



# Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow

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## Hunting Awareness & Conservation Education

### **Wildlife Laws, Regulations, and Enforcement**

**Goal:** Participants should understand that hunting laws and regulations vary by jurisdiction and regions to enable game population regulations, to distribute hunting pressure, to distribute hunting opportunity, to maximize safety, and to protect public property, private property rights, and to protect all wildlife resources and their habitats. Laws exist because they are needed. While most hunters practice self-adherence to law, there are times when hunters unintentionally violate; an even smaller percentage intentionally violate or “poach” however, the unlawful taking of wildlife is big business both nationally and internationally. Violators affect not only the principles already listed here, but also the overall perceptions of hunters. Like any portion of society, hunters are a cross section of “good, bad, and ugly” members (the ugly being discussed more in Role of Hunting in Society and Hunter Responsibility and Ethics). For most agencies, the law enforcement sections are highly visible to the public, tasked with additional duties beyond wildlife, and require substantial resources to operate – usually at a cost to the hunters. Across North America, hunters partner with agencies to assist law enforcement and combat violating.

**Objectives:** After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:

1. Explain the distinction between wildlife laws and various hunting laws and regulations, and that they vary widely between jurisdictions.
2. Explain how rules and regulations are set, who sets them, and what purposes they hold.
3. Understand the concept of “social carrying capacity” and that it and politics are strong influences.
4. Draw distinctions between unintentional, inadvertent, and intentional violators, their motivations, and effects on wildlife and hunters’ perceptions.
5. Understand that officer discretion and expertise are important factors and highly variable components of enforcement.
6. Recognize that agencies’ hunting regulation resources can be confusing and a frustration to the hunting public when not clear and concise, and even sometimes contradictory and vague. This also makes enforcement difficult for officers and judicial systems.
7. Explain the influence of violators, the illegal wildlife trade, and how hunters are partnering with agencies to combat those influences.

### **Why This Is Important for a Natural Resource Professional**

Often the most controversial aspect of hunting is the necessity for laws and regulations and that they not only speak for the resources and all the dynamics as discussed in Biological Basis but address societal dynamics as well within a particular jurisdiction. Natural resource professionals have primary responsibility for providing the data and reasoning for regulations, for gaining public and stakeholder input as part of regulation setting processes, explaining the agency's actions, and enforcing whatever regulations subsequently are established. Professionals also must consider that violators are part of their constituency, with poachers being a small subset, and look toward ways to make violating more difficult, partnering with stakeholders. Professionals should be cognizant of their hunting regulation resources and ensure they are clear, concise, and accurate for the long-term interests of the resource and the public.

### **Additional Resources:**

Beattie, K.H. 1981. The influence of game laws and regulations on hunting satisfaction. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 9(3) 229-231.

Gilbert, F.F. 2000. Considerations in managing wildlife populations for sport. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 28(2): 459-463.

Muth, R. M. "Towards a Typology of Motivations for Wildlife Law Violations in North America"