

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BIRD PROTECTION.

THE Committee on Bird Protection has remained active throughout the year. Whenever possible, informal meetings of members were held in Washington, D. C., at which times problems were discussed and plans made. All members of the committee have been kept in touch with pertinent projects by means of correspondence.

Better protection for migratory water-fowl and for hawks and owls continue to be the two greatest needs.

Poor breeding seasons for ducks nesting on the southern prairies of Canada and in the northern tier of states adjacent, caused by drought indicate that the supply of ducks bred in this area does not warrant a continuation of the rate of killing which now obtains. Failure of eel grass off the Atlantic Coast seems to indicate a disastrous decrease for Brant. At the meeting of the advisory Board, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, held in Washington July 10, 1933, a motion to prohibit baiting of wild fowl lost by a very narrow margin. Thereafter a hearing on this subject was held by the Secretary of Agriculture on August 28 at which opposition to an anti-baiting regulation was well organized. Though more drastic regulations were not adopted, the new hunting regulations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act provide for a reduction of the bag limit from 15 to 12, with not more than 8 in the aggregate of certain species and a reduction of the possession limit from 30 to 24. Meanwhile a possible anti-baiting regulation is held in abeyance for a year during which time a thorough study of the practice of baiting is being made by the United States Biological Survey.

The annual report of The Hawk and Owl Society contains evidence in the form of reports from observers in widely separated areas that hawks are on the decrease and that indiscriminate campaigns are still being waged against these predatory birds. This organization is placing emphasis on education and upon improved laws that will protect beneficial species.

Particular mention should be made of the successful efforts made by S. Prentiss Baldwin, a Life Member of the A. O. U., in securing repeal of the bounty on hawks and owls in Ohio. At

considerable personal expense and with persistent endeavor he engineered the necessary law through the State Legislature.

It is a strange paradox that while some promote organized campaigns against these predatory birds, there are others so convinced of their value that their re-introduction is advocated in western communities as a means of benefiting the farmer because these birds destroy noxious rodents.

As a result of three years study a wild life policy for the National Parks has been proposed by Mr. George Wright and his colleagues that has been accepted and which assures the preservation of national park areas as complete sanctuaries for all forms of animal life. In this policy emphasis is placed on the prime function of the parks to preserve the fauna and flora in its primitive state and, at the same time, provide the people with maximum opportunity for its observation. Park management plans provide that "every species shall be left to carry on its struggle for existence unaided, as being to its greatest ultimate good, unless there is real cause to believe that it will perish if unassisted," that "the rare predators shall be considered special charges of the national parks in proportion that they are persecuted everywhere else"; that "no native predator shall be destroyed on account of its normal utilization of any other park animal excepting if that animal is in immediate danger of extermination, and then only if the predator is not itself a vanishing form," and that "Species predatory upon fish shall be allowed to continue in normal numbers and to share normally in the benefits of fish culture." There is also a clear cut policy on exotics: "Any exotic species which has already become established in a park shall be either eliminated or held to a minimum provided complete eradication is not feasible. The threatening invasion of the parks by other exotics shall be anticipated, and to this end, since it is more than a local problem, encouragement shall be given for national and State coöperation in the creation of a board which will regulate the transplanting of all wild species."

Observers in California report the Condor as a vanishing species. This great bird lives in wild unfrequented regions and while it appears to have protection, there are many adverse factors which make its future problematical. A serious forest fire last fall in Ventura County, the last stronghold of this bird, may have de-

stroyed nesting places and young. It was reported to our committee that after the fire a flock of thirty-seven birds was seen by a local resident in the mountains.

The American Egret, a bird which a few years ago was depleted by the plume hunter, appears to be on the increase. This bird is now reported commonly in widely separated localities in the eastern United States both coastwise and interiorally. Along the Pacific Coast also, this bird is now commonly seen in many marshy areas.

Outside of the continued warfare against hawks and owls there have been few organized campaigns of destruction. Except as has been noted we believe bird protection has prospered during the past year. We have no new recommendations but do express allegiance to those heretofore proposed.

(Signed) H. C. BRYANT, *Chairman* HOYES LLOYD
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