deer, moose, antelope and bighorn sheep in the upper Wind River drainage and other sections of Fremont, Natrona, and Carbon Counties, Wyo.

Our department has submitted a formal statement to Regional Forester David Nordwall under date of January 6, 1967, entitled "Statement of the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Concerning a Proposal to Establish the Washakie Wilderness Area in Fremont, Hot Springs, and Park Counties, Wyo."

This statement expressed the official views of Wyoming concerning the proposed Washakie Wilderness Area in the Shoshone National Forest of Wyoming.

Statements have been made concerning the effects of wilderness area status on wildlife in the area under discussion that have not originated from our commission. We intend to clarify our position and present the wildlife values concerned for your evaluation.

We have derived our conclusions and recommendations concerning the Washakie Wilderness proposal on the basis of known facts, determined on the ground by qualified wildlife people.

It is not our intention to speak in generalities but in specifics relative to specific and particular parts of the Wind River drainage. It is entirely possible that our recommendations would be greatly revised under different circumstances and in different areas.

Moose, Rocky Mountain elk, bighorn sheep, and grizzly bear are classified as wilderness animals. Remote, wilderness type habitat is essential for survival of these species in a wild state. All of these animals are present now or have been inhabitants of the upper Wind River drainage. Our greatest concern is for the elk in this area due to their significant numbers, high desirability by hunters, and economic return to the State of Wyoming.

We have two basic concerns on elk management in this area relative to the proposed wilderness area. The first is the depletion of resident elk herds on summer ranges at lower elevations within the drainage. Our second concern is the possible deflection or alteration of established migration patterns of elk which utilize valuable natural winter ranges available in this area.

DEPLETION OF RESIDENT ELK HERDS

The greatest change in elk distribution in the Wind River drainage over the past 20 years have evolved with the development of extensive road systems on National Forest Service lands and the widespread use of four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Small summer resident elk herds existed over many sections of the lower forest lands in the Wind River drainage prior to the development of extensive road systems.

Increased human activity in these areas by hunters, rockhounds, timber operators, recreationists, et cetera, have reduced the numbers of these herds and in some cases have eliminated them completely.

Thus elk, a wildlife species recognized for multiple use on public lands, have been substantially decreased by other public land users.

Resident elk herds formerly ranged over the lower drainages of the Wiggins Fork, Horse Creek, upper Wind River, and Warm Springs Creek areas. Numerous access roads have been built in most of