

DIVISION OF WILD LIFE CONSERVATION

By W. E. BARBER.

CONSERVATION WARDENS.

The first year of the supervision of this division by the Conservation Commission closed June 30, 1916, and we beg to report that much has been accomplished in the reorganization of the warden department for greater efficiency, in weeding out the dead timber and placing every warden on his merits of efficiency to retain his position with this division.

Wardens have been advised that circumspection in their department was demanded in all of their official acts and that their duties were to be confined entirely to the conserving of the wild life of the state, and that their political activities would no longer be the measure of their tenure in office. This departure has resulted in a more coherent organization which is manifest in a more general interest by each and every warden in pushing forward the activities of this division. We shall endeavor to add strength to this division by carrying forward the policy we have established and enthusing the spirit of coöperation among our force, which must result in greater accomplishments in the future.

The consolidation of these various departments has promoted the efficiency of the warden division tremendously. The permanent employes of the various departments are all conservation wardens with police powers to make arrests for any violations of the conservation laws, giving this division added supervision in suppressing violations. Besides, the parks and forests are essential for game covers and naturally belong in the great scheme of conservation.

We have in all at the present time 76 conservation wardens. This number is made up of 63 engaged entirely in the activities of wild life patrol duties. Added to these are ten forest rangers and three park superintendents who are located in vicinities where the services of wardens are essential. Prior to the consolidation of these departments, the wide stretch of wild timberlands of the northern part of the state were without adequate protection, and the adding of the forest rangers to the warden division had given that territory the much needed protection. The park superintendents perform an important service in protecting the song and insectivorous birds during the influx of campers during the summer months. They also patrol a considerable additional territory during the winter months.

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