

which had little or no controls placed on the coyotes. We are not using our data to make generalizations on the coyote-sheep problem everywhere."

The researchers said the coyote problem varies from area to area. In some places they are no problem at all—in others they are. There has to be selective control, they added, and new devices are being developed to help.

What Happened to the Blue Pike?

A unique fish, commercially harvested by the ton as recently as the 1950s, has disappeared. Under authority of the Endangered Species Act, a team of experts is trying to learn where the blue pike went and what might be done to bring it back—if it ever existed at all biologically.

The mysterious blue pike resembles the well-known walleye in all respects except its smaller size and bluish, instead of yellowish, coloring. It once filled the trap nets of commercial fishermen in Lake Erie's eastern basin, where blues were often caught in the same net hauls as walleyes. Oldtimers recall boats docking in Erie's eastern ports with tons of blue pike heaped on board.

Then, some unexpected change in Lake Erie's environment or some other unknown factor caused a sudden crash in blue pike populations. In recent years, although sport fishermen have occasionally reported catching blue pike, not one of these reports has been verified. In fact, some authorities feel that verification is impossible, that the blue pike is nothing more than an unusual color phase of the walleye.

So the first mission of the blue pike recovery team is to prove that the fish exists. To do this, they may offer a reward for the live capture of the fish so that "true blues" can be bred in captivity to prove their genetic identity. If attempts to find and propagate blue pike are successful, an attempt may be made to reintroduce them to selected parts of their original range.

Captive Whoopers Lay First Eggs

Two eggs were laid in late April by captive whooping cranes at the Patuxent (Maryland) Wildlife Research Center, a facility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The two layings—ten days apart—are the first known layings by this species while in captivity. Government biologists described the layings as "major events of scientific importance."

Because the eggshells are too thick to candle, it is not known if either egg is viable. Whooping crane eggs require about one month to hatch; meanwhile, they are being artificially incubated.

The parent birds were hatched from eggs

taken from the nest of wild whoopers in northern Canada in 1968. The captive flock was established at the Patuxent center in hopes of restoring wild populations. Only 49 of the species were counted in the wild during the 1974-75 annual winter census.

Elsewhere, in early April, several whoopers were exposed to a commonly fatal disease while en route to their northern nesting grounds. Nine of the birds were forced to earth at the Sacramento-Wilcox Game Refuge, in Nebraska, by a sleet storm. Their arrival coincided with an epidemic of avian cholera that killed at least 15,000 waterfowl at the refuge. It was unknown whether the whoopers caught the disease, since the birds remained in the area for only 36 hours. The incubation period for avian cholera is 24 to 48 hours. From shortly after the birds' arrival, a crew of state and federal game officers went about the area trying to chase them away.

"This is the first anyone can remember them coming through this area," remarked one of the officers. "Who would have believed the biggest bunch ever would have picked such a little spot, the worst spot, of all the places to land?"

Aerial surveys of the crane's nesting grounds in Canada showed that fifteen chicks hatched last summer. But only two immature birds were seen among the forty-nine whoopers counted in early December at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. That is an increase of one bird over the 1973-74 count, but still far below the record fifty-nine reported from Aransas in 1971. Biologists, meanwhile, are puzzled over the poor survival rate of nestlings.

These Animals Have Come Back!

The media have given substantial attention in recent years to the plight of animal species threatened with extinction, pointing out that man must mend his ways if they are to survive. We hear little about those that have survived just such a crisis. As recently pointed out by the Wildlife Management Institute, however, a number of species have made remarkable comebacks—thanks to human endeavor—since the turn of the century. Some outstanding examples are the following:

- **Beaver:** 1900—Eliminated from the Mississippi Valley states and all eastern states except Maine; common only in Alaska and a few localities in the Pacific Northwest and Rockies. *Today:* Common to abundant in nearly all states except Hawaii.

- **Pronghorn antelope:** 1925—Authorities estimated 13,000 to 26,000 in U.S.A., most in

Wyoming and Montana. *Today:* Minimum population in all western states is 500,000.

- **Bison:** 1895—800 survivors. *Today:* Population more than 35,000 in North America.

- **Elk:** 1907—Common only in and around Yellowstone National Park; estimated total south of Canada, 41,000. *Today:* About 1 million in 16 states.

- **White-tailed deer:** 1895—About 350,000 south of Canada; extirpated from more than half the states. *Today:* Approximately 12 million in 48 states.

- **Wild Turkey:** 1930—Common in only a few southern states, eliminated from most. *Today:* Restored to 43 states, including establishment in several outside original range of species.

- **Fur seal:** 1911—Official census in Pribilof Island showed 215,900. *Today:* Herd maintained at around 1.5 million under a scientific management program.

- **Egrets and herons:** 1920—Several species on the brink of extinction because of slaughter on their nesting grounds by feather collectors to supply the millinery trade. *Today:* Most species common to abundant over most of the United States.

- **Trumpeter swan:** 1935—73 survivors south of Canada on one wildlife refuge. *Today:* Thriving populations on two national parks and several national wildlife refuges. Removed from the endangered status in the late 1960s.

- **Wood duck:** 1915—Greatly reduced in numbers and considered a candidate for early extinction. *Today:* The most common breeding waterfowl in eastern U.S.A.

- **Sea otter:** 1907—Nearly extinct; a few survivors in Alaska's Aleutian chain and in coastal California. *Today:* Minimum of 50,000; successfully restored to waters of mainland Alaska, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, increasing and extending range in California.



In Sapporo, Japan, eight persons successfully sued for damages when their sunlight was cut off by the erection of an eleven-story apartment building.

A geologist reports that the recent collapse of a number of castles and other ancient monuments in Sweden was caused by detergents that turned supporting clay to mud.



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