

Policy Considerations for Increasing Compatibilities between Agriculture and Wildlife

Natural Resources Journal

Volume 39, Number 2
Spring 1999

Albuquerque, NM:
University of New
Mexico School of Law

“Policy Considerations
for Increasing
Compatibilities
between Agriculture
and Wildlife”

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Agriculture has received much attention as a source of threat to wild species and habitats. For example, among federally listed threatened or endangered species in the contiguous 48 States, 57 percent are listed, at least in part, due to agricultural development, pesticide use, fertilizer

use, or grazing. Recent actions to protect wildlife have resulted in several marked policy shifts for agricultural producers. For example, wolf reintroduction programs explicitly recognize increased threats to livestock and contrast sharply with past policies aimed at eradication.

The 1996 Farm Act positioned USDA to play a leading role in protecting wildlife resources on private lands. Specifically, it provides farmers incentives to enroll valuable habitat areas into several USDA conservation programs. Given the potential to use agricultural lands to protect wildlife, it is likely that future farm policy will aim to make farm production more compatible with species and habitats.

This article reviews recent research relating to the economics of protecting wildlife on agricultural lands. The objective is to answer four questions.

- Are wildlife resources associated with agricultural lands increasing or decreasing in value?
- How do biological considerations affect strategies to conserve wildlife on agricultural lands?
- What lessons can economics and past USDA conservation programs offer the design and implementation of future policies to protect wildlife on private lands?
- How do resource ownership and uncertainty affect farm-level wildlife conservation activities?