

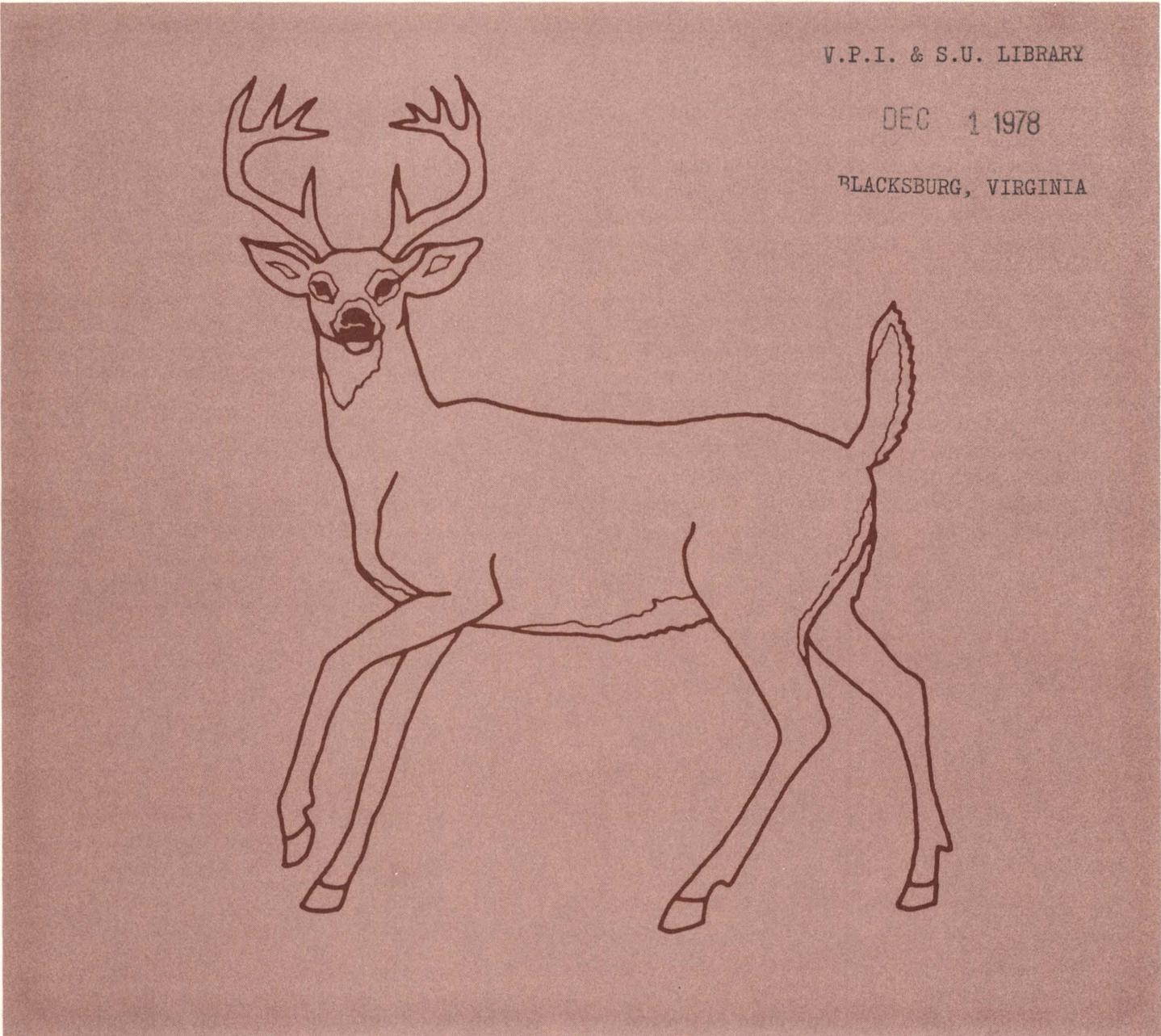
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4-H WILDLIFE project 1



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4-H Wildlife Project I

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This project will help you begin to understand wildlife and how it can be managed. It is important that you read the manual first and answer the questions before you begin the activities.

Requirements of Wild Animals

Suppose you were not born in a hospital, but out-of-doors; and instead of living in a house, you lived outside. What would you need to survive? Of course, you would need air and sunshine; but these things are abundant almost everywhere, and you would not have to look for them. But where would you find food, shelter, and water? These 3 things are needed by every animal, including you, to survive. You have a house, running water, and a grocery store to provide these requirements, but wild animals must look for food, cover, and water.

The cottontail rabbit, for example, finds grass, clover, and weeds for food; brush-piles, briars, thickets, and animal burrows for shelter; and dew, streams, and ponds for water. The gray squirrel, however, must look for nuts, berries, seeds, and mushrooms for food; hollows in trees for shelter, and moisture that collects in trees for water. Thus, you can see that each animal must find a particular kind of food, shelter, and water. The rabbit cannot eat nuts as the squirrel does, nor could the squirrel live in thickets as the rabbit does.

Each wild animal must find the particular kind of food, shelter, and water that it needs in order to live. If it does not find these requirements, it will die. The type of food, shelter and water that an animal needs to live is called its habitat.

Before the Settlers

Imagine yourself to be an Indian in Virginia before the time of the settlers. At that time, the land was full of wildlife that you could take for food and clothing. The forests were big and tall and abounded with gray squirrel, turkey, black bear, and ruffed grouse. There were also white-tailed deer, as well as elk and bison. Large predators such as mountain lions, timber wolves, and bobcats preyed on many of these animals. The streams were clean and abounded with trout, while along the banks lived numerous beaver, muskrat, otter, and mink. Waterfowl were abundant on the rivers, lakes, and marshes. Overhead, eagles and hawks roamed in numbers. Other birds, such as the passenger pigeon, were so abundant that their flocks often blocked out the sun.

These animals provided the food, clothing, and other things that you as an Indian needed to survive. Although you were often wasteful with wildlife, you were too few and too nomadic to do serious damage to the wildlife and its habitat.

The Settlers

When the settlers, who were ancestors of many of you, came to Virginia, they were much like the Indians and had little effect on the wildlife and the habitat. But as these settlers became more numerous, they killed more and more wildlife. Even worse, these

people began to clear the forests for cultivation and cut them for timber. Often they deliberately burned the forest. Thus, much of the habitat that the wildlife needed to survive was destroyed.

As Virginia became more settled, the killing of wildlife increased. While some men killed only what they needed, or to protect their livestock, others slaughtered wild animals to sell on the market. Some people killed just for the sake of killing, leaving the carcass where it fell. Soon animals began to disappear. Wolves, mountain lions, bison, and elk were eliminated in Virginia. The passenger pigeon, the Carolina parakeet, and the heath hen were completely destroyed and are gone forever from the earth. Most other animals, such as the deer, bear, turkey, and beaver, became extremely scarce. Even the animal we chose as our national emblem, the mighty bald eagle, declined and is still in danger of disappearing.

Not all wild animals suffered. Rabbits and quail liked the farms of the settlers and so increased in numbers. A few other animals increased, such as skunks, woodchucks, and fox. Later on, even these animals suffered as farmers changed farming practices.

The Present

People who appreciated wildlife, hunters, nature lovers, bird watchers, and outdoorsmen, began to realize that if something was not done, much of the wildlife of America would be destroyed forever. States began to pass laws to stop the killing of wild animals for sale on the market and to limit the number of animals hunters could take. Game commissions were formed by these states to enforce the laws. The federal government passed the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1918 to prevent the destruction of waterfowl. Also, the federal government and state Game commissions bought land, called refuges, where wildlife would be safe from man. Game commissions also restocked animals from other areas into places where they had been destroyed. The Virginia Game Commission, for example, restocked elk, white-tailed deer, beaver, and turkey in

Virginia. But of equal importance, concerned people realized it was necessary to preserve and manage the habitat to help wildlife. By managing the habitat, people began to make the land produce the things wildlife need to live--food, shelter, and water. All of these things--hunting laws, refuges, restocking, habitat management--are called wildlife management.

Today, wildlife in Virginia is plentiful in many places. However, this fact may not be true tomorrow. You as 4-H members may learn about wildlife and help it to survive.

Things 4-H Members Should Know

If you have read this manual, you should be able to answer the following questions without help.

1. Name 5 requirements wildlife need to survive.

Place a star over the 3 most important requirements.

Why are these 3 most important?

2. What is habitat?

3. Select one wild animal and describe its habitat. Tell exactly what kind of food, shelter, and water that animal needs.

4. What happens to wild animals that do not find the kind of habitat they need?

5. What animals lived in Virginia before the settlers came to the state?

6. What happened to these animals?

Which ones were eliminated in Virginia?

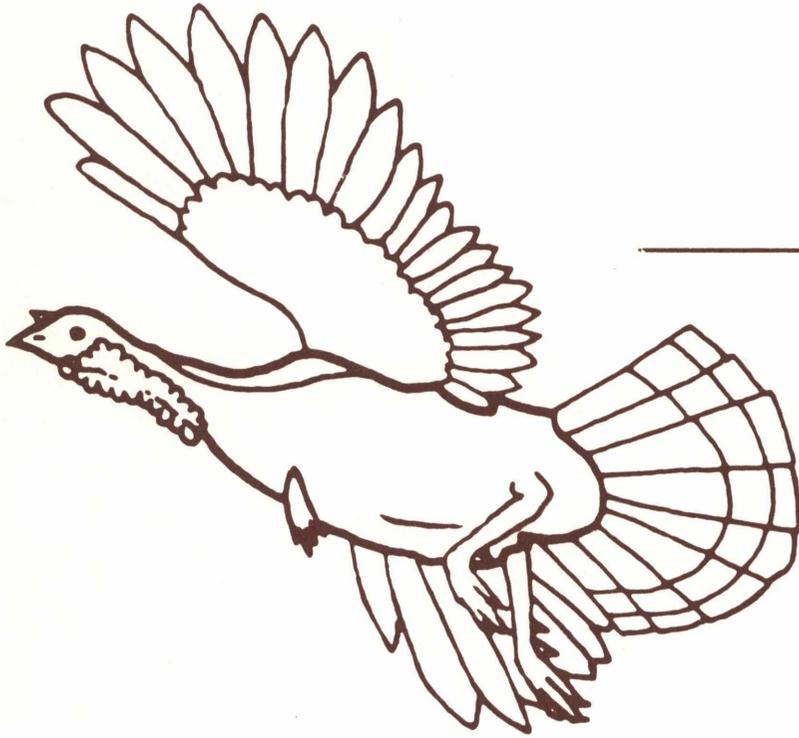
Which ones were completely destroyed forever?

7. How was the wildlife destroyed?

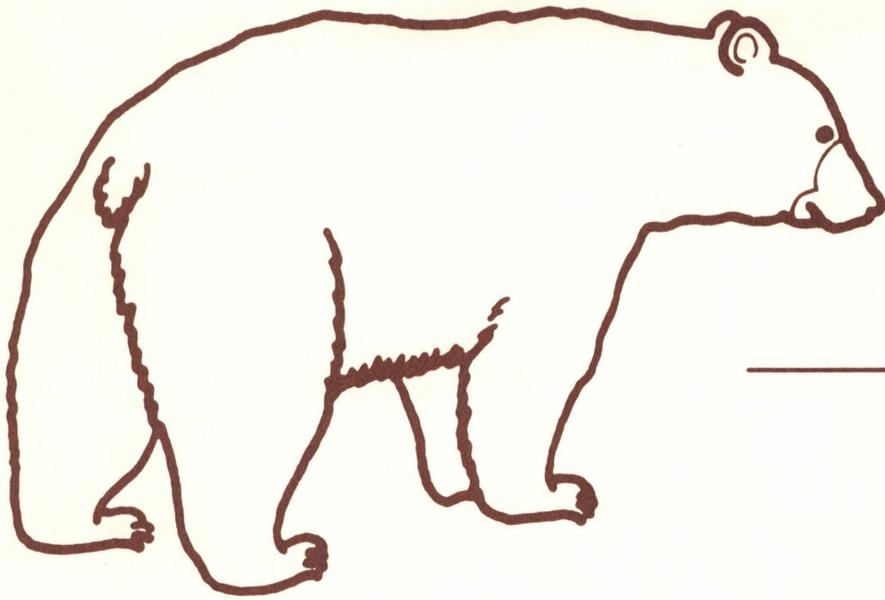
8. What did concerned people do to prevent the complete destruction of wildlife?

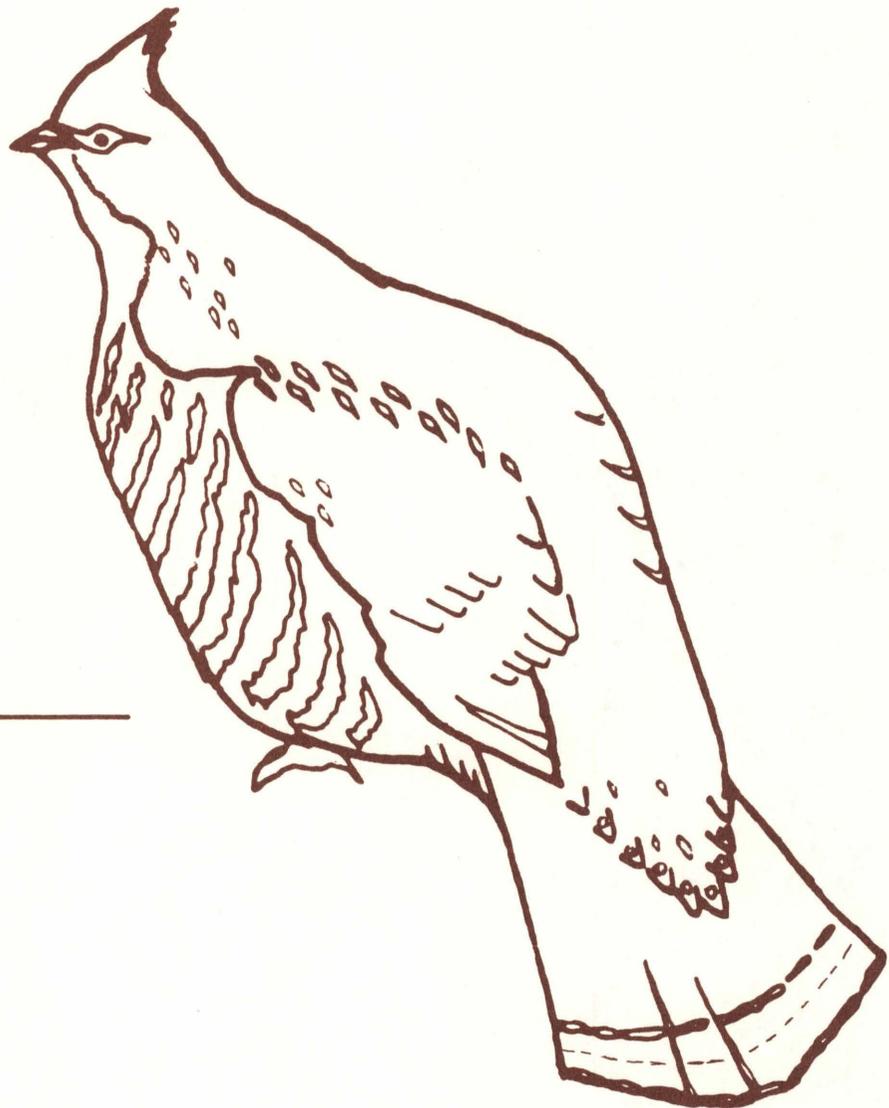
9. What can 4-H members do to help wildlife to survive in Virginia?

2. Visit a stream or pond near your house early in the spring once the temperature is above freezing every night for one week. Even if you live in a city, there is probably a roadside ditch, stream, or pond close to your home. Almost every park or golf course has a pond or stream. Catch some salamanders. They usually live under rocks, wood, and leaves along the edge of the water. Describe the salamander's habitat. Describe how it looks and feels. The salamander is important to many wild animals such as skunks, snakes, raccoons, mink, otter and bear. Why? What do you think the salamander eats?

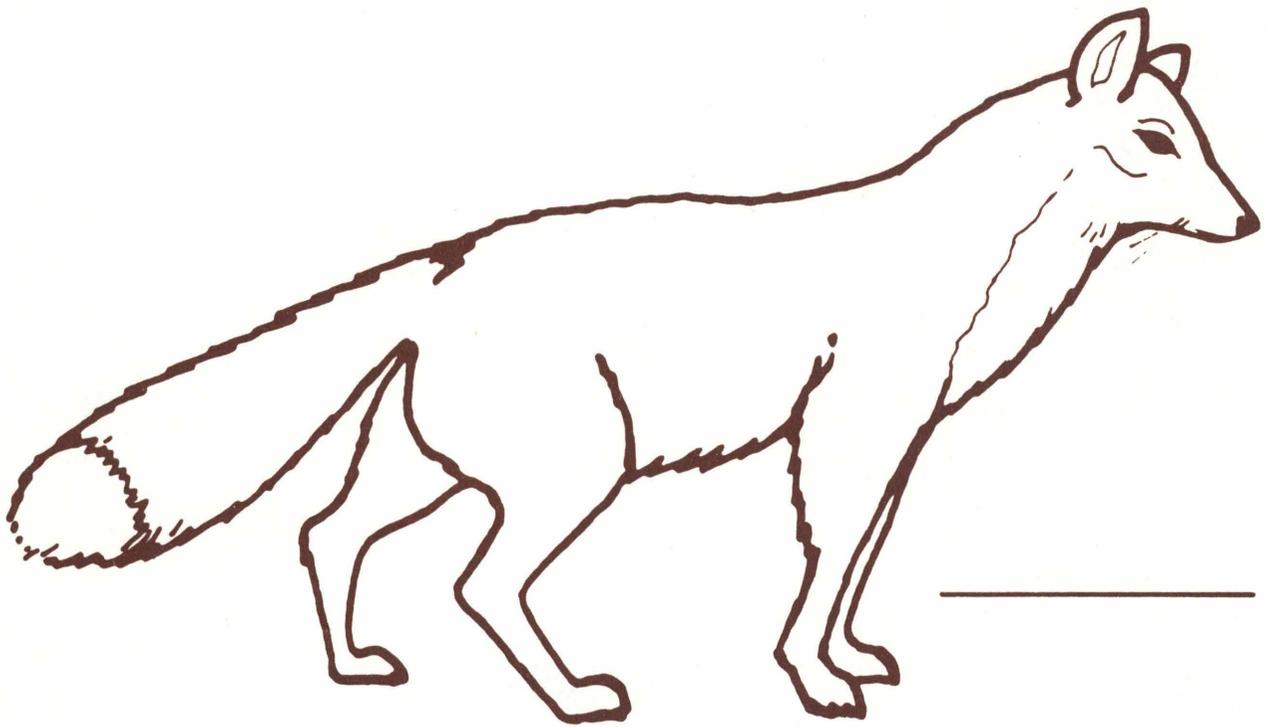
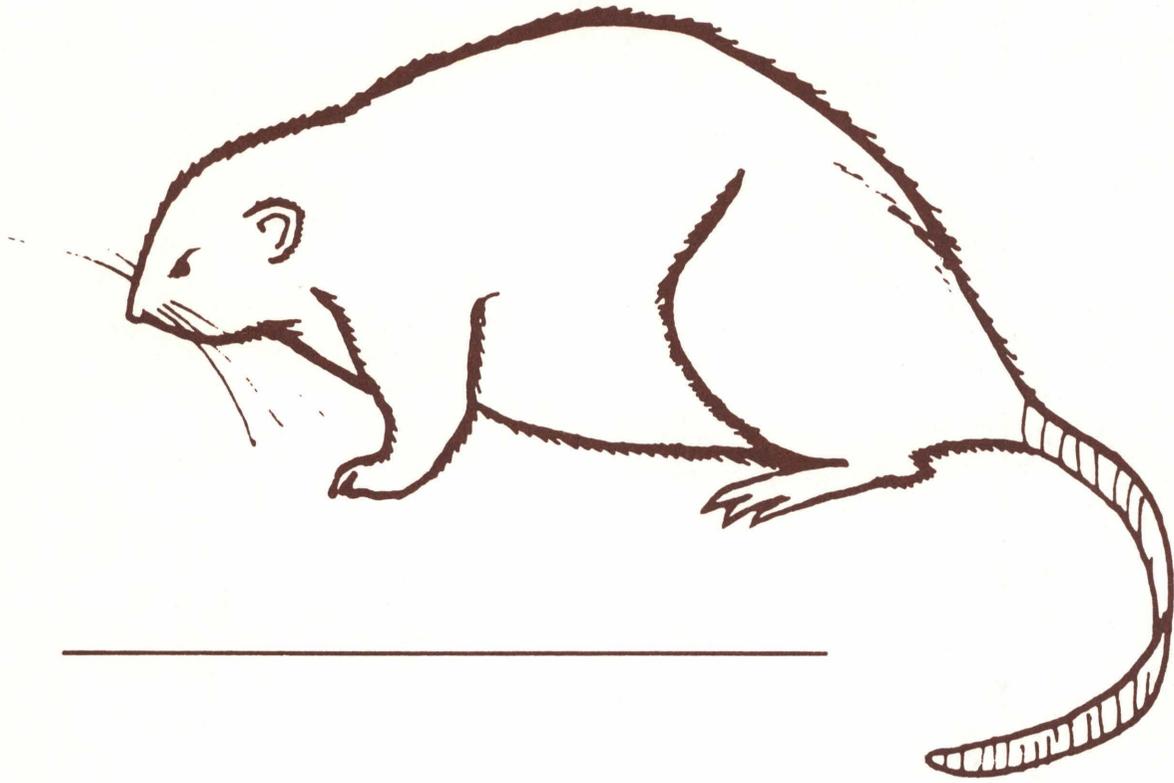










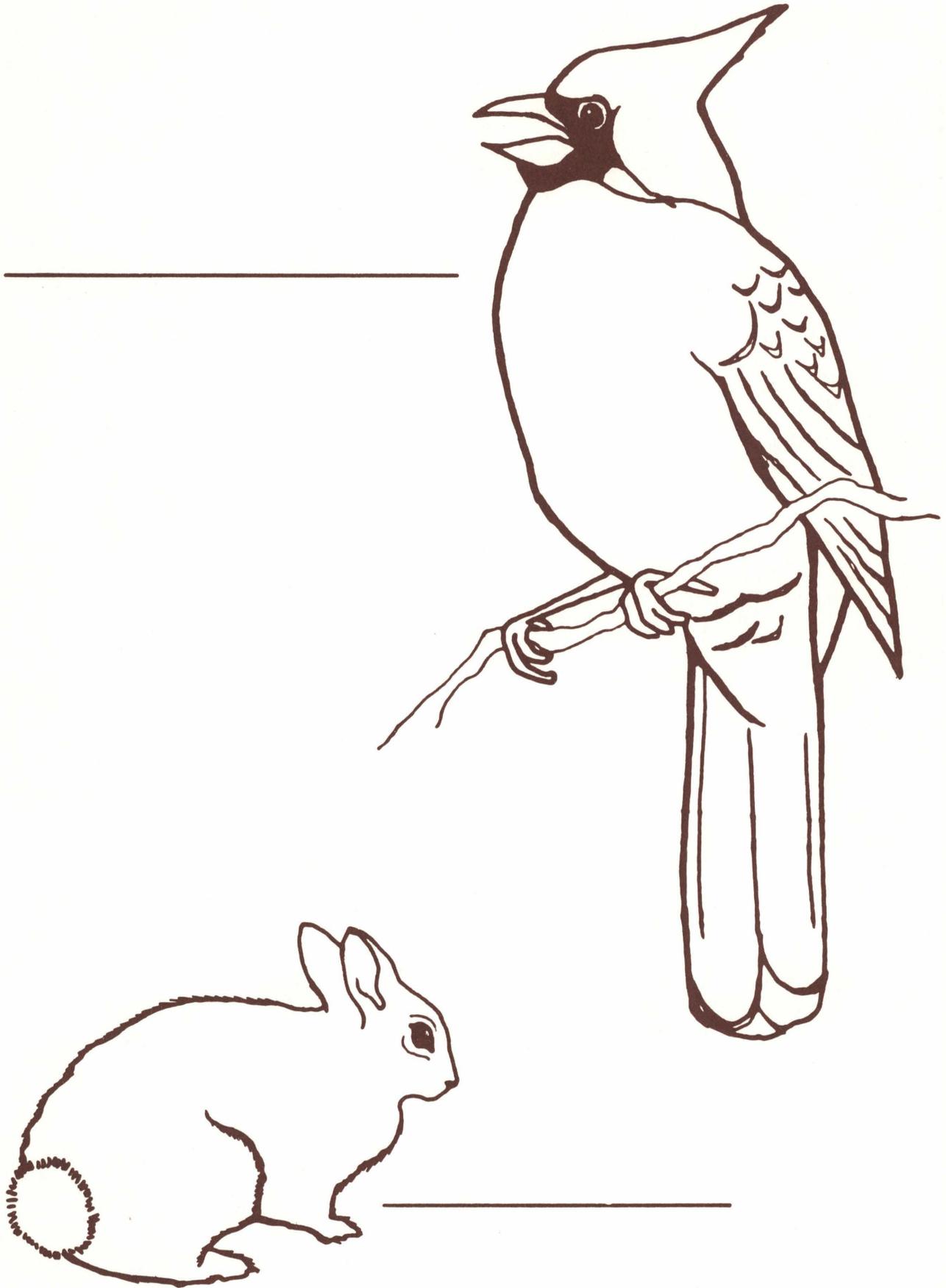


















Wildlife Appreciation Project

Unit I

CONSERVATION PLEDGE

“I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully
to defend from waste the natural resources of my country--its
soil and minerals, its forests, waters, and wildlife.”

Member's Name _____ Age _____

Parent's or Guardian's Name _____

Complete Mailing Address _____

Name of Club _____ County _____

Name of Local Wildlife Project Leader _____

Record for Club Year Ending _____

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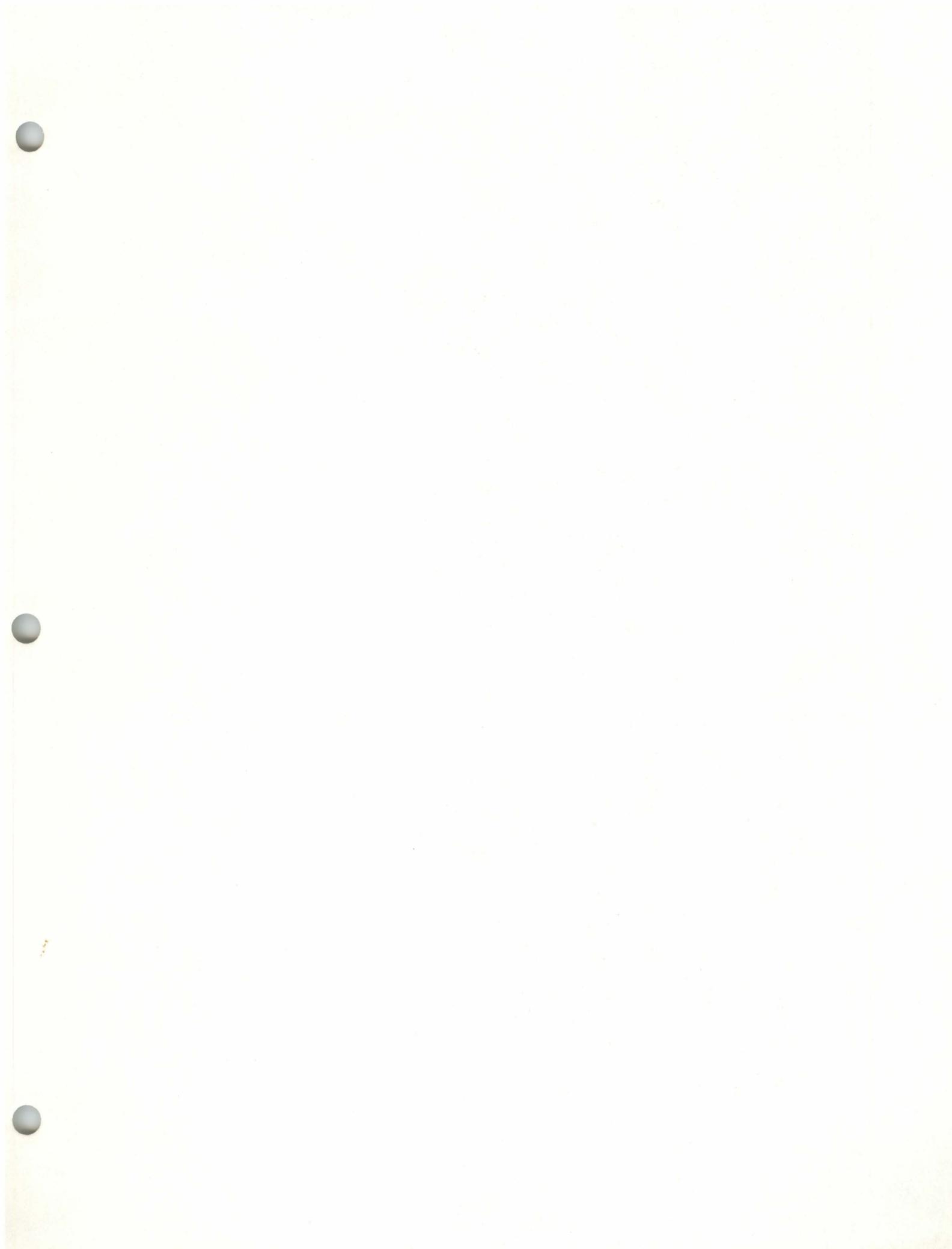
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