

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BIRD PROTECTION, 1941

DESPITE handicaps imposed on this Committee by reason of its widely scattered membership, we have tried to present a fairly complete and up-to-date account of bird-protection matters north of the Rio Grande. As in previous years, we are indebted to many persons for information. To those who have contributed data or suggestions, we wish to express appreciation.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Fish and Wildlife Service has continued its tremendous task, in cooperation with the States, of protecting the migratory birds of the continent during their residence in the United States. The bureau reports that, on June 30, 1941, it was administering 267 wildlife refuges covering a total of 13,626,022 acres of land and water. Migratory waterfowl are the primary birds accommodated on 178 of these, with an acreage of 3,440,074. Fifty areas, comprising 107,679 acres, are chiefly for colonial nesting birds. The remaining 39 refuges and ranges of 10,078,269 acres are used by upland- and big-game, furbearers, and birds.

Federal and State authorities have made progress toward better bird protection in the Florida Everglades. Due to reluctance of land owners to part with mineral rights, prospects for fulfilment of the Everglades National Park Project have not been promising. It is now possible that a federal wildlife refuge can be set up to protect the valuable species of southwestern Florida, at least until the park can be established.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has continued its research into the life histories, food requirements and other details, a knowledge of which is so necessary to the proper conservation and management of wildlife. Limited space forbids even mention of the many pieces of research under way.

The National Forests are important as homes for birds of many species. One of the rarest and most endangered of these is undoubtedly the California Condor. Special measures, to be described later in this report, have been taken in an effort to ensure the preservation of this bird. Four areas are closed to trespass in the interest of vanishing species and serve as sanctuaries for many other species as well. Forty-nine 'natural areas' are preserved undisturbed for the study of the vegetation and animal life. These range in area from 126 to 6,400 acres, and total nearly 64,000 acres. The 72

'wilderness areas' contain fourteen million acres. Portions of these lands are closed to hunting.

Some of the important species subject to heavy hunting pressure, including the various forms of quails, grouse, pigeons, wild turkeys, ducks, geese, woodcocks and pheasants, are found in the National Forests. Of these birds, the Ruffed Grouse, is the most numerous, followed in turn by the Bob-white, Mourning Dove, Gambel's Quail and Blue Grouse. According to Dr. H. L. Shantz of the Forest Service, about 48,000 Wild Turkeys inhabit the National Forests and are about equally divided between eastern and southwestern areas.

Continued efforts of the National Park Service have been directed toward protection and conservation of nationally important bird species, some of which have recently reached numbers where they can be expected to survive only if most stringent protective measures are taken. The Singer Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana, has again been studied, and urgent recommendations made for immediate action on S. 329 (to create the Tensas Swamp National Park) in order to preserve a sizeable portion of forest upon which the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is dependent for habitat. Recent appropriation of funds by the State of Texas promises early establishment of the Big Bend National Park, which will augment protection of rare species indigenous to this arid region. Some progress has been made on food studies of the Hawaiian Goose or Nene. Research and protection for the primary benefit of rare birds and those nearing extinction have stimulated interest in extending greater protection elsewhere.

Over vast areas of this country, the reestablishment of vegetation is essential to wildlife restoration and conservation. The Soil Conservation Service has continued its work, much of which is of direct benefit to bird life. Since its inception and up to the end of 1940, the Service has written more than 146,000 farm plans, covering over 44 million acres. Nearly eleven thousand reservoirs and ponds have been built, many of them providing food, resting and nesting conditions for waterfowl. Under State or Federal orders hunting has been prohibited on a total area of 418,484 acres of land under administration of the Soil Conservation Service. In addition, a 49,200-acre National Wildlife Refuge has been set up on which wildlife administration is vested in the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The National Audubon Society, one of the most active of the non-governmental agencies interested in conservation matters, has continued its watch over rare birds and other wildlife. Research on the Roseate Spoonbill was continued by an Audubon Society staff mem-

ber. Publication of results of the studies of the California Condor, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and the desert bighorns is planned.

The Audubon Society also reports favorable nesting conditions and production of young on a number of its southern sanctuaries. In the coastal-lagoon area of Texas the results have been outstanding. Large broods have been reared by such birds as Roseate Spoonbills, egrets, herons, ibises, cormorants, pelicans, gulls and terns. While the results in Florida areas have not been so spectacular, the Society's five full-time year-round wardens have again guarded enormous numbers of birds in the southwestern Florida and Okeechobee-Kissimmee regions.

The influence of the Audubon Nature Camp has already become a significant factor in the development of American public opinion on bird and other conservation subjects. The Camp's graduates are scattered through 37 States, as well as four Provinces of Canada. Some 70 per cent are engaged in teaching, while many others are leaders in the Boy Scout, Girl Scout and Camp Fire Girls groups.

We regret that in this report we are unable to give an adequate resumé of the efforts made by numerous other groups and organizations to obtain facts or to further public awareness of bird-protection problems. The American Wildlife Institute and the National Wildlife Federation are among those whose work reaches many who are not subject to influence of the 'bird societies.' These two organizations are especially effective in influencing leaders in the political and business fields. Current 'conservation' pages in the journals are filling a desirable need for the ornithological groups. The resumé of wildlife problems contributed to 'The Auk' by Mr. Francis H. Allen is an example, which has been followed by the 'Wilson Bulletin.' We believe that these efforts to keep ornithologists in touch with critical bird news is praiseworthy and should be continued.

A number of outstanding achievements in bird protection have been made during the period since our last report. The first event, the signing on October 12, 1940, of the Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation, opens the way to better bird conservation throughout the Western Hemisphere. This treaty calls for the establishment and extension of national parks, monuments, refuges and other areas on which wildlife must be protected. Rare species can be designated as national monuments. Individuals of such species would thenceforth be under the protecting mantle of the law despite their wanderings from conventional refuges. The treaty also makes it possible to extend the principles of the migratory-bird treaty acts, now existing between the United States, Canada and

Mexico, to other countries south of the latter. It is to be hoped that the admirable provisions of this Convention may be enacted into the legal codes of all American republics.

FEATHERS IN MILLINERY.—About two years ago, to the astonishment and dismay of the bird-loving public, plumage began to be a feature of fashionable headgear for women. The cycle of bird destruction for millinery seemed about to return after a period of three or more decades. We have to thank again the National Audubon Society for sounding a call of alarm and, with the cooperation of other organizations, for indefatigably bringing the issue to its present stage. A new plumage law of New York State, the American headquarters of the trade, makes illegal any traffic in wild-bird plumage beginning April 16, 1947. On that date, legal trade will henceforth be limited to the plumage of ten specified kinds of domestic fowl. Similar restrictions should be adopted by the other 47 States and by the Congress for the District of Columbia. Ornithologists everywhere should join their forces with other groups to secure suitable legislation, and to ensure that fish-fly manufacture will not be allowed to serve as a loophole for the law.

DEPLETION OF ENVIRONMENT.—Much concern continues to be felt for the safety of many of our bird species. Destruction of environment continues in certain critical areas, to the great detriment of members of the avian fauna that are dependent upon it and whose habits are so exacting and inflexible as to make impossible a shift to other habitats. In some instances, the populations have reached or even exceeded the carrying capacities of their habitats. Restoration or dedication of additional areas for use of the birds is then the only solution for expansion. In other cases, and despite the most violent denials by some sportsmen, excessive hunting continues to be a constant menace.

SPECIAL SPECIES

GREAT WHITE HERON.—Probably less than eight hundred individuals of the Florida representative of the Great White Herons are alive today. The range of this species is restricted and subject to destructive hurricanes. It is possible that the 'Great Whites' can never be assumed to be 'safe.' Constant care must be exercised to increase the population and to maintain it at a high peak, with the hope that the species will spread somewhat northward and the effects of storm damage therefore will not be so devastating. The Great White Heron Refuge in the Florida Keys is continuing to provide better protection for this and other rare or extra-limital species.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL.—Several favorable reports of Roseate Spoonbills have come from Gulf Coast refuges of the Fish and Wildlife Service. During the spring of 1941 the following records were made: on May 10, approximately 600 spoonbills were seen on the Second Chain of islands bordering the Aransas Refuge near Corpus Christi, Texas; on May 19, at least 150 spoonbills were on the Sabine Refuge, Louisiana; and on May 30, 53 birds were noted on the Indian Key Refuge near St. Petersburg, Florida. Numerous other observations of lesser numbers were made on these areas during April and May, all of which are encouraging.

DEPLETION OF WATERFOWL.—The waterfowl of North America constitute an example of birds that have been greatly reduced by a combination of destruction of habitat, adverse weather and excessive shooting. We are becoming convinced that hunting is now a critical factor preventing speedy recovery of the birds. Waterfowl nesting conditions in the north-central United States were excellent this season. Recent reports indicate that eastern Canada has had a normal nesting population, but those from the Prairie Provinces are not assuring. A competent observer, who is intimately acquainted with the situation over a vast area, writes as follows: "Frankly, I should like very much to report more optimistically, but under the circumstances this is impossible. Locally, of course, the picture is a bright one full of encouragement with a wealth of ducks of several species and good broods of young. But this condition is conspicuously local in all respects. In some instances the numbers of birds were definitely disappointing, and many dry potholes and sloughs are of course destitute of waterfowl."

The 1940 hunting-season kill of ducks and geese is believed to be almost equal to the year's crop. The upward trend of the waterfowl population, following the low ebb of 1935, has conspicuously leveled off during the past year. The net increase is only slight—possibly 5 to 8 per cent. The breeding population of some species that return to the nesting grounds is still too small for safety. Some waterfowl, such as the Redhead, continue to be in a precarious condition. Nevertheless, unscrupulous or uninformed groups of sportsmen clamor for further relaxation of restrictions on hunting.

The steadily increasing number of waterfowl hunters has now almost overtaken the gains that close hunting restrictions allowed the waterfowl to make between 1935 and 1940. Nearly everyone admits that 'luck,' in the form of poor hunting weather, alone prevented a huge kill in the fall of 1940. We believe that the concessions made

to hunters—longer season, longer shooting days, increase of the 1939 possession limit—are unwise.

The recently announced liberalization of gunning regulations permitting the daily take of one Wood Duck per hunter, during the sixty-day hunting season, in fifteen States of the South and Southeast should be carefully watched to determine the effect on the status of the species.

CANVAS-BACK AND RUDDY DUCKS.—It appears to your committee that the return of the Canvas-back and the Ruddy Duck to the list of species with the daily 10- and 20-bag and possession limit is a grave error and an act for which there is insufficient justification. While an increase has been noted in both of these species of divers, these birds are still rare or uncommon over vast areas where they were formerly abundant. It is generally admitted that the Redhead is in a precarious condition. The fact that this bird is not easily distinguished from the Canvas-back and commonly associates with it, makes the security of the Redhead still more precarious by the lack of protection given the Canvas-back.

ROSS'S GOOSE.—Decidedly smaller numbers of the Ross's Goose were seen on the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, California, during December 1940, as compared with those of the preceding year. This species continues in need of special protective measures. Closing the hunting season for several years on all white 'geese' west of the Great Basin (or at least in California, the principal wintering area) would not seem to be too severe if the Ross's Goose is to be saved.

The Federal authorities are to be commended for the amendment to the regulations which provide that "no person may take more than 3 geese in the aggregate of all kinds during any 7 consecutive days" in Hyde County, North Carolina; Alexander County, Illinois; or Siskiyou County, California. These special county bag limits represent an experiment in Federal game management and are designed to curtail excessive kills in areas where geese (especially Canadas) concentrate during the hunting season. In some of these regions more than one third of the entire wintering goose population has been killed off during the hunting season. A reduction in the kill in these concentration areas is therefore a genuine conservation measure.

TRUMPETER SWAN.—Increase of Trumpeter Swans continues to be very slow. The United States population of this species as of August 15, 1941, was counted at only 211 birds. More than double this number is believed to exist in western Canada, yet the dangers confronting the swans make this hold on life all too slender. No increase is known to have followed the planting of six adult swans (only

three of which survived) in Jackson Hole in 1938 and of three more at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon, in 1939, of which only two survived. It is possible that poaching, or stupid confusion of swans for legal game, is responsible for holding down the numbers of birds in the United States. We therefore highly commend the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for closing the season on Snow Geese in Idaho. While we support this action, we feel that a closed season for Snow Geese in the Montana counties adjacent to Red Rock Lakes Wildlife Refuge and Yellowstone National Park would be of at least equal benefit to the swans. This would remove any possible excuse for the killing of Trumpeter Swans by hunters who confuse these two white birds. We also commend the Emergency Conservation Committee for its initiative in directing and supporting an educational campaign among the people of southern Idaho, southwestern Montana and northern Utah regarding the identification and status of these majestic birds. It is to be hoped that this campaign, although modest in size, will accomplish its purpose of making safe the wintering ground of the Trumpeters of the United States.

Additional dangers to the swans have recently arisen in proposals for major military projects in the region. Fortunately these have been cancelled.

OIL POLLUTION.—Loss of seabirds by oil pollution continues to be sporadic but nevertheless important. We have had reports that several hundred ducks come ashore on Cape Cod each winter, their plumage saturated with the heavy residue of fuel oil pumped overboard from vessels. A considerable number of these birds succumb. This waste oil cannot be legally discharged in American waters, but nevertheless it may drift for long distances. The person who finds a market for this unused heavy oil will do a tremendous service to oceanic and coastal bird life.

Oil pollution in the eastern North Atlantic Ocean and North Sea has been much intensified in the past two years because of the war. The lighter and more refined oil from sinking vessels saturates the plumage of birds more rapidly and completely than does the residual crude waste. We are informed that loss of bird life along the English coasts is greater than ever before, and that at least one organization of private citizens has been formed to rescue oil-soaked birds when possible. Another report states that windrows of dead, oil-blackened ducks have been seen on the Dutch shores. Let us hope that this does not foreshadow the shape of things to come on the western side of the Atlantic.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR.—Little new information on the status of the California Condor has reached us. Under a National Audubon Society research fellowship, Carl Koford has assembled a mass of data and management suggestions. He is satisfied that there has been no further decline and perhaps as much as a ten per cent increase in numbers of condors during the past two years. The Forest Service is gathering records of condor occurrence through 75 fire-lookouts in southern California. The Sisquoc sanctuary of 1300 acres in the Los Padres National Forest is obviously far too small, however, to accomplish its purpose. The entire Forest should be closed to all hunting or carrying of firearms, and food should be provided the condors if it is found to be necessary.

DUCK HAWK.—This Committee has kept in touch with investigations on the status of the Duck Hawk. The bird appears to be more numerous than is generally suspected. Recent publicity regarding the possibility of using falcons for destruction of enemy carrier pigeons seems to be founded on such poor chances of success that it is doubtful that the wild stock of falcons will be seriously disturbed.

BALD EAGLE.—It is too early to determine the effects of the new legislation extending protection to the Bald Eagle population of the United States. Although Alaska was expressly excluded from the Act, the incentive for destroying eagles in the Territory was removed in March, 1941, by the Governor's veto of the bounty appropriation. Judging from the scarcity of this bird over great areas of its range in Alaska, even this negative protection is desirable, at least until a life-history and food-habits study now being made by the Fish and Wildlife Service is completed.

SHARP-TAILED AND PINNATED GROUSE.—With increasing favorable conditions in the Great Plains area, the condition of the grouse-prairie chicken group may improve. The Attwater's Prairie Chicken, however, is rapidly disappearing and is in grave danger of extinction. Except in four Texas counties, it is now extirpated from all of its former range. Cultivation, overgrazing, and other destruction of habitat, as well as local hunting, have been highly detrimental. To control the loss due to shooting, the Texas legislature in 1937 provided a five-year closed season on all prairie chickens in the State. Naturally, this should be renewed, but creation of large refuges, on which proper habitat management can be controlled, must be prompt.

The Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse, with its western subspecies, is suffering a rapid contraction of its geographic range within the United States. This contraction of range in the West is clearly due to overgrazing and to plowing-up of the habitat by dry farmers. Shrinkage

in the Lake States is clearly due to the conversion of cutover areas from brush to closed forest, and to the usurpation of peat marshes by aspen thickets. The closing of the tree canopy on cutovers is the consequence of better fire control; the spread of aspen on marshes follows the peat fires which ran during the dry years of 1930-34.

In most western States the Sharp-tail is regarded as a 'lost cause.' This attitude seems particularly unfortunate for two reasons: (1) it seems to imply the acceptance of universal overgrazing as an inevitable and permanent condition; (2) there are ample Pittman-Robertson funds wherewith to demonstrate that relief from overgrazing will bring an upgrade in Sharp-tail populations. It is not necessary to *purchase* Sharp-tail refuges; in fact, leases calling for the continuance of farming but the discontinuance of heavy grazing would be preferable to the total cessation of both farming and grazing.

In the Lake States uplands the general closing of the canopy on cutover lands is unavoidable; the spread of Sharp-tails on these lands was a temporary aftermath of lumbering and free-running fires. A few spots suitable for Sharp-tails could be saved, however, if State and Federal foresters would cease planting all openings to conifers.

In Lake States marshes the general encroachment of aspen thickets on former hay meadows is the natural penalty for former peat fires. Wisconsin is experimenting in controlled burning as a means of reducing aspen. This may work, if the burns are superficial. If the fires are allowed to bite deep, it will aggravate the aspen problem.

Speaking generally, it is clear that the Sharp-tail is fast losing its position as a shootable game bird. The next decade may bring the virtual elimination of the Columbian subspecies, and the reduction of the Lake States Sharp-tail to non-shootable levels.

Many people believe that the abundant 'Prairie Chicken' of western Canada is the Pinnated Grouse. This is not true. There are very few Pinnated Grouse in Canada, and these are confined to the border. The Canadian 'Prairie Chickens' are Sharp-tails.

In the United States, the main stronghold of the Pinnated Grouse in the Lake States is fast shrinking, and for the same reasons as the Sharp-tail: the encroachment of aspen on marshes, and the encroachment of timber on the cutover land. Further south in the dairy belt grazing, drainage, and pheasants are evicting remnants of Pinnated Grouse with exceptional rapidity. Southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and northern Indiana may lose these grouse within a decade. The reverse, however, is true of southern Illinois and Missouri, where 'poor' prairies are reverting and Pinnated Grouse

are on the upgrade. Recent literature indicates rapid shrinkage in Texas and tolerable conditions in parts of Oklahoma.

The recent retirement from farming of large new military reservations ought to provide an excellent opportunity to restore both the prairie flora and the fauna, including Pinnated Grouse.

'Game-restoration' efforts in many States are concentrated on raising and liberating Ring-necked Pheasants, Hungarian Partridges and other exotic game birds. If long continued to excess, this practice may not only replace but even exterminate some of our native game birds. We believe that a larger percentage of available funds should be spent for research and for habitat improvement. More emphasis should be placed on encouraging natural propagation of native game birds.

WHOOPIING AND FLORIDA CRANES.—Estimates made in 1938 placed the Whooping Crane population at less than 300. An intensive field study of winter food habits is under way in order to determine management methods of Federal and Audubon Society refuges on the Gulf Coast. As crane wintering grounds, the most important of these is the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Twenty-six Whoopers, of which at least five were immature, were seen here on December 17, 1940. Whether production of young has kept pace with losses is not known, but the Whooping Crane is certainly in a precarious state.

In the Okeechobee-Kissimmee region the Florida Crane has had a good nesting year. An encouraging report comes from southern Georgia of a flock of 150 seen near Dinner Pond in the Okefenokee Swamp.

WOODCOCK.—Following more than fifteen years of gradual increase, the Woodcock population has definitely and seriously slumped. As a result of the storm disasters of early 1940, the hunting season in the United States and Canada was reduced by one half. Subsequent studies have shown that this measure was not enough to bring about recovery. Although fairly good reproduction occurred in the Maritime Provinces, the breeding stock was definitely lower in the eastern United States for the second successive year.

In view of the precarious status of this bird, it is both disappointing and surprising that fourteen different open-season periods should be provided to insure the most favorable shooting for the hunters in the various States and sections of States where the bird occurs. New York, for example, is divided into three zones and while the hunting period in any one zone is limited to fifteen days there is a total limit of 45 days for the State as a whole and a period of 90 hunting days for the eastern United States where the bird occurs. For a species

that lays but four eggs and rears but one brood a year and has such a limited distribution and habitat range, further restriction on the take appears to your committee to be imperative.

WILSON'S SNIPE.—The numbers of Wilson's Snipe are "startlingly small" as compared with those of ten to twenty years ago. Until definitely normal, these reduced populations should not be subjected to hunting. We are gratified that Federal officials have recognized the precarious situation that exists and have therefore placed this bird under full protection for the present year at least.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE.—The plight of the White-winged Dove has become increasingly serious and its management problem is complicated by the international character of its range.

The Texas breeding population of the Eastern White-wing, which is an important game bird in southeastern Texas and especially in the lower Rio Grande Valley, is decreasing at an alarming rate. It has been reliably reported that as recently as the fall of 1924 there were in the lower Rio Grande Valley at least twenty major flights of these birds which totaled at least four million individuals. In the fall of 1940 Federal and State field investigators estimated that fewer than 250,000 'White-wings' were present in the same area. Word just received indicates a further decided decrease in breeding stock in 1941 as compared with that of 1940.

A joint Federal-State research project on both eastern and western White-wings is now in progress. Its purposes are to determine the means for safeguarding the population of White-winged Doves which breeds in the Rio Grande Valley and in southern Arizona. The results of this investigation will undoubtedly indicate required changes in hunting regulations, as well as recommend a plan for the acquisition and management of nesting-ground refuges. Sufficient work was done in 1940 by Federal and State investigators to show that the serious decline in the Eastern White-wing was due to (1) drastic reduction in acreage of nesting grounds as a result of the clearing of woodland to provide agricultural land; (2) reduced production of young as a result of severe predation by two species of egg-eating birds; and (3) too heavy kill by hunting.

The Western White-wing is in a similarly unfavorable condition. The breeding stock that returned to Arizona from Mexico in the spring of 1941 was probably considerably smaller than that of the preceding year. Since food and water conditions were excellent, it was hoped that a very successful nesting season would result. Unfortunately, indications are that predation and other factors caused 50 to 75 per cent mortality to eggs and young.

In view of the extremely critical status of the White-wing in the United States and the general recognition of the situation in the two States affected, namely, Arizona and Texas, it is most disappointing that a completely closed hunting season was not imposed. Even the organized sportsmen of Arizona officially recommended a closed season. Almost everyone in both States familiar with the situation realizes that curtailment of the take and a restoration of breeding habitat are imperative. While some restriction in the regulations has been provided, the facts at hand show clearly that a completely closed season is urgently needed. The 1941 regulations permit a twelve-bird limit each day from September 1 to September 15 in Arizona and September 16 to September 25 in Texas. Unless we wake up to the seriousness of the situation, extirpation of this economically important bird from the United States will soon be accomplished.

MOURNING DOVE.—Recent findings are also causing much concern for the Eastern Mourning Dove. Although an attempt was made by restrictive hunting regulations to conserve the survivors of the January 1940 storms, the number of doves at present is decidedly unsatisfactory. The stock must be protected if a good recovery is to be attained within a reasonable time. An open season and a heavy kill at this period of the bird's struggle for existence might be disastrous. It is fortunate that some curtailment of the season was provided for 1941. Nevertheless, this maximum of 42 days is still much too long under the present emergency. The Department of the Interior has recently reported that the status of the bird is "decidedly unsatisfactory."

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER.—Little new information is available regarding the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Logging of its principal remaining habitat is proceeding rapidly, and under present conditions will probably run to its conclusion. The number of birds remaining is very low and this, coupled with destruction of the environment, makes extermination appear all but inevitable. A bill (S. 329) has been introduced into Congress to establish the area as the Tensas Swamp National Park. An adverse report has been rendered by the Bureau of the Budget, and no action has been taken by the Congress. Unless public demand and interest are shown, little progress can be made toward acquisition of this vital area.

STATUS OF GAME BIRDS.—We have mentioned some of the dangers confronting bird species in America. In several cases these are so-called 'game species,' and a vociferous minority of the hunting fraternity is a menace to some of them. We have no quarrel with the

thoughtful, informed sportsmen who desire reasonable shooting of species that can stand the drain. Unfortunately, however, a considerable number of hunters seemingly desire to kill to the limit of their gun capacity, and let tomorrow take care of itself. This group is noisy and frequently influential. Because its platform is spectacular and appeals to personal selfishness it is frequently supported and publicized by some of the 'sportsmen's' magazines. Conservationists should not hesitate to oppose this group and their publicity. A dignified silence will never express reasonable protection sentiment to administrators and legislators who are bombarded with demands for longer hunting days and seasons, legalization of baiting and live decoys for waterfowl, and other excessive devices.

Realization of the value of predatory birds is increasing but slowly. In a recent publication we regretted to note a recommendation for pole-trapping of raptors, by farmers and sportsmen, for the protection of pheasants. The author points out that "with the trap jaws padded, the harmless forms can be released." Indiscriminate pole-trapping should be outlawed. We are reluctant to believe that the sponsors of this bulletin really stand behind this inadvertent statement in an otherwise commendable publication. (A substitute statement, signed by two members of this Committee, is appended to the report.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The haste and waste that inevitably and unavoidably accompany the current national-defense program carry many direct and indirect hazards to bird life. This Committee would not be so foolish as to oppose any legitimate military demands essential to the safety of this country. Through the liaison established between federal conservation agencies and the military establishments, means exist for working out protection for birds where possible. But, unfortunately, unnecessary destruction will occur. Bombing- and gunnery-practice areas may be laid out on important bird-nesting or feeding grounds when other sites could be substituted. Marshes will be drained in attempts to secure immunity from mosquitoes. Power development projects will run wild, converting valleys now fertile for waterfowl into practically sterile storage reservoirs. Heading the list of this Committee's recommendations, therefore, we suggest that:

1. Information on military projects that would appear detrimental to important bird habitats should be sent at the earliest possible moment to the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.
2. Public support should be given to any measure, such as S. 329,

that would result in acquisition and protection of the last important habitat of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

3. Support should be given to establishment of a wildlife refuge for further protection of the unique bird life of southern Florida.

4. As soon as possible after adoption of the Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation in the Americas, the Congress of the United States should enact legislation to give effect to the Convention's numerous provisions for protection of rare birds and other animals.

5. We hope that legislation will be enacted by the several States to make illegal the traffic in wild-bird plumage for millinery purposes.

6. Again we urge the California Division of Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife Service to close the Sacramento Valley to the shooting of all white geese, in order more effectively to protect the Ross's Goose.

7. The regulations governing hunting of waterfowl should be made more restrictive, until very definite further gains of the breeding-bird populations indicate that more intensive hunting may be allowed with safety. The Ruddy Duck and the Canvas-back should not be subjected to the '10- and 20'-bag limit.

8. The Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the several States are urged to study and carry out measures for the better protection of the Trumpeter Swan. Measures in addition to those now in force should include: exclusion of fishermen and other persons from nesting areas; posting of swan-use areas, whether in public or private ownership; and education of the hunting public on means of distinguishing swans from legal game. The Snow Goose season should be closed in Beaverhead, Gallatin and Madison Counties, Montana.

9. The entire Los Padres National Forest should be closed to all hunting and food provided therein, if needed, as a means of protecting and increasing the numbers of the California Condor.

10. We repeat our recommendation of last year that the Arizona Game Commission, the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, and the Fish and Wildlife Service should declare a continuous closed season on the White-winged Dove.

11. Marked restriction of the hunting kill of the Woodcock and Mourning Dove is imperative.

CLARENCE COTTAM

ALDO LEOPOLD

WM. L. FINLEY

VICTOR H. CAHALANE, (*Chairman*)

SUBSTITUTE STATEMENT ON POLE-TRAPPING OF RAPTORS

Realization of the value of predatory birds is increasing but slowly; control operations indefensible from any enlightened point of view continue not only to be carried out, but to be officially sanctioned by conservation agencies. Thus Oregon State College, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the American Wildlife Institute are the joint sponsors of a bulletin recommending pole-trapping of raptors, by farmers and sportsmen, for the protection of pheasants. Pole-trapping, we thought, had long been outlawed by "the decent opinion of all mankind." We are reluctant to believe that these three agencies, each of which has done such excellent conservation work in Oregon, really stand behind this publication.

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