

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON BIRD PROTECTION
AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

YOUR Committee on Bird Protection has continued studies of trends and factors affecting adversely the status of birds and has actively championed measures providing better protection for them. Three meetings were held in Washington during the year: March 20, May 5, and October 5. We have considered carefully the resolution concerning the use of poison which was referred to us by vote of the Union at the Detroit meeting last year. Because we have found ourselves unable to adopt and recommend it in precisely the language in which it is drawn, we have prepared a resolution bearing upon the matter, which we shall offer in lieu thereof.

Nothing has occurred to change our belief in the platform of the Committee accepted by the Union at the annual meeting in 1930. The need for adherence to the ideals there expressed is evident with every problem confronting the Committee at this time. We feel that no agency of deliberate and conscious destruction of birds should be continued, nor any new agency brought into exercise, until an indisputable justification for it appears.

We regret to report that economic depression has had its effect on the educational movement for bird protection. In many States, economic distress has resulted in the discharge of special teachers, thus reducing the number of those teaching nature study. As an example, the nature-study department of the Los Angeles City School system was abolished. Under present conditions, protests are of no avail. This setback is partially compensated by the fine series of new volumes on birds which have appeared during the year: 'Birds of Minnesota,' 'Birds of Oklahoma,' 'Florida Bird Life,' 'Portraits of New England Birds,' and 'Birds of Newfoundland Labrador.'

Recent reports from California indicate that two rare birds, the Condor and the White-tailed Kite, continue near the vanishing point in spite of special protection afforded them. The status of the Trumpeter Swan as a breeding bird in the United States continues to show improvement as evidenced by reports from Yellowstone National Park and vicinity.

When the committee's attention was drawn to plans for larger importations of Flamingos from Cuba, letters were immediately written to forestall commercialization of a dwindling species. It is felt that this quick action showing opposition resulted in reduced shipments to New York, and to Florida where there has been talk of reintroduction experiments.

At least two western States have advertised competitive campaigns of destruction of hawks as an avowed protection of game, giving convincing evidence that these beneficial birds are still sought out and killed wholesale. The Province of Ontario has removed all protection for predatory birds. Though much has been written in their defense, and active opposition to such campaigns and such legislation has been voiced by bird students, yet most of the predatory birds continue to be in grave danger. Recent food habit studies of hawks and owls by the Baldwin Research Laboratories have shown that poultry and game constitute less than five per cent of the food of hawks and owls of Ohio. Other studies of similar nature continue to show that a scientific valuation of the worth of predatory birds results in positive rather than negative appraisal. It is a pleasure to report, therefore, that a Hawk and Owl Society has been formed actively to espouse the cause of protection for these birds. This new conservation group has outlined its views as follows:

1. Through educational methods, to create greater popular appreciation of the esthetic, scientific, and economic value of hawks and owls.
2. To combat the constant propoganda which encourages the destruction of all birds of prey.
3. To work for the enactment and enforcement of laws giving adequate protection to hawks and owls.

With these tenets this committee agrees and therefore urges active support of this project.

It is a pleasure to report also that South Carolina gave protection to the Bald Eagle, and at least two States (New York and Massachusetts) introduced bills into their legislatures giving added protection to eagles and hawks. The coming year is one when some forty legislatures will be in session, and the opportunity to initiate better protective laws should not be lost.

Attention is invited to a resolution passed by the Advisory Board to the Secretary of Agriculture which if carried out, should,

mean better protection for migratory wild fowl. After naming the chief elements essential to the preservation of migratory game birds as: enactment of restrictive laws, the establishment and maintenance of numerous sanctuaries, and the education of the shooting public to the need of restraint, the resolution says: "It shall be our policy in recommending shooting regulations to give the bird rather than the hunter the benefit of any doubt." However, from a conservationist's viewpoint, wildfowl, considering their present status, are still endangered by insufficient protection. The total protection given this year to two additional species of ducks (Ruddy Duck and Bufflehead) shows recognition of a waning supply. We therefore call upon all concerned to place such limits upon shooting seasons, shooting areas, and game bags, and to take such steps in law enforcement as shall allow water fowl not merely to maintain a doubtful and uncertain status but to insure a safe margin of increase. To this end the Committee takes a definite stand favoring legislation to do away with the employment of bait to attract game birds within shooting range and the employment of live decoys for the same purpose, on the ground that these methods are among those most detrimental at the present time to the safety of migratory birds.

On the same account and to the same end, we commend the policy of acquisition by government and altruistic agencies of breeding grounds, rest grounds, and refuges, and of restoring to native condition areas that have been unwisely drained and deforested.

Likewise we commend the efforts that are being made to remedy the evils of stream pollution and the fouling of waters with waste oil.

Respectfully submitted,

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RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY BIRD PROTECTION COMMITTEE
AND ADOPTED BY THE UNION.

The American Ornithologists' Union, upon the recommendation of its Bird Protection Committee, resolves that it desires the

preservation and maintenance of the avifauna of this continent, and of all continents, in the largest measure of integrity, and offers the spirit of that pronouncement as the proper one in which to approach all questions of law and practice which concern bird life.

Therefore it deplors every program of bird destruction or control, so called, which is formulated in the interest of and according to the desires of some fraction of mankind, without due consideration of the interests and desires of mankind in general.

It is evident that there is great destruction of birds and of particular kinds of birds, without regard to the status of the species and their ability to endure such destruction, and without regard to the indirect but far-reaching results of such destruction. Specifically, attention is called to the destruction, at the instance of sportsmen and with the mistaken idea of benefiting game, of hawks and owls, and in less measure, of herons, kingfishers, and various other kinds of birds.

The committee disapproves any and all measures of control that by means of poison, traps, or otherwise, accomplish the destruction of species other than those intended. It disapproves the use of steel traps and of traps of all sorts whose use involves the holding of a bird victim for a prolonged period in injured condition.

It calls for wider and clearer recognition of the fact that birds as a class are of inestimable value to mankind; that civilized society in countless ways bears already too heavily upon these valuable creatures, and that the need is for protection rather than for destruction; and it therefore calls upon all good citizens to favor the establishment and maintenance of sanctuaries; to have no part in such unlawful practices as the sale of game birds; and to support all worthy efforts for bird protection.