

THE TRUTH BE KNOWN -

The disinformation and outright lies coming forth from various agency employees is appalling. In an Elko Daily Free Press Article, dated March 6, 1997, it was reported that Larry Gilbertson, NDOW supervising game biologist for Region II, told the Elko County Game Board that in 1988 hunters bagged 18,901 bucks in Nevada, the highest ever.

Mr. Gilbertson is also quoted in an Jan. 11, 1997, Free Press article, as saying that the highest success rate, for deer harvested in Nevada was in 1981 when 54 percent of the hunters were successful.

These kinds of statements need challenging. Anyone who has spent a reasonable amount of time in rural Nevada and is familiar with the history of this region knows differently. Over the years, at meetings throughout the state, I have heard a good many persons object to this kind of disinformation, but to little avail - NDOW personnel have always done as they please - blaming any reduction in wildlife on drought, hard winters, or overgrazing by livestock.

Recently I was going through the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge annual reports which have been completed yearly since 1938, when I noticed information relating to early deer production - most of it entered by Baine Cater. Baine Cater served as manager at Ruby Lake from 1948 through 1956. Soon after his arrival at Ruby Lake, Baine was appointed to the Elko County Game Board.

In 1949 Baine reported that statewide hunter success had been 78 percent that season. He reported an 83 percent success rate for a special hunt in the north eastern part of the county.

In 1951, Baine reported that preliminary estimates indicated that hunter success ratios were around 90 percent. He reported that one group of 103 hunters that rented cabins at the mine on Harrison Pass killed 99 deer. In 1952, Baine reported that hunter success ran over 95 percent and that the estimated harvest for Elko County that year was between 10,000 and 12,000 deer.

In 1956, Baine reported that returns indicated that 13,000 to 15,000 deer were killed in Elko County. Two deer were allowed each hunter. Hunter success for non residents was 97 percent for first deer and 65 Percent for the second deer. Resident hunter success was 76 percent for the first deer and 42 percent success for the second deer. It was estimated that 14,000 deer had been taken in Elko County in 1955.

Data from the Statistical Reporting Service indicates that there were 34,500 deer taken in the state of Nevada in 1955. Larry Gilbertson claims that the greatest number of deer ever taken, were taken in the 1980's, yet data indicates that the average number of deer taken in the State from 1980 through 1989 was 16,185 deer per year - less than half the deer taken in 1955.

In 1954 Baine Cater wrote that the deer appeared to be returning north early that spring, and that they appeared to be in very good condition after a long winter. Baine remarked that an estimate of 1,000 deer was made from the refuge headquarters north for eight miles along the road.

In contrast, during the Spring, of 1999 and 2000, during March and April, I don't believe anyone could have counted more than 1,500 deer from Overland Pass to Secret Pass, a distance of almost 70 miles. (In fact, in talking with my son Walt, who spends a good deal of his time hunting mountain lions over this same area, we both agree that the number of deer would be more like 1,000 animals rather than 1,500 animals.)

Most sportsmen now recognize the impact coyotes and mountain lions are having on our game, but state and federal employees continue to deny that such a thing is occurring. Regardless of the science that has been completed, which clearly illustrates the effects of predation, these people continue to deny the fact that predators have an impact.

But such has not always been the case. In the 1940's, 50's and early 60's, predator control was supported and practiced both on and off of our state and federal wildlife refuges. It was not until the early 1960's that changes in philosophy began to become evident.

When reading the Annual Reports of the Refuge, it was not hard to follow the change in management philosophy which occurred at Ruby Lake. The Reports during the 1940's and 50's reflect support for predator control. But beginning in the 1960's refuge personnel were expressing the importance of "a more balanced approach", where predators were given equal status to other wildlife.

Neither is it hard to follow the corresponding trend in wildlife numbers. In the 1940's, Refuge personnel were reporting 500 sage grouse wintering on the refuge. Today Sage Grouse are nearly non-existent on the refuge. Another indicator is Sand Hill Crane production. Although many Sand Hill Crane pairs have nested and even hatched some young on the Refuge in recent years, no adolescent Sand Hill Cranes survived to adulthood from 1986 through 1993.

Regardless of the truth, we now know that state and federal officials will continue to deny the fact that predators are a problem. We also know now that the legislation which created the Department of Wildlife was "employee instigated". In other words, it was all planned, the state employees who were then working for the Nevada Department of Fish and Game knew that if they could get legislation passed which would abolish the Department of Fish and Game (which was controlled by county representation) and replace it with a state agency (the Nevada Department of Wildlife) they would have more control over the agency.

In 1957, at the urging of wildlife management personnel, the Nevada Legislature passed Senate Resolution No. 20. Senate Resolution No. 20 called for a study of fish and game management, policies, and organization. Several persons with wildlife management backgrounds were given responsibility for various aspects of the study, but Thomas Kimball was asked to make recommendations for legislative change.

Thomas Kimble had begun his career in wildlife management in Arizona; had served as Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and then as Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Game and Fish. Later, Mr. Kimble, served as Executive Secretary for the National Wildlife Federation. Thomas Kimble was notorious for being pro government and anti livestock. During the 1960's and 70's Thomas Kimble was recognized as one of the leading environmental activist in the Nation.

It was Thomas Kimble that instigated a study on the Kiabab National Forest in the 1950's, hoping to use its outcome to justify running livestock off of National Forest lands. When the results of the study showed the opposite of what Mr. Kimble wanted, he destroyed all records of the actual study and substituted a bogus report.

To make a long story short, Mr. Kimble's report to Nevada's Legislature was exactly what the state wildlife folks wanted. Mr. Kimble's recommendations were the blueprint for what was to become the Nevada Department of Wildlife. The new legislation took control of game management away from the Counties and placed it squarely in the hands of a state organization and the rest is history.

Since that time things have gotten steadily worse; not only in terms of wildlife and resource management, but in the political arena as well. Agency people at every level have become very adapt at getting what they want. They know how to influence the legislative process and they know how to control public opinion.

All across this nation, at every level, governmental personnel are gaining more and more control and influence over legislative affairs. While you and I are busy making a living, the bureaucrats are busy writing new legislation which enhance their livelihoods.

This could well be the most serious situation we face today. Disinformation and bogus reporting has become a way of life for governmental employees. If we are to survive as a free and productive nation, we must regain control over our government; we must reduce its size and its influence over every aspect of our lives.