altered, the wildlife population declines because the habitat can only support a specific number of animals in the community. In Washington, increasingly more land is being developed into lakeside condominiums, suburban settlements and shopping centers. New roads, intensive farming techniques and drainage of marshes all contribute to the loss of wildlife habitat.

## HOW WILDLIFE BECOMES RARE AND ENDANGERED



(information compiled from the National Wildlife Education Foundation)

## problems:

HABITAT DESTRUCTION: In the United States, each day, civilization destroys an estimated 3,500 acres of valuable wildlife habitat. When land is cleared, marshes are drained and rivers are channelized, polluted or turned into giant lakes, wildlife declines or disappears. The passenger pigeon is an example of a species that disappeared primarily due to habitat destruction.

PAST EXPLOITATION: We have learned much from the wasteful commercial and political exploitation of wildlife in the past. The ruthless slaughter of wildlife in the 1800's resulted in the creation of wildlife management in the United States. Species endangered by exploitation include bison. Today the bison is once again abundant.

CONTROLLED AS PESTS: Man has considered some wildlife species to be pests and has intentionally reduced their numbers. At times, it is necessary to reduce some wildlife populations to protect human beings or to permit other wildlife species to exist or increase where populations are low or endangered.

ALWAYS RARE: Some wildlife species always face extinction because they have a low reproductive rate and highly specialized habitat and food needs that restrict the species to a few isolated geographic areas.

PESTICIDES: Misuse of certain chemicals has threatened some wildlife species with extinction. In some cases these chemicals were unintentionally introduced into the food chain. For example, DDT causes the shells of birds' eggs to become thin and soft so that they broke, resulting in low reproduction rates. Among the species affected by pesticides are the peregrine falcon and bald eagle.

ILLEGAL KILLING: Criminals with little regard for wildlife or the laws created to protect wildlife, do such killing. The alligator is one example of a species drastically reduced in past years by illegal killing for commercial reasons. Today the alligator is once again abundant thanks to wildlife management.

## solutions:

PROTECT WILDLIFE AND ITS HABITAT: It is our responsibility to save existing habitat and develop new habitat. Support efforts to contain the expansion and pollution of our civilization. Encourage the wise use of our natural resources.

JOIN THE SPORT HUNTER IN REPORTING to your nearest wildlife agent, anyone who is illegally killing or capturing wildlife. Be able to describe the person and the vehicle. Know the date, time, location and circumstances of the violation.

BECOME INFORMED about wildlife and the organizations working in behalf of wildlife. Do not be misguided by organizations whose principles are based on emotion rather than sound biological facts.

SUPPORT THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF GAME BY purchasing hunting and fishing licenses. The fees from licenses and the special taxes on guns, ammunition and archery equipment are used to manage all wildlife species. Hunting is a management tool- the most practical and least wasteful method of harvesting surplus wildlife populations, while providing food and recreation for man. Scientifically based sport hunting has never led to the extinction of a single species or caused any species to become endangered. Also revenue from the personalized license plates sold at Dept. of Motor Vehicles is used for the management of non-hunted wildlife.