1987

1987 Annual Report Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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(402) 595-2144
Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, Gretna
(402) 332-3901
Rt 2, Alliance (308) 762-5605
Bassett (402) 684-2921
U.S. 81, Norfolk (402) 371-4950
Rt 4, North Platte (308) 532-6225

Commissioners
Chairman: Stan Juelfs, Kimball
Vice Chairman: Wayne Ziebarth, Wilcox
2nd Vice Chairman: LaVern Schneider, McCook
L. Bruce Wright, Lincoln
Richard L. Coyne, Omaha
Elvin Adamson, Nenzel
J. Alan Cramer, Wayne

Administration
Director: Rex Amack
Assistant Directors: William J. Bailey, Jr.
Dale R. Bree

Division Chiefs
Administration: Larry Morris
Budget & Fiscal: Larry Witt
Engineering: James Sheffield
Fisheries: Wes Sheets
Information & Education: Jim MacAllister
Law Enforcement: Don Schaepler
Outdoor Education: Paul Horton
Operations: Earl Johnson
Realty: Bruce Sackett
Recreation Areas: Jim Carney
Resource Services: Harold Edwards
State Parks: Charles Duncan
Wildlife: Ken Johnson

PURPOSE
The Game and Parks Commission is charged with managing and controlling
the state's wildlife, parks, and outdoor recreational resources in the best long-term
interest of the people.

To accomplish that purpose, the Commission plans and implements its poli­
cies and programs efficiently and objectively; maintains a rich and diverse envir­
onment in Nebraska's lands and waters; provides outdoor recreation opportuni­
ties; manages wildlife resources for the maximum benefit of the people; and
attempts to help Nebraskans appreciate their role in the natural world.

Contents
Administration ......................................................... 4
Budget and Fiscal ...................................................... 6
Engineering ............................................................ 9
Fisheries ............................................................... 10
Information and Education ........................................ 13
Law Enforcement ..................................................... 16
Operations and Construction ...................................... 20
Outdoor Education ................................................... 22
Parks ................................................................. 24
Planning and Programming ....................................... 26
Realty ................................................................. 28
Resource Services ................................................... 29
Wildlife ............................................................... 31

Complete copies of each division's annual report may be obtained by
contacting the individual division at Game and Parks Commission Head­
quar ters, 2200 No. 33rd, Lincoln, NE 68503.
Administration

The Administration Division provides support services for the Commission’s various organizational units through the following offices and functions: Personnel; Purchasing and Inventory; Internal Audit; In-service Training; Aircraft Operations; Word Processing; Maintenance and Headquarters Telephone Switchboard; and Staff Assistants and Secretarial and Clerical Personnel in the district offices. Assistance is also provided to the Director’s Office.

Personnel

The Personnel Division’s functions include administration of payroll, worker’s compensation, retirement, insurance, accident reports, performance evaluations, personnel records and preparation of the personal services portion of the agency’s operational budget.

The agency hired 18 new permanent employees in 1987 and 13 employees were promoted to higher positions. Total turnover during the year was 3.8 percent. In addition, classification reviews by the State Department of Personnel resulted in three position reclassifications.

Personnel conferred with the Office of Risk Management on several worker’s compensation cases. Worker’s Compensation claims paid for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1987, totalled $181,372.87.

Game and Parks Commission employees were involved in 23 motor vehicle accidents in 1987.

The agency payroll for 1987 totalled $10,648,926.88. Of that total permanent employees earned $8,386,541.39 and temporary employees were paid $2,262,385.49. There were an average of 394 permanent employees per month, and an average of 330 temporary employees per month.
In-Service Training

In-service training is devoted to bettering present performance and to preparing employees for positions of higher responsibility by directing training efforts primarily to meeting the specialized needs of individual staff members who enroll in a variety of short courses, seminars and workshops. Broad-based training needs are met through in-house workshops for groups of employees.

Aircraft Operations

The Piper Super Cub was flown a total of 139.68 hours in 1987 — 134.28 hours during the day and 5.40 hours at night, at a cost of $30.20 per hour. The 45 flights were made to conduct various surveys, counts, investigate antelope depredation complaints, and to assist in fish and wildlife law enforcement.

Purchasing and Inventory

The activities of Purchasing and Inventory during 1987 included:
• keeping up-to-date records on current purchases and computerization of all equipment purchases prior to 1976
• controlling and recording service contracts
• streamlining material and supply purchases of less than $300 to expedite field needs and reduce paperwork
• reducing the cost of gasoline and diesel fuel purchases in the Lincoln area
• increasing the use of contracts developed by the Department of Administrative Services resulting in a monetary savings for items purchased under contract
• increasing emphasis on disposal of surplus property
• working toward better utilization of vehicles permanently leased from the Transportation Services Bureau
• increasing utilization of office supplies from the Department of Administrative Services Central Stores.
The Budget and Fiscal Division includes four sections:

1.) Permits, which encompasses the fiscal administration of issuing boating-certificates, operation of the Customer Service Center in the Lincoln Headquarters Building, Accounts Receivable, and Permits Accounting Departments

2.) Fiscal Accounting, which prepares all voucher payments for the agency and maintains various files and reports connected with the fiscal accounting of all the agency's expenditures

3.) Audits and Cost Accounting, which encompasses audits of all political subdivisions and maintenance of Area Cost Center Expenditure Accounting

4.) The Budget Section which includes preparation and daily maintenance of the agency's budget and financial resources. Major functions of the Budget and Fiscal Division include:

- maintaining all fiscal records in accordance with state and federal laws
- maintaining area cost accounting on income and expenditures for internal control of the Commission
- administering fiscal operation and control of federal programs
- administering the fiscal control of issuing State Boating Certificates
- issuing all hunting and fishing permits to account vendor accounts
- receiving, depositing, and maintaining accounts receivable records on all funds received by the Commission
- preparing the Commission's budget
- preparing and maintaining the Commission's fiscal and operating budgets
- performing audits of federal programs relating to participating subdivisions
- administering an internal program of forms control, including development of forms and defining their purpose, use and retention
- performing other administrative functions as assigned by the Board of Commissioners, the Director or Assistant Directors
## SPECIAL CASH FUNDS
### NEBRASKA HABITAT CASH FUND
- Habitat Stamps: 1,107,577.50
- Interest Earned—Investments: 82,412.44
- Federal Reimbursements: 370,501.46
- Incidents: 2,206.14
- Cash Gifts: 14,172.00
- Crop/Passaic: 5,079.69
- Salt of Surplus Property: 557.97
- Fund Transfers—Workman’s Comp. Claim & Misc.: 0.00
Total: **1,587,615.70**

### NONGAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES CASH
- Cash Gifts: 2,973.38
- Federal Reimbursements: 1,578.68
- Interest: 16,492.10
- Nongame donations: 907,952.57
Total: **121,059.73**

### NIOBRA STATE PARK SPECIAL CASH FUND
- Interest Earned—Investments: 33,272.79
- Incidents: 33,387.79
Total: **66,660.58**

### NORDA CASH FUND
- One Cent Tax on Cigarettes: 1,671,664.03
- Interest Earned—Investments: 147,100.85
- Federal Reimbursements: 8,922.19
- Incidents: 69,473.28
Total: **1,875,715.85**

### NEBRASKA SNOWMOBILE CASH FUND
- 75% of fee, less issuing fee: 5,233.93
- Interest Earned—Investments: 2,195.15
Total: **7,428.08**

### FEDERAL FUNDS
- Land and Water Conservation Fund, Bureau of Reclamation, Historical Grants, and Boating: 841,152.00
- Total Cash and Federal Income Received: **18,613,670.99**
- During 1987: **18,613,670.99**

## 1987 EXPENDITURES
### PURPOSE OF EXPENDITURE—OPERATIONAL COSTS
#### Program 330. Habitat Development
- Habitat Cash: 1,151,375.89
- Total: **1,151,375.89**

#### Program 336. Wildlife Conservation
- Enforcement, Promotion and Development
- Subprogram 01. Enforcement
  - General Fund: 442,262.37
  - Game Cash: 7,101,864.76
  - Park Cash: 157,959.51
  - Total: **7,298,086.64**
- Subprogram 02. Information and Education
  - Game Cash: 1,312,206.07
  - Park Cash: 361,799.75
  - Total: **1,651,922.05**
- Subprogram 04. Game
  - Game Cash: 840,887.02
  - Total: **840,887.02**
- Subprogram 05. Fish
  - Game Cash: 7,196,631.33
  - Federal: 78,736.46
  - Total: **7,275,367.79**
- Subprogram 06. Resource Services
  - Game Cash: 1,187,941.39
  - Total: **1,187,941.39**
- Subprogram 10. Outdoor Recreation
  - Game Cash: 260,431.16
  - Total: **260,431.16**
- Subprogram 15. Aquatics
  - General Fund: 210,052.36
  - Total: **210,052.36**
- Subprogram 16. Nongame and Endangered Species
  - General Fund: 1,304,661.22
  - Nongame Cash: 628,884.40
  - Total: **1,933,545.62**
- **PROGRAM 336. SUMMARY**
  - General Fund: 782,977.95
  - Game Cash: 7,051,961.67
  - Park Cash: 499,578.46
  - Nongame Cash: 63,864.40
  - Federal: 74,736.46
  - Total: **8,478,120.94**
- **PROGRAM 337. AGENCY ADMINISTRATION**
  - General Fund: 471,395.20
  - Game Cash: 948,827.76
  - Park Cash: 301,635.23
  - Habitat Cash: 86,906.52
  - Total: **1,804,364.71**

## 1987 EXPENDITURES
### PURPOSE OF EXPENDITURE—OPERATIONAL COSTS
#### PROGRAM 549. PARK ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION
- General Fund: 3,301,600.56
- Park Cash: 2,317,164.19
- NORDA Cash: 813,860.22
Total: **6,492,624.97**

#### PROGRAM 550. FEDERAL AID AND PLANNING
- General Fund: 229,079.54
- Game Fund Cash: 100,000.00
- Total: **329,079.54**

#### PROGRAM 617. ENGINEERING, AREA MAINTENANCE AND SNOWMOBILE
- General Fund: 1,922,815.30
- Game Fund Cash: 1,554,154.28
- NOIDA Cash: 615,947.17
- Snowmobile Cash: 7,350.00
Total: **2,958,853.14**

#### PROGRAM 828. CREDIT CARD DISCOUNT
- Game Cash: 325.94
- Park Cash: 4,016.23
- Habitant: 2.06
Total: **4,144.23**

### TOTAL EXPENDITURES, OPERATIONAL COSTS
Total: **21,189,957.59**

## STATE GAME FUND/INCOME
### Hunting Activities: 3,597,402.49
### Fishing Activities: 2,649,245.07
- Federal Reimbursement: 1,901,244.47
- Nebraskan magazine subscriptions: 640,197.69
- Advertising: 25,017.46
- Total: **6,585,375.05**

### TOTAL STATE PARK CASH FUND INCOME
Total: **9,797,419.17**

### STATE PARK CASH FUND INCOME—by Areas
- **Alden:** 1,742.13
- **Arbor Lodge:** 38,159.25
- **Ash Hollow:** 1,935.50
- **Box Butte:** 1,180.00
- **Brougham Oak:** 93,376.44
- **Brownville:** 200.00
- **Buffalo Bill:** 10,690.93
- **Calamus:** 11,663.17
- **Chadron:** 118,307.86
- **Champion Mill:** 173.25
- **Crystal Lake:** 50.00
- **Dead Timber:** 5,239.80
- **Enterovius:** 35.25
- **Fort Atkinson:** 2,411.98
- **Fort Hartsuff:** 2,517.85
- **Fort Kearney:** 9,583.56
- **Fort Kearney Recreation:** 34,204.95
- **Fort Robinson:** 593,251.20
- **Fremont:** 47,399.58
- **Indian Cave:** 45,185.77
- **Johnson Lake:** 53,649.01
- **Keller Park:** 2,086.92
- **Lake Maloney:** 864.02
- **Lake Minatare:** 3,634.95
- **Lake McConaughy:** 103,521.95
- **Lewis and Clark:** 6,316.81
- **Lincoln:** 65,074.80
- **Mcclellan:** 10,534.57
- **Memphis:** 281.69
- **Merrill:** 4,468.24
- **Merrimac Island:** 69,922.91
- **Norton:** 90,692.69
- **Pawnee:** 27,573.32
- **Platte River:** 463,277.66
- **Ponca:** 100,368.85
- **Red Willow:** 5,206.95
- **Rock Creek Station:** 5,903.84
- **Schnarrenberg Park:** 3,375.00
- **Sherman:** 11,756.38
- **Swanson:** 15,748.13
- **Two Rivers:** 91,150.38
- **Vitoh Springs:** 14,565.92
- **Water Train:** 533.20
- **Wiltow Creek:** 4,039.33
- **Woodland:** 308.90
- **Miscellaneous Areas:** 650.00
- **Subtotal by Areas:** 2,338,654.68
- **Federal Reimbursements:** 3,675.00
- **Park Entry Permits:** 2,144,218.08
- **Donations:** 1,044.66
- **Other Non-Area Income, Interest Fund Transfers to Workman’s Comp. Claims & Misc.: 163,254.65
Total: **4,449,968.67**
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

December 31, 1986. Cash and General Fund Appropriation on hand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game Cash (Fund 2332)</th>
<th>6,334,625.66</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Park Cash (Fund 2333)</td>
<td>1,353,188.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334)</td>
<td>1,307,627.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nongame and Endangered Species Cash (Fund 2335)</td>
<td>389,142.34</td>
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<td>Nebraska State Park Special Cash (Fund 2336)</td>
<td>508,090.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337)</td>
<td>34,038.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORDA Cash (Fund 2338)</td>
<td>2,514,966.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Fund 4332, includes: Lands and Water Conservation Fund, Bureau of Reclamation (8972). Boating and Historical Grants</td>
<td>61,734.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Fund (Fund 1000)</td>
<td>3,451,127.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less amount lapsed</td>
<td>35,791.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Construction Fund (Fund 3000)</td>
<td>3,415,155.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Cash and General Fund Appropriation on hand December 31, 1986: 16,642,940.24

Cash Revenue and Appropriations Received during 1987:

| Game Cash | 9,767,419.17 |
| Park Cash | 4,499,968.67 |
| Nebraska Habitat Cash | 1,087,615.70 |
| Nongame and Endangered Species Cash | 1,211,059.71 |
| Nebraska State Park Special Cash | 33,307.79 |
| Nebraska Snowmobile Cash | 7,432.00 |
| NORDA Cash | 1,775,715.85 |
| Federal Fund 4332, includes: Lands and Water Conservation Fund, Bureau of Reclamation (8972). Boating and Historical Grants | 441,152.00 |
| General Funds | 6,336,036.00 |
| Capital Construction Funds | 774,536.43 |

Total Cash and General Fund Appropriation Received during 1987: 25,151,706.99

Total Expenditure by Fund Type:

| Game Cash (Fund 2332) | 8,279,826.18 |
| State Park Cash (Fund 2333) | 3,674,232.33 |
| Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334) | 1,454,519.62 |
| Nongame and Endangered Species Cash (Fund 2335) | 62,866.40 |
| Nebraska State Park Special Cash (Fund 2336) | 300,034.55 |
| Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337) | 2,339.00 |
| NORDA Cash (Fund 2338) | 1,692,465.25 |
| Federal Fund 4332, includes: Lands and Water Conservation Fund, Bureau of Reclamation (8972). Boating and Historical Grants | 847,003.98 |
| Capital Construction Funds | 742,493.51 |

Total Expenditure During 1987: 23,396,650.47

December 31, 1987. Cash and General Fund Appropriation on hand:

| Game Cash (Fund 2332) | 8,251,216.59 |
| Park Cash (Fund 2333) | 2,658,925.25 |
| Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334) | 1,440,703.83 |
| Nongame and Endangered Species Cash (Fund 2335) | 247,335.67 |
| Nebraska State Park Special Cash (Fund 2336) | 322,176.99 |
| Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337) | 34,131.91 |
| NORDA Cash (Fund 2338) | 2,238,237.11 |
| Federal Fund 4332, includes: Lands and Water Conservation Fund, Bureau of Reclamation (8972). Boating and Historical Grants | 55,882.47 |
| General Funds (1000) | 3,216,698.16 |
| Capital Construction Fund (Fund 3000) | 138,686.78 |

Total Cash and General Fund Appropriation on hand December 31, 1987: 18,597,996.76

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**1987 CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>1987 CASH</th>
<th>2332</th>
<th>2333</th>
<th>2334</th>
<th>2336</th>
<th>2338</th>
<th>4000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acq. of Habitat Land</td>
<td>191,154.95</td>
<td>191,154.95</td>
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<td>Improvements and Renovation:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak Glenn</td>
<td>8,766.96</td>
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<td>Fort Robinson</td>
<td>767.20</td>
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<td>Eugene T. Mahoney</td>
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<td>Niobrara</td>
<td>62,801.83</td>
<td>133.34</td>
<td>30034.55</td>
<td>1,288.85</td>
<td>6,268.57</td>
<td>384,277.96</td>
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<td>Plate River</td>
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<td>84,391.64</td>
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<td>Fort Atkinson</td>
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<td>Bowring</td>
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<td>1,712.25</td>
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<td>55,579.74</td>
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<td>Rock Creek</td>
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<td>1,712.25</td>
<td>39,668.89</td>
<td>55,579.74</td>
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<td>Atkinson Rec. Area</td>
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<td>Brownfield</td>
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<td>Calamus</td>
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<td>Fremont</td>
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<td>Johnson Lake</td>
<td>3,078.00</td>
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<td>Keller</td>
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<td>Lake Mcneil</td>
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<td>53,711.70</td>
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<td>Merritt Reservoir</td>
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<td>Summit</td>
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<td>Waigert Lake</td>
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<td>Rec. Areas General</td>
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<td>55,829.66</td>
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<td>Cigar Creek</td>
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<td>Elwood</td>
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<td>Greenval</td>
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<td>Sacramento</td>
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<td>Smith Lake</td>
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<td>Jack Sinn</td>
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<td>Caumoa Hatchery</td>
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<td>North Platte Hatchery</td>
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<td>Rock Creek Hatchery</td>
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<td>335,849.66</td>
<td>153,945.21</td>
<td>167,682.84</td>
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<td>300,034.55</td>
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Budget and Fiscal is responsible for the administration and issuing of boating certificates.
Engineering

The Engineering Division provides architectural and engineering services to agency divisions and functions similar to an independent, private professional consulting firm. The staff consists of professional architects, engineers, surveyors, inspectors and support staff that provide all services usually and customarily associated with those professions.

The Division performs many activities, including:
- preparation of feasibility studies, preliminary designs, cost estimates, construction plans and specifications, and contract administration of projects under construction
- related activities include legal land and topographic surveys, field inspections, preparation of formal presentation drawings, model buildings and drafting services
- acts as the Game and Parks Commission’s representative when contracting services from outside for professional expertise
- acts as a service to local municipalities by reviewing projects funded by the Heritage conservation Recreation Service through the Game and Parks Commission to determine whether they comply with local and state codes and statutory regulations for funding authority

During 1987 the Engineering Division was involved in many projects across the state, including 32 in-house projects; three projects which involved hiring an outside consultant; and four projects funded by LB309.
The Fisheries Division assumes responsibility for maintenance, development and regulations on use of renewable fisheries resources. The broad goal is to manage these resources in the best interest of Nebraskans. The Division is organized into five sections: Administration, Management, Production, Research, and the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium.

**ADMINISTRATION**

The Administration Section plans, organizes, directs and controls approved programs, policies and operation procedures of the Division.

One of the functions of this section is the issuing of special permits which amounted to a total of $20,876.00. In 1987 the section issued:

- **158 Missouri River Commercial Fishing Permits (151 resident, 7 nonresident).** Resident permits are $65, nonresident are $130. Fees collected were $10,811.00
- **328 Bait Vendor Permits (325 resident, 3 nonresident).** Resident permits are $25, nonresident are $150. Fees collected were $8,575.00
- **7 Nonresident Fish Dealer Permits at $100 each.** Fees collected were $700.00
- **3 Commercial Put and Take Permits at $50 each.** Fees collected were $150.00
- **32 Private Fish Culturist Permits at $20 each.** Fees collected were $640.00.

There were 28 fish kills reported in 1987, involving 21,771 fish. Ten of the kills occurred in lakes and reservoirs, seven occurred in ponds, two in rivers and eight in streams. Lancaster County reported five fish kills, the largest number of all counties in the state.

There were several causes for the fish kills. There were agricultural-related, 5 (livestock waste, 3; fertilizer, 1; irrigation 1); industrial-related 1 (refrigeration); natural 12 (disease and parasite, 4; winter kill, 4; summer kill, 4) and unknown causes, 9.
TWO RIVERS TROUT LAKE

The Two Rivers Trout Lake was open from 7 a.m. to sunset for 141 days during 1987, the shortest season on record. The abbreviated season was due to the loss of trout-supporting water by June 20. An estimated 27,436 trout died when the water temperature rose above the trout's tolerance level.

While the area was open to fishing, fishermen averaged about 59 minutes of fishing time per trout. The catch rate was 2.72 trout per tag returned. Fishermen reported harvesting 70,968 trout, 56.1 percent of the 12,468 trout stocked in the lake in 1987.

FISH PRODUCTION SECTION

The primary purpose of the five fish production facilities is to produce, procure and stock fish in Nebraska's waters as requested by the management and research sections.

During 1987 the five hatcheries reared and stocked 10,873,508 fish ranging in size from eggs and fry to adults. Among those fish were 2,000 brook trout; 439,109 rainbow trout; 135,497 brown trout; 104,375 northern pike; 33,955 tiger muskie; 1,000,000 white bass; 461,142 largemouth bass; 1,366,077 bluegill; and 4,994,004 walleye.
AK-SAR-BEN AQUARIUM

The Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium is located at Schramm Park State Recreation Area, nine miles south of Gretna on Highway 31.

The Aquarium is open to the public daily, May 15 - Sept. 15 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Winter hours are in effect from Sept. 16 - May 14. Public hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. The Aquarium is closed to the public on Tuesdays, however the staff is on duty. The facility is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

The Aquarium’s display tanks house about 52 species of fish, which means there are about 288 specimens on display. Tanks are also used to display turtles, crayfish, salamanders and clams.

The Aquarium is one of the showplaces of the Game and Parks Commission system. There are some 15,000 flowers planted and maintained throughout the growing season to add to its appeal.

During 1987 approximately 125,000 people visited to Aquarium, a daily average of about 376 people. An admission charge of $.50 is charged for youngster 6-15 years, and $1.00 for adults. Total admission fees for 1987 were $27,861.35. (There is no charge for school groups, Boy Scout groups, Girl Scout groups, church groups, etc. if they make reservations. Large groups of 20 or more are allowed discount rates.)

Trout pellets are sold from 10-cent vending machines in the canyon ponds so people can feed the ducks and geese. An income of $1,422.30 was realized from the vending machines during 1987.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Activities of the Fishery Resource Specialist during the year were divided into five general categories: review or preparation of Corps of Engineers 404 permit applications (5); water project reviews for fishery impacts (9); instream flow planning and studies (4); conferences, meetings and educational programs (4); and miscellaneous activities (5 specific and many nonspecific).

RESEARCH SECTION

The Research Section is charged with providing new information, making resource recommendations and developing new management techniques for fisheries managers. Toward this end, several projects were continued in 1987 and a number of new projects were initiated. The staff also provides technical assistance to other fishery personnel when needed.

Nine projects covering multiple resource concerns were in progress during 1987.

One of the primary goals of the section is to produce information applicable to fishery management programs. Toward that end, as much information as possible is published in technical papers or presented in oral reports. There were 14 written reports published in 1987.
Information and Education

The Information and Education Division was involved in many projects during 1987, all of them aimed towards informing and educating the public about Nebraska's heritage, its wealth of natural resources, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Carrying on a vital News Program is an important function of the division. Weekly news releases to all Nebraska media were produced, as well as spot releases to local affected areas. An Outdoor Report was compiled from Commission sources and distributed weekly. Special press packets were produced on Niobrara State Park, fishing, hunting, and camping.

The Art Section provided illustrations for a wide range of purposes during 1987, with about 50 percent of its time devoted to artwork and layout for NEBRASKAland Magazine. This included producing artwork and seeing each issue of the magazine through all stages of production. Other duties included design of Commission brochures and pamphlets, producing illustrations for slide shows, producing show cards, designing booths and signs for use at the State Fair and other events requiring display materials.

The Publications Section wrote, edited, and supervised the production of many pamphlets and brochures for the agency. Major projects included brochures for Niobrara State Park, the Nongame Wildlife program, Chadron State Park, Platte River State Park, A Tackle Box Guide, a series of lake maps for Aquatic Education, and numerous projects for the Outdoor Education Division. The section also supervised the printing of 392,400 Fish Guides, 151,200 Boat Guides, and 260,000 Hunt Guides.
NEBRASKAland Magazine published 10 issues in 1987. The year began with "The Fish Book," a 132-page special documenting some 122 fish species found in Nebraska. Many species are captured in full-color photographs, the results of hard work by issue coordinator Ken Bouc and agency Fisheries Division staff. "The Fish Book" has sold well over the counter and on newsstands, and is being used as a text for the Aquatic Education program.

Other NEBRASKAland highlights included a series on naturalist Frank Shoemaker; a feature section on Fort Atkinson State Historical Park; articles on the new Calamus Reservoir, Niobrara State Park, and Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch; a 64-page August-September issue; and color features on a variety of topics.

The number of NEBRASKAland subscriptions stayed stable during the year, with about 61,000 copies of the magazine printed each month.

Income has shown steady growth over the last five years. The last subscription rate increase went into effect July 1, 1986. The figures reflect a 38.9% increase over the period.

Revenue from NEBRASKAland Magazine continued to increase in 1987. Subscriptions and single copy sales accounted for over $641,000, and advertising raised another $25,677.66. Sales from other publications, principally the NEBRASKAland Calendar of Color, amounted to $97,374.88. The total income from the magazine and related publications effort was $764,250.23.

The division also published nearly 35,000 copies of the 1988 NEBRASKAland Calendar of Color. It sold successfully on newsstands, and through the NEBRASKAland Gift Catalog inserted in the November and December issues.
The division also provided publications, publicity, and support for the grand opening and dedication of the new Niobrara State Park on July 11.

The Printing Section handled the printing of all Commission materials that were not done commercially. During 1987 the section ran nearly 1,000 jobs, requiring about one million sheets of paper. Much of the work involved making negatives for photog-raph printing to illustrate news releases, brochures, NEBRASKAland Magazine and other publications.

In the interest of speed and economy, the Mail Section used the United Postal Service. UPS charges were $22,131.34 for 14,203 pieces.

In 1987 the Photography Section made some 2,000 black and white photo exposures and about 39,000 color exposures. Some 1,800 rolls of film were processed and 1,360 prints ranging from contact size to 16 x 20 were made. The color exposures and prints were made to illustrate NEBRASKAland Magazine, various Commission publications and slide series, and to fill requests from numerous firms in the public relations and publishing fields.

In its 33rd year, 52 segments of the Outdoor Nebraska weekly radio program were mailed to 73 radio stations in Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas. The 10-minute program featured interviews with Commission staff and other specialists which emphasized the need for public awareness of the changing environment and important conservation management principals.

The division also began production on a feature length 16mm film for the Eve Bowring Visitor Center at Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch State Historical Park. It, and other videotape production projects, were produced through contracts or agreements with private vendors.

Eight KNOW NEBRASKA TOURS, co-sponsored with the Omaha World-Herald, were coordinated by the division. Over the last nine years, some 4,500 people have participated in this popular program.

The division also coordinated the annual agency effort at the Nebraska State Fair. An estimated 350,000 visitors enjoyed the “Old Town” exhibit. The total sales in permits and magazines topped $25,849, an all-time high.

The Omaha Information Office had an extremely busy and productive year. It initiated an area news release to 110 outlets each week, and produced weekly radio and television feature spots. It coordinated numerous Hunter Safety classes in the metro region, and worked with a number of schools and youth groups on various Outdoor Education projects. The office mailed nearly 9,600 pieces, and sold over $130,000 in permits, magazines, and related items. Included in these sales are $41,765 in archery permits.

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Law Enforcement

Nebraska Conservation Officers enforce laws and regulations pertaining to fishing, hunting, boating, and the State Parks System. Modern natural resource law enforcement is an important part of wildlife and park management.

Today effective natural resource law enforcement is divided into three equally important parts. Public education explains the need, intent and purpose for existing laws and regulations; selective law enforcement allows officers to concentrate their efforts in a particular area where specific problems are occurring; and general law enforcement allows officers to prevent and control law violations in their individual patrol areas.

For the amount of area to be covered and the scope of its responsibilities, the Law Enforcement Division is not large. During 1987 the division was at full staff with one division chief, one assistant chief, six supervisors, 50 conservation officers, one administrative secretary and one radio operator.

The conservation officers drove a total of 1,504,262 miles while patrolling rural and urban areas in 1987. Patrol boats were used about 2,057 hours for promotion of boating safety, and snowmobiles were driven about 103 miles for enforcement purposes.

Contacts

The essence of law enforcement is contact with the public and conservation officers made 227,927 personal contacts during 1987. The majority of these contacts, 97,215, were made regarding miscellaneous matters, most of them pertaining to parks regulations. There were another 71,658 contacts with fishermen, 29,636 contacts with hunters and 1,474 contacts with trappers. Conservation officers conducted 25,862 boat inspections, investigated 1,669 complaints from the public, and made 413 personal appearances at meetings, fairs, sport shows, and schools.

![Contact Pie Chart]

- Hunters 13%
- Fishermen 31%
- Other 42%
- Boat Inspection 11%
- Complaint Investigation
- Personal Appearances 2%
- Trappers 6%
Arrests & Citations

During 1987 conservation officers wrote 4,407 citations for a total of 4,751 offenses (some citations listed more than one offense). A total of 4,230 of the people cited pleaded guilty or were found guilty by the court, resulting in a conviction percentage of 95.98 percent.

Total Offenses:
Conservation officers cited a total of 4,751 people for various offenses in 1987. The largest number of citations, 1,930, were written for violations of park regulations; 861 were fishing violations; 855 were hunting violations; 651 were boating violations; 352 were fur harvester violations; and 102 were miscellaneous other violations.

Of the 1,930 parks violations, 1,527 citations were written to people who entered parks with no park entry permit on their vehicle; 149 were for entering, swimming or driving in an unauthorized area; 44 were for minor in possession of alcoholic beverages; 23 were for littering; 22 were issued to people who had no registration or current license plates on their vehicle; 21 were issued to people who allowed pets to run at large on the beach; and 144 were issued for a variety of other miscellaneous offenses.
Operation Game Thief

Nebraska's Operation Game Thief Program is an opportunity for citizens to volunteer information pertaining to game law violations without actually becoming involved in the case. Styled after highly successful Crime-stoppers Programs across the country, the Operation Game Thief Program allows citizens to report information without giving their name or having to appear in court. They may be eligible for a cash reward.

During 1987 a total of 53 Operation Game Thief investigations were initiated which resulted in 38 arrests. The cases resulted in violators paying $5,898 in fines and court costs, and $4,505 in liquidated damages.

Since its inception in September 1982, information received from citizens through the Operation Game Thief Program has been responsible for the investigation of 336 game violations which resulted in 199 arrests. Those people arrested were involved in 117 deer cases, six turkey cases, 15 upland game cases, 15 furbearer cases, nine waterfowl cases, 22 fish cases, one bobcat case, one eagle case, one hawk case, and one swan case. Of the people charged 188 were found guilty, eight cases were dismissed, charges were not filed against one person, and two people were found not guilty.

Since 1982 information received through the Operation Game Thief Program has resulted in game law violators paying a total of $21,601.42 in fines and court costs; and $29,645.00 in liquidation damages which were returned to the Game Fund. During that time, 74 rewards totalling $10,625.00 were paid for information received from the public.

Of the 336 investigations launched through the program, 38 percent resulted in arrests being made for game law violations. The conviction rate of those arrests was 94.5 percent.
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Mandatory Road Checks

Nebraska conservation officers made mandatory road checks at 17 sites during 1987 in which 2,750 vehicles were stopped and checked. In the vehicles stopped, officers contacted 1,093 hunters, 81 fishermen, and 55 other sportsmen. Those checks resulted in the arrests of 63 people and the confiscation of 12 bass, 38 pheasants, 12 grouse, eight ducks, three packages of venison, one dove, seven turkeys and nine raccoons.

Radio Communications

The statewide agency radio communications system consists of a network of bases and repeaters which allow radio communications between district offices, from mobile radios to offices, and from mobile radio to mobile radio. Cost of the communications system during 1987 was $28,863.18. Included in that total was $3,651.40 for base/repeater repair and maintenance; $9,976.80 for tower, antenna and cable repair and maintenance; $1,896.98 for telephone line rent and electricity to tower sites; $11,538 for tower rental and tower site leases; and $1,800 in miscellaneous expenses.

The 1987 operating expense was $10,720.49 more than the 1986 expense primarily due to the collapse and resulting loss of the Ainsworth tower and the cost of moving that control/repeater site to the new Educational Television tower south of Bassett.

The operation expenses do not include costs incurred by individual divisions for operation, maintenance or replacement of mobile or portable radios.

FISHING VIOLATIONS

TOTAL: 861

- Permit 79%
- Other 10%
- Possession Limits 6%
- Number of hooks 5%

HUNTING VIOLATIONS

TOTAL: 1,207

- Deer 18%
- Migrating Birds 16%
- Antelope 1%
- Turkey 1%
- Fur Harvester 29%
- Small Game 29%

PARKS VIOLATIONS

TOTAL: 1,930

- Permit 79%
- Other 14%
- Swimming 7%
Operations and Construction

The Operations and Construction Division is assigned the responsibility of providing the necessary personnel and equipment to assist other agency divisions with engineering, construction, maintenance, and transportation services.

The Engineering Section regularly inspects agency facilities and areas reporting needed improvements and repairs, and provides suggestions for corrective solutions. It also inspects force account construction daily for compliance with planned design, and develops specifications for materials and equipment purchased by the division.

The Construction Section provides personnel trained in engineering and construction skills to supervise and operate heavy equipment and install and maintain utility services. During 1987 personnel assisted with construction, renovation, and repair of several agency facilities.

The Maintenance Section provides personnel and equipment for the daily supervision, operation and maintenance of unmanned areas. Among the responsibilities of this section are establishment of tree nurseries and maintaining the tree transplanting program; assisting with regulation enforcement, maintaining public contact on unmanned areas; and providing and manning an equipment and material supply shop for the Parks Division.

While the Division provided services on 28 construction projects across the state during 1987, most of the work occurred at Niobrara and Eugene T. Mahoney State Parks.
At Niobrara State Park construction included:
- completion of a 65-unit campground with entrance gate and sign
- tree planting
- general clean-up and erosion control

At Mahoney State Park construction included:
- completion of the assistant superintendent's residence
- a 32-stall stable
- entrance kiosk
- landscaping of the lake area
- tree removal and planting
- erosion control

The Lincoln Maintenance Section provided a variety of services during 1987, including:
- daily maintenance to seven Salt Valley Lakes areas and five District V areas, including mowing and trimming; garbage pick-up and hauling; cleaning, painting and repair of latrines; installation and repair of boat docks and ramps; repair of wells and water systems; and care of trees and shrubs
- supervision and regulation of pay campgrounds
- refuse pick-up, latrine cleaning and mowing provided to six wildlife management areas
- maintenance personnel assisted conservation officers with park regulation enforcement during peak activity periods
- provided maintenance on 195 miles of agency non-hard surfaced roads and parking areas

During 1987 the Division provided a wide variety of equipment to area superintendents to complete numerous projects.
Gasoline and diesel fuel was provided for agency vehicles at the Lincoln shop, and during 1987 a total of 51,830 gallons of gasoline and 24,896 gallons of diesel fuel were dispensed.
Outdoor Education

During 1987 the Outdoor Education Division scheduled 22 Outdoor Education Workshops, most at the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium facilities. Some 1,700 people attended the fishing, turkey hunting and deer hunting workshops.

During 1987 the Division:
- presented 28 school programs
- taught eight UNL and other college classes
- conducted nine Project WILD introductory workshops
- reached 799 teachers and other people through Project WILD workshops
- reached an estimated 32,000 Project WILD leaders.

BOATING SAFETY

There were 55,175 boats registered in Nebraska during 1987, an increase of about seven percent over the previous year.

During the year there were 24 boating accidents involving 33 boats reported, which resulted in 16 injuries and two fatalities, compared to six boating fatalities reported in 1986.

In 1987 a "typical" boating accident:
- involved a boat operator 27-50 years of age with over 100 hours boating experience
- occurred on a Sunday afternoon in July
- occurred while the boater was cruising, rather than fishing, skiing or engaged in other water-related activities.

During the year efforts to inform boaters about boating safety were made through public service announcement on radio and television, regular news releases, canoe safety classes, boating and water safety programs, and the home study Boating Safety Course.
AQUATIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Aquatic Education Program was greatly expanded in 1987, with program materials used in some 150 classrooms across the state.

Those materials included:
- a number of supplementary materials written and printed for teachers
- life history posters of catfish, northern pike and bass
- a large fish identification key poster
- Whiskers coloring books for students
- bookmarks in the shape of fish with information on back used for mobiles and wall displays

A teacher's guide for Aquatic Education which provides curriculum ideas and classroom activities for teaching aquatic resources was completed. Teaching aids on aquatic plants and insects were written and a two-projector slide-dissolve program on fisheries management was created in 1987.

HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

In 1987 a total of 483 instructors conducted 312 Hunter Safety Courses involving some 5,400 students. Records show 111,803 students have been enrolled in the program since 1972 and 94 percent were certified.

- a NEBRASKAland Calendar and two hunter safety newsletters were mailed to active instructors during the year. In-service instructor workshops were conducted in five locations across the state and there was one bowhunter education workshop conducted
- eleven instructor workshops were held during the year and 47 new instructors were certified
- hunting-related accidents dropped slightly during 1987, to only 13 non-fatal accidents and one fatality
- the Hunter Safety Coordinator spoke to 35 civic and school groups and assisted with 11 outdoor education workshops.
The Division of State Parks is responsible for administration and operation of Nebraska's system of state park areas. The division provides necessary resource protection and enhancement measures to assure quality outdoor recreation experiences for future generations of park users.

The State Park System is made up of 85 areas comprised of a total of 149,125.79 acres — 67,290.88 acres of land and 81,834.91 acres of marsh or water. Within the system are seven state parks comprised of 29,818.07 acres; 67 state recreation areas that encompass a total of 116,887.38 acres; and 11 state historical parks made up of 2,420 acres.

To maintain and operate the park system's 85 areas the Commission employs a permanent staff of 117 people that is supplemented by another 620 temporary employees. Only 40 of the park areas are staffed by on-site personnel and 82 of the permanent field employees are stationed there. The remaining 35 field positions are assigned to other recreation areas and seven park maintenance crews to maintain and operate 27 other recreation areas.

The 620 temporary employees assisted the parks staff during the recreation season. The summer help was obtained from several federal employment programs, volunteer services of local groups and the military.

Replicas of earliest buildings document military and Indian activities at Fort Robinson.

ESTIMATED PARK VISITS

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1987 was perhaps the busiest planting and landscaping year the Horticulture Section has seen. Because of intensive demands on personnel to prepare Niobrara State Park and Mahoney State Park, there was little time to accomplish the normal nursery and greenhouse functions that are part of the section's responsibility. Approximately 1,000 large container-grown trees and 2,000 container-grown shrubs were planted at Niobrara before the park opened July 11, 1987.

Mahoney State Park received the section’s full attention during the fall. When the road system was completed, landscaping was started with hundreds of pine and fir trees. The campground and park buildings came after the roads and parking lots were finished.

The container nursery at Fort Kearny State Historical Park provided 3,500 container-grown trees and shrubs for Calamus State Recreation Area and other areas needing plants for campgrounds. The field nurseries at Branched Oak State Recreation Area supplied large trees for Mahoney State Park, Pawnee and Branched Oak State Recreation areas. The juniper nursery at Ash Hollow State Historical Park provides shrubs for Lake Minatare State Recreation Area and other western parks.

INCOME

The Park System generates revenue for the park cash fund and to help support park programs in several ways. Camping, lodging, swimming and trail rides are typical activities for which fees are charged. Other park income is derived from restaurant and concession sales, leases from cabin sites, conservation practices, and concession sites.

The income generated by resale items, including T-shirts, caps and other souvenir-type items, totaled $111,464.25 during 1987; income from food services was $337,743.21; camping income was $655,245.34; and the income from cabin rentals totaled $640,775.15.

Park visitors spent $127,378.93 to enjoy park trail rides; $86,746.23 on boat and other recreation equipment rentals and $677,504.00 on Park Entry Permits. The total revenue collected in Nebraska’s parks was $2,987,062.15. All figures represent net income with taxes deducted.
Planning and Programming

The Planning and Programming Division's major responsibilities include administration of several federal grant programs; comprehensive planning; special studies; local planning review; water resource project monitoring; and environmental review of all federally assisted developments in the state.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCA) of 1965 provides 50 percent federal grants-in-aid to the various states and their political subdivisions for state comprehensive planning, acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas. It is supported by a portion of user fees on federal areas, tax on motor boat fuels, the sale of surplus property, and revenues from off-shore petroleum leases. About 85 percent of the LWCF is derived from off-shore leases.

Of approximately $377,500 allocated in fiscal year 1987, 60 percent, or $226,500, was reallocated for local community projects and 40 percent, or $151,000, retained for agency-sponsored projects. All present grants are on the basis of 50 percent federal and 50 percent local funds (or state funds in the case of agency-sponsored projects).

Over the past 22 years, the federal government, state and local communities have invested more than $73.8 million in new and improved outdoor recreation facilities under this program in Nebraska.

Federal Aid for Commercial Fisheries

The Commercial Fisheries Research and Development Act of 1964 is administered by the National Marine Fisheries Service and provides financial assistance to the states for activities designed to monitor or develop commercial fishing. Nebraska normally receives $19,000 from this program.
Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950 are companion programs, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provide financial assistance to the states and territories for restoration activities. The Wildlife Restoration Program is funded by an 11 percent excise tax on arms and ammunition, and a 10 percent excise tax on handguns and archery equipment. The Sport Fish Restoration Program is funded by a 10 percent excise tax on fishing rods, creels, reels, baits and lures.

During 1987, these programs made about $3.5 million available to Nebraska for fish and wildlife surveys and inventories, research, acquisition, development and maintenance, technical assistance, hunter safety training and aquatic resource education.

Comprehensive Planning

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for 1986-1990 was scheduled to be printed, along with the SCORP Action Program and the Nebraska Wetlands Addendum. Nebraskans continue to enjoy their outdoor recreation activities, according to their responses to the annual recreation participation questions asked in the Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey.

Resource Monitoring

Game and Parks Commission staff members evaluated potential benefits of project proposals by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Soil Conservation Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, and Nebraska Department of Roads.

Staff members participated in meetings relating to the Prairie Bend Unit study directed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the major water resources planning effort in Nebraska. Two Section 404 permit evaluations, the Deer Creek Reservoir (Wyoming) and Two Forks Reservoir (Colorado), were underway and subject to the full Environmental Impact Statement process. Both would cause significant impact to the Platte River Ecosystem in Nebraska.
The Realty Division was involved in several land acquisitions, appraisals, lease renewals, payments and cancellations, appraisal reviews, negotiations, and public hearings during 1987.

Some of the Division's activities included:

- A review of a land appraisal for subdivisions seeking federal aid was accomplished for one Nebraska community.
- 19 tracts of land were appraised during 1987, five of which were purchased during 1987.
- During the year the Game and Parks Commission acquired title to five tracts of land with funds from the Habitat Program. Those five tracts represented 805.50 acres and cost a total of $302,469.72. Public hearings were held on all acquisitions prior to Commission action.
- The Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation donated two tracts of land to the Game and Parks Commission. One of them, the 59.29 acre Margrave tract was designated as a wildlife management area and the other, a 360-acre tract near Orchard, was designated Asihall State Historical Park.
- A lease with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added 173 acres to Chadron State Park in Dawes County.
- 70-acre Pawnee Slough WMA was acquired through a second lease in Lincoln County.
- There have been 80 tracts purchased and designated wildlife management areas since 1977 when the Habitat Program began. Paid in lieu of taxes to counties in 1987 amounted to $38,409.97 on those 15,818.78 acres.

The Game and Parks Commission currently leases 82 areas through the Realty Division at a cost of $229,704.98. A breakdown of those types of leases and their cost is:

- Accessways: $420.00
- 14 Canoe Campsites: $3,001.00
- Habitat Areas, Fisheries, Grazing, Recreation: $22,706.98
- Office Space in Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney: $134,344.00
- 16 Storage Areas: $22,171.00
- 18 Tower Leases: $12,055.00
- Work Areas: $31,250.00
- Hanger Space: $660.00
- Post Office Boxes: $397.00

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Resource Services

The primary responsibilities of the Resources Services Division are development, improvement, and continued maintenance of wildlife habitat. Fulfilling those responsibilities involves development and maintenance of lands and facilities on state wildlife management areas and administration of the Nebraska Wildlife Habitat Plan, which involves Game and Parks Commission controlled lands, private lands, and lands under control of other government agencies.

Resource Services is responsible for the management of elk and captive waterfowl.

The division is responsible for:
- management of captive waterfowl and pheasant production flocks
- management of elk, buffalo, and bighorn sheep herds
- management of controlled hunting areas such as the Sacramento-Wilcox Area, the Clear Creek Area; and the Randall W. Schilling Area
- control of fowl cholera
- nest box management
- technical land reconnaissance
- providing facilities for sporting dog training and field trials
- coordination and assistance with other governmental agencies and groups
- technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, sportsmen groups, and individuals.

Tree plantings on wildlife lands provide winter cover, nest sites, and browse.
Resource Services also provides facilities for sporting dog training and field trials.

Controlled fires are used on wildlife areas to rejuvenate native prairie and improve habitat.

During 1987 the Resource Services Division was involved in a number of efforts to enhance wildlife habitat through the Nebraska Habitat Program. Among those efforts were:

- the allocation of 40,200 trees to farmers and ranchers for wildlife habitat plantings
- the distribution of 920 5-pound bags of seed mixtures to be planted as wildlife food plots
- the distribution of 4,585 pounds of grain sorghum (milo) to be used for planting of food plots for wildlife.

Among the projects involving public land habitat improvements during 1987 were:

- providing seed for the County Roadside Seeding Program. The Division received requests from 24 counties, but few seedings were made that actually utilized Commission seed
- provided funding for the Living Snowfence Program along state and county roadsides. Since its inception in 1983, about $140,000 has been expended for the program, though less than $5,000 was actually utilized during 1987
- continued coordination efforts with the U.S. Forest Service for various habitat developments and protective projects, such as habitat improvement and protection on McKelvie, Bessey, and the Pine Ridge Forest Service lands. Habitat development included tree and shrub plantings, grass and legume seedings, oats and sweet clover seedings, and food plot plantings. About $8,000 was expended for those purposes during 1987
- again coordinated efforts with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Harlan County Reservoir for various habitat projects including numerous tree and shrub plantings, grass and legume seedings and food plot plantings. Fences were also erected at several locations. To date the Commission has expended approximately $843,000 for wildlife habitat improvement on this area
- completed projects on numerous state wildlife management areas across the state, including some 75,000 trees and shrubs planted, numerous grass-legume plantings, and food plot plantings.
- a moratorium on new contracts in the private lands portion of the Nebraska Habitat Plan was invoked in 1987 due to a shortage of funds. That moratorium was scheduled to be lifted in July 1988. During 1987 there were 2,042 cooperators enrolled in the program, representing 36,064 acres of land involved in various practices of the private lands program.

Wildlife land acquisition is an important part of the Nebraska Wildlife Habitat Plan and each year division personnel conduct numerous technical land reconnaissances. The information they develop on a parcel of land is presented to a habitat screening committee, and each area is assigned a priority rating for acquisition.

During 1987, 864.79 acres of land were acquired and designated wildlife management areas. Since 1977, the acquisition program has purchased 17,579 acres of land at a cost of $7,339,559.

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The division administers all sporting dog training and field trial activities in the state. During 1987 there were 25 organized clubs listed on the state roster, and they conducted a total of 66 trials during the year.

During 1987:

- 17 licensed trials were conducted at the Branched Oak Dog Trial Area
- nine licensed trials were conducted at Yankee Hill Wildlife Management Area
- one licensed trial was conducted at Alexandria Lakes Wildlife Management Area
- one licensed trial was conducted at Fort Robinson State Park.
Wildlife

The Wildlife Division is responsible for developing research and management associated with game and non-game mammals and birds of the state.

Research studies provide information that assists in development of management programs and is provided to Law Enforcement, Resource Services and other divisions.

Management programs attempt to provide the maximum hunting, trapping and recreational opportunity for Nebraskans and to develop regulations that ensure adequate safeguards for the resource.

Division personnel collect information pertaining to various wildlife species and their environment, and try to formulate programs to better manage them. They are also concerned with protecting threatened or endangered species and study non-native species to determine their suitability for reintroduction. The division is responsible for monitoring private game farm operations, controlled shooting areas, falconry operations and pheasant rearing programs through the game farm operation at Wilcox and the day-old/chick cooperor program.
Research Programs

During 1987, the Division was involved in several projects. Among those were:

- data from lead in soil samples and in waterfowl liver samples were examined, tabulated and evaluated, and will be used to evaluate the conversion to steel shot for waterfowl hunting
- the results of aerial photos of quail habitat taken in 1985 was evaluated and will be compared with photos of the same areas in 1965 to determine habitat changes over the 20-year period
- insects were collected and identified as part of a Fisheries Division study of the Missouri River
- a new study involving identifying waterfowl species by measurements taken from breastbones was begun. It may prove to be a valuable law enforcement tool.

Management Programs

- a record 1,014 bald eagles were found to have wintered in Nebraska in 1987, compared to 462 in 1986. Biologists use these figures to keep track of the status of the bald eagle, an endangered species
- a field study was conducted in western Nebraska to determine production and nesting requirements of the ferruginous hawk and nestlings were banded to determine movement and mortality
- barn owl restoration through artificial nest box construction, and replacement and release of captive reared birds was continued
- intensive research was conducted on least tern nesting colonies located in the Platte and Niobrara Rivers. Data was used to develop management recommendations for use by various state and federal wildlife agencies
- artificial shelter/nest boxes that were previously attached to trees in several locations along the Missouri River in southeast Nebraska were monitored to determine the status and distribution of the threatened flying squirrel. It now appears there is a very sparse population along the Missouri River bluffs from Nebraska City south to the Kansas border.
DEER (Firearm season)

Deer numbers continued at a high level in most areas of the state in 1987. The Frenchman Unit, located in the southwest portion of the state, rated highest in hunter success. There were a total of 52,889 firearm deer permits sold in 1987, and 64 percent of the permit holders took a deer.

DEER (Archery season)

Archers enjoyed good deer hunting in 1987, with 26 percent of the 12,158 permit holders bagging their deer.

ANTELOPE ARCHERY

In 1987 firearm antelope hunting permits numbered 536, down 35 percent from 1986. But, even with permit numbers and antelope numbers down, three out of four hunters, 77 percent, took an antelope.

ANTELOPE (Archery season)

Antelope hunting with a bow and arrow remained one of the toughest challenges facing Nebraska hunters. In 1987 17 antelope were taken by 229 archery permit holders, a hunter success rate of only seven percent.

ANTFOWAL

For the 13th consecutive year, avian cholera again caused losses in the spring migration of ducks and geese in south-central Nebraska. Biologists picked up 1,381 waterfowl carcasses in the Rainwater Basins between February 20 and April 16. The 1987 duck breeding population in the Sandhills was estimated at about 120,000 ducks, an increase over 1986’s population.

Production of Canada geese at Sacramento WMA and 125 goslings acquired from Colorado resulted in the release of 532 goslings in the North Platte Valley, mostly in Scotts Bluff County.

The North Platte Valley Restoration Project was begun in 1983 with the release of 99 birds on Winters Creek Lake near Scottsbluff. The goal of the project is to enhance the released population in the area by some 3,000 birds, which would allow an annual harvest of an additional 1,000 geese. In 1987, the fifth year of the ten-year project, the restoration effort was “going reasonably well.” By the end of 1987 more than 2,000 goslings had been released in the area.
Wildlife Checkoff Program

Funds were collected from Individual Income Tax returns to fund many non-game wildlife management programs, among them:

- a contract nesting ecology study of the least tern and the piping plover on the lower Platte River
- more than 40 captive bred barn owls were released in the ongoing effort to restore a breeding population to southeast Nebraska
- 55 river otters obtained from Idaho were released on the South Loup River, Calamus River, and North Platte River in the ongoing effort to restore this species to Nebraska
- funding was provided to Project WILD, an educational program that teaches young people from elementary school through high school basic concepts about wildlife
- a contract with The Nature Conservancy to conduct a Natural Heritage Inventory in Nebraska was developed. A staff of three scientists began work on the inventory in September. Approximately 50 percent of the funding came from the Nongame Checkoff.
(Spring shotgun season)
Turkey populations remained high in 1987, particularly in the Verdigris and Niobrara Units. There were 6,652 permits sold for the spring shotgun season, and 45 percent of the hunters bagged a bird.

(Fall shotgun season)
Good numbers of birds were available to hunters during 1987's fall turkey season and 6,015 permit holders tried their luck at bagging a gobbler. When the season ended, 3,910 hunters had filled their permit, a hunter success rate of 65 percent.

(Spring archery)
A total of 1,270 archers bought permits for the spring season and 236 harvested birds, a hunter success rate of 19 percent.

(Fall archery)
Nebraska's bowmen enjoyed a good archery turkey season in the fall of 1987 as 663 permit holders took 197 birds, a hunter success rate of 30 percent, compared to a 20 percent success rate in 1986.

MUSKRAT RACCOON HARVEST

FURBEARERS
The 1986-87 fur harvester season was a great one. There were record harvests of beaver, 25,439 (6,000 over the previous high); raccoon, 112,902 (26,000 over the previous high); and red fox, 2,829. The oppossum harvest, 17,551 animals, was second only to 1976 levels. There were an estimated 320,303 furbearers harvested during the season, which represented a total fur value of $4,661,065.

MOURNING DOVE
Nebraska's mourning dove harvest is directly related to how long warm weather stays in the state. A few nights when temperatures dip into the low 50s is all it takes to send the doves winging toward warmer climates. In both 1986 and '87 the weather turned cool in early September and the result is evident by the number of doves harvested.
SQUIRREL HARVEST

COTTONTAIL RABBIT HARVEST

UPLAND GAMEBIRD HARVEST

PHEASANT

Nebraska’s pheasant flock was rebuilding in 1987 after the severe winter of 1983-84 and the summer rural mail carrier survey indicated an 18 percent decline in the statewide population from the previous year. Though pheasant numbers were down, the harvest was up as hunters took about 661,836 roosters.

QUAIL

Also recovering from a dramatic decline in numbers during the 1983-84 winter was Nebraska’s quail population that was estimated to be about 34 percent higher in 1987 than it had been in 1986, though the harvest for those two years remained about the same. There were about 340,770 quail taken during the 1987 season.

GROUSE

Both prairie chickens and sharp-tail grouse are included in Nebraska’s grouse season. The 1987 spring breeding ground survey showed a 19 percent overall increase in the breeding population and the result was a harvest of about 98,875 birds.

COTTONTAIL RABBIT

Summer surveys showed an increase of about 20 percent in rabbit numbers in 1987. Biologists say the cottontail population could support a good deal more hunting pressure than Nebraska gunners give it.

SQUIRREL

Nebraska’s squirrel population always seems to remain pretty stable and that’s good news for hunters because there are plenty of squirrels for them to pursue. But, like the cottontail, the squirrel is under-harvested each year.
The First Commission

When the rolling prairie land that is now Nebraska first became American territory with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, it was a game-rich haven for its Native American population and for the relatively few American and European adventurers who passed through it. Even much later, when Eastern immigrants passed through, and when settlers began to furnish their claims in Nebraska territory, game was abundant, and little need was seen for regulation.

Yet, as early as 1860, the Council and House of Representatives of the Territory of Nebraska began to recognize that uncontrolled harvest of these resources would soon deplete them beyond restoration. In that year they first passed legislation setting certain hunting seasons and the penalties for violation of these laws.

Thereafter, for nearly twenty years, all regulation of fishing and hunting was carried out through legislation, but by 1879, it was clear that these regulatory efforts needed consolidation, and a three-member Board of Fish Commissioners was created. These unsalaried Commissioners were responsible for the supervision of public waters, fish propagation and stocking, and by 1881 a state-owned fish hatchery was established along the Platte River near Gretna. Still, regulation of hunting was carried out by the legislature itself.

The Commission Expands

By 1901, however, the consequences of past excesses were becoming clear, and the legislature expanded the scope of the Fish Commission and changed its name to the Game and Fish Commission. This body, made up of the governor and his two appointed deputies, functioned until 1919, exercising control over fish and game management, and enforcement of fish and game laws. It was this commission, in 1919, which established the state's first hunting and fishing permits.

In 1919, the state legislature abolished the Game and Fish Commission, and assigned its duties to the Department of Agriculture, through a Bureau of Game and Fish. Ten years later, an independent agency was created, which undertook responsibility for forestation and parks activities as well as for its existing fish and game responsibilities. This Game, Forestation and Parks Commission reflected the state's increasing interest in outdoor recreation beyond simply hunting and fishing, and a statewide concern for forestation. By that year the state already was managing parks at Chadron, Arbor Lodge in Nebraska City, Victoria Springs near Anselmo and at Old Fort Kearney in Buffalo County.

There followed a period of rapid upgrading and expansion of the state's recreation facilities, and game and fish resources under this five-member appointed agency.

The Modern Era

In subsequent years there have been few sweeping changes affecting the agency, but with an increasing population in search of increased opportunities for outdoor recreation, the responsibilities of the commission have continued to increase. Its number was increased to seven, and for a period of years was given the additional responsibility of tourism promotion. Later, however, those responsibilities were given to the Department of Economic Development.

In 1967 the legislature created the office of State Forester within the University of Nebraska, and when forestation responsibilities were transferred to that office, the commission's name was changed to its present Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Although its name and its responsibilities have changed through its 100-plus years, and the scope of its duties has broadened, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission remains devoted to the essence of its first calling: the protection of Nebraska's natural resources, and the promotion of outdoor recreation for the state's citizens.