



The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

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## Conservation Education *Top Core Concepts\**

1. In North America fish and wildlife are public trust resources managed by governmental agencies.
2. Since most wildlife live on private lands, private landowners play an important role in sustaining and improving habitat.
3. Sustainable natural resources depend on the support of an informed and responsible citizenry.
4. The health and well-being of fish, wildlife, and humans depend on the quality of their environment.
5. Loss and degradation of habitat are the greatest problems facing fish and wildlife; therefore, enhancing and protecting habitat is critical to managing and conserving them.
6. Conserving biodiversity is important.
7. Fish and wildlife can be conserved and restored through science based management which considers the needs of humans as well as those of fish and wildlife.
8. Everyone impacts fish and wildlife and their habitats and as human populations grow, impacts on natural resources increase.
9. Regulated hunting, fishing, and trapping are important tools for managing some wildlife populations and habitats.
10. Within the U.S., state fish and wildlife management is funded primarily through hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and through federal excise taxes collected from the sale of hunting, target shooting, and fishing equipment and motor boat fuels.
11. Wildlife-based activities, such as hunting, fishing, viewing, and photography provide people with millions of days of outdoor recreation each year and generate billions of dollars for the economy.

\*These top concepts are part of a larger set of Core Concepts that provides foundational knowledge and context for better understanding. These top 11 concepts were selected as fundamental concepts within the larger document; however, it is recommended that communicators and educators read these top concepts in context of the full set of Core Concepts before using them. Agency members of AFWA were given the opportunity to participate in the development of these concepts. The full set of Core Concepts is available online at [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org).

## **Conservation Education**

### ***Key Messages for the Public***

1. North America's fish and wildlife belong to all of us, and we rely on state and federal agencies to watch over them.
2. Private landowners play an important role in ensuring that wildlife and the places they live remain for future generations to enjoy.
3. Maintaining healthy places for people and wildlife depends on each of us taking responsibility to be informed about our natural world.
4. All living things benefit from a healthy environment. What's good for fish and wildlife is also good for people.
5. Taking action today to conserve wildlife and the places they live is the key to ensuring they survive for future generations to enjoy.
6. It is important to take action now to ensure that wildlife and the places they live are healthy and diverse.
7. Wildlife conservation and management are solidly rooted in science and balance the needs of both wildlife and people.
8. As human populations grow, resulting changes in our natural environment affect the quality of life for both people and wildlife.
9. Wildlife populations sometimes grow beyond the ability of habitat to support them. Along with providing recreational opportunities, regulated hunting, fishing, and trapping are important tools for managing some wildlife populations and habitats.
10. Through license sales and taxes on the equipment, hunters and anglers pay for wildlife management in the United States.
11. Wildlife-based activities—such as hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching—bring millions of dollars to our economy and connect people with nature.

## **Conservation Education**

### *Key Messages*

**1. North America's fish and wildlife belong to all of us, and we rely on state and federal agencies to watch over them.**

*Why Say This:* In North America, fish and wildlife are part of the public trust. This means that it is our responsibility to manage and take care of them and the places where they live. To do this, we look to the government agencies that manage these natural resources on a state-by-state and national level and understand that these agencies rely on the involvement and support of the public. Fish and wildlife are valuable to our society.

**2. Private landowners play an important role in ensuring that fish and wildlife and the places they live remain for future generations to enjoy.**

*Why Say This:* Since most fish and wildlife live on private lands, private landowners play an important role in sustaining and improving habitat. With the cooperation and active role of private landowners many important habitats can be conserved for fish, wildlife and people.

In addition, without the stewardship of private landowners, we would have fewer places to recreate and enjoy nature.

**3. Maintaining healthy places for people, fish and wildlife, depends on each of us taking responsibility to be informed about our natural world.**

*Why Say This:* Sustainable natural resources depend on the support of an informed and responsible citizenry. With the profound affect of human populations on those of wildlife and their habitat, people need to better understand and take responsibility for the health of the natural world around them.

**4. All living things benefit from a healthy environment. What's good for fish and wildlife is also good for people.**

*Why Say This:* The health and well-being of fish, wildlife, and humans depend on the quality of their environment. Ensuring that people have clean air and water is not only important for our health but for fish and wildlife too. The health of fish and wildlife are often the earliest indicator of pollution and other threats to the environment. As we call the same places home, what affects fish and wildlife, also affects people.

**5. Taking action today to conserve fish and wildlife and the places they live is the key to ensuring they survive for future generations to enjoy.**

*Why Say This:* Loss and degradation of habitat are the greatest problems facing fish and wildlife; therefore, enhancing and protecting habitat is critical to managing and conserving them. Urban sprawl, unchecked land use, invasive species and even climate change are just a handful of the obstacles fish and wildlife face where they live. Many contributing factors are caused by human interaction with the environment, including poor choices of land use. It's up to us to take action today to maintain and restore the places that people and wildlife call home.

**6. It is important to take action now to ensure that fish and wildlife and the places they live are healthy and diverse.**

*Why Say This:* Conserving biodiversity is important as all living things and habitats are interconnected—whether it is obvious or not. Focusing on specific species while ignoring the rest, is not attending to the big picture of conservation. It is important that we work together, across all political, economic and geographic boundaries to ensure that all fish, wildlife and the places they live are healthy and diverse.

**7. Fish and wildlife conservation and management are solidly rooted in science and balance the needs of both wildlife and people.**

*Why Say This:* Fish and wildlife can be conserved, protected and restored through science based management, which considers the needs of humans as well as those of fish and wildlife. Science can help us identify the ways in which we manage our environment that strikes this crucial balance. The more we learn about our natural world, the better we can adjust to better take care of it for future generations.

**8. As human populations grow, resulting changes in our natural environment affect the quality of life for both people and wildlife.**

*Why Say This:* Everyone impacts fish and wildlife and their habitats; and as human populations grow, impacts on natural resources will increase. As we develop the landscape, fish and wildlife habitat continues to shrink and people and animals are increasingly coming into conflict. This results in deer/car collisions, wildlife damage to crops, livestock, landscaping and property, and potentially life-threatening personal encounters. By understanding how our decisions impact our “ecological footprint,” we can limit our negative impact on fish and wildlife.

**9. Wildlife populations sometimes grow beyond the ability of habitat to support them. Along with providing recreational opportunities, regulated hunting, fishing, and trapping are important tools for managing some wildlife populations and habitats.**

*Why Say This:* Regulated hunting, fishing, and trapping are important tools for managing some wildlife populations and habitats. Wildlife professionals in the US and Canada stress that being able to use management techniques that include hunting, trapping and fishing help them maintain a balance between the numbers of people and animals. As a result, problems ranging from deer-auto collisions, property and environmental damage, and the spread of diseases contracted both by people and animals are better managed. In addition, hunting, trapping and fishing are important recreational activities that connect people with nature.

**10. Through license sales and excise taxes, hunters, boaters, anglers and trappers pay for wildlife management in the United States.**

*Why Say This:* Within the U.S., state fish and wildlife management is funded primarily through hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and through federal excise taxes collected from the sale of hunting, target shooting, and fishing equipment and motor boat fuels. Today, almost all state fish and wildlife agencies receive the bulk of their total operating and program budgets from these sources. Without a dedicated funding source and few

other funding options for wildlife agencies, hunters, boaters, anglers and trappers will continue to be the primary support for state-by-state conservation efforts.

**11. Wildlife-based activities—such as hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching—bring millions of dollars to our economy and connect people with nature.**

*Why Say This:* Wildlife-based activities, such as hunting, fishing, viewing, and photography provide people with millions of days of outdoor recreation each year and generate billions of dollars for the economy. According the 2006 National Survey of Hunting Fish and Wildlife-Related recreation, more than 87 million Americans spent more than \$120 billion dollars in 2006 on wildlife-related activities. These activities support close to 3 million jobs in the U.S.