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By:  King of Hemphill H.R. No. 204

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Texas game wardens have protected their fellow citizens and the state's natural resources for 125 years; and

WHEREAS, In 1895, the 24th Texas Legislature established the office of Fish and Oyster Commissioner to enforce laws related to those industries; four years later, it gave the Fish and Oyster Commission jurisdiction over all public waters, including freshwater streams, lakes, and ponds, and it later added commercial shrimping to the portfolio; and

WHEREAS, The agency underwent several name changes before 1963, when it became the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; in that era, wardens were first charged with promoting recreational water safety; the legislature designated game wardens as Texas peace officers in 1971, and eight years later, TPWD hired its first female game warden; and

WHEREAS, In the past decade, game wardens have formed specialized teams to expand their capabilities; these include underwater and swift-water recovery, forensic accident reconstruction, and unmanned aerial surveillance; a K-9 unit was launched in 2013, and game wardens have played a vital role in rescue and recovery following such disasters as Hurricanes Ike and Harvey; and

WHEREAS, A force once small in size and scope, game wardens now number more than 550, and they have been called "the Swiss Army knife of Texas law enforcement"; many have aided the COVID-19 pandemic response, delivering personal protective equipment, conveying samples to labs, and assisting at testing sites; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of more than a century, game wardens have worked tirelessly to safeguard the state's natural resources while taking on increasing responsibilities, and in so doing, they have earned the lasting respect and appreciation of past, present, and future generations of fellow Texans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby honor Texas game wardens for 125 years of service to the Lone Star State and extend to them sincere best wishes for continued success in their endeavors; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for Texas game wardens as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.