

CONSERVATION NOTES

BY FRANCIS H. ALLEN

THOSE ornithologists who want to keep the shorebirds off the gamebird list should be on their guard. The subject of an open season for the larger species has already been discussed in the sporting columns, and it may be that a serious movement in that direction is on foot. It is understood that the Fish and Wildlife Service has no intention of altering the present regulations as to these birds, but all interested in keeping them protected the year round should be ready to do what they can for them.

PERHAPS the most important work that can be done for the conservation of birds and for conservation in general lies in the education of children. Much has been done in that field of recent years, but only here and there and in ways that are small in relation to the whole problem. Now at last a far-reaching campaign is being launched by the National Wildlife Federation, which plans to obtain the introduction of authoritative texts on various branches of conservation into grade schools all over the country. It is not expected that conservation as such will find its way at once into the curricula, but it is expected that teachers will use the books in teaching various subjects and also outside of school hours. The books have been prepared by a committee of educators with the criticism of professional conservationists of countrywide reputation. The system will be introduced gradually in different parts of the United States, and the plan is to have the distribution financed by public-spirited individuals and organizations.

THE National Audubon Society and the Feather Industries of America, Inc., which is said to control at least ninety per cent of the feather business of the country, have entered into an agreement whereby within six years the trade will dispose of all illegal or suspected illegal feathers, during which time the State of New York is expected to pass legislation that will put a definite stop to the importation and sale of all wild-bird plumage—legislation that it is hoped will be followed by similar legislation in the other States. The dealers agree to turn over to the New York Department of Conservation immediately their entire stocks of Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Bird-of-Paradise, Egret, and Heron feathers, to be destroyed or distributed to educational institutions on the passage of the new legislation.

THE situation of the White-winged Dove in the Southwest appears to be getting more critical. The Fish and Wildlife Service is considering year-round protection for the species in Arizona and shortening the open season in Texas. The National Audubon Society is taking an active interest in these birds.

THE Fish and Wildlife Service reports that the Whooping Crane count in the Aransas Refuge in Texas was twenty-six this winter, an increase of four over last year, but that only five of them were immature birds against seven young in 1939-40. With this apparent rate of reproduction the outlook for the species seems not very encouraging.

NATIONAL Wildlife Restoration Week comes in April this year, the week of April 14-19. In this year of national defense it is particularly important that everything possible should be done to preserve our waters, soil, and forests, and no waste of these resources, such as took place in the last great world war, should be allowed.