

Alaskans' Aid Asked to Enforce Game Laws

Commissioner Pat Wellington called for Alaskans to help enforce their own game laws in a hard-hitting statement recently.

--"If you take a ceremonial knife and commit suicide with it, the act is called hari-kari. In Alaska if you see a man poaching a moose, or a salmon, or a bear, and you don't report it, you are doing the same thing with your renewable natural resources, I repeat, YOUR natural resources.

"You are helping to kill them off a little at a time. We have 59 Fish and Wildlife protection officers in this state. This means we have one officer for every 10,000 square miles of land, not excluding the sea. Our men cannot do this job of protecting the fish and game laws of Alaska without the help of the public," Commissioner Pat Wellington said.

"Too often we take the easy way out by ignoring violations of fish and game laws. If you see a man fishing illegally, this man is hurting you, not some vague constituency floating around in the clouds. The fish in this state belong to the citizens of the state -- so do the birds and animals. Such natural resources, if taken without the state's written or implicit permission, is a kick in your shins as a citizen," Wellington observed.

"Alaska can go a long way toward policing its own resources without one person stepping out of his house," Wellington said. "Just teach your children the basic laws of protecting our wildlife."

"If you stand by and cheer while your boy is throwing rocks at a spawning salmon, you might as well be skipper of a purse seiner high-grading fish at the mouth of a spawning creek," the commissioner said. "Public Safety will enforce the laws

governing the taking of fish and game, but we can't do it alone."