

CONSERVATION NOTES

BY FRANCIS H. ALLEN

THE regulations for the hunting of migratory birds are 'liberalized' in some respects for 1941 and tightened in others. Canvas-backs and Ruddy Ducks are no longer limited to those in the daily bag of ten ducks, the possession of one Wood Duck is allowed in fifteen of the States, and six Blue Geese may be killed in a day if no other geese are taken; but, on the other hand, Wilson's Snipe are given complete protection, the seasons on Mourning Doves are reduced to forty-two days in each zone, and the White-winged Dove seasons have been drastically cut from one month to half a month in Arizona and from two months to ten days in Texas. There is a new experiment in the special limitation of goose bags in those counties in North Carolina, Illinois, and California, where concentrations have led to unduly heavy shooting. The Wood Duck regulation is admittedly an experiment, too. This species is frequently shot by mistake by gunners who have no intention of breaking the law, and in these cases the bird has been thrown away. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is anxious to discourage the shooting of Wood Ducks, and the permission to include one in the daily bag is only an allowance for accidental killing. The hunter may be presumed to have learned his lesson after picking up a single Wood Duck, and that bird by its appearance in the bag may save the life of a duck of some other species that would otherwise be shot to complete the quota of ten. Another experiment is the prohibition of the killing of Snow Geese in Idaho, where, it seems, hunters have sometimes shot Trumpeter Swans under the impression that they were firing at geese! In spite of strenuous efforts on the part of some hunters, the regulations still prohibit the use of baiting and live decoys.

CONSERVATION-MINDED ornithologists—which means, of course, all ornithologists—may be thankful that Dr. Gabrielson's organization, with its intimate knowledge of wildlife facts and conditions and its long-term view, has the final decision on these perplexing matters of seasons and bag-limits, and that not even a Congressional committee can dictate its policies.

THE menace of oil pollution has taken a new form in the blow-outs of submarine wells on the Texas Coast. Director Baker of the National Audubon Society reports in the July-August number of the 'Audubon Magazine' what is being done to fix the responsibility for the resulting pollution and to prevent similar occurrences in the future. Apparently it was not known whether any actual damage had been done to the abundant bird life of those waters as yet, but the menace may be a serious one.

FISH-HATCHERIES under the control of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service are to be operated as wildlife sanctuaries, and no measures for the control of fish-eating birds are to be undertaken without specific authorization from Washington.

THE 'Audubon Magazine' reports an unprecedentedly good breeding-season of the birds protected in the Texas maritime sanctuaries.

DR. T. Gilbert Pearson reports in the May-June 'Audubon Magazine' the passage of the first national laws to protect wildlife in the Republic of Colombia. Certain species of birds, including Upland Plover, Robins, woodpeckers, herons, thrushes, and sparrows, get all-the-year-round protection for ten years, ducks and geese get a seven months' close season, and Woodcock can be shot for only four months of the year. This, of course, is only a beginning, but so far as it goes it is a good beginning.