Preparing for the Wildlife Section of the Envirothon

Managing wildlife involve populations of animals and manipulating the numbers of animals. The science involved in managing wildlife principally deals with determining the population and it’s age structure and setting harvest goals. This allows the perpetuation of the species, allows wise use of the species, and manages populations at levels that minimizes human-animal conflicts while maximizing opportunities.

For every game biologist employed by a game and fish agency there are many other people behind the scenes performing non scientific duties such as; accounting, managing public lands (planting trees, spraying weeds, building fence), administrative functions, working with the public and media, etc.

In college, the future wildlife/fisheries biologist learns a wide variety of subjects such as anatomy, botany, mammology, ornithology, ichthyology, biometry, aquatic ecology, animal behavior, etc. This is all very good knowledge, but is just a fraction of what the student will learn when they are actually on the job dealing with everyday problems that occur with animals and their habitats in our state. Academic knowledge is the basis for a career in natural resources, but it is the real life and work experiences that will help you use this knowledge in a practical way.

There is absolutely no substitute for actually spending time out in the field. Hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking, etc. are all activities that lead to a better understanding of animal behavior. Classroom knowledge is important for a basis, but it needs to be fine tuned with hundreds of hours spent outdoors over a lifetime. Subsequently, just spending time in nature without the classroom background leads to a person who knows what an animal will do or where it is found, but often doesn’t understand the why.

Wildlife management is often about managing the wants and needs of people. There are people who want no managed use of resources, just as there are people who wish to hunt and fish. Hunters and anglers want large numbers of game and fish out there, agricultural produces often wish for less game when it is damaging their crops and livestock feed. This involves a balancing act that is often a back and forth process of obtaining a goal that is constantly moving.

I want students to understand why we manage wildlife and why we use the techniques that we do. For example, I would place more value on a student knowing why we age animals (such as deer) than to be able to accurately age deer jaws.

What to know for wildlife

\*Opportunity For All DVD

\*Know the animals (birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish) found in ND-and sign they leave (tracks, scat, browse, sounds)

\*Be able to read and decipher a hunting proclamation if I offer one.

\*Current events-read the newspapers if there is a hot topic such as bovine TB, CWD that has been in the news, those would make great test questions.

\*key terms-I will include these on a list, the teams will be responsible for looking them up if they don’t know them.

Know state bird, fish

Know endangered species

Know which agencies manage what species