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CLOSING REMARKS

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This Bobwhite Quail Symposium is primarily the product of one man's effort. Frank Schitoskey accepted the challenge of putting this meeting together and assumed the primary responsibility in the planning, organization, coordination, and editorial phases that made this symposium a reality.

In 1981, Dr. Schitoskey asked Tom Sanders, Elizabeth Schitoskey, and me to be members of the Steering Committee for the symposium. Subsequently, we determined the objectives of the symposium and selected several topics that we felt were particularly germane to bobwhite quail management in today's society. We felt that the problem of rapid deterioration of prime quail habitat had to be addressed. Likewise, an update was needed on the effects of disease, environmental toxicants, and harvest patterns on bobwhite populations. Manuscripts were solicited from several of you who are active in research in these areas. On behalf of the Steering Committee, we thank each of the authors of the solicited manuscripts for your time, your effort, and your professionalism. You have made a great contribution, not only to this meeting, but also to the profession of wildlife biology through your years of dedicated work.

We also want to thank the authors of the volunteered papers and those of you who participated in the panel discussion. These papers have rounded out the content of this symposium and addressed several issues that are currently the focus of research and management of bobwhite quail.

Besides those of you who submitted manuscripts, a number of other individuals contributed greatly to this meeting.

1. We are grateful to Bill Altman for chairing the Quail Hunters Field Events. He, with the help of a committee consisting of E. Epperson, John Floyd, Howard Jarrell, and Delmar Smith, planned and organized those events. We also thank Fred Oliver for serving as Master of Ceremonies, and we are indebted to each individual who participated in specific field events.

2. We thank our chairpersons, John Barclay,

Scott Shalaway, John Skeen, and Elizabeth Schitoskey, for overseeing sections of the program. And we thank Billy Teals for serving as moderator of the panel discussion on public use of private land. Each of these people did an excellent job.

3. We are also indebted to Oklahoma State University for use of its facilities. In particular, we thank the Arts and Science Extension Office and the Student Union for their cooperation.
4. The Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit served as the host for this symposium, and we thank all Unit personnel involved. We especially thank Judy Gray for her enthusiastic assistance.
5. The Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society assisted in providing transportation for some of you to and from the airport. Those students who helped out in this capacity have our sincere thanks.
6. Finally, we thank the following sponsors for financial support:

The Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Oklahoma State University

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Wildlife Society

The International Quail Foundation

The papers presented over the last two days on bobwhite quail represent an overview of current research and management problems that are being addressed in the U.S. today. Dr. Klimstra presented an eloquent summation of the state of the art of bobwhite quail management and provided a great amount of food for thought. I hope each of us will reflect back on his comments from time to time. Dr. Klimstra pointed out the urgency of the present day situation. At one point in his presentation, he made the following comment:

"Examination of the literature on the bobwhite suggests that we have either considered, by in large, that there is no more to be learned about this important bird or we have, in general, given up hope that anything can be done to improve its status." A review of the last 30 years of the Journal of Wildlife Management certainly supports this statement. But is the literature a good indicator of the interests and goals of wildlife researchers? Probably not. I think wildlife researchers are as eager to study bobwhites as ever, but funding agencies across the country presently do not consider the bobwhite a high priority species. How do we convince administrators that bobwhites are high priority? I do not know the answer, but it must be done. We certainly do not believe there is no more to be learned about bobwhites. With destruction of habitat occurring on a daily basis and quail abundance decreasing in most parts of its range, there has never been more need for research on bobwhites than exists today. The specific areas that need additional research are overwhelming. As pointed out numerous times, there is a need to conduct research on local populations because we cannot necessarily use the results of research conducted on a population in one type of habitat for managing quail anywhere else where habitat, climate, and soil conditions are different. There does appear, however, to be a number of areas that deserve special consideration for future and continuing research that may have wide application throughout the species' range.

First, there is a need to develop low cost census methods that are sufficiently sensitive to monitor small fluctuation in populations in local as well as regional areas. Without reliable, consistent, and accurate census methods, we cannot evaluate the effects of specific habitat manipulations or harvest methods. In the past, determining population trends was adequate in most cases. After all, we were all taught that in r-selected species such as quail, we did not have to worry about small fluctuations. If, however, we are to manage quail in a professional manner and avoid sometimes valid criticism by anti-hunting groups, we must be able to document the effects of specific management tactics. The work of Dimmick, Wells, Kellogg, and others should be helpful in this regard.

Second, there is a paucity of information on the reproductive ecology, particularly brood ecology, of bobwhite quail. A real need exists for research on the specific habitat requirements (not necessarily preferences but requirements) of quail broods in relation to habitat type, food, cover, and space. Survival patterns need to be studied in relation to specific habitat management practices. Innovative experiments need to be conducted to test specific hypotheses. Short term studies in so called "natural habitat" will provide baseline information from which hypotheses can be generated, but only long term studies that test multiple hypotheses will provide the information necessary for maximizing quail production on intensively managed public or private land.

Third, additional research is needed on the synergistic effects of environmental contaminants on quail survival and reproduction in natural habitat. As Stromberg pointed out, lab studies without application to field conditions provide little insight into the effects of sublethal doses of toxicants. Innovative experiments that involve both laboratory and field work could do much to elucidate the effects of low-level doses of contaminants, particularly pesticides and herbicides, on quail populations.

Fourth, the problem of compensatory vs. additive mortality of hunting needs further investigation. As Dr. Roseberry pointed out, hunting and non-hunting mortality are not completely compensatory. We need to know at what level of harvest does hunting mortality become additive and under what types of habitat and climatic conditions would we expect additive mortality to be most significant.

These are certainly not the only areas in need of research, but I think research in these areas would be sufficiently holistic to assure that results would have wide application throughout many parts of bobwhite range.

Another important topic discussed at this meeting was wildlife management on private land. This is a controversial topic and no easy solution appears in sight. However, quail will continue to decrease in abundance if solutions are not found.

One method suggested for enhancing, or at least maintaining, wildlife habitat on private land is providing a financial incentive to landowners for maintaining natural habitat. Much more information needs to be available to land owners in regard to cost-benefit ratios if these programs are to succeed in parts of this country. This type of information is not available for many areas. To provide such information, model farms that incorporate farming practices, ranching practices, and wildlife management into a profitable business are needed. These models could provide information on habitat management costs, wildlife and crop production, and total income derived from each operation. Such areas could be used for demonstration and extension education.

One specific financial incentive that may be attractive to some landowners and result in preservation of habitat is leasing land for hunting. The question and answer session of the Panel Discussion on Public Use of Private Land certainly demonstrated the controversial nature of this topic.

The controversy on the desirability of leasing as a method to preserve wildlife habitats stems, I think, from our failure to define our goals. If our sole goal is to provide more habitat for quail, then wildlife biologists cannot concern themselves with cost to hunters. If the price is within the reach of a sufficient number of hunters to make a leasing program cost effective,

then it is an effective way to manage wildlife habitat.

If, however, our management goal is to provide recreation to the maximum number of hunters, then we must define success in a different way. These two separate but not mutually exclusive goals must be defined early in any program. During the panel discussion pertaining to leasing private land, the stated goal of the participants was to provide habitat for wildlife. They demonstrated that in some situations leasing of private land is a partial solution to preserving habitat. In other words, leasing works if the landowner can make a profit. The questions from the audience, however, quickly shifted towards an emphasis on hunter recreation. As far as I could determine, the objections were not because leasing provided quail habitat but because of the cost to the hunter. Therefore, we must define our goals. I am sure the topic of public use of private land will continue to be an important issue for many years. I suspect that as both the abundance and habitat of bobwhite quail continue to decrease due to agricultural practices, leasing in one form or another will gain acceptance in many parts of the country. Any hunting is better than no hunting to many quail hunters, and if leasing is the only alternative, many hunters will support leasing.

In conclusion, I think this symposium has come at a good time. We appear to be at one of the crossroads that occur from time to time in the wildlife profession when we do not know which way management is heading in this country. The continuing decline in funding for quail projects is affecting and will continue to affect the future of bobwhite quail, because fewer and fewer quail biologists are being produced by universities. This is occurring at a time when the need for energetic, innovative, and dedicated quail biologists is at its highest.

However, quail biologists have a duty to, as one often hears in political circles, "stay the course." The goal of our research should be to explain, not simply describe the responses of quail populations to habitat changes and management tactics. We should collect data that will allow us to test alternate hypotheses and, in general, make better use of the Scientific Method.