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New Mexico  
Wildlife and Conservation Association, Inc.

Dedicated to The Conservation of Soil, Forests, Waters, Wildlife, and All Natural Resources

Affiliated with NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Box 1542, Santa Fe, N. M.

April 12, 1962.

Mr. Eliot F. Porter,  
Rt. 4, Box 33,  
Santa Fe, N. M.

Dear Mr. Porter;

Your letter of April 4 is received.

Of course, whether or not you continue membership in the Santa Fe WCA is strictly for you, and you alone, to decide. I would not presume to insist nor even to argue that point at all. However, you are so wrong on so many points in connection with the sportsmens organizations, formerly known as the Game Protective Association and now called Wildlife and Conservation Association, that I feel that I must set the record straight.

Have you ever stopped to think about who protects the non-game birds in this and many other States? Who pays the Bill for the law enforcement involved? Ligon in his new book NEW MEXICO BIRDS list some 300 species found in the State with 247 species nesting here. There is no open season on 4 fifths of those species but it is sportsmen's dollars that pays for the law enforcement necessary for their protection. Of course the Fish and Wildlife Service has one or two field men in the State but that is nothing compared to over a hundred that the Game Department has. It is supported entirely by sportsmens dollars. The Department gets not one dollar from the general fund. Yet we pay for the protection of all song birds. There have been some recent prosecutions for killing birds on which there never was and never will be an open season.

When prairie chickens were on the brink of extermination in this State due to depletion of numbers by extreme drouth conditions the GPA strongly supported the Department of Game and Fish in acquiring some 30,000 acres of land in scattered tracts throughout their habitat and devoting those lands to the restoration of habitat so that the birds could recover. They have re-established themselves in fine shape but except for some \$250,000 of sportsmen's money they would have been lost.

Sage chickens were exterminated in this State about the turn of the century before there was any law to protect them. When I was State Game Warden the sportsmen cooperated in their restoration and with their hunting and license fees paid the heavy bills. There has never been a season on these birds and probably never will be but they are present, thanks to sportsmen and the Game Department, in their native sage brush habitat.

Back in 1936 the GPA sent me to Washington with a list of six areas that I was to try to have acquired for Federal Bird refuges. They were the Bosque del Apache area, the Bitter Lakes Area, the San Simon Marshes, the Lajoya Marshes, Salt Lake (near Wagon Mound) and Lake Burford on



*Jicarilla*  
 the Apache Indian Reservation. *Now, as a result,* The first two are in Federal Refuges and have been highly developed for refuge purposes not only for birds which may, in season, be hunted elsewhere, but for scores of other species as well. The San Simon Marshes is in Federal ownership and protected for years as a State Refuge.

Lajoya Marshes were acquired by the State and are *are benefited,* being developed for bird refuge purposes. All species using that type Salt Lake has been acquired and protected. Burford Lake is under agreement between the Fish and Wildlife Service and Indians. And it was the bloody Game Protective Association that initiated that program and they who have supported it, and paid the bill through licenses and duck stamp money.

The Duck stamp money all goes for acquisition and development of bird refuges. Non-game species benefit as much as game species. Sportsmen are the principal buyers of duck stamps although a few are bought by others for purposes other than helping in the refuge program.

When antelope were on the very verge of extermination in New Mexico from 1912 to 1920 it was the sportsmen who came to their rescue. There had been no open season on them for many years but poaching added to the depredations of predators was threatening to wipe them out entirely. The Game Department had practically no funds for law enforcement and could not stem the tide of violations. It was then the State Game Protective Association stepped in and put up money to pay a \$50.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any one killing an antelope. And they paid it many times, *too,* and it helped so much that antelope began to increase again, and have become plentiful once more.

Elk were early exterminated from the State by market hunters before we had any Game Department. Now we have a great many elk in a great many parts of the State. Who paid the bill for their restoration through trapping in Jackson Hole Wyoming and hauling them to New Mexico? It was, of course the Sportsmen's dollars paid for hunting and fishing licenses.

Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep were also exterminated by market hunters and contact with domestic sheep. Who paid for their restoration? Who else but the sportsmen? Who benefits most from this restoration in the Sandia Mountains? Certainly not the twenty sportsmen who draw licenses to hunt them each year. No, it is the thousands of people who visit Sandia crest and have the chance to see this spectacular species in the wild in its native habitat. There are plenty of other examples.

If we in this enlightened age do not know enough about ecological relationships to determine when it is desirable to kill certain predators when are we going to learn? I am not for extermination of any species of life. I am for intelligent management of all life. I have been closely identified with wildlife and predators for over 60 years and I have learned a lot. One thing is that when predators of any species increases to a point where they are taking an excessive amount of game animals or birds it is time to step in and do some control work. (not extermination), I do not approve of the use of poison because it kills indiscriminately. But predator control at times is necessary.

I think you will find that the GOOD BOOK says that God put all creat-

creatures here for the benefit of man. There is no better outdoor recreation than hunting and fishing. It contributes eminently to mankind's mental and physical welfare. The ancients found that those who engaged in the chase were the best able in time of need to defend their country.

You do not object to the raising of cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry by the farmer, to be slaughtered and eaten by mankind. The Game Department is simply a Game Farmer and raises game to be taken not just for the meat but for recreation purposes as well.

The farmer raises turkeys, which are recent direct descendants of the wild turkey, he sells them alive many times to be killed for meat. The Game Department raises wild turkeys and sells the sportsman a chance to kill one for recreational sport and for meat. (The Dept. sells the license and uses the money to produce more turkeys) Wherein lies any difference?

It is the sportsmen (and their organizations) which furnish the funds to perpetuate all species of wildlife and to so manage game species that there shall be an annual or periodic surplus for harvesting. Game is a crop just as livestock, poultry, wheat and corn. It is produced so that the surplus may be harvested. It so happens that the sportsmen are the harvesters and they, and they alone, pay the entire bill.

How much money does the idealist and the bird watcher contribute financially to the protection of either game or non-game species? I may be wrong, and I wish you would correct me if I am, but it is my opinion that unless they buy hunting and fishing licenses they contribute nothing at all.

Anyway come to our meetings some times, you are most welcome whether you are a member or not. I have written this letter for the sole purpose of giving sportsmen credit for doing a lot of conservation work and dispelling the completely erroneous idea that they are solely interested in killing, for that is not the case.

Sincerely yours,

*Elliot A. Barker*  
 Executive Secretary N. M. WCA.



Route 4, Box 33  
Santa Fe, N. M.

4 April 1962

Mr. Elliott S. Barker  
343 Palace Avenue  
Santa Fe, N. M.

Dear Mr. Barker:

I have not renewed my membership in the Santa Fe Wildlife and Conservation Association because I have come to realize that our points of view are not compatible. The Association's chief concern is for the protection of game animals for slaughtering by hunters. Towards this end it works closely with the State Game Department and at least tacitly supports predator control in the belief that in so doing more game will be available for killing.

I stand for protection of all forms of life including predators because I believe that general ecological relationships involving man himself are not well enough understood to justify any but the very least and necessary interference. Furthermore, my ideas of conservation extend to all life simply because it exists. All forms of life are the result of millions of years of evolution. When a species disappears it is gone for good. Human participation in this process should be confined to a necessary minimum. Killing for pleasure, either directly or indirectly, is in my opinion morally wrong and killing is only justified when required for human welfare and survival.

The other activities of the Association are only subsidiary to its interest in hunting without which it could not continue to exist as constituted at present.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot P. Porter