

Robert Ellarson

"Good morning boys and girls.welcome to the world of nature."

1. **Name of Nominee:** Dr. Robert S. Ellarson
2. **Date of Birth:** September 21, 1916
Place: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Deceased: March 17, 1993
3. **Title:** Extension Wildlife Specialist and Professor (Emeritus) of
Wildlife Ecology
4. **Institution:** Department of Wildlife Ecology
226 Russell Labs
University of Wisconsin - Extension
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
5. **Home Address:** 915 Columbia Road
Madison, Wisconsin 53705
6. **Education:** Graduated Bay View High School, Milwaukee,
Wisconsin--1934
BS University of Wisconsin (Agriculture)--1946
MS University of Wisconsin (Botany)--1947
PhD University of Wisconsin (Wildlife
Management-Botany)--1956
7. **Employment:**
 - 1934-35 Worked placer gold mine with father and uncle on Salmon
River in Central Idaho
 - 1936-40 Salesman and clerk with Moe Brothers Manufacturing Co.,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 - 1943-44 Conservation Aide Sp-5, U.S. Soil Conservation Service
 - 1945-46 Engineering Aide P-1 (summers), U.S. Soil Conservation
Service
 - 1947-50 Research Assistant, Department of Wildlife Management,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

- 1950-56 Instructor, Department of Wildlife Management, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 1956-60 Extension Wildlife Specialist and Assistant Professor, Department of Wildlife Management, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 1960-68 Extension Wildlife Specialist and Associate Professor, Department of Wildlife Management, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 1968-78 Extension Wildlife Specialist and Professor, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 1979-93 Professor Emeritus, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

8. Awards and Recognition:

- 1963 First Award for Excellence from the Institute for Education for Radio - presented to WHA Station (Wisconsin School of the Air Programming) for "Wonderful World of Nature" prepared and presented by R. S. Ellarson
- 1966 Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Chapter of Soil Conservation Society of America
- 1966 Conservation Education Award from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation in cooperation with the National Wildlife Federation and the Sears Roebuck Foundation for outstanding contributions to the wise use and management of the Nation's natural resources
- 1967 Conservation Education Award presented by The Wildlife Society, Washington, D.C.
- 1975 The Gordon MacQuarrie Award ". . . for telling the conservation story" presented by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation

9. **Membership in Honorary, Professional and Scientific Societies:**

Alpha Zeta
American Society of Mammalogists
American Society of Ornithologists
The Nature Conservancy
Phi Eta Sigma
Phi Sigma
Sigma Xi
Soil Conservation Society of America
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Wilson Ornithological Society
Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters
Wisconsin Society for Ornithology

10. **Publications:**

- 1949 The vegetation of Dane County, Wisconsin in 1835. Transactions of Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters 39:21-45.
- 1950 The yellow-headed blackbird in Wisconsin. Passenger Pigeon 12(3):99-109.
- 1952 (with J. J. Hickey). Beaver trapped by tree. Journal of Mammalogy 33(4):482-483.
- 1954 Farm game project. Circular 4-H 73-a, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 2 pp.
- 1954 Farm fur management and harvest project. Circular 4-H 73-b, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 3 pp.
- 1954 Songbird project. Circular 4-H 73-c, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 4 pp.
- 1954 Fish management project. Circular 4-H 73-d, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 3 pp.
- 1954 Wild flower study and protection project. Circular 4-H 73-e, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 3 pp.

- 1954 Wild flower garden project. Circular 4-H 73-f, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 3 pp.
- 1955 Tree swallow-bluebird nesting studies in the Arboretum. The University of Wisconsin Arboretum News 4(3):1-2.
- 1955 What's new outdoors? Teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1956 The old-squaw duck on Lake Michigan. Wisconsin Academy Review 3(2):60-62.
- 1956 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 36 pp.
- 1957 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1958 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1958 (with Harvey I. Fisher). An abnormal sternal apparatus in a ruffed grouse, *Bonasa umbellus*. Illinois State Academy of Science 51(3 and 4):34-36.
- 1959 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1959 (with R. A. McCabe). An easy-to-make birdhouse. University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 7 pp.
- 1960 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1960 (with Glen Barquest). A ranch-style purple martin house. University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 6 pp.
- 1961 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1962 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.

- 1963 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1963 Wisconsin wild flower study. Circular 4-H 125, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 13 pp.
- 1964 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1965 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1966 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1967 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1968 Unusual nighthawk migration. The Passenger Pigeon 30(3):115.
- 1968 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1968 (with G. W. Longenecker). Landscape plants that attract birds. University of Wisconsin Extension Programs, Madison. Circular 514. 10 pp.
- 1969 (with Glen Barquest). Shelves, houses, feeders for birds and squirrels. University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Programs Special Circular 144, Madison. 32 pp.
- 1969 Canada geese problems and control on farms. University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Madison. 5 pp.
- 1969 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1970 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.

- 1971 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 24 pp.
- 1972 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 17 pp.
- 1973 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 16 pp.
- 1974 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 18 pp.
- 1975 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 16 pp.
- 1975 Landscape plants that attract birds. University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Programs. Circular G1609. 8 pp. (revised).
- 1975 (with S. R. Peterson). Incidence of body shot in Lake Michigan oldsquaws. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 39(1):217-219.
- 1976 (with S. R. Peterson). Total mercury residues in livers and eggs of oldsquaws. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 40(4):704-709.
- 1976 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 16 pp.
- 1977 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 19 pp.
- 1977 (with S. R. Peterson). Food habits of oldsquaws wintering on Lake Michigan. *Wilson Bulletin* 89(1):81-91.
- 1978 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 15 pp.
- 1978 (with S. R. Peterson). p,p'-DDE, polychlorinated biphenyls, and endrin in oldsquaws in North America, 1969-73. *Pesticides Monitoring Journal* 11(4):170-181.

- 1978 (with S. R. Peterson). Bursae, reproductive structures, and scapular color in wintering female oldsquaw. *Auk* 95:115-121.
- 1979 (with S. R. Peterson). Changes in oldsquaw carcass weight. *Wilson Bulletin* 91(2):288-300.
- 1979 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 15 pp.
- 1980 Wonderful World of Nature teachers' manual. Wisconsin School of the Air, Madison. 15 pp.

Dr. Robert S. Ellarson was active in the field of natural resource education for 40 years. He played a role in natural resources and environmental education, including (1) the training of teachers; (2) the development and delivery of resource programs among youth, 4-H and non4-H; (3) the guidance of laypersons and Extension agents on a wide array of resource issues and problems; and (4) efforts to expand and enhance 4-H education facilities and opportunities at Camp Upham Woods. In each of these areas, his contributions have been significant and forceful in shaping public attitudes toward resource conservation and management.

Specifically, Professor Ellarson recognized the "multiplier effect" of teaching teachers and the value of natural resource education among youth. Accordingly, he developed an outstanding program presented over the Wisconsin School of the Air (University of Wisconsin radio station, WHA) entitled "Wonderful World of Nature." During the 26 years (1956-81) of its existence, the program reached approximately 30,000 young people each Monday morning in both urban and rural areas. Subject matter dealt with all aspects of the living environment, from lichens to oak trees and waterfowl to small mammals. Understandable and accurate information were the hallmarks of a fascinating program which offered a foundation for shaping attitudes about conservation among the young and for their heightened environmental awareness. As part of this program, he developed a teachers' manual to help teachers who were not sufficiently informed in the natural sciences. Revised and modified each year to keep pace with social and environmental change, the manual allowed teachers to conduct intelligent discussions with students having heard the Wonderful World of Nature over the air. Direct correspondence with young people who wrote to him concerning the program and related matters was also instrumental in shaping their ecological attitudes and conscience. Throughout, Ellarson relied almost exclusively upon his own intellectual resources for program development, and the Wonderful World of Nature became synonymous with his name. Since its inception, the program format has been adopted in

other states and its impacts have now become national in scope. It still continues in 1994 with a new host.

In addition to his radio work, he made a series of 15 television programs for in-school use and served as head of wildlife project work for state 4-H clubs. His 4-H conservation camps and tours for members and leaders enjoyed heavy attendance each year at Camp Upham Woods in south-central Wisconsin. Emphasis was placed on the need for a land ethic among all who enjoyed the natural world, and he encouraged their active involvement in the out-of-doors where events could be experienced firsthand. Indeed, over the years Bob Ellarson played a lead role in the development of hiking trails, camping and recreational facilities, meeting and lodging accommodations, and the creation of a full-time naturalist position at Camp Upham Woods. The camp (now referred to as the Upham Woods Environmental Education Center) is now recognized as one of the finest of its kind anywhere, due largely to Ellarson's efforts and many contributions. Following retirement in 1978, he was still called upon for his advice and assistance in the development of new camp programs.

Professor Ellarson's contributions in environmental education have also been felt among the numerous committees which he has actively advised throughout his career. The Wisconsin Recreational Laboratory Association, the University of Wisconsin Arboretum Committee, University Experimental Farms Committee, Pesticide Use Committee, Conservation Curriculum Committee of the State Department of Public Instruction, UW Subcommittee on Integrated Conservation Education, and several wildlife-related subcommittees of the Natural Resources Council of State Agencies in Wisconsin all benefitted from Bob's unique expertise in the fields of plant ecology, soil and water management, wildlife ecology and environmental education. These were all voluntary or solicited contributions because of his broad knowledge base. His membership on assigned University committees was equally as extensive and the products of his efforts are living testimonials of his environmental concerns. Wisconsin now enjoys a roadside management program, wildlife management demonstration areas on experimental farms, native prairie establishments on private and public properties, improved and expanded facilities at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, nature trails and wildlife plantings at state youth camps and school forests, and improved woodland management on private forests. The latter constituted a clientele group with which Ellarson worked closely for more than two decades in the form of field days and seminars throughout Wisconsin. The state's fish and wildlife resources and its citizenry are the richer for it.

The abundant enthusiasm and sincere dedication with which Bob Ellarson approached his work distinguishes his many contributions from those which are simply expected of any employee in public service. He invariably gave an extra measure in carrying the natural resource message to young people and to the training of teachers in the area of conservation. The importance of inspiring and molding the minds of young people in the world of ecology and natural history cannot be overemphasized. A child given the proper yardsticks will be able to make wise value judgements as an adult. It is in this area of achievement that Professor Ellarson especially excelled.