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Images courtesy of *Beyond Seasons' End*

For more information and to order your free copy of *Beyond Season's End* visit, [beyondseasonsend.org](http://beyondseasonsend.org).

The site was designed to create an electronic work space that:

- connects you with others in the wildlife community who are concerned about climate change
- channels information to you about the nuts and bolts of field projects addressing climate change
- informs you about best practices in the field related to climate change
- encourages discussion and debate relevant to global climate change's effect on the design and implementation of your field projects
- creates a stage for the interaction of global climate change theory and field experience

# More Light, **LESS HEAT:** A Review of *Beyond Seasons' End*

*Beyond Seasons' End* is new book about climate change in the sportsman's interest. It sheds light into the well-heated advocacy for climate change policy by offering "A Path Forward in the Era of Climate Change" as stated in its subtitle.

The book shows that we (the community of sportsmen conservationists) are promoting positive management actions to address climate-related habitat issues that are evident today. You may not be as convinced as the authors that lower snowpacks and hotter forest fires are signals of larger changes in the global climate, and that would be a good reason to read and scrutinize this book. It shows how we (the Club) can add to the debate in Washington beyond the pages we contributed to this book.

Advocacy on climate change issues by sportsmen-conservationists needs more unity behind a clearer goal of revolutionizing the funding of wildlife conservation in America. The Club can make this happen.

To fully appreciate the book and see its relevance to the Club, one must first grasp the double meaning in the subtitle proclaiming our times to be the "Era of Climate

Change." Practically, this means climatic effects on wildlife are yet another challenge facing sportsmen-conservationists. Politically, it means the conservation and environmental political world around us is choosing a course that will affect our interests in forest and grassland habitat policy, energy, and private land use, and we need to represent our interests in these decisions.

On the practical meaning, the first chapter of *Beyond Seasons' End* presents a good picture of a sportsman's take on climate change. We grasp the concepts in atmospheric science, but do not presume to be climatologists. We use the authoritative climate science of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as best we can to understand what it means to the species groups of our main concern.

Each of the main chapters covers a group of game species and their climate-related ecology and management, including proposed management approaches and case studies. The Club's contribution to the book is the chapter on big game by Professional Member Kaush Arha with thoughtful reviews by colleagues Jack Ward Thomas, Paul Krausman, Harold J. Salwasser, Valerius Geist,



Steve Mealey, and Regular Member Robert Model. The other chapters cover waterfowl, coldwater fish, warmwater fish, upland birds, and saltwater fish.

Our chapter, like each of the chapters on a species group, is organized in five sections. The introduction reviews climate effects on the species group. The next section describes how the species group will likely respond. Then, each chapter has a section titled, "Yesterday's Programs Can't Solve Today's Problems." The

last two sections cover management project types in "What Can Be Done" and case studies in "Solutions for Species."

These chapters each compare climatological findings globally and regionally with expertise on smaller areas of landscape where local ecologies and natural histories play out. In tending these connections between global and regional climates and the ecology of species groups, *Beyond Seasons' End* uses definitive language as if there are no doubtful points in this analysis. This is a legitimate criticism of the book. However, we have data on effects we can already observe and some of these effects may be related to climate. Most certainly related are the ice and snow dynamics that are reducing glaciers and snowpacks, accelerating spring runoffs, and raising sea levels. Perhaps partially climate-related are the uncharacteristic wildfires and forest health problems that are certainly an effect of reduced forest management. Quite possibly climate-related are shifts in species' ranges and migration arrivals that appear to be phasing out of synchrony with the emergence of food sources such as butterflies and flowering plants.

We are safe in saying these climate-related issues are another reason—along with the need to better manage non-game species—that we must revolutionize the funding of American wildlife conservation. As Club members know well, American wildlife conservation was designed to manage game wildlife using sportsmen dollars collected as excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment and supplies. That system is not built to manage non-game species and to adapt to large-scale systematic effects on basic ecology, regardless of whether these changes are an extended drought or a change of global climate.

*Beyond Seasons' End* presents actions

that can be taken about climate-related concerns; however, the word "action" is another point of double-meaning that readers should be aware of. The concluding chapter describes current programs and positions, a proposed agenda, and a review of the House of Representatives proposal for a cap-and-trade law (H.R. 2454, passed by the House June 26, 2009). To advocates of climate-change legislation, action means passing a bill into law. Some sportsmen-conservationists are in this camp. Other sportsmen think action means managing wildlife and their habitats. Still other sportsmen connect the two, saying we need legislation to fund the management. The book does not clearly advocate any one of these positions, which brings us to the political meaning of living in an era of climate change.

Even though *Beyond Seasons' End* rightfully and helpfully points to a path forward, it also reflects the weaknesses and inconsistencies in the sportsmen's position in the climate debate. The book is an encouraging beacon in the public debate about climate policy because its predominant feature is the presentation of active on-the-ground management. On the other hand, we are underselling our reason for participating in this debate and glancing off a strong, clear, and consistent message for what we hope to accomplish through new policy.

To see this, read the appendix, which reproduces three letters from sportsmen to, first, members of the House of Representatives in April 2009, and two later letters to senators in September 2009. The letter to the House says, essentially, "Hunters and anglers strongly support the legislative approach" that became H.R. 2454 and the groups encourage "sufficient revenues" for wildlife conservation (which these groups got in H.R. 2454). To the Senate, one letter says, essentially, that the Senate should pass "comprehensive climate and energy legislation this year" and include "an adequate and appropriate amount of the total carbon allowance value" for wildlife conservation. The other letter says, essentially, that the groups authoring the letter "do not have consensus on a climate change bill" but that any successful policy must accomplish four things including funding for wildlife conservation. This last letter was based on the Club's position on climate change. The letterhead of each letter shows which hunting groups signed which letter. The Club signed only the last letter.

It is right that these letters are part of *Beyond Seasons' End* because they give the detailed picture of sportsmen on the issue. The picture, however, could be better focused. Sportsmen could, and should, have a clear

and unified position. The Club can help make this happen.

First, we sportsmen need to clarify why we are interested in federal air pollution policy. If it is because we believe emissions of greenhouse gases are a factor in wildlife conservation, then we need to get smart on air pollution policy and choose a reasoned position favoring an approach, whether it's cap-and-trade, the "sector" cap-and-trade approach, the carbon tax, or some alternative. If pollution itself is only a related effect on our interests, then we need to better justify why this policy should fund our programs. For example, we could refer to the precedent of using offshore oil and gas royalties to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and assert that any resource development for which the federal government collects fees or revenues in the public interest should rightfully fund a share of the costs of wildlife conservation to mitigate related effects. These are two distinct avenues—policy or funding—but we are attempting both and following through on neither. We sportsmen have practically endorsed cap-and-trade with no pollution-policy rationale. We have also asked for funds without explaining any general principle. We should pick one or the other and fill in the missing rationale or principle.

Second, we sportsmen need a clear statement that climatic challenges are not the only reason we need to revolutionize funding for existing wildlife programs, but they are the latest reason. We have been seeking funds for non-game wildlife management and working at larger geographic scales for 30 years. We need new funding for all these reasons and should say so at every opportunity. We should also be clear that the funding will go to existing programs. *Beyond Seasons' End* fails to mention the long-running needs for funds and contradicts itself on existing programs. It repeatedly claims in each chapter that "Yesterday's Programs Can't Solve Today's Problems". Yet the advocacy letters in the appendix say existing programs are the best way to spend new money. The precursor publication, *Seasons' End*, also explicitly called for funding existing programs.

Helping the community unify on these points is well within the Club's abilities. And we have time. If the U.S. Senate manages to bring climate change to a debate yet this year, the sportsmen's community will have a chance to update our position in our visits to Capitol Hill and our new letters. If the next round of the debate is still some year or more off, then we have time for a new book. In either case, *Beyond Seasons' End* is a good start and a good guide. ■