

Tracking the evolution of conservation in Florida



Kenneth D. Haddad
Executive Director
Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission

This issue of *Florida Wildlife* magazine celebrates the 60 years since its beginning. Since 1947, this magazine has tracked the evolution of fish and wildlife conservation in Florida.

Until the 1930s, conservation efforts had little to do with science. Most bag limits and other hunting and fishing regulations materialized out of traditions. But then, people began to grasp the concept that fish and wildlife were not inexhaustible. People realized it was within their power to use up the resource completely and lose it forever if they didn't restrict harvests. They looked to scientists for guidance.

In 1943, despite the distraction of the global war that raged at that time, the people of Florida were so concerned about the future of fish and wildlife they approved an amendment to the state constitution to create a new agency to be nature's steward.

The focus for many years was game animals, but eventually, Floridians realized much more was at stake. The lizards, frogs, toads and other critters – even insects and the others we see every day – are all part of a magnificent system in which all species depend on each other. As a result, science grew more important to conservation, and conservation science had to broaden

its scope. Even the oceans that cover more than two-thirds of the world couldn't replace species as quickly as people could use them.

Conservation today is much more complex than anyone could have dreamed when *Florida Wildlife* first rolled off the press six decades ago. We at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission believe this magazine plays a significant role in keeping Floridians informed about the challenges individuals must take on to ensure a better future for the natural wonders past generations have handed down to us for our care. **FW**

