

A STUDY OF THE OUTDOOR WRITERS OF NORTH
AMERICA WITH EMPHASIS ON THEIR JOBS,
SALARIES, EDUCATIONS AND ROLES

by 45

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VITA

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His first major at Kansas State was wildlife management, but, after one and one-half years, he went into journalism with emphasis on the liberal arts. When an outdoor writing curriculum was developed at Kansas State in 1964, he entered that specialized field and eventually became the first Kansas State student to graduate with a degree in outdoor writing.

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While at Kansas State he was a member of the Air Force ROTC. He was married in the summer of 1967 and he and his wife were awaiting orders from the Air Force as he completed his master's thesis.

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Behind most final products there is the work of many, even though the product may bear the name of only one. An excellent example is this survey of the outdoor writing field.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The average layman is inclined to think of an "outdoor writer" as one who gets paid for enjoying such recreation as hunting, fishing, boating and camping. To many a writing novice, the basic ingredient appears to be that of reporting a more or less memorable adventure in those realms of activity (Cullimore, 1968).

Johnson (1962) found that besides writing for newspapers there also are magazine writers and book authors in the outdoor field. Other writers, according to his survey, work almost exclusively in photography, lecturing, radio and television.

Outdoor subjects for the purposes of Johnson's study were regarded as those related to (1) camping, (2) hunting, (3) fishing and (4) boating. The returns from his questionnaires indicated that there are many other related activities which outdoor writers cover, including coverage of football, baseball, tennis, soccer, polo and other spectator sports; nature subjects such as gardens, flowers, lawns, trees, birds, birdwatching; dogs and horses; forests, streams and wildlife; conservation of forests and land and wildlife; travel and tours; woodcraft, hiking and horseback riding.

Outdoor writers produce material for not only the general public but for specialized circulation. Work for such organizations as Ducks Unlimited and the National Wildlife Federation is common.

The 1968-69 edition of the National Outdoor Writers Directory¹

¹Outdoor Writers Association of America, National Outdoor Writers Directory (Columbia, Missouri: Outdoor Writers Association of America, 1968), pp. 46-47.

shows outdoor writers exhibiting seven different skills in six media. These writers write on at least 15 different subjects (see Tables 1 and 2).

TABLE 1
WHAT OUTDOOR WRITERS DO

Skills	Percentage Who Have Skill
Writer (Textual)	84.00
Photographer, Still	64.00
Photographer, Movie	13.00
Artist	4.00
Part-time Lecturing or Public Speaking	27.00
Public Relations and Marketing Consultant Work	18.00
Informational Staff Positions With Government Agencies	10.00
Writer-Photographer Combination	More Than 50.00

Media	Percentage Who Use Media
Newspaper	54.00
Magazine, Staff	20.00
Magazine, Free-lance	50.00
Radio	15.00
Television	15.00
Book Authors	16.00
Active in More Than One Medium	60.00

Perhaps "outdoor writer" is a misnomer for the workers in this field because some of the writers actually never write stories or columns. Some people have suggested that there should be outdoor broadcasters, outdoor artists, outdoor

photographers and outdoor consultants. Others have suggested that the whole group be called outdoor communicators because of the many skills which they exhibit.

TABLE 2
WHAT THE OUTDOOR WRITERS WRITE ABOUT

Subject	Percentage Who Cover Subject
Salt Water Fishing	48.00
Fresh Water Fishing	74.00
Small Game Hunting	65.00
Big Game Hunting	56.00
Camping	62.00
Boating	57.00
Archery	35.00
Dogs and Handling	30.00
Travel	54.00
Firearms, Technical	29.00
Skin Diving	16.00
Forestry	37.00
Biology	38.00
Water and Soil	44.00

Even though some of the outdoor writers devote all of their time to art, photography or broadcasting, they will be referred to in this study under the general term "outdoor writers" because that is, seemingly, the most commonly accepted name for them.

Review of the Literature

Very little has been written about the outdoor writer and this may explain why the many misconceptions about outdoor writing and writers have developed. Much of the

literature which deals with outdoor writing does so only incidentally.

One of the exceptions is Johnson's 1962 study. His questionnaire was sent to all members of the OWAA and returns were gained from 826 of the writers. This was 69.9 per cent of all members in the organization. His questionnaire was quite thorough and the study did a satisfactory job of showing the outdoor writers' employee-employer relationships.

A comprehensive survey of the newspaper outdoor writers in the OWAA by the OWAA gave some insight into the relationship of the newspaper outdoor writer to his job (Anonymous, 1968). This questionnaire study gained responses from more than 100 newspaper writers. It studied the extent of outdoor coverage, subject matter, jurisdiction over the outdoor writer and a variety of other outdoor writing aspects.

Thompson (1965) sent questionnaires to 80 outdoor writers and received 43 responses. Two of his more significant findings were that 62 per cent of the writers had at least one college degree and that the average salary of the 22 writers who answered the earnings section of the questionnaire was \$11,727 a year. Thompson sent questionnaires to well-known writers rather than taking a random sample of all writers and it is thus questionable that his results could be considered to be representative of all outdoor writers.

A survey conducted by the Associated Press Managing Editors' Association compared the popularity of 32 sports. Fishing and hunting topped the list of sports which the managing

editors wanted more coverage of, and fishing ranked seventh and hunting ninth in popularity among newspaper readers (Palmer, 1967).

Zimmerman (1968), in a study of Kansas sportsmen, learned that 88.7 per cent of the respondents to his questionnaire view outdoor television shows, 83 per cent read a hunting and fishing or related sporting magazine, 78.6 per cent read outdoor columns or pages in newspapers, 63 per cent listen to outdoor or conservation radio programs and 60.6 per cent read conservation magazines.

The remaining sources reviewed were devoted to a particular phase of outdoor writing and thus none is very complete.

The use of radio and television in conveying the conservation message to the public has been the subject of several papers. Harlan (1965) suggested that television is the best way for governmental agencies to reach the public with conservation messages. Stites (1955) suggested that radio is the best way to get this message across because radio is readily available and widely heard.

Phillips and Rousseou (1959) studied the use of radio and television by state conservation departments and found that 43 of the 48 states were using either radio or television to carry their outdoor messages to the public. The salaries of the outdoor writers in these jobs ranged from \$3,900 to \$6,500 a year with a mean of \$4,975 a year.

Benton (1965) said that the best way to educate the public in sound conservation principles is with a weekly, one-half hour television show and Gilbert (1960) explained some of the techniques he used in producing a wildlife show in Colorado.

Wipperman (1965) still contended that state conservation information efforts should be directed at radio because it's mass, it's cheap, it's selective and intrusive and because it's heard.

The role of the national broadcasting industry was discussed and it was decided that the conservationists had not been active enough in seeking national coverage (McMullen, 1965). Davis (1966) reported that the National Forest Service had had excellent success with "Lassie," a national television series, and he said that all conservation organizations should strive to get their message on television.

Jackson (1952) wrote that the missing link in conservation is the wildlife journalist. His findings indicated that the outdoor writer is usually a product of a hit or miss background. Walsh (1952) saw great promise for the outdoor writing field and said that it is the outdoor writers who would get conservation where it wanted to go.

Wade (1963) learned that the outdoor writers who work as information and education specialists are generally underpaid, too few in numbers to do an adequate job, and too low on the organization's command level.

Taylor (1954) wrote that the informational releases from government-employed outdoor writers can be used for story ideas, but nothing else. Cullimore (1966) hinted that things have not improved in this area as he said that most government information releases are too poorly written to produce favorable results.

According to Breth (1948), conservation suffered a very bad press because writers were ignorant of wildlife concepts and Rothstein (1965) said that newspapers were having a difficult time finding capable outdoor writers.

If newspapers are going to do their part in the fight for preservation of our natural resources their editorial writers will comment on every major conservation question and they will have an outdoors column on their sports pages (Meeman, 1965).

The final sources reviewed concerned techniques. Scott (1962), and Cullimore (1968) told how to sell to the outdoor markets and Wormer (1959) told how to take better outdoor pictures.

The Problem

A student or anyone else contemplating entrance into the outdoor writing field would find little of value in the literature currently available. Johnson (1962) and Anonymous (1968) are the only studies reviewed that would be beneficial to the novice trying to learn about the outdoor writing field.

Even these two studies are deficient in some important areas. The biggest deficiency is that neither of these studies gives the novice a hint of what he might learn by writing about the outdoors. Another deficiency is that the novice gets only the outdoor writers' side of the issues discussed.

This is not an attempt to degrade either the studies reviewed here or any others. These studies were not designed for general public consumption. They were designed for use by specific groups and all served the purpose for which they were intended.

The person who is interested in outdoor writing and who wishes to learn about the field can probably do so in only one way. That is to enter the field and learn as he tries to make a living. This method is sometimes the most difficult and there is always the possibility that the writer could pick up more bad habits than good.

The problem is that the prospective writer cannot find a source which will tell him what to expect in the way of salary, working conditions, limitations, subject matter and other important factors. Even the outdoor writers themselves have difficulties in finding out how their fellow writers have handled these various problems.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to bridge some of the gaps that exist in the literature which has been written about outdoor writers and their work.

The study hoped to give some insight into the outdoor writers and their jobs. It was intended to show some of the beliefs of the outdoor writers and it explained some of the opinions which they hold.

It is hoped this study will be a basis of future study for those interested in improving the outdoor writing field.

It is desired that, after reading this study, anyone planning to enter outdoor writing will have a good idea of what conditions to expect and can thus plan accordingly so that a minimum of effort is wasted and a maximum positive result is attained.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Materials Used in Study

The information used in this study came from five sources. These sources were (1) a review of the literature, (2) a questionnaire which was sent to 172 members of the OWAA, (3) a questionnaire which was sent to 60 North American conservationists, (4) a questionnaire which was sent to 90 radio, television and newspaper personnel who hold management positions, and (5) personal knowledge and observations of the author.

The Universe

The universe encompasses all of the North American continent. The outdoor writers, conservationists and radio, television and newspaper personnel contacted live throughout North America.

The questionnaires which went to the outdoor writers were sent to writers in Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico. No questionnaires were sent to writers in Mexico because none were included in the random sample selected. This is probably not significant because there were 1,100 outdoor writers on the list and only two of these live in Mexico. Even if included, the results could not have been noticeably changed.

The conservationists contacted live in the United States and Canada. There was a possibility of selecting writers from various United States' territories but none were taken in the random sample. The same is true for the radio, television and newspaper managers as only United States and Canadian personnel were included in the sample.

Only in an unusual situation would the results of this survey not be valid in any part of the North American continent, including Hawaii and Puerto Rico, but, because no results are available from Mexico and Central America, the results cannot be considered valid for them.

Design of the Study

The study was designed around three mailed questionnaires and the review of the literature. It was decided to use mailed questionnaires because of the large number of people that had to be contacted.

Direct interviews would have been favored over mailed questionnaires, but these are too time consuming and the cost of interviewing several hundred persons would have been prohibitive.

The results of the three questionnaires were tabulated and various significant percentages calculated. The validity of the various results in relation to the total members in the three groups is discussed in Chapter Six.

The makeup of the three questionnaires, their contents and some of the weak points in them will be discussed in the introductions to the following three chapters.

All questionnaires were sent with stamped, self-addressed envelopes in an attempt to increase the percentage of returns.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

Two groups of outdoor writers were selected to receive the 172 questionnaires which were used for the first part of the survey section of the study. The first group consisted of the 39 newest members in the OWAA. The list of new members was compiled from the three most recent issues of the OWAA's monthly newsletter, Outdoors Unlimited.¹ These 39 writers are actually not new writers but the newest members in the OWAA. Some of them have been writing for 20 years and are certainly not new writers. However, the average tenure of these writers in the outdoor writing field is considerably less than the tenure of the OWAA members in general.

The new members received their questionnaires in an advance mailing and were used as a test group.

When nearly one-half of these writers returned completed questionnaires, it was decided that this was an adequate return and the remaining questionnaires were sent to a random sampling of outdoor writers selected from the OWAA's directory.²

The number of writers to be contacted in the random sampling was determined by estimation of the number of questionnaires that could be effectively analyzed. It was decided that about 100 questionnaires could be studied and a number of questionnaires

¹Outdoors Unlimited, Newsletter of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, Columbia, Missouri, XXIX, Nos. 2,3 and 4.

²Outdoor Writers Association of America, National Outdoor Writers Directory (Columbia, Missouri: Outdoor Writers Association of America, 1967, pp. 3-40.

that would provide that many usable returns was estimated. It was projected that 180 questionnaires would provide the desired amount of returns.

The number of writers listed in the OWAA Directory was determined to be about 1,100 and it was decided to take every seventh member as the sample. The first writer to be taken was selected by drawing a lot from a container which held lots numbered from one to seven. From then on, every seventh name was taken. This provided a list of 155 names. Twenty-two of these names were omitted from the survey because they were the names of associate¹ members in the OWAA. This left 133 names and these writers received questionnaires.

A total of 95 replies were received from the 172 writers contacted. Not all of the replies were usable, however.

Eight of the writers returned blank questionnaires and a ninth questionnaire was returned by the Postal Department because the writer had moved, leaving no forwarding address.

Four of the writers who returned blank questionnaires claimed a unique status and said that they did not want to bias the results of the study. Two others had retired and thus did not feel qualified to answer the questions. Another writer said that he was too busy and the final one flatly stated that he never gave out such information.

The final count showed 86 usable questionnaires; none of which had an answer to every question.

¹Associate members, according to OWAA standards, are writers who do not work actively or who receive no salary for their work.

Faults in the First Questionnaire

A review of the responses to the questionnaire revealed several weak points in its makeup (see Appendix I for a copy of the first questionnaire).

The major weakness is on the first page of the questionnaire where the number and lengths of stories are requested. Because many of the writers work for a number of media, their answers in these spaces were meaningless unless qualifications, which told exactly how many of what kind of stories were produced, were added.

In the section which asked for the lengths of stories and columns, the writers did not differentiate between book, newspaper and magazine stories so it was difficult to determine the length of stories contributed to a specific media.

The ambiguity resulted because it was not realized that the writers serve so many different media. To remedy the confusion, results were discarded when it was impossible to distinguish between the media. Fortunately, most of the writers that did write for several media qualified their answers and thus provided usable data.

Results of the First Questionnaire

The questionnaires returned from the first and second mailings were closely examined. They proved to be so similar in data that they were considered as one group when the results were compiled.

The only significant difference found to exist between the

new members and the older ones is that the new members wrote more in the opinion section of the questionnaire. Perhaps, this is because the writers who have been in the OWAA longer have been besieged by people requesting information and have thus become less receptive to answering questionnaires. There also was a difference in the average age of the newer writers as most of them are younger than the long-time members. A corresponding difference in the time that they have been writing also was found. These differences were not considered of enough significance to warrant establishing two sets of results.

Age of the Writers

The average age of the 75 respondents was slightly less than 46 years. The average of the 17 new members was only 38 years. More than two-thirds of all respondents were more than 41 years old (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
AGES OF THE OUTDOOR WRITERS SURVEYED

<u>Age Grouping</u>	<u>Number in Grouping</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
20 to 30 Years	8	10.67
31 to 40 Years	13	17.33
41 to 50 Years	27	36.00
51 Years or Older	27	36.00
Total	75	Total 100.00

Free-lancers or Regular Employees

Forty-nine of the respondents answered that they are

free-lancers while 50 said they hold regular jobs (see Table 4). Sixteen of the writers free-lance in addition to holding regular jobs. Thirty-four of the writers said that they are regular employees only, but only 13 of these work for a single medium. Either there was confusion as to the definition of "free-lancer" or these writers are kept busy with a multitude of regular jobs. Ten of the 13 who work for one medium only are full-time newspaper employees. Of the 33 who earn all of their salary from free-lancing, only five concentrate their efforts on a single medium.

TABLE 4
FREE-LANCING VERSUS REGULAR EMPLOYMENT

Employment	Number	Percentage*
Free-lancing	49	59.00
Free-lancing Only	33	39.76
Regular Job	50	60.24
Regular Job Only	34	40.96
Boths Types of Jobs	16	19.30

* The total number of respondents to this question was 83 and all percentages were calculated using this number.

Job Titles

The section of the questionnaire pertaining to the job titles of regularly employed outdoor writers was of little measurable value, except to show the great diversity of job titles that outdoor writers possess. Many of the writers on newspapers and in broadcasting have more than one job title, but

only the title which refers to the writer's outdoor duties is mentioned here.

The study showed that 30 of the 68 respondents have the title of "Outdoor Writer," "Outdoor Columnist," or "Outdoor Editor" (see Table 5). Many of these writers also work in other departments in the same organization.

One-fourth of the writers have titles related to the conservation field. These writers are either with conservation organizations at the state or national level or are wildlife specialists, ecologists etc. working in private enterprise.

The bulk of those not in the previous two categories are editors, publishers or general writers or announcers who write or broadcast about the outdoors because they see a need for outdoor coverage or because they want the extra money. "Managing Editor" and "Owner" were the two most prevalent job titles associated with this group. Only two of the people who answered are sports editors who also do an outdoor page, column or section.

TABLE 5
JOB TITLE CLASSIFICATION

Job Title Grouping	Number in Group	Percentage
Outdoor Editor, Writer or Columnist	30	44.11
Conservation Director, Specialist or Consultant	17	25.00
Editor, Publisher, Owner, General Writer or Announcer	19	30.89
Total	66	Total 100.00

Skills of the Outdoor Writers

"Outdoor Writing" encompasses filming, art, broadcasting, direction of other employees, lecturing, public relations, government service, consulting for conservation organizations and a variety of other skills. One thing is evident, however, outdoor writers do write. Eighty-two of the 84 respondents write books, or stories and columns for newspapers, magazines or other publications (see Table 6).

More than 78 per cent write stories of some kind while more than 65 per cent write columns. The difference between a story and a column might not have been clear to all of the writers but it is hoped that they judged a column to be a personal type of feature article which may or may not have a special format in the publication. It cannot be ascertained if this is how they interpreted it, however.

TABLE 6
SKILLS OF THE OUTDOOR WRITERS

Writers' Skills	Number	Percentage*
Direction of Employees	8	9.52
Writes Stories	66	78.57
Writes Columns	55	65.48
Writes Stories and Columns	82	97.58
Takes Still Pictures	62	73.81
Takes Movies	9	10.71
Broadcasts on Radio or TV	14	16.67
Does Art	7	8.33
Writes and Does Photography	48	57.14

* The total number of respondents to this question was 84 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

Demonstrating the value of photographic experience in the outdoor writing field is the fact that 62 of the 84 writers take still pictures or slides and another nine take movies. None of the photographers earn their total annual income from taking pictures or movies which seems to indicate that it is a needed talent but that it alone will not provide a living.

Media Used by the Outdoor Writers

Analyzing the question concerning the media used by the outdoor writers presented problems because many of the writers failed to estimate the percentage of time devoted to the various media. This would be a difficult undertaking, especially for those writers who devote time to three or four media. Because many of the writers offered no estimate of the time devoted to each media, only 66 of the 80 responses were useable.

Probably the most significant thing learned from this question is that 44 per cent of all outdoor writing time is devoted to newspapers and another 31 per cent is directed to magazines (see Table 7).

Frequency of Broadcast or Publication

The questionnaire provided four choices for frequency of publication. Because some of the writers produce weekly for one media and less frequently for another it was difficult to evaluate the results when one of the four choices was marked. Some of the writers marked more than one choice but did not distinguish how often they write for each media.

TABLE 7

MEDIA USED BY THE OUTDOOR WRITERS AND THE TIME DEVOTED TO EACH

Media	Number Using Media	Average Percentage of Time Devoted to Media by Those Using It	Percentage* of All Time Accounted for Which Is Devoted to This Media
Newspapers	47	64.00	44.21
Magazines	39	54.49	31.10
Books	13	37.08	7.05
Governmental Publications	7	63.00	6.45
Public Relations	13	29.23	5.56
Education	4	34.50	2.02
Radio			
Broadcasting	9	18.11	2.39
TV Broadcasting	9	10.67	1.40

*Percentages were calculated by dividing all time accounted for into the time devoted to each of the media. There were 66 respondents to the question.

When no qualifications were added and previous answers showed that the person works for a variety of media, interpretation was difficult. It was decided to make no effort to distinguish between the media and only the frequency of publication was calculated.

In instances where more than one frequency was marked, the most frequent selection was used in the results (see Table 8).

Generally, the weekly producers are those who have a regular job on a newspaper or who free-lance a weekly column to one or several newspapers. Weekly radio and television shows also account for weekly production. The monthly

producers are both free-lancers and regularly employed magazine writers and government employees. The quarterly and semimonthly producers fit into the magazine category. The sporadic producers do a variety of things. Book authors obviously produce sporadically but they certainly don't work sporadically. Lecturers, consultants, free-lance movie cameramen, still photographers and a mixture of other free-lancers fall into the sporadic production category.

TABLE 8
FREQUENCY OF MATERIAL

Frequency	Number Producing This Often	Percentage
Weekly	48	60.00
Semimonthly	3	3.75
Monthly	12	15.00
Quarterly	1	1.25
Sporadically	<u>16</u>	<u>20.00</u>
Total	80	Total 100.00

There seems to be no particular day of the week that is more favorable than other days for the weekly producers (see Table 9).

Length and Number of Broadcasts, Stories and Columns

Question number six of the survey, which asked outdoor writers to estimate the approximate length of their broadcasts, stories and columns, and the final part of the preceding question which asked the writers to estimate their approximate

number of stories, columns, lectures, etc. per year, were very inconclusive.

TABLE 9
DAYS OF THE WEEK ON WHICH OUTDOOR MATERIAL IS PRODUCED

Day of the Week	Number of Writers	Percentage*
Monday	9	22.50
Tuesday	14	35.00
Wednesday	17	42.50
Thursday	17	42.50
Friday	21	52.50
Saturday	12	30.00
Sunday	19	47.50

*The total number of respondents to this question was 40 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

Too often, the writers marked several different skills but did not differentiate among them when they listed an annual total. Stories and columns were grouped together in the results because the writers never distinguished between the two when listing totals. When lectures, pictures, brochures or other items were involved, they were omitted from the results because they were not usually separated from the stories and columns.

The total showed 56 writers producing 9,895 stories and columns for an average of 177 per year. When the two government writers with 53 and nine assistants were excluded from the total, a much lower average number was obtained. These two government employees produce 5,000 and 800 stories a year. But it is obvious from their comments that their jobs involve

direction of other writers rather than actual writing. With these two omitted, the results show 54 writers producing 4,095 stories and columns a year for an average of 76 per writer. This average is probably higher than the number produced by the magazine writers but lower than that produced by the newspapermen.

The findings regarding the length of the material were more enlightening because the writers were given several choices and thus the answers were more easily evaluated.

Neglecting to provide spaces for photographers, book authors and lecturers probably lost an opportunity for some valuable information as only five writers volunteered this information.

Three of these were book authors who produce a total of four or five books annually. The fourth writer was a photographer-lecturer who also does television broadcasts. He produces 70 two-hour lectures and four seven and one-half minute films for television each year.

The most significant finding is that the stories and columns tend to be 10 inches or longer, with nearly one-half of the stories being 30 inches or longer. The predominant length of the radio and television broadcasts is 15 minutes, with eight of the 13 broadcasters producing shows of this length (see Table 10).

TABLE 10
 LENGTH OF THE STORIES, COLUMNS AND BROADCASTS

Length	Number Producing This Length Broadcasts	Percentage
Five Minutes	4	30.77
Ten Minutes	1	7.69
Fifteen Minutes	8	61.54
Total	13	Total 100.00
Stories*		
Less than Ten Inches	5	8.19
10 to 20 Inches	19	31.10
20 to 30 Inches	13	21.30
From 30 Inches to Book Length	29	47.54
Columns**		
Less than 10 Inches	3	5.88
10 to 20 Inches	22	43.14
20 to 30 Inches	17	33.33
30 to 50 Inches	11	21.57

*The total number of respondents to this question was 61 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

**The total number of respondents to this question was 51 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

Recreation Versus Conservation Subject Matter

Perhaps this question was confusing to the writers as it did not include other possible alternatives such as "To Educate" or "To Make Money" and these are undoubtedly the motives for much of the writing. Still, both making money and education can logically be considered under either conservation or recreation because they are reasons and not subjects.

The respondents, in some cases, seemed to have either a degree of misunderstanding about the question or a belief that their writing fell into some other unspecified category. This is apparent because some of the writers accounted for only small portions of their writing. One writer wrote that he devotes two per cent of his time to conservation and none to writing about recreation. Another wrote that he spends five per cent of his time on each. Another said he writes about conservation two per cent of the time and recreation seven per cent of the time.

Some of the writers had additional comments. Many of these comments concerned the difficulty involved in judging how much time is devoted to a particular subject.

One writer wrote that "the question is very difficult to answer. Everything I write is aimed at promoting conservation of either man's quality environment or wildlife." A second writer said the whole mess was stupid and that he resented "the so-called sound conservation practices." A third said that the "only writers who play with 'so-called' conservation are a few charlatans in public relations for lumber and chemical companies."

Apparently, the use of the phrase "so-called sound conservation practices" antagonized some of the writers, especially those who spend some of their writing time extolling conservation ideals.

This phrase was used because not all of the writers agree on what is good conservation and what is not. What one man thinks is sound conservation is so-called conservation in the eyes of another writer. The term was meant to mean what the writer feels to be sound conservation, even though there are others who might not agree. In other words, intent to write about conservation was wanted and no concern was given to whether others felt that the ideas were indeed sound.

The results of the question on writing subjects showed that 70 of the 72 writers who answered the question devote some portion of their time to writing about recreational opportunities while 67 of them devote some of their writing to conservation. Two of the 67 writers who deal with conservation topics grant all of their time to these topics and five of those who write about recreation devote all of their writing to that area.

When all of the time given to conservation is averaged, it shows that 39.87 per cent of outdoor writing time concerns conservation topics. A similar calculation showed that the writers who write about recreation give 61.40 per cent of their time to that subject.

When all time, both conservation and recreation, was totalled and the percentage of time given to each calculated, a similar result was recorded; 38.33 per cent of the writing is about conservation and 61.67 per cent of the time goes to writing about recreational aspects. Theoretically, this means that for every three stories, columns and broadcasts the

public gets which deal with recreation, there are two stories, columns or broadcasts which deal with conservation.

Percentage of Income Derived from Outdoor Writing

As in many of the other questions, the complex situations in which many of the outdoor writers work caused problems for them in answering this question. In situations where the writer has several positions on the same publication or station, it is difficult to estimate just how much income comes from each particular phase of his job.

The responses showed that, on the average, outdoor writers earn 49.79 per cent of their income from their outdoor writing activities. Twenty of the 72 respondents earn their total income from outdoor writing (see Table 11). Five of these are regular employees on newspapers and another three are free-lancers who devote the majority of their time to newspapers. Only one is a regular magazine staffer and two others are full-time government employees.

Not all of the outdoor writers earn the majority, or even a small part, of their total salary from outdoor writing. Five of the writers earn no money from their outdoor writing efforts and another nine make less than five per cent of their total incomes from outdoor writing.

Other Employment

The outdoor writers who earn only a portion of their total income from outdoor writing were grouped into three

general classes. The three groups established were people who had jobs in either journalism, the outdoors or some totally unrelated field.

TABLE 11
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME EARNED FROM OUTDOOR WRITING

Per Cent of Total Income Earned from Outdoor Writing	Number	Percentage
100 Per Cent	20	27.78
75 to 99 Per Cent	7	9.72
50 to 74 Per Cent	9	12.50
25 to 49 Per Cent	10	13.89
6 to 24 Per Cent	12	16.67
One to 5 Per Cent	9	12.50
No Income from Outdoor Writing		
	Total 5	Total 6.94
	72	100.00

Of the 59 writers who responded to the question, 32 of them have other jobs in the general journalism field. Many of these jobs are on the same publication for which the outdoor writer pens his outdoor columns and stories or the same station for which the writer does a radio or television outdoor show.

Some of the more common "other" jobs are sports editors, advertising men, copy editors, managing editors, photographers, wire editors, reporters and, on occasion, publishers. Among the free-lancers, the most common jobs were teaching journalism and general advertising and public relations employment.

Twelve of the 59 respondents hold additional jobs in the outdoor field. These jobs show a great deal of variance. Some of the jobs are privately owned businesses. Hunting and fishing outfitters, fishing contest coordinators, conservation consultants and other outdoor-related jobs make up this group.

The remaining 15 writers have other jobs that are related to neither journalism or the outdoors. Actually, there were 17 with unrelated jobs, but two of these also have jobs in journalism or the outdoors. No pattern was established among those writers who have unrelated jobs. Steel workers, farm managers, mail carriers and even an optometrist are included in this highly diversified group.

Tenure in the Outdoor Writing Field

Everyone writes that outdoor writing is a new and rapidly expanding field, but the results of this survey show that many of the outdoor writers have been around for a considerable length of time. More than three-fourths of the 75 respondents to this question have been in the field for more than five years. It must be remembered that this survey is slightly biased in favor of younger members because there are 16 new members included in the results and there would be only one-half that number, or less, had these new members been included in the directory list and a list selected randomly. While not always the case, these new members have sometimes entered the field only recently and thus lower the average tenure of the writers in the field.

The average tenure for all writers in the field is 16.2 years. This seems to discount the claim that outdoor writers are a new phenomena.

Still, 16 of the writers have been in the field for only five years or less which shows that many writers are still entering the field (see Table 12). Nine of these were from the list of new members. Calculations show that if all writers had been selected at random, only about 10 per cent of the writers would prove to be in the field for five years or less.

TABLE 12
TENURE OF OUTDOOR WRITERS

Years in Outdoor Writing	Number of Writers	Percentage
0 to 5 Years	16	20.78
6 to 9 Years	6	7.79
10 to 14 Years	13	16.88
15 to 19 Years	12	15.58
20 to 24 Years	13	16.88
25 to 29 Years	6	7.79
30 to 34 Years	7	9.09
35 to 39 Years	1	1.30
40 to 44 Years	1	1.30
Total	77	Total 100.00

Work Prior to Outdoor Writing Career

Like the work that the outdoor writers do in addition to their outdoor writing, the work that was done prior to entering the outdoor writing field is varied. Results showed that many of the writers have had previous careers in journalism or the out-of-doors. Many of the jobs that the writers had

prior to entering outdoor writing are probably the same second jobs that they hold today.

The responses to this question were grouped into six categories. The largest grouping was of people who had had previous jobs in journalism as 27 of the 72 respondents fell into this category (see Table 13).

TABLE 13
PREVIOUS JOBS HELD BY OUTDOOR WRITERS

Previous Work	Number of Writers	Percentage*
Journalism	27	37.50
Outdoor Work	13	18.06
Military	4	5.57
College	3	4.17
First Job	7	9.72
Miscellaneous	<u>25</u>	<u>34.72</u>
Total	<u>79</u>	

*The total number of responses to this question was 72 and all percentages were calculated using this total.

Reasons for Entering the Outdoor Writing Field

Probably of more significance than the data on previous jobs is the data on why the writers entered the outdoor writing field.

While different answers from each of the writers were expected, the responses were very similar and seven distinct groupings were established.

Nearly two-thirds of the 66 writers, 42, say they entered the field merely because they liked it (see Table 14).

Another 15 writers said they entered the field as a hobby. Only

one of the 15 writers who entered as a hobby makes more than 30 per cent of his living from outdoor writing and only three of the 15 make more than 10 per cent of their total salary from outdoor writing. Two of these earn all of their living from outdoor writing but the others earn only 10 per cent or less of their total salary from outdoor writing. Five writers entered the field to earn some extra money. The most that any of these earn from outdoor writing is 30 per cent of their annual income. Six of the writers say they entered outdoor writing only because they were forced to do so. These were usually sports writers who were forced into outdoor writing because their publisher suddenly decided to provide coverage of the outdoors for the readers. All but one of these six are happy with outdoor writing and even the one who isn't said he is starting to like covering the outdoors although he admitted he lacked an understanding of the field when he first began covering it.

Factors Which Limit Outdoor Writers

Only 52 of the writers answered the question concerning limitations. Whether the question was confusing or whether their failure to answer meant they have no limitations is impossible to determine. It is suspected that many of the writers who didn't respond have no limitations and therefore didn't write anything.

TABLE 14
REASONS GIVEN FOR ENTERING THE OUTDOOR WRITING FIELD

Reasons Cited	Number of Writers	Percentage*
Liked Field So Entered	42	63.64
Entered As a Hobby	15	22.73
Saw a Need for Outdoor Writing	9	13.64
Entered by Accident	6	9.10
Entered for Extra Money	5	7.57
Joined Husband in Field	1	1.52
Outdoor Writing Beats Working	$\frac{1}{79}$	1.52
Total	$\frac{1}{79}$	

*The total number of respondents to this question was 66 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

No one seems to have enough time and outdoor writers are no exception as 22 of the writers cited lack of time as their most severe limitation. Many wrote that they didn't have enough time in the field because of other duties on the same publication. Some said they have to write their columns and stories for the outdoor page in their spare time. Other limitations listed were an insufficient travel budget and insufficient space in the newspaper (see Table 15).

Pressure by the publishers proved to be a limitation for four of the writers. These pressures warrant discussion because they may be factors in other areas of the country.

A Midwestern newspaper writer wrote the following: "Pollution, a number one problem, the boss says, 'don't knock it.' He doesn't want the industries in our town to be at arms with the newspaper. There are smaller items, too

numerous to mention." A written policy on a west coast daily gives its outdoor writer a different type of problem. He writes: "The policy of my newspaper does not allow the use of brand names, or the names of resorts, bait shops, etc. in copy. I believe this substantially decreases my effectiveness in being able to tell people what to use and where to go for their hunting and fishing sport."

TABLE 15
LIMITATIONS ON OUTDOOR WRITERS

Limitation	Number Affected by This Limitation	Percentage Affected*
Time	22	42.31
Budget	5	9.62
Space Inadequate	4	7.69
Publisher's Pressure	4	7.69
Lack of Education	3	5.77
Lack of Ability	3	5.77
No Limitations	17	32.17
Total	58	

*The total number of respondents to this question was 52 and all percentages were calculated using this total.

Another Midwesterner writes that his union restricts him as much as his publisher. His publisher doesn't give him the time he needs and the American Newspaper Guild hinders him because, under his contract, he is prohibited from taking pictures for his column. The final complaint against publishers is from a third Midwesterner who writes that he is hindered by an editor and publisher who don't seem to think outdoor writing has any real significance. This is probably the reason that other writers find themselves short of time and space.

Seventeen of the writers said they have no limiting factors. Three each said they are limited only by their lack of education and limited ability.

Number of Assistants Who Aid Outdoor Writers

Sixty-four per cent or 48 of the 75 respondents have no assistants. This may indicate a lack of interest on the part of management, especially in newspapers. In magazine work, this factor does not mean as much because many of the writers that have regular staff jobs have a specialized part of the magazine in which there is little need for an assistant. Few of the free-lancers have assistants although some do enlist the aid of secretaries and photographers.

Among those who have assistants, one or two assistants is the most common, with nine having one and 10 having two (see Table 16). Only five of the persons with assistants are writers who devote the majority of their time to authorship of books and three others are magazine writers. These people have only two assistants as a maximum.

The returns show four writers who have four, nine, 15 and 53 assistants. The writer with 53 helpers is an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture while the others are employees of state and federal conservation departments.

TABLE 16

NUMBER OF ASSISTANTS AVAILABLE TO AID OUTDOOR WRITERS

Assistants Available	Writers with This Number	Percentage
No Assistants	48	64.00
One Assistant	9	12.00
Two Assistants	10	13.33
Three Assistants	3	4.00
Four Assistants	1	1.33
One Unpaid Assistant from Another Section of Paper	1	1.33
Nine Assistants	1	1.33
Fifteen Assistants	1	1.33
Fifty-three Assistants	<u>1</u>	<u>1.33</u>
Total	75	Total 99.98

Work Accomplished by Assistants

The assistants' work varies from photography to secretarial duties. All of the writers who have assistants listed their duties. About one-half of the assistants retained do editing, copy writing and photographic work (see Table 17).

TABLE 17

DUTIES OF THE OUTDOOR WRITERS' ASSISTANTS

Assistants' Duties	Writers Who Have Such Assistants	Percentage*
Typing	9	33.33
Photography	15	55.56
Copy Writing	13	48.15
Edit Copy	16	59.26
Do Research	3	11.11
Other Work (Often Secretarial)	13	48.15

*The total number of respondents to this question was 27 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

Educational Levels of the Outdoor Writers

With 66 of the 79 respondents showing an education that extended past the high school level, it's apparent that the outdoor writer is usually a well-educated man or woman.

Only two of the outdoor writers had an education that resulted in less than a high school diploma. One of these has completed the seventh grade and the other has two years of high school (see Table 18). Twenty-three of the writers have a college bachelors degree, 13 have a masters or have worked on it and another five have a doctorate or have taken hours toward one. The largest single group in any one educational level is the 23 writers who have had some college hours but have not completed a degree. In addition to these, four other writers have either completed or attended junior college.

No attempt was made to determine a trend in the colleges attended as they are extremely diversified.

TABLE 18

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF THE OUTDOOR WRITERS

Highest Level Completed	Number Completing This Level	Percentage
Some Elementary School	1	1.27
Elementary Diploma	0	0.00
Some Secondary Education	1	1.27
Secondary Diploma	11	13.82
Attended or Completed JuCo	4	5.06
Completed Some College	23	29.11
Received a Bachelors	21	26.58
Received or Worked Toward a Masters	13	16.46
Received or Worked Toward a Doctorate	5	6.33
Total	79	Total 100.00

Fields of College Study

Out of the 62 writers who had some college or received a college degree, some 20 of them, nearly one-third, had at least 10 college credits in journalism (see Table 19). No space was included in the questionnaire for college majors but some of the writers did list their major. Six of these were journalism majors, three were wildlife management majors and two majored in forestry.

Not as much attention was given in the study to learning about the majors as was given to learning what basic writing and other skills the writers had studied in college. It is more significant that 20 writers had some journalism training than it is that six writers have journalism degrees. The fact that 20 took journalism courses in college shows that they intended to write after leaving college and that is the important thing. This is important, it should be said, provided that the journalism courses were writing courses or broadcasting courses rather than history, advertising or public relations courses which do not usually develop writing ability.

Twenty writers had some general science courses in college and these courses should have been helpful in understanding the outdoors. Thirteen writers had at least 10 credits in wildlife management and/or ecology, eight had 10 credits in biological sciences and three had 10 credits in forestry.

The only other area in which a significant number of people studied was English in which seven people had 10 credits. Photography and engineering had two and four students respectively.

The remaining areas of study were extremely diversified. A doctor of optometry, a music major, language majors, a hotel management major and marketing and business majors were just a few of the people with unusual majors who have somehow found their way into the outdoor writing arena.

TABLE 19
AREAS OF COLLEGE STUDY FOR OUTDOOR WRITERS

Areas in Which the Outdoor Writers Have at Least 10 College Credits	Number of Writers With 10 Credits in This Area	Percentage*
Journalism	20	32.26
General Sciences	20	32.26
Wildlife Management or Animal Ecology	13	20.97
Biological Sciences	8	12.90
English	7	11.29
Engineering	4	6.45
Forestry	3	4.84
Photography	2	3.23

*The total number of respondents to this question was 62 and all percentages were calculated using this total.

AMOUNT OF TIME OUTDOOR WRITERS SPEND
IN THE FIELD GATHERING MATERIAL

While outdoor writers are writing about the out-of-doors, much of their material is evidently gathered while sitting at the desk because almost two-thirds of them spend no more than 25 per cent of their working time in the field gathering material (see Table 20).

Many of the writers say they would like to spend more of their time in the field but their other duties keep them

from doing so. A lack of budget is another reason cited for spending little or no time in the field.

Free-lancers spend more of their time in the field than the regular employees as nine of the 12 writers who devote more than 50 per cent of their time to field work are free-lancers.

TABLE 20

AMOUNT OF WORKING TIME SPENT IN THE FIELD GATHERING MATERIAL

Per Cent of Outdoor Writing Time Devoted to Gathering Material in the Field	Number of Writers	Percentage
Less Than 10 Per Cent	17	22.67
10 to 25 Per Cent	30	40.00
25 to 50 Per Cent	16	21.33
50 to 75 Per Cent	6	8.00
75 to 90 Per Cent	6	8.00
Total	75	Total 100.00

Sources of Material Used by the Outdoor Writer

Outdoor writers use a variety of sources in gathering material for their columns, stories and broadcasts. In some, or perhaps many, cases these sources are used merely to provide leads for stories which are then researched or columns which are then written from personal experience.

According to the writers, the most frequently used source of material is personal knowledge and experience. With 76 of the 77 respondents saying that they use their own knowledge

(see Table 21), it is apparent that a writer must know the field quite well if he is going to be successful.

TABLE 21
SOURCES OF MATERIAL USED BY THE OUTDOOR WRITER

Source	Number Using This Source	Percentage*
Personal Experience	76	98.70
Wildlife Management Authorities	54	70.13
National Conservation Organizations	50	64.94
Governmental Organizations	48	62.34
National Conservation Magazines	43	55.84
Experienced Outdoorsmen	44	57.14
National Scientific Publications	34	44.16
National Outdoor Magazines	28	36.36
State Outdoor Magazines	25	32.47
Newspapers	25	32.47
Research	16	20.78
Radio and TV	11	14.29
Personal Contacts with Bait Shop and Other Supplies Salesmen	9	11.69
Attends Various Meetings	5	6.49

*The total number of respondents to this question was 75 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

The majority of the writers use information from national conservation magazines, wildlife management authorities, experienced outdoorsmen, governmental organizations and national conservation organizations. This demonstrates that the writers seek the advice of specialists in dealing with many of their outdoor topics.

Role of the Outdoor Writer in Bridging the Communications
Gap Between Sportsmen and Anti-hunters

This question was included to get some idea of what the outdoor writers feel their role should be. To do an adequate study of their role, or to determine what their role should be, many more questions than this one would have to be asked. Still, this question gives some insight into what the writers feel they should be doing.

Sixty-seven of the 73 respondents said they believe that it is the outdoor writer's duty to try to educate both the hunter and the non-hunter on the issue of hunters and anti-hunting sentiment.

The most typical comment of those writers who feel that the outdoor writers do have a role in bridging the communications gap was "Who else can, or will, do it if the outdoor writer doesn't?" They said that by explaining the hunter's role in wildlife management and by showing how the hunter has actually paid for much of the wildlife we have today, much of the anti-hunting sentiment that is present could be diminished.

Only six of the 73 writers said that it is not within the outdoor writer's realm to try to bridge this gap. Their reasoning in this question is best expressed by their answers: "No," "It's futile," "How can you reach them?" "Possibly, if they wish to assume such a role; personally, I make little effort in this direction except to acquaint all who'll read my column with hunting facts, stories and information."

The comments of the other two writers showed different reasoning. One of the writers said that the only reason those with anti-hunting sentiment would read an outdoor writer's story would be to criticize it. The other writer said, "Generally, no. I think that outdoor writers' limited time and in some cases limited talents, should be devoted to those people who are interested in hunting, the outdoors in general, and to promoting sound conservation ideas."

Reasons for Development of Anti-hunting Sentiment

The terms commonly used by outdoor writers to describe anti-hunting sentiment were "ignorance" and "misunderstanding." Ignorance or misunderstanding of what facts was not explained, but in many cases the writers pointed out that the anti-hunting people do not realize that it is the hunter who actually pays "for the birds that the little old ladies in sneakers watch." Others said that the ignorant are mostly city people who don't hunt or fish and, therefore, cannot see why others want to do these things.

Some of the other reasons cited were "overhunting near populated areas," and "poor sportsmanship on the part of hunters" (see Table 22). Nature lovers also drew fire, because, as one writer said, "they hate all killing and cannot, or will not, look objectively at the situation."

Even the outdoor writers themselves were not exonerated as seven of the respondents, nearly 11 per cent, said that outdoor writers' stories about shooting animals several times

to bring them down fostered more anti-hunting sentiment than anything else. Four writers said biased news media cause anti-hunting feeling to develop because they do not print the hunters' side of the issue.

TABLE 22
REASONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-HUNTING SENTIMENT

Reason Cited	Number Citing Reason	Percentage*
Ignorance	23	35.94
Misunderstanding	30	46.88
Overhunting Near Populated Areas	3	4.69
Poor Sportsmanship	9	14.06
Nature Lovers	19	29.69
Outdoor Writers	7	10.94
A Biased Press	4	6.25

*The total number of respondents to this question was 64 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

Benefit of a College Education in Journalism
and Wildlife Management

More than three-fourths of the writers agreed that a college education in journalism and wildlife management would be of value to the outdoor writer. Sixty of the 77 respondents said it would be of value although most seemed to think the education in wildlife management would be of more benefit than an education in journalism.

Another 14 of the writers said that such an education might be of benefit, but most of these expressed a belief that

writing cannot be taught. Only three of the 77 writers said that such an education would be of no value.

A comparison of the answers to this question with the level of education of the writers showed no apparent relationship between those who have no higher education and those who don't think it is necessary. In fact, many of those who had no higher education said that this has placed a severe burden on their writing because it necessitates additional research for each article written. The most frequent comment of these writers follows: "The more education the better, especially in these two fields."

Special Qualifications Needed by the Outdoor Writer

Love conquers all, according to the outdoor writers, as they said that a love of the outdoors is one of the most important traits that an outdoor writer can have. It was sur assed as the most desirable quality only by good general journalistic ability. In most cases, the writers said good writing ability was the most important journalistic talent, but they also stressed such desirable journalistic qualities as objectivity and a desire to get all of the facts and cover all facets of a story. Two other journalism-related assets, persistence and a sense of inquiry, also were mentioned but these are totalled separately (see Table 23). The only other quality to gain considerable mention was a knowledge of the outdoors and of wildlife conservation and management.

TABLE 23
 QUALITIES NEEDED BY THE OUTDOOR WRITERS

Quality	Number Citing It As Necessary	Percentage*
Journalistic Talent	34	46.57
Persistence	15	20.55
Love of the Outdoors	31	42.47
Sense of Inquiry	11	15.07
Knowledge of Wildlife Management	16	21.92

*The total number of respondents to this question was 73 and all percentages were calculated using this figure.

Do Outdoor Writers Have the Desirable Qualities?

This question is a difficult one to evaluate because writers listed different qualities and then judged whether the writers have the particular quality suggested.

Only three of the 68 respondents who listed specific desirable qualities said they thought all outdoor writers have them, but another 33 said that most of the writers have them (see Table 24). However, this leaves 15 of the writers who say that only the good writers have these qualities and 17 who say that most of the writers do not have the desirable qualities mentioned.

The writers who say that only the good ones have the desirable qualities may believe that most of the writers are either good or bad, so it is difficult to judge how many of the writers they believe have the selected qualities.

A comparison of the writers who answered that most of their fellows have these desirable qualities to those who answered the opposite shows no apparent reason for their differences in belief.

TABLE 24

NUMBER OF WRITERS WHO THINK THEIR PEERS HAVE THE QUALITIES NEEDED TO DO A GOOD JOB IN OUTDOOR WRITING

Number of Writers Possessing Desired Qualities	Number Who Believe Peers Have Desired Qualities	Percentage
All Have Them	3	4.41
Most Have Them	33	48.53
Only Good Ones Have Them	15	22.06
Most Don't Have Them	17	25.00
Total	68	Total 100.00

ARE OUTDOOR WRITERS SATISFIED WITH THEIR PAY?

Opinions varied as to whether or not outdoor writers are paid satisfactorily for their work. Who is paid as much as he would like? Thirty of the 72 respondents said outdoor writers are not paid sufficiently (see Table 25). Ten more writers said that only the big name writers are paid a satisfactory amount for their work.

Those who said the pay is satisfactory often said so with stipulations. Only seven of the writers flatly stated that the outdoor writer is paid sufficiently. Another five said that they are paid well enough when other benefits are considered and six said they receive satisfactory salaries compared to the poor pay which all journalists receive. Four said that the pay

is generally poor but that this is only just, as the quality of outdoor writing is generally poor.

Three writers said that magazine writers receive adequate pay for their but that newspaper writers receive inadequate remuneration.

TABLE 25

DO OUTDOOR WRITERS BELIEVE THEY ARE PAID SUFFICIENTLY?

Belief Expressed	Number Expressing This Opinion	Percentage
Outdoor Writers Not Paid Sufficiently	30	40.00
Big Names Only Paid Enough	10	13.33
Writers Not Paid Enough Paid Enough Compared to Other Journalism Jobs	7	9.33
Paid Enough Considering Other Benefits Available	7	9.33
Pay Equal to Low Quality of Writing	5	6.67
Magazine Pay Is Satisfactory but Newspaper Pay Is Not	4	5.33
No Opinion	3	4.00
	<u>10</u>	<u>13.33</u>
Total	75	Total 100.00

How the Outdoor Writers Would Improve Their Field

Areas in which the outdoor writers feel improvements are needed are as varied as the many jobs which the outdoor writers have.

Twenty-nine of the 86 outdoor writers who returned questionnaires did not answer the final question or answered it but said they see no areas in the outdoor writing field that need improvement.

The answers of the 59 writers who see a need for improvement fell into several general categories. The four main areas cited were a need for more space, a need for more professionalism among the writers, a need for more biological education, and a need for more restrictive regulations before a person could qualify as an outdoor writer.

The Need for More Space

Twenty of the writers said the biggest problem facing the outdoor writer is a lack of space and time in newspapers and the broadcasting media. Most writers said this is a problem because the management of the media do not recognize the value of outdoor writing and that they emphasize football, basketball and other spectator sports excessively.

Most of these writers said that the difficulty lies in educating management. Some of this problem apparently results because of poor communication between management and the outdoor writers, but none of the writers could offer concrete ideas on how this communication could be bettered. Some suggested that the readers should write the editors and ask them for increased coverage of outdoor subjects. Other writers said that perhaps the writers could improve their situation by merely asking for increased coverage.

One writer said that his situation had gradually improved as his boss began to see the demand for outdoor writing and that he now receives overtime pay for his outdoor writing time.

Two writers said that the biggest problem is the need for cooperation on the part of the boss. Many times, these writers said, they have to write what the boss wants and are, therefore, hindered from covering the subjects that need covering the most.

Poor payment and insufficient space and time seem to have a direct correlation as the two were often mentioned by the same people. Apparently, those editors who feel no great need for outdoor coverage show their feelings by providing the outdoor writer with little time and space.

The Need for Professionalism

Fourteen of the writers feel that the outdoor writing field could be upgraded by making the writers more professional.

The criticism of one of them is a good summation of the comments of several: "Better pay would upgrade the whole field. We could do without some of the 'Gee Whiz' type articles and a lot of the exaggeration that goes with them. Certain magazines foster this fictionalization and some downright falsification. I've run into this in talking to people about articles; they feel writers are sometimes not sincere or honest--if this is so, it is mostly because of pressure put on them by editors."

Exaggeration drew fire from another writer as he said that sportsmen who make trips after reading a story about an area are often disappointed after going there. This happens, he said, because the story they read was "blown up" just to make good reading.

Columns which "tell who caught six bream, four mackerel, etc." were criticized because they tell only about statistical outputs and not about people and their experiences.

Some of the writers would urge their peers to get all of the facts before they begin writing. Another factor that one of these writers complained about is the national practice of "writers fleecing goods manufacturers for free samples: booze, tackle, clothing, and tents." He added that it is a bad trend and that it makes him feel guilty--"even at conventions when the prizes are donated from the advertising budget." Another writer was more succinct in voicing his remedy for curbing unprofessional trends. "Clear out all the sponges and deadbeats from outdoor writing," he said.

Better training of writers in journalism would be an asset, one of the writers said, and another suggested that writing clinics be held at the state level for outdoor writers.

The Need for Biological Training

The 12 writers who expressed a belief that more knowledge of conservation, wildlife management and ecology are needed did not say that this is the only thing wrong with outdoor writing as many of them expressed beliefs previously mentioned.

One of the writers said he sees little hope for his peers until they recognize that what they deal with is the total environment, including social and economic aspects of life.

A writer for the Department of the Interior said that he would like to see the sport of the catch or kill tied more

closely to the biological and management reasons for the hunters' success or failure. "When the public is made to realize that there are reasons for good outdoor recreation, they become more interested than merely hearing about how many fish and game animals the hunters take home with them," he said.

A Department of Agriculture writer said the outdoor writing field would be improved if more of the writers working in it would develop the facts they use on the basis of the scientific findings of the research leaders in the biological disciplines they write about. "You must know that many writers become preoccupied with controversial subjects and use anything any uninformed source might say to keep the controversy going the way they think it should," he said.

Campaigning for conservation rather than being satisfied to merely report what is taking place in the field of conservation also was recommended by some of the writers. Closer ties with state and federal governmental agencies also were favored.

The Need for Control Over the Writers

Seven of the writers indicated they think the OWAA or some other organization should establish a strong code of ethics for outdoor writers and that the outdoor writers should be forced to abide by them. They feel that it is "the phoney or the amateur" who handicaps the person who must make his living by writing.

"This trend is very evident on some junkets for boating, fishing, shooting, etc. Many times more than 50 per cent of those on the trips are so-called free-lancers who will never write anything they can sell about the very trips they are 'free-loading' on," a Midwest newspaper writer said.

Most of the writers who wanted tighter reins on the "phonies and amateurs" gave no definite proposals on how this control could be achieved although three of them said that this might fall under the auspices of the OWAA.

General Criticisms

A variety of miscellaneous areas which need improvement were cited which did not fall into any of the previously discussed categories.

One writer said that the total educational level of the outdoor writers should be raised and that the writers should have closer relationships with such groups as soil conservation districts, earth science clubs and water supply technicians.

To upgrade the writers' educational level, another writer suggested that a few more top universities teach outdoor journalism or at least offer some broad outdoor type courses.

While some writers said there are already too many in the outdoor writing field, one writer said that the rapidly expanding outdoor writing field needs more people who want to write.

Magazine editors and book publishers were criticized. Magazine editors, one free-lancer said, could help the writers if they would return rejected manuscripts more promptly so that the writers could submit them to other markets. Book publishers were criticized because of the low pay which new book authors are forced to accept if they want their books published.

A Great Lakes newspaperman said his biggest burden, and one which could stand improvement, is the great duplication of mail which he receives. "My biggest headache is trying to find time to read all of the interesting material--including releases--to fairly judge and select what to use. The mailers don't eliminate names--even on request," he said.

Several of the writers said there should be better rapport between conservationists and outdoor writers. According to a Midwest newspaperman, this is not always as easy as it sounds.

State conservationists should be stopped when they will not allow their field men to talk or be quoted, he said. "Some local park officers and game officers can lead us to problems, but they get fired, suspended, etc., if any news ideas are used that didn't come from state headquarters," he said.

The final complaint probably sounds funny, but it is obviously not funny to the woman who writes that she would personally like to see women outdoor writers accepted a little better than they now are.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of the second questionnaire was to learn what opinions North America's conservationists have of the continent's outdoor writers (see Appendix II for a copy of the questionnaire).

Their opinions are thought to be important because the outdoor writers indirectly, and sometimes directly, present the work of the conservationists to the public and thus have some effect on how this information will be accepted.

A list of 60 conservationists was chosen from the 1968 Conservation Directory¹. The list was selected randomly by choosing approximately every 100th member listed. The first one was selected by drawing a lot from a container which held lots numbered from one to 100. From then on, every 100th person was taken. The list was selected by measuring with a ruler rather than by actually counting to 100 each time so that it may not always be every 100th member.

There are approximately 6,000 conservationists listed and the 60 chosen constitute about one per cent of the total. This is a small sample, but it is considered adequate to establish thought trends among the conservationists.

Most of the conservationists are workers who devote 100 per cent of their working time to conservation but a few of

¹National Wildlife Federation, Conservation Directory 1968, (Washington, D. C.: National Wildlife Federation, 1968) pp. 1-149.

them, such as the members of the United States Department of Agriculture contacted, work in conservation only when it happens to fall into their realm of authority. Some of the conservationists are privately employed while others are employed by the government. Likewise, some deal in specialized fields such as fish, forests and holly while the work of others covers a broad spectrum.

Forty of the 60 conservationists returned completed questionnaires for a return percentage of 66.7 per cent. Six more eventually returned completed questionnaires, but these arrived too late to be used. They did not appreciably differ in data from the ones used in the results. This is considered to be an outstanding rate of response because many of the letters had to be forwarded to conservationists whose home addresses were not listed in the directory. Some of the conservationists contacted are the members of various conservation commissions and they spend little time at the commission headquarters, except to attend meetings.

The second questionnaire was printed in red ink because that was the only color available. Whether this had any effect on the recipients is unknown.

Faults of the Questionnaire

The only major fault in the questionnaire is that the third question is a compound question which asks for a yes or no answer. This made interpretation of the answers difficult because a specific response could refer to either

the first or second phrase of the question. Most of the respondents noted this error and then responded to only a selected part of the question.

Some of the conservationists remarked that the questionnaire was full of loaded questions and broad generalizations. The loaded questions weren't meant to bias the results but were included because they were the questions most frequently asked by the writers themselves when they responded to the first questionnaire. The broad generalizations were present because it is important to find out about outdoor writers as a group. Everyone would probably agree that there is some good and some bad in everything. What was desired was the overall impression that conservationists have of outdoor writers.

Results of the Second Questionnaire

The average age of the 40 respondents is slightly more than 51 years, and these conservationists have been in the conservation field for an average of 23 years.

This is of no great significance except to exemplify that the conservationists who answered are a mature group who have a great deal of experience in the conservation field.

Conservationists as an Outdoor Writer's Audience

Thirty of the 40 respondents said they regularly read a newspaper outdoor column or page. A majority of them also read a national outdoor magazine and watch a national television outdoor program and more than 43 per cent of them view

a local television outdoor program or listen to a local radio outdoor show (see Table 26).

Their attention to these media and their tenure in the conservation field certainly qualifies their opinions of the outdoor writers and broadcasters.

TABLE 26
VIEWING AND READING HABITS OF THE CONSERVATIONISTS

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Newspaper Outdoor Column or Page		
Regularly Reads	30	75.00
Doesn't Read	9	22.50
Occasionally Reads	1	2.50
Total	40	Total 100.00
National Outdoor Magazine		
Regularly Reads	20	54.05
Doesn't Read	16	43.24
Occasionally Reads	1	2.71
Total	37	Total 100.00
Local Radio or TV Outdoor Show		
Regularly Views or Hears	16	43.24
Doesn't View or Hear	17	45.95
Occasionally Views or Hears	4	10.81
Total	37	Total 100.00
National Television Outdoor Show		
Regularly Views	22	59.46
Doesn't View	11	29.73
Occasionally Views	4	10.81
Total	37	Total 100.00

Role of the Outdoor Writers as Conservationists See It

Because this question is a compound one which asks a simple yes or no answer some of the conservationists were perplexed as to how to answer it. This also made interpretation of the answers difficult.

Since the expected answer is so obvious, it was decided a "Yes" answer would be interpreted to mean that the outdoor writers should attempt to educate their readers in sound conservation practices.

All forty of the respondents answered "Yes" to the question. This is interpreted to mean that all of the conservationists feel that the public should be educated in sound conservation practices by the outdoor writers. Two writers divided the question and had two answers. They answered "Yes" to the first phrase of the question and "No" to the second phrase which asked if the writers should be content to entertain the public and inform them of recreational opportunities.

Some of the conservationists' comments demonstrated their feelings about this subject. "The development of sound conservation concepts should go hand-in-hand with presentation of recreational opportunities. The urban population must become aware of conservation needs if we ever expect proper use and wise consumption of them," one respondent said.

Two conservationists said that the outdoor writers should deal with conservation but that it is best if this information is provided by trained conservationists for the outdoor writers. Two others said they should write about conservation but first "they will have to learn some sound conservation principles."

Perhaps the most complete answer as to what the outdoor writer's role should be came from a Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife employee who wrote: "Outdoor writers have a responsibility to inform their readers of new findings and important principles which should govern the management of

natural resources. They should not be content to merely entertain the reader; however, they cannot preach and must avoid language which has this connotation."

Placement of Outdoor Writing Emphasis

Sixteen of the 36 conservationists said that outdoor writers place sufficient emphasis on conservation of the outdoors. However, 24 of the writers, 63.16 per cent, said that not enough emphasis is placed on conservation concepts. Two of the respondents answered that it varies from writer to writer and that some of the writers place enough emphasis on conservation while others do not.

Many of the respondents that answered either "yes" or "no" qualified their answers with such words as "some" and "most." One writer said that the "good ones, of which there are all too few, do."

Understanding of Wildlife Management and Ecological Concepts

The conservationists were divided on the question of whether the outdoor writers understand wildlife management and ecological concepts well enough to write about them. Fourteen of the respondents said that the writers understand these ideas well enough to write about them. Thirteen of the 40 respondents said that the writers lack sufficient knowledge of these ideas to write about them and thirteen said that some of the writers have the necessary understanding of these concepts but others do not.

Several respondents commented that the writers know about hunting and certain game species but that the real concepts of ecology escape them. Others commented that the writers are too often preservationists who want to save everything rather than use it and that they lack understanding of some of the complex issues such as water pollution.

Comments on Free Lodging and Free Products

Outdoor writers are frequently given free products or lodging with the understanding that they will write or do a broadcast which tells about the facilities or products. Under the rules of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, members must write the truth about these products and they can accept no products with the understanding that they will write a favorable report.

This practice frequently brings the writers a good deal of criticism; some of it comes from the writers themselves. Other writers point out, however, that a writer could not afford to go to Canada or some place even farther away if he were not assured of free lodging. Likewise, these writers point out that the writers could not afford all of the new products if they had to buy them so that it is a good way for the sponsors to receive publicity if they have a product which warrants the writer giving it favorable publicity.

Of course, not all outdoor writers are members of the OWAA and are, therefore, not subject to its restrictions.

That all of the conservationists understand this complex situation is doubtful and, for that reason, one of the choices offered as an answer was "Don't Know."

Fourteen of the 39 respondents said that this policy is harmful to the outdoor writing field. One conservationist said that even though the policy might have no effect on the writing it is harmful because some people believe that it does. Another respondent said that the policy prejudices the writers as educators.

The most common opinion expressed by those answering that the policy is harmful is that it is bad only in cases where the outdoor writer feels an obligation to endorse the products. Most agreed that no reputable writer would ever go to the point of actually endorsing a product.

Thirteen of the 39 respondents answered that this policy does not adversely affect the outdoor writing field. Most of those that commented said the character of the outdoor writers prevented this from being an influencing factor.

Fourteen conservationists said that they didn't know enough about the policy to comment.

Many of them said they did not like to answer "yes" or "no" to the question and that, generally, it depends on the writer whether the policy will affect his writing.

Misconceptions Fostered by the Outdoor Writers

Outdoor writers are sometimes accused of fostering misconceptions about the outdoors. Some of these charges

were made by the writers themselves in the responses to the first questionnaire.

One-third of the 30 conservationists who answered this question said that outdoor writers do foster misconceptions about the outdoors. One conservationist said that the writers too often picture many animals as dangerous and say that these animals will attack man. He said that some writers seem to feel that animals such as coons, woodchucks, crows, skunks, bobcats and bears have no place in the scheme of nature and thus should be killed. A lady commenting on this subject said that outdoor writers frequently distort articles on bounties; thus, they create misconceptions.

An information and education administrator for a private company in the Northwest writes: "It is usually the conservation writers (Mike Frome, Richard Starnes, Ted Trueblood, et. al.) who mislead and stir controversy through ignorance or by design on broad conservation issues--National parks, public land reform, etc."

Most of the conservationists who said misconceptions are fostered said that it happens because the writers are human and have pet peeves just like everyone else. Some of them said that too much emphasis is placed on game and not enough on where the game fits into the total environment. Others said that insufficient emphasis is given to the natural environment and that too much emphasis is placed on artificial propagation of fish and animals.

Fourteen of the respondents said that they were not aware of any misconceptions fostered by outdoor writers. Six more said that some of the writers have pet peeves and therefore foster misconceptions but that usually the writers do a good job.

Agreement with Certain Beliefs of the Outdoor Writers

One of the beliefs expressed by the outdoor writers when they answered the first questionnaire is that explaining the hunters' role in providing game would reduce anti-hunting sentiment. Some of the writers said that it is the hunter who is responsible for the game which he is accused of destroying.

Had question Number 8 asked whether hunters are responsible for some wildlife production, the answer probably would have been "yes" in every case. Asking whether they produce all game biased the question because it is only in a rare instance when any one group produces all of something.

Despite the expected unanimous response that hunters do not produce all game, 12 of the 39 respondents said that it is the hunter indeed who is responsible for all of the game that is present today. These people failed to comment on the question so their feelings on this subject could not be included.

The other 27 conservationists, 69 per cent, said that this tenet is unsound and that while hunters might provide some game they certainly are not responsible for all game.

Most conservationists agreed that no one organization produces all of the game and that while the hunters provide some game, state and federal conservation agencies, private societies and

private land owners do just as much to make game available. One conservationist said that licenses and excise taxes have no effect on wildlife. "Most of the hunter's money would go to put and take stocking and would benefit nothing else if the hunters had their way," he said.

Sometimes the sportsmen destroy more than they produce according to one conservationist. "Sportsmen at times are very destructive. Equipment left in the forest is often shot full of holes as are road signs and cabin windows. Hunters use roads they are not allowed to. They shoot along forest roads from their cars, etc., etc., etc.," one conservationist charged.

A Canadian biologist wrote, "In Canada, it is usually the Provincial Government which is charged with the responsibility of Game and Wildlife Administration. The fees collected from sportsmen do not begin to pay for their services."

Sometimes help comes from unexpected sources as a U.S.D.A. official explained, "No!! For example, the eradication of the screw-worm fly in Texas as a result of U.S.D.A. research, engendered a tremendous increase in deer population in Texas."

"The national parks and forests were set up with little or no help from the sportsmen, mainly being fostered by a few far-sighted individuals such as T. Roosevelt and G. Pinchot," another conservationist said. A similar view was expressed by a west coast park official: "If it were not for the pressure exerted by the conservationist (and preservationist), the so-called sportsmen would have long since exterminated most of

the so-called game animals. Our wildlife exists today not for pleasure of the sportsmen's organizations, but because of the extremely hard work of the preservation forces."

Is Outdoor Writing Satisfactory by
the Conservationists' Standards?

Eighteen of the 39 respondents have never worked with an outdoor writer and thus have no first-hand experience. The other 21 have had stories about their work printed or broadcasted by outdoor writers and results were generally pleasing to the conservationists. Fifteen of the conservationists said that the outdoor writers' work was completely satisfactory and four others said the work was satisfactory in most respects. Only two conservationists said that the writers produced stories which were unsatisfactory.

Those who said the work was partially or totally unsatisfactory gave various reasons for their dissatisfaction. One said there were some gross enlargements of facts and another said there was gross overdramatization of the facts.

A biologist said that he was satisfied to a point but, he added, there is too much of a tendency for outdoor writers to express opinions of their own. This, he said, is possibly done with the view of improving the human interest aspects of the stories. "Reasonably satisfactory," was how another biologist expressed his view of the outdoor writers' work as he said that most outdoor writers express points which biologists do not consider to be the most significant.

The final complaint is directly opposite that expressed by the majority of the conservationists who had complaints. The complaint is that outdoor writers, "too often listen to the P.H.D. and his scientific proof or lack of same rather than the facts of life and common sense."

What Conservationists Feel Is Wrong with Outdoor Writing and How They Would Improve It

Only a minority of the conservationists questioned said they see nothing wrong with outdoor writing the way it is. An information and education chief for a state agency wrote that outdoor writers realize the importance of conservation in view of the population explosion and new construction and as a result emphasize the conservation of resources. Another conservationist wrote that outdoor writers have contributed a good deal over the years and are continuing to do so. A newspaperman who dabbles in conservation wrote that "the American sportsman . . . is thoroughly capable of separating the bogus from the genuine among writers in the outdoor field."

A federal government employee wrote that the outdoor writing field is in transition, and is becoming more responsible with less emphasis on who caught what, when and where and more emphasis on resource problems.

Not all of the conservationists were so kind. A frequent comment was that outdoor writers are more interested in selling copy than they are in reporting matters as they really

are. One conservationist defended this policy. "I can't really blame the outdoor writers," he said, "because the general public would read a romantic story with blood and danger and probably wouldn't read the true story of the field."

Some of the conservationists said that the outdoor writers lack sufficient understanding of ecology and that they frequently show a need for deep research in writing on conservation. The best writers, a Bureau of Fish and Wildlife Service employee wrote, are those who have had some training in the fish, wildlife and conservation fields. The general sports writer and the uninformed individual make poor outdoor writers and should not be allowed to publish copy, he said.

The final noteworthy criticism is that the outdoor writers do not publish sufficient information on the subject of law enforcement.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD QUESTIONNAIRE

Ninety questionnaires were sent to radio, television and newspaper personnel. The 50 questionnaires which were sent to the newspapers were addressed to the managing editors and the 40 which went to the TV and radio stations were addressed to the station managers (see Appendix III for a copy of the questionnaire).

The stations and newspapers were randomly chosen using the same method as was used for the first two questionnaires. This list also was compiled from the 1967 edition of the National Outdoor Writers Directory.

From the 90 questionnaires mailed, completed questionnaires, which accounted for 27 outdoor writers, were returned by 22 institutions. Twenty-one more stations and newspapers replied that they do not have an outdoor writer. This is difficult to understand because some of the papers which said they have no outdoor writer are the same papers listed as markets by the outdoor writers in the directory. Sometimes this resulted because the writers did not list their newspaper, radio or television markets in the directory. In these cases, one of the writer's hometown papers or stations, depending on what he listed as his skills, was selected at random for the sample. Random selections of newspapers were made from the 1968 Ayer's Guide and selections of radio and television stations were made from the 1965 Standard Rate and Data Service guides to radio and television stations.

It was hoped that this questionnaire would provide some valuable information in the areas of salaries and work relationships of the outdoor writers in these three media. The value of the information gained was somewhat diminished by the poor percentage of returned, completed questionnaires.

Only radio, TV and newspaper personnel were contacted because these media are where the bulk of local outdoor material is produced. For this reason, it was considered the most likely place for an outdoor writer to begin a career.

The great diversity of the free-lancers and the variance in the types of magazines produced in North America would require the sending of hundreds of questionnaires to gain significant data. The free-lancers and their markets show a great deal of variance. For this reason, a study of one year's work might be meaningless.

In the first questionnaire, the executives of the national magazines who were selected in the random sample demonstrated a great reluctance to answering questionnaires so it seemed useless to query them about the salaries of themselves and their employees. In the first questionnaire, they either said they were too busy and returned blank questionnaires or returned nothing.

Coupled with the factors previously discussed is the fact that most people seem reluctant to answer questions regarding their salary. Because of this, only workers who had immediate superiors who could be expected to answer the questions were contacted.

Faults of the Third Questionnaire

If there was a fault in the questionnaire it is that it did not give an adequate definition of "outdoor writer." Two people wrote letters explaining that they did not know what an outdoor writer was. One of these did not understand how it is possible to have an outdoor writer who does not write.

A letter was sent to each of these people explaining in depth what an outdoor writer is and does. One of the people, a woman working for an Hawaiian radio station, replied that most modern radio stations no longer have block programming and thus cannot afford to keep a specialized employee for something such as outdoor writing.

She said that subjects which might be done by an outdoor writer are broadcasted in the form of announcements and vignettes. She said block coverage of something such as outdoor writing would be a giant step backward in programming and would be of value only in a rural community where a station is all things to all people.

Some of the respondents said that their organizations contract for outdoor columns or shows but that they don't use outdoor writers. Apparently, these people did not understand what information was desired.

Results of the Third Questionnaire

The 22 organizations which responded have had outdoor writers for an average of 19.5 years. Two years is the shortest time that any of them have had an outdoor writer and 50 years

is the longest. The five radio and television stations which reported have had outdoor writers for about 13 years.

The writers have held their present positions for an average of 7.25 years; one-half year is the least time that anyone has been in the present job and 25 years is the longest stretch.

The writers discussed have an average tenure of 12.56 years in the outdoor field. In eight of the organizations, the present outdoor writer is the only writer who has been employed by the organization. In four of these cases the present outdoor writer actually began his career as the first outdoor writer in the organization.

Type of Employment

Twenty-one of the 27 writers discussed hold regular jobs; two of them are syndicators who write for several newspapers; three of them are free-lancers who work for only one newspaper, and one of them is a worker who does a regular radio show once weekly but who has a regular outside job.

Fourteen of the writers produce only one story, column or broadcast each week. One produces three days a week and another four days a week. Three produce five days a week and two more six days a week. One produces every day of the week. The average is about three appearances per week for each person.

Space and Time Alloted to Outdoor Material

Only four of the newspaper workers actually do a full outdoor page each week. Most of them write only weekly or fill in a partial page.

The two writers who specialize in radio have one 15-minute show each week. Two other broadcasters do both radio and television and in both cases it is for the same organization. One of these does two, five-minute radio shows seven days a week and one five-minute television show five days a week. The other does five 15-minute radio shows each week and one half-hour television show weekly. The fifth broadcaster is a television sports director who covers the outdoors in his sportscasts.

Why Outdoor Writers Were Employed

The most frequent reason cited for employment of outdoor writers is because the management saw a need for outdoor coverage. This reason was offered by 17 of the 22 managers who answered the questionnaire. In three cases the writer approached the organization and convinced the management that they needed an outdoor writer and in two cases public opinion demanded outdoor coverage to such an extent that an outdoor writer was located.

Qualities Desired in an Outdoor Writer

The qualities which management finds desirable in an outdoor writer are the same qualities listed as desirable by the outdoor writers when they answered the first questionnaire. A knowledge and love of the outdoors and journalistic ability were cited by most of the managers as the traits needed by the outdoor writer who hopes to be successful.

The managers said the outdoor writer should be a participant in the outdoors and that he should have wide contacts and the ability to get along with people.

A managing editor with three outdoor writers said the outdoor writer must have the same qualities as any good reporter plus a knowledge and interest in the outdoors. This editor reported that his newspaper has two writers devoted to hunting and fishing activities and a third who handles boating and skiing news. A fourth writer deals with conservation and natural resources but no further information was provided on this writer. Apparently the paper does not consider him an outdoor writer.

The only other needed asset mentioned by the managers is photography. The ability to use a camera is needed if the outdoor writer is going to do a good job, a newspaperman said.

Outdoor Writers' Salaries

The question which asked about the outdoor writers' annual salaries was considered to be the most important one on the questionnaire because of the limited knowledge available in this area.

Only one regular employee makes less than \$6,000 a year; this person is in the \$1 to \$1,999 bracket. Apparently the person who completed the questionnaire listed only what the writer makes from his outdoor work on the paper. This writer devotes less than 25 per cent of his working time on the paper to outdoor writing and there is no way to estimate his total annual salary.

One regular employee receives from \$6,000 to \$6,999 a year and he devotes less than 25 per cent of his time to outdoor writing. Four writers earn from \$7,000 to \$7,999 a year for their efforts and three of them do other work besides outdoor writing (see Table 27).

Only one writer falls into the \$8,000 to \$8,999 bracket and he earns all of his annual salary from producing outdoor material for a newspaper three times a week.

Six of the writers are in the \$9,000 to \$10,999 annual salary grouping. Two of these earn their total annual salaries from outdoor writing and a third earns his total salary as a sports director. Three earn from \$11,000 to \$12,999 a year and two of these are on the same Great Lakes daily. Only the radio and television personality with five 15-minute radio shows and a 30-minute television show each week is in the \$13,000 to \$15,000 category.

When the midpoint of each level is taken and all of the salaries are averaged, the figure obtained is about \$9,125 a year.

Among the free-lancers, the most common pay rate for a contributed column is from \$1 to \$9 a week with four of the six free-lancers receiving this amount. It is probably safe to guess that they are paid \$5 a column. One of these contributors, a writer for a Northeastern daily, has been free-lancing to the same paper for 25 years.

The weekly salary of a radio free-lancer who produces one 15-minute show each week is from \$15 to \$19 a week. Another free-lancer is paid from \$20 to \$24 a week for his efforts for

one newspaper. The highest paid column producer is a regular employee who is paid \$50 a column. No information was given about any other work.

TABLE 27

WORK AND SALARIES OF THE REGULARLY EMPLOYED OUTDOOR WRITERS

Annual Salary	Does He Do Other Work	Percentage of Time Devoted to Outdoor Writing
Not Given	Yes	Less Than 25
Not Given	Yes	Less Than 25
Not Given	Yes	Less Than 25
\$1 to \$1,999	Yes	Less Than 25
\$6,000 to \$6,999	Yes	Less Than 25
\$7,000 to \$7,999	Yes	Less Than 25
\$7,000 to \$7,999	No	All
\$7,000 to \$7,999	Yes	50 to 74
\$7,000 to \$7,999	Yes	75 to 100
\$8,000 to \$8,999	No	All
\$9,000 to \$10,999	Yes	50 to 74
\$9,000 to \$10,999	No	All
\$9,000 to \$10,999	Yes	Less Than 25
\$9,000 to \$10,999	No	All
\$9,000 to \$10,999	Yes	25 to 49
\$9,000 to \$10,999	Yes	All to Sports
\$11,000 to \$12,999	Yes	Less Than 25
\$11,000 to \$12,999	Yes	Less Than 25
\$11,000 to \$12,999	No	All
\$13,000 to \$15,000	No	All

Six of the managers said that the salary of the outdoor writers is higher than the average pay rate of the organization and 16 said that the outdoor writer's salary is on par with the salaries received by other staff members in similar jobs. Only one said that the salary received by the outdoor writer is below the average received by other workers on the staff.

Because 13 of the writers do other work in addition to outdoor writing, it is impossible to make any statements regarding the outdoor writer's pay when compared to that of the other staff members. Apparently there is no difference between the pay received by the outdoor writers and the other staff members. Of course, this high standard of pay could be due to their other jobs, and that is why it is difficult to generalize about the subject.

Certainly, \$1 to \$9 a column for a writer with 25 years experience on the same paper cannot be considered high pay. It would seem that a writer would have to make more than this each week just to break even.

Other Jobs Held by the Outdoor Writers

The other jobs which the outdoor writers hold are typically varied. The trend toward a great variance in jobs was shown in the first questionnaire which was sent to the outdoor writers.

For example, one of the outdoor writers produces a weekly farm page and two others on the same paper are an assistant editor and a telegraph editor.

The regular radio employee holds down a job as a staff announcer and three of the newspaper workers are general assignment reporters. One of the newspapermen is a sports writer; another is an editor, and a third is a publisher.

One of the writers on the Great Lakes daily mentioned earlier was sent to Vietnam for three months in 1967 to cover the war. "He was selected because of his exceptional writing and

reporting ability and his physical toughness," his managing editor said.

Ability of the Outdoor Writers

While question number 12 asked only about the relative ability of free-lancers to regular employees, 13 of the respondents compared the relative ability of their outdoor writer to the ability of the other employees. The concensus is that the outdoor writers are as good or better than the other staff members in the organization.

Only two writers were said to be below average in ability. One of these is a free-lancer and the other a regular employee.

Promotion of Outdoor Material

Twelve of the 17 newspaper editors said that their papers make special efforts to promote the outdoor section of the newspaper to advertisers. Some of the papers produce special boating and outdoor recreation sections in the spring while others make a special effort to promote the hunting season in the fall.

Some of the papers promote the outdoor section with house advertisements in other parts of the paper. A Southeastern daily produces tabloid issues during special seasons of the year.

Five newspapermen said that no effort was made to promote the outdoor section of the newspaper; one that said an effort had been made commented that his ad salesman have scoured the

countryside looking for advertising for the outdoor page but have had no measurable success.

With only five from the broadcasting media reporting, it is difficult--if not impossible--to draw conclusions. Three of these said they have had no problems finding sponsors for their outdoor programs. One of the two remaining stations said that they have experienced difficulties with sponsors which were never remedied, but no explanation of their problem was offered. The final station said that finding sponsors for outdoor programs has been difficult but that the problems have been solved through continued efforts by the station.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Characteristics of the Average Outdoor Writer

The questionnaire surveys showed that the average outdoor writer is just past middle age and that he's been in the field for 16 years. About one-half of the outdoor writers are free-lancers, and the other one-half are regular employees. Twenty per cent of the writers have both types of employment. The writers' most common skill is writing, but there is a three-out-of-four chance that a writer also does photography.

There's a fifty-fifty chance that the writer works for at least two media, and one-half of the time one of these media is a newspaper. In his work, he devotes three-fifths of his time to stories about recreation and the remainder to conservation. He earns only one-half of his salary from outdoor writing, but there's a good chance that his other jobs include work in either journalism or the outdoors.

If he has a limitation in his job, it is that he doesn't have enough time or that he doesn't get enough recognition from his employer. He usually has had some college, and in college he probably had some credits in journalism and/or wildlife management. Even if he couldn't go to college, he'll agree that a college education, especially in journalism and wildlife management, would be valuable.

He spends little of his time in the field gathering material for his stories, and he relies on his personal knowledge and experiences for much of the material which he presents.

The writer and his employer will agree that a love of the outdoors and journalistic ability are the most important qualities that a writer can have.

He's probably dissatisfied with his salary which ranges from \$6,000 to \$15,000 a year if he's in the radio, television or newspaper business. If he free-lances, his annual salary depends on his ability and energy. His salary, if he's a government employee, depends on the civil service level that he can fill.

His boss thinks that his work is as good as that of anyone else on the staff, and his salary is comparable to that of other staff members doing the same type of work.

Anti-hunting sentiment, he believes, develops because of misunderstanding and ignorance. It would be eliminated if all outdoor writers wrote articles which explain how the hunter has helped to save wildlife. Sometimes he will go as far as saying that the hunters are responsible for all game present today. But nearly two-thirds of the conservationists will disagree with him on this point.

Conservationists say the outdoor writer should educate his readers in sound conservation practices, but about two-thirds of them do not think he puts enough emphasis on this subject. One-third of the conservationists feel outdoor writers

need to know more about wildlife management and ecology and one-third also think the writers foster misconceptions about wildlife. Despite this, only a small minority of the conservationists who have had stories about their work published by outdoor writers were displeased with the final results.

The outdoor writer would like to see his field gain the same recognition that spectator sports have gained, and he feels that a lack of recognition is the reason for the poor coverage he receives in the various media.

Conclusions

The outdoor writers, as was demonstrated in the preceding section, do have common traits, but it is doubtful that an outdoor writer could be found who would have all of the traits discussed in that section.

Probably the most important finding of this study is that the outdoor writers are a very diverse group of individualists who display a variety of talents for several different media.

Because of their many skills and outlets, it is questionable whether they should all be included under the same name--that is "Outdoor Writers." Because of this factor, the public has many different ideas of what all outdoor writers do. In reality, the outdoor writers they are familiar with may be only one segment of all outdoor writers.

The findings indicate that there are certain traits which all outdoor writers or persons planning entrance into the field should have. The most important qualities, according to the

writers, are the ability to use a camera, a love and knowledge of the outdoors and good journalistic ability. The reasons are obvious, except for the need for photography.

The ability to use a camera is needed because the survey shows that the outdoor writer is a one-man show. He must have the ability to take pictures if they are needed because he cannot be assured that he will have assistants to do so.

The reasons for the media's complacency are not easy to understand. Some of the media seem to recognize outdoor writing as an important institution while others seem to view it as a poor cousin of spectator sports. The writers say that they would like to see the salary levels in the field raised to that of sports writers, but, according to the radio, television and newspaper executives, it already is.

The outdoor writers, on the average, earn only about one-half of their annual salaries from outdoor writing work. Apparently, outdoor writing is not a lucrative enough profession to allow most people to earn a satisfactory annual salary.

This demonstrates the outdoor writer's need for a broad general education which will allow him to work on other parts of the publication so that his annual salary will be at a satisfactory level. The complaints by some of the outdoor writers that the writer who is willing to work for little or nothing hurts outdoor writing may be valid. Those outdoor writers who like their field so well that they are willing to work for nothing probably do hurt outdoor writing. Usually these people have other jobs which provide a living. They can afford

to spend a good deal of time on a free-lance story which they will sell. Because they can afford to sell these stories at relatively low rates, it hurts the full-time writer. In some cases, the quality of these stories may be such as to give all outdoor writers a bad name. The same situation exists in newspapers. When a weekly column is available at \$5, why should a newspaper hire a full-time outdoor writer?

Findings indicate that the writers are a very opinionated group of people who are often dissatisfied with the work of their peers. Much of this dissatisfaction can be traced back to the great diversity among the writers. The outdoor writer for a national conservation magazine such as National Wildlife is an entirely different writer than the one who writes for Guns and Ammo or Field and Stream. One devotes almost all of his time to conservation, and the other writes about recreation. It is little wonder that each has his own opinions about what is good outdoor writing.

Some of the outdoor writers expressed criticism of the outdoor writers who write only about hunting and fishing. If this is not what the national magazines wanted, they would not print it; thus, it is probably the media who are to blame rather than the writers. Of course, the media only provide what they think the people want. The writers should strive to be objective, but the desire to eat--and thus write what they know will sell--is probably the determining factor in many articles.

The problems of the outdoor writers are not unique to their field. The workers in many fields receive what they feel are low salaries, and they are often forced to work in conditions which they consider unfavorable.

It appears that an education in journalism and wildlife management would be of considerable value for an outdoor writer, but not all outdoor writers think that writing can be taught, and not all believe that an emphasis of wildlife management is necessary.

Limitations in the Scope of the Study

The results of the three questionnaire studies, which constitute the bulk of this study, may be criticized because no attempt was made to determine whether the samples selected for the questionnaire mailings were of sufficient size to provide data which can be applied to all members of the three fields. In the case of the third questionnaire, this is extremely unlikely.

Because the expressed purpose of this study is to provide the person unfamiliar with outdoor writing with some easily understandable information, it was decided that filling the results with a large quantity of statistical proofs and probabilities would be more confusing than practical. Correlations could have been computed with each of the many factors discussed compared to every other factor, but this would probably have done little more than raise the confusion coefficient.

What value would have been gained by showing a relationship if the reasons for the relationship could not be ascertained? Ascertaining these reasons through follow-up letters would have been impossible because of the time and money that would be necessary to do an adequate job.

For these reasons, the results have been presented in the simplest and most concise manner possible.

It is not known how many of the outdoor writers in North America are represented by this study. Certainly not all of the outdoor writers in North America are in the OWAA. Cullimore (1968) suggests that about one-half of all outdoor writers in North America are members of the OWAA.¹

Suggestions for Future Study

Future study in this field should be limited to a specific area or to a specific group of outdoor writers. It would be easier to study only one segment of the outdoor writing field because of the great confusion created by dealing with so many different people at the same time. It would allow the researcher to use more comprehensive questionnaires than were used in this study.

Of interest would be a study to determine how many of the newspapers and radio and television stations in the United States or North America have outdoor coverage. A study of why the major radio and television networks and the wire services give such poor coverage of outdoor news would be interesting.

¹Personal Communication.

Finally, future studies should be aimed at contacting all outdoor writers, not just members of the OWAA. Perhaps the OWAA is not really representative of the outdoor writers of North America as everyone assumes it to be.

APPENDIX I

THE FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

412 N. 11th apt. 16
Manhattan, Kansas 66502
March 27, 1968

I NEED YOUR HELP

As a graduate student in journalism at Kansas State University, I am doing a survey of the outdoor communications field for my master's thesis.

The objective of this survey is to learn about outdoor writers, their problems, jobs, the type of material they print or broadcast and, finally, how they feel about certain current issues.

One of the methods used to gain pertinent information about outdoor communicators is this questionnaire. BUT, the only way for this questionnaire to be of benefit is for you to complete and return it. Because I am sending out only a limited number, I need a good return in order to obtain some usable data.

Please fill out the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope. Because many of the questions require only simple check marks, the entire process will take only a few minutes.

THANKS

Gary Madon

Please place a check mark in the appropriate space, or, if a written reply is requested, write as such as you believe necessary to fully answer the question.

1. Name _____ Age _____

2. Are you a free-lancer or a regular staff employee?

Free-lancer _____ Regular employee _____

What is your job title? _____

Employer's name _____

3. What are your areas of work?

Storywriting _____

Column writing _____

Photography:

Still _____ Motion picture _____

Art _____

Broadcasting _____

4. What percentage of your work is devoted to each media?

Newspapers _____

Magazines _____

Books _____

Radio _____

Television _____

Governmental work _____

Public relations _____

Other (please specify) _____

5. How frequently is your material printed or broadcast?

Daily, more than once a week or weekly (mark days)

Mon. _____ Tues. _____ Wed. _____ Thurs. _____ Fri. _____ Sat. _____ Sun. _____

Semi-monthly _____

Monthly _____

Sporadically _____

Estimated number per year _____

6. What is the average length of the stories, columns or broadcasts?

Broadcasts:

Five minutes _____ Ten _____ 15 _____ 30 _____ 60 _____

Stories (average length):

Less than 10 inches _____ 20-30 inches _____

10-20 inches _____ 30-50 inches _____

Columns (average length):

Less than 10 inches _____ 20-30 inches _____

10-20 inches _____ 30-50 inches _____

7. What percentage of your communication is designed to extoll so-called sound conservation management practices and what per cent is written or broadcast purely to interest the reader or to promote recreational uses of wildlife, forests, etc.?

Conservation _____ Recreation _____

8. Approximately what percentage of your income is derived from outdoor writing? _____ per cent.
If it is not 100 per cent, what other work do you do?
_____.
9. How long have you been in outdoor communications? _____.
10. What work did you do before you entered outdoor communications?
_____.
11. Why did you enter outd or communications rather than some other field? _____.
12. Are there any limitations which seriously affect the quality of your work? If the answer is yes, what are some of these and what effect do they have? _____.
13. Do you have any assistants? Yes _____. No _____. If yes, how many? _____. How do they help you?
Photography _____.
Copy writing _____.
Editing _____.
Other (please specify) _____.
14. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? (If a level was only partially completed, write the number of years in that level on the space provided.)
Elementary school _____.
Secondary school _____.
Junior college _____.
College _____.
Bachelors _____, Masters _____, Doctorate _____.
Where did you attend college? _____.
15. What were your major fields of study in college? (areas in which you had at least 10 units of study)
Journalism _____.
Radio and/or TV _____.
Photography _____.
General sciences _____.
Wildlife management or ecology _____.
Others (please specify) _____.
16. What percentage of your working time is spent in the field gathering material?
Less than 10 per cent _____, 50-75 per cent _____.
Ten to 25 per cent _____, 75-90 per cent _____.
25-50 per cent _____, 90-100 per cent _____.
17. Which of the following sources do you rely on in gathering material for your work?
How many _____.
Radio and TV _____.
State outd or magazines _____.
National outd or mags. _____.

(continued)

- National conservation publications _____.
- National scientific publications _____.
- Interviews with wildlife agmt. authorities _____.
- Interviews with experienced outdoorsmen _____.
- Releases from governmental organizations _____.
- Releases from nat'l conservational organizations _____.
- Personal knowledge and experiences _____.
- Others (please specify) _____.

18. Do you believe outdoor writers have a role in bridging the communication gap between sportsmen and those who possess anti-hunting sentiment? (please explain answer) _____.
19. What causes this anti-hunting sentiment to develop? _____.
20. Do you believe a college education in journalism and/or wildlife management is beneficial to the outdoor writer? _____.
21. Are there any special qualifications that an outdoor writer should possess? _____.
22. Do most outdoor writers have those? _____.
23. Are outdoor writers paid sufficiently? (please explain answer) _____.
24. If you do not think they are paid sufficiently, what is the reason for this? How do employers justify it? _____.
25. Are there any things you would like to see done to improve the outdoor writing field? _____.

APPENDIX II

THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

412 N. 11th apt. 16
Manhattan, Kansas
May 20, 1968

As a graduate student in journalism at Kansas State University, I am doing a survey of the outdoor communications field for my master's thesis.

As part of my research, I recently sent questionnaires to outdoor communicators throughout North America. From the returns, I learned what opinions these writers and broadcasters have of themselves and their field. Now, I want to learn what opinions people outside the field have about these people and their work.

Because conservationists are generally well-educated and very active in their work and because outdoor writers and broadcasters indirectly affect conservation of our natural resources, I am sending the enclosed questionnaire to conservationists like yourself.

Even if you do not consider yourself an authority on the outdoor communications field, I urge you to complete this questionnaire. Your reaction to the work of these people is very important to my research.

Some of the questions in this survey may appear to be leading or impertinent. This is not intended. These questions are important because they are the questions most frequently raised by the outdoor writers themselves.

Respectfully yours

Gary Haden

Please mark the appropriate spaces or write as much as you feel necessary to answer the question. Please use the back of the sheet if insufficient space is allowed for a question. All material will be held in strictest confidence. The term "Outdoor Writer" refers to all persons engaged in writing or broadcasting for the general public. It is not meant to include those writers who write for conservation publications such as Audobon's Magazine or National Wildlife.

1. Name _____ . Age _____. How long have you worked in the conservation field? _____ .

2. Do you regularly:

Read a newspaper outdoor column or page? Yes _____. No _____ .

Read a national outdoor magazine such as Sports Afield?

Better Camping or Guns and Ammo? Yes _____. No _____ .

Listen to a local radio or watch a local television outdoor program? Yes _____. No _____ .

Watch a national television outdoor program? Yes _____. No _____ .

3. Should outdoor writers attempt to educate their readers in sound conservation practices or should they be content to entertain the public and inform them of recreational opportunities? Yes _____. No _____. If answer is no, who should do it?

_____ .

4. Does the outdoor writer place sufficient emphasis on conservation of the outdoors, compared to recreation using the outdoors?

Yes _____. No _____ .

5. Do outdoor writers understand wildlife management and ecological concepts well enough to write about them? Yes _____. No _____ .

6. Does the policy which allows outdoor writers to accept free lodging or products in return for articles or broadcasts about these services or products adversely affect the outdoor writing field? Yes _____. No _____. Don't know _____. If yes, why is it harmful? _____ .

7. Do outdoor writers foster misconceptions about certain species or about the outdoors in general? (For example idea that all predators should be killed to increase game populations or the belief that all cougars, wolves, wolverines, etc. should be shot whenever sighted?) If yes, what are some of these misconceptions and how harmful are they? _____

_____.
8. Do you agree with the majority of outdoor writers who say that it is the American sportsmen who are actually responsible for all of the game we have today because they buy licenses, pay excise taxes and form sportsmens' organizations? Yes _____. No _____. If your answer is no, what falacies do you find with this statement? _____

_____.
9. Has an outdoor writer ever written a story or done a broadcast about any of your work? Yes _____. No _____. If answer is yes, was his work satisfactory? Yes _____. No _____. If unsatisfactory, what was wrong with it? _____

_____.
10. Please add any other comments you might have about the questions asked here or about the outdoor writing field in general.

_____.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

APPENDIX III

THE THIRD QUESTIONNAIRE

412 North 11 apt. 16
Manhattan, Kansas 66502
June 23, 1968

As a graduate student in journalism at Kansas State University, I am doing a survey of the outdoor communications field for my master's thesis.

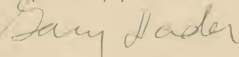
As part of my research, I recently sent questionnaires to outdoor communicators throughout North America. From the returns, I learned what opinions these writers and broadcasters have of themselves, their peers, their audience and their employers. However, I did not learn as much as I feel necessary about the relationship of the writers to the organizations for which they work.

That is why I need your assistance. The writers are generally reluctant to divulge personal information such as salaries. Such information is necessary, however, if I am to produce a useful paper. Gathering and presenting this information will eventually help the outdoor writers and that is why it is so very important that I receive your assistance.

This questionnaire is being sent to newspaper, radio and television management personnel. The term "outdoor writer" is meant to include people working for all three of these media, even though some of the writers may not spend any of their time actually writing.

If you do not have an outdoor writer in your organization, please place the name of your organization in the space provided at the top of the second page and return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. A brief explanation of why no outdoor writer is employed would be appreciated but is necessary only if you feel you want to add one.

Respectfully yours



Gary Haden

All answers will be held in strict confidence. It is not necessary to provide your outdoor writer's name and I will make no attempt to learn who he or she is. Please omit all questions not applicable to your organization.

1. Name of organization (optional) _____.
Your position in the organization _____.
2. How long has this organization employed an outdoor writer?
_____. How long has your present one been employed? _____. How many years experience in outdoor communications has he had? _____.
3. Is your outdoor writer a:
regular employee? _____.
freelancer who syndicates to several organizations? _____.
freelancer who works for you alone? _____.
4. How frequently does his material appear?
One a week _____. Two _____. Three _____. Four _____. Five _____. Six _____. Seven _____.
How much space or time is allocated to his material? _____
_____.
5. Why did your organization first employ an outdoor communicator?
Management saw need for outdoor coverage _____.
Writer convinced management that his services would be an asset _____.
Public opinion demanded outdoor coverage _____.
Don't know _____.
Other reasons (Please specify) _____
_____.
6. Are there any special qualifications that an outdoor communicator should have? _____
_____.

ANSWER FOLLOWING SECTION ONLY IF OUTDOOR WRITER IS REGULAR EMPLOYEE

7. What is his annual salary?
\$1-1,999 a year _____.
\$2,000 to 3,999 a year _____.
\$4,000 to 4,999 a year _____.
\$5,000 to 5,999 a year _____.
\$6,000 to 6,999 a year _____.
\$7,000 to 7,999 a year _____.
\$8,000 to 8,999 a year _____.
\$9,000 to 10,999 a year _____.
\$11,000 to 12,999 a year _____.
\$13,000 to 15,000 a year _____.

8. Does he do other work for the organization in addition to his outdoor writing or broadcasting? Yes _____. No _____. If answer is YES, approximately what percentage of his time is devoted to his outdoor efforts?

- Less than 25 _____.
- 25 to 49 _____.
- 50 to 74 _____.
- 75 to 100 _____.

9. If answer to above question was YES, what are his other duties?

10. How does his salary compare to that of the other staff members who hold similar positions? Higher than average _____.
About equal _____.
Lower than average _____.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING SECTION ONLY IF OUTDOOR WRITER IS A FREELANCER

11. What is his weekly salary?

\$1-9 _____. \$10-14 _____. 15-19 _____. 20-24 _____. 25-29 _____. 30-40 _____. 41-50 _____

For how many other papers or stations does this person provide outdoor material? _____.

12. Would you say his ability is as good as that of the regular staff members? Yes _____. No _____. Better than some _____.

ANSWER FOR NEWSPAPER PERSONNEL ONLY

13. Does your publication make any special attempt to promote the outdoor section or does it make any special attempt to solicit advertising for that section? Yes _____. No _____. If YES, what are some of these?

ANSWER FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION PERSONNEL ONLY

14. Has your station ever had any difficulty in locating a sponsor for the outdoor program? Yes _____. No _____. If YES, was it remedied? How? _____.

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A STUDY OF THE OUTDOOR WRITERS OF NORTH
AMERICA WITH EMPHASIS ON THEIR JOBS,
SALARIES, EDUCATIONS AND ROLES

by

GARY LEE HADEN

B. S., Kansas State University, 1967

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

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Manhattan, Kansas

1969

The term "outdoor writer" may be used to describe a person who performs a variety of skills for any one of several media. Some of the people described never actually write but devote all of their working time to photography, art or broadcasting.

This thesis was written to clarify some important aspects of the outdoor writing field so that some of the confusion which exists today might be cleared up.

The research portion of the study consisted of three mailed questionnaires. The first questionnaire was sent to 172 members of the Outdoor Writers Association of America. The writers' jobs, roles and opinions were ascertained by studying the 86 replies received. The second questionnaire was sent to 60 North American conservationists. From the 40 returns, the attitudes of the conservationists toward the outdoor writers were learned, and some improvements suggested by the conservationists were discussed. The third questionnaire was mailed to 90 radio, television and newspaper executives, and 22 replies which discussed 27 outdoor writers were received. The salaries and competency of the outdoor writers and their employee-employer relationships were discussed.

Findings indicated that the term "outdoor writer" may mean many different things. Nearly all of the writers do write, but most of them said the ability to use a camera is also a prerequisite for outdoor writing. A love of the outdoors and good writing ability are the two most important traits that an outdoor writer can have, according to the outdoor writers and their employers.

The study showed that many of the outdoor writers have two or more jobs. About 44 per cent of all outdoor writing is in newspapers, and about 31 per cent is devoted to magazines.

Most of the writers said they are underpaid. The third questionnaire showed that the salaries of the regularly employed newspaper, radio and television outdoor writers range from \$6,000 to \$15,000 a year.

Less than 30 per cent of the outdoor writers earn their total annual income from outdoor writing. The majority of them supplement their outdoor writing income by working in other jobs related to either the outdoors or journalism. The average outdoor writer makes less than 50 per cent of his annual income from outdoor writing.

The survey shows that the outdoor writers are quite willing to discuss the faults of the outdoor writing field, but few of them had any definite ideas on how their field could be improved.

