



How Hunting Promotes Conservation

By: Gabriella Hoffman

What This Lecture Will Cover

- Why Americans hunt
- How hunting bolsters conservation efforts in the U.S.
- Hunting's impact by the numbers
- Hunting in its current standing
- Ways to bolster hunting today

#1—Why Do Americans Hunt?

Reasons Why People Hunt

- To enjoy time in the Great Outdoors
- To enjoy pastimes
- To practice conservation and ethics
- To strengthen families and pass down traditions



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James Swan: Hunting and mental health

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Hunting and mental health

James Swan

May 31, 2006



The [Washington Times](#) reports that Earle D. Hightower, chairman of the 27-member Institute for Public Safety a group concerned with issues such as traffic and air pollution in Rockville, Md. recently sent out 600 cards to property owners in Garrett County stating that 40 percent of hunters are drug addicts, drunks or mentally unstable.

Mr. Hightower, 82, who says he is a former hunter and World War II veteran, was quoted as saying, "My personal opinion is that anybody who goes out and shoots helpless animals has a psychiatric problem."

Reasons Why People Hunt, Part 2

“In the act of hunting, a man becomes, however briefly, part of nature again. He returns to the natural state, becomes one with the animal, and is freed from the burden of his existential split: to be part of nature and to transcend it by virtue of his consciousness. In stalking the animal he and the animal become equals, even though man eventually shows his superiority by use of his weapons.” — Eric Fromm, "The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness"

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Study: hunting offers emotional release

March 29, 1985

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LINCOLN, Neb. -- A study suggests hunting may provide an emotional release that allows hunters to vent frustrations that otherwise might lead to violent crime, says a University of Nebraska criminologist.

Source: <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1985/03/29/Study-hunting-offers-emotional-release/6786480920400/>

Fact: Hunting Leads to Better Mental Health

- Study: As # of hunting licenses go up, violent crime goes down (1985)
- In urban outposts, higher anxiety = therefore, fewer licenses
 - Criminologist Chris Eskridge of University of Nebraska-Omaha

#2—How Hunting Bolsters Conservation Efforts

What is a Conservation?

—Merriam Webster defines conservation as “a careful preservation and protection of something; *especially* : planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.”

—Important: Don't confuse conservation with preservation!

What We're Told Conservationists Look Like



What An Actual Conservationist Looks Like



Without Hunters, Conservation Wouldn't Exist

- In the late 1800's, hunters recognized their place as stewards of the environment and wildlife
- There weren't any measures to protect wildlife and commonly hunted species
- No joke: America's wildlife was nearly on the verge of extinction.
 - Wild turkey, whitetail deer, waterfowl, bear, and many others were hunted in excess.



8:15

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NATIONAL

Decline In Hunters Threatens How U.S. Pays For Conservation

March 20, 2018 · 6:31 AM ET

Heard on All Things Considered

NATHAN ROTT



Source: <https://n.pr/2GfdXHE>

Conservation Dies Without Hunters

Not fake news. NPR even said this.

“State wildlife agencies and the country's wildlife conservation system are heavily dependent on sportsmen for funding...This user-play, user-pay funding system for wildlife conservation has been lauded and emulated around the world. It has been incredibly successful at restoring the populations of North American game animals, some of which were once hunted nearly to extinction.” -

“Decline In Hunters Threatens How U.S. Pays For Conservation”

Source: <https://n.pr/2GfdXHE>

#3—Hunting's Impact by the Numbers

Excise Taxes Play A Big Role

- Every purchase of a hunting license, ammunition, bow, firearms, tackle, or similar expenses (excise taxes)
 - Taxes paid when purchases are made on a specific good
 - Pittman-Robertson Act (hunting) & Dingell-Johnson (fishing)
 - Will discuss more on this in upcoming slides

Hunters Foot Bill for Majority of Conservation Efforts



- 80 percent of funding for wildlife and habitat restoration efforts comes from anglers, hunters, and shooting sports enthusiasts.
 - Could the same be said of skiers, hikers, bikers, or others? Nope!

Economic Impact of Hunting and Shooting Sports

- Outdoor recreation—including fishing and hunting—accounted for \$373 billion or 2% of the GDP (Feb. '18)
- Firearms and ammunition industry pumped back \$51.3 billion into the economy (NSSF).
- Over \$20 billion — with \$1.1 billion appropriated by DOI this year alone—has been pumped back to conservation by hunters and anglers. (March 2018)

How Efforts By Hunters Restored Wildlife Numbers

—In 1907, only 41,000 elk remained in North America. Today: there are more than 1 million elk. (Look here in WV- elk were just reintroduced)

—In 1900, only 500,000 whitetail deer remained. Today: 32 million+

—In 1900, only 100,000 wild turkeys remained. Today: 7+ million range today.

—In 1901, few ducks thrived. Thanks to waterfowlers and their wetland rehabilitation efforts, more than 44 million can be accounted for today.

Pittman Robertson Act of 1937

- Better known as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (1937)
 - For fishing, the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration (PRDJ) Act of 1958 establishes standards.
- PR funds are collected from excise taxes
- Currently doesn't apply to R3 (more on this later)

Pittman-Robertson Act Pt. 2

- Hunters originally self-imposed an excise tax on purchases related to licenses, firearms, and ammunition
- After this self-imposition, an 11 percent excise tax was adopted. Then the DOI disburses funds to states to pay for state-sponsored wildlife restoration projects.

North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

- A code of ethics hunters and anglers abide by
- Boasts seven tenets and not legally enshrined
- It has been model of "the form, function, and successes of wildlife conservation and management" in the United States and Canada.

NAMWC - Seven Tenets

- 1. Wildlife resources are a public trust*.**
- 2. Markets for game are eliminated*.**
- 3. Allocation of wildlife is by law*.**
- 4. Wildlife can be killed only for a legitimate purpose*.**

NAMWC - Seven Tenets, Part II

5. **Wildlife is considered an international resource.**
6. **Science is the proper tool to discharge wildlife policy*.**
7. **Democracy of hunting is standard*.**

#4—Hunting In Its Current Standing



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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PRESS RELEASE

New 5-Year Report Shows 101.6 Million Americans Participated in Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Activities

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Survey Preliminary Findings Show Importance of Increasing Access to Public Lands

September 7, 2017

Contact(s):

Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior announced a new report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that shows that 101.6 million Americans—40 percent of the U.S. population 16 years old and older—participated in wildlife-related activities in 2016, such as hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching.

The survey illustrates gains in wildlife watching—particularly around the home—and fishing, with moderate declines in the number of hunters nationally. The findings reflect a continued interest in engaging in the outdoors. These activities are drivers behind an economic powerhouse, where participants spent \$156 billion—the most in the last 25 years,

Hunting Could Die Off If Participation Tapers Off

- A 2016 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report found number of Americans who hunted fell 16.1% since 2011
 - Loss of 2 million hunters
 - Expenditures for hunting dropped 29 percent from \$36.3 billion to \$25.6 billion
 - Now hovers around 11.5 million total. In 2011, there were 13.7 million hunters
- Industry is worried but vigilant in quest to fix this

Factors Contributing to Hunting's Decline

- Increased urbanization
 - 80% of U.S. population lives near/in urban county
- Ineffective outreach to Millennials & non-traditional target demographics
 - Our generation comprises 25% of the population
- Habitat Loss

Factors Contributing to Hunting's Decline, Part 2

- Vicious social media attacks from anti-hunters
 - Extreme bullying led to one European huntress to commit suicide 1-2 years ago
- Decreased opportunities and access
 - Finding ways to navigate private & public hunting opportunities

R3 Can Help Reverse Tide

- R3- Recruitment, Retention, & Reactivation
- Your wildlife agencies are getting on board this
 - Involves different stakeholders—wildlife biologists, communications/marketing, conservation groups, and corporations—to reverse tide on hunting participation decline



More Ways to Increase Hunting Participation

- Introduce someone new and slowly reel them in (i.e. mentorship programs)
 - Encourage online hunters ed AND time in the field
- Host events in cities like Pint Nights, Coffee & Conservation, and events to attract our generation
- Get involved with and support good conservation groups
 - NRA, DU, RMEF, WU, SCI, TU, NWTF, TRCP, etc.

Ending Thoughts from Reagan

“If we’ve learned any lessons during the past few decades, perhaps the most important is that preservation of our environment is not a partisan challenge; it’s common sense. Our physical health, our social happiness, and our economic well-being will be sustained only by all of us working in partnership as thoughtful, effective stewards of our natural resources.” - Ronald Reagan



Any Questions!? I'll Answer Some Q&A

Let's connect!

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