

Our department is charged with the responsibility of managing, conserving and providing for the harvest of resident species of fish and game in the State of Washington. More than 900,000 people now fish and hunt in our State, and it is estimated that this figure will exceed a million within the next 2 years.

The creation of a third large national park in the North Cascades region of our State would be at the very serious expense of public fishing and hunting in the State of Washington. Hunting would be prohibited in the park area and only limited fishery management and restocking programs would be maintained.

Wildlife populations in the area proposed to be embraced within the North Cascades National Park enjoy the highest state of abundance they have ever known. They have been well managed and well conserved. No argument has been advanced that complete preservation of them is either necessary or desirable.

For the reason that there are several park proposals varying in size, and amendments to present bills which do the same thing, and because of seasonal variations, it is difficult to exactly determine the present harvest of wildlife in these proposed park areas. Generally, however, and with these qualifications hunters annually take slightly more than 1,000 deer and 40 mountain goats in the proposed park areas. Proponents of the park point out that this is but a small percentage of the State's total annual big game harvest. This is not a realistic measurement of value.

Our high mountain deer and mountain goat hunting is the epitome of hunting in our State. It provides the hunter an opportunity to go into the high mountains during that period of the year when they are at their greatest beauty, to camp out and to enjoy this scenic wonderland, while engaging in one of America's most traditional and honored forms of outdoor recreation—the hunting of big game. The season occurs during September, after Labor Day and after the time that other recreationists have left these mountains. Hunting at this time in no way interferes with the interests of other people.

Deer use this area as a summer and early fall range and with the first snows, migrate to lower country, where they are often a problem to orchardists and agriculturists in the lower valleys. It cannot be argued that hunting seasons in any way deplete resident species of wildlife occupying this high country. Equally, it cannot be argued that hunting seasons in any way detract from the opportunity of viewing wildlife during the summer period.

A prohibition against hunting ignores all of the lessons and all of the scientific knowledge which has been accumulated in the field of wildlife management during the past 50 years, which all add up to this: That wildlife populations, as other renewable resources, can and should be harvested under controls, in order to maintain these populations in a strong and healthy condition, and especially to maintain the environment of wildlife which is essential to its well-being, and which inevitably will deteriorate without population control.

That a no-hunting policy is a regressive policy is amply proven by the fact that in our own State in the Olympic National Park, which was created and has been maintained on the basis of emotion rather than practicality, huge herds of elk are locked up and unused; the result of this has been that the range of these elk is rapidly deteriorat-