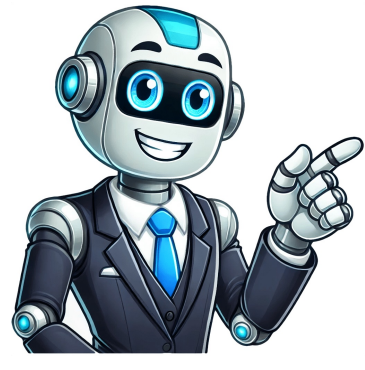


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Wildlife conservation and hunting may seem like contradictory concepts at first glance, but the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation has successfully merged them. This unique model, born in the late 1800s, was spearheaded by hunters, anglers, and recreational shooters who believed that wildlife belonged to everyone, not just the privileged few. As the nation's early laws protecting fish and wildlife were scarce, market hunting and habitat destruction led to devastating declines in species populations, with some, like the passenger pigeon, becoming extinct. Concerned leaders within the hunting community came together to make significant strides in conservation, leading to landmark legislation such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937. These acts created a partnership between states, industry, and the federal government, providing more than 75% of state fish and wildlife agencies' annual budgets through self-imposed excise taxes on hunting and angling equipment. Since 1937, hunters have generated approximately \$25.5 billion for wildlife and habitat conservation, with a record \$1.5 billion distributed in 2022 to states and territories through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is guided by seven core principles that prioritize the sustainability of wildlife populations and their management as a public trust. These tenets emphasize the importance of responsible use, scientific management, and conservation efforts. The model's first principle, "Wildlife as Public Trust Resources," highlights the government's role in managing natural resources and wildlife on public lands to ensure future generations can enjoy them. The second principle, "Prohibition on Commerce of Dead Wildlife," prohibits commercial hunting and the sale of wildlife to prevent overhunting and preserve populations. The third principle, "Rule of Law," establishes laws and regulations that guide the use of wildlife resources, while the fourth principle, "Opportunity for All," ensures every citizen has access to hunt and fish in the United States and Canada. The fifth principle, "Wildlife Should Only be Killed for a Legitimate Purpose," sets strict guidelines for killing wild animals, with laws prohibiting unnecessary killing. The sixth principle, "Wildlife as an International Resource," recognizes the migratory nature of wildlife across state and national boundaries, while the seventh principle, "Scientific Management of Wildlife," relies on the best available science to inform decision-making in wildlife management. Citizens can support conservation efforts by purchasing a hunting or fishing license annually, which funds wildlife management initiatives. Another way to contribute is by purchasing a Federal Duck Stamp, with 98 cents of every dollar supporting conservation projects. We can purchase vital waterfowl habitats for protection through the National Wildlife Refuge System. Over \$1 billion has been raised to date, with 6 million acres protected since 1934. Additionally, a Federal Duck Stamp grants free admission to national wildlife refuges, which helps protect our wildlife and offers excellent hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching opportunities. Furthermore, the R3 initiative aims to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and anglers, ultimately supporting conservation efforts. We should consider introducing someone new to hunting or fishing on our next adventure. The connection between hunters, anglers, and wildlife conservation is indeed remarkable and intertwined. Let us continue this tradition and strengthen wildlife conservation.

Hunter ed guiding principles for managing wildlife resources. What provides the guiding principles for managing wildlife resources.