ability of a unit (because of its university association) to stay at the leading edge of information discovery and development, a unit is frequently the most efficient means for the conduct of research by the Service. Evidence continually demonstrates that all cooperators receive a dollar's worth of services and products for each dollar any one of them invests in the unit.

Students are probably the greatest benefactors from their association with a unit. They receive an education at a major university, they usually receive a stipend, their tuition is usually waived, and they work with a potential employer.

A cooperative unit is designed to add talent to an already strong university program in fishery and wildlife biology but not to be the main component of the overall university program. Participation in the university program by Service biologists in the units is limited by law to graduate level education. One of the original criteria for positioning a unit is that the suggested host university already has a strong fisheries and wildlife undergraduate curriculum as a foundation for the graduate program. Placement of unit students in fishery, wildlife, and related professions has consistently exceeded 95% (Appendix I).

Functions of Unit Positions

All unit personnel must hold a doctoral degree. Furthermore, the Cooperative Agreement permits unit employees to teach one university graduate-level course per year in the area of their specialty. These two points make it possible for unit personnel to serve as professors with graduate-student advisement, research, and teaching responsibilities. Upon entering on duty, unit leaders and assistant unit leaders are appointed to the general faculty of the host university. Each individual presents the appropriate credentials to university committees who recommend an appropriate level of graduate faculty appointment or who recommend withholding an appointment until the desired level of achievement is reached.

Salaries of Unit Professionals

Current salaries for federal scientist positions generally are not competitive with university salaries, although the high variability between salary scales at different universities causes exceptions. Discussions with unit personnel indicate that salary level is one of the least influential factors of tenure among unit scientists but is a significant factor when recruiting new scientists for unit positions. Unit salaries were competitive with university faculty salaries through the 1970's. In an informal, nationwide survey of salaries for beginning assistant professors in 1979 (Goforth, unpublished), new assistant unit leader (GS-11, step 1) salaries exceeded the average beginning university assistant professor 12-month salary by approximately 9%. A similar survey in 1987 revealed that salaries of assistant unit leaders (GS-11, step 1) were 26% below the 12-month average salary