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REDINGTON REPORTS ON WILD-LIFE
ADMINISTRATION TO SECRETARY HYDE

Discusses the Research, Conservation, and
Control Activities of the Bureau
of Biological Survey

That the first requisite in wild-life administration is an adequate knowledge of all the facts regarding the wild animals and birds of the country--their relationships and economic value, their habits, and their abundance--is stressed by Paul G. Redington, chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, in his report to Secretary Hyde of the U. S. Department of Agriculture on the work of the Biological Survey for the fiscal year ending June 30 made public to-day (November 27). Only with such facts known, says Mr. Redington, can the wild life of the country be administered on a sound scientific basis and the harmless and useful species protected and those that are economically injurious controlled.

Mr. Redington elaborated on the research work of the bureau concerned with the distribution and abundance of migratory birds, conservation of big-game mammals, habits of the wild life of forest areas, and with the food requirements and feeding habits of useful and harmful birds, rodents, and other forms. He presented the results of cooperative studies in the propagation of quail and other game birds, of experiments at the bureau's fur experiment stations and on fur farms in raising fur-bearing animals in captivity, and of investigations for the improvement of reindeer in Alaska.

The control of predatory animals and injurious rodents, Mr. Redington says, has the background of scientific research, both as to the habits of the various species and as to control methods to be applied. These methods are furthered and extension of needed work is made possible by the cooperation of

States, farmers' and stockmen's organizations, and individuals. Campaigns against injurious species are not directed toward the extermination of any of the interesting native wild animals or birds, but toward local control only of those that become detrimental to farming, stock-raising, or other economic interests, or to game and other useful wild species, he says.

Refuges for Wild Fowl

"In recent years it has become evident that close seasons on game birds, bag limits, and restrictions imposed upon gunners will prove ineffectual unless suitable habitat of wild fowl is preserved. There has been a constantly decreasing acreage of water and marsh area in this country, aggregating many thousands of square miles. The passage of the migratory bird conservation act during this year is a national recognition of the great importance of the birds of North America as a food supply, as an incentive to healthful sport, outdoor study, and recreation, and as aids in the development of Agriculture," says the report.

Mr. Redington emphasized the need for facilities for the adequate administration by the Biological Survey of the 82 bird reservations already under its jurisdiction, pointing out that without proper administration "many sanctuary areas have no more value as wild-life refuges than have adjacent unprotected lands."

Protective Laws

"Unquestionably, public interest in the enforcement of laws for wild-life conservation generally is increasing," says Mr. Redington, "though illicit operations by the market gunner, the spring shooter, and the night hunter are still conducted on a serious scale in some localities, but every effort commensurate with the ability of a limited enforcement personnel is being made to curb these violations. That attempts to enforce the provisions of the migratory-bird treaty act with only 25 full-time United States game protectors can not be wholly effective is obvious. The problem is becoming more serious as wilful violators become aware of the lack of an adequate force of protectors.

"There is urgent need for a Federal statute under which assailants of Federal officers may be adequately punished. The occupation of a game

protector is hazardous work, and lack of protection in the performance of his duties not only diminishes the effective execution of the police powers conferred but provokes contempt for the law. Since the passage of the migratory-bird treaty act, one Federal game protector has been killed while engaged in the enforcement of the regulations, two have been seriously injured, and others have been assaulted by persons whom they were attempting to arrest. In cases of such assaults redress can be sought only in local courts, where the results have proved unsatisfactory."

Fur Farming

In discussing the subject of fur-farming, Mr. Redington said that under sound business and scientific management the profits derived from the sale of pelts and breeding stock are greatly stimulating the growth of the business, and that more than \$20,000,000 is invested in the approximately 5,000 fur farms in the United States and Alaska, exclusive of many valuable areas of muskrat marshes, which also are being operated privately or by the States as fur farms. Investigations of diseases of fur animals and the development of better methods of treating the diseases, have been continued with very satisfactory results, he said.

Alaskan Wild Life

Mr. Redington discusses the measures in force for the conservation of the valuable big-game and fur mammals and the bird life of Alaska, which, he says, are among the most important of the natural resources of the Territory. In large sections of Alaska a human population could scarcely exist without relying upon native game animals and birds for food. Administration of the Alaska game law has been carried on by the Alaska Game Commission with an exceedingly limited personnel, he said, but it has been well supported by those interested in the development of Alaska's resources.

TO EDITORS: The following is furnished for the use of editors of outdoor and other publications who desire a longer and more detailed article.

Conservation and Human Needs

"Although economic considerations should by no means be allowed to out-

weigh all others that are advanced for the welfare of wild life," says Mr. Redington, "they have a proper place in every measure considered for wild-life conservation, for man must in many places subdue nature and make it serve his purposes; fields must replace large forest areas; and domestic livestock must supplant most of the wild ruminants, predatory animals, and injurious rodents. In the process whereby civilization, either intelligently or wantonly, is changing natural conditions, the wild life, wisely preserved and controlled, can be made an asset of great value, not only of economic but of esthetic and scientific importance, and the natural habits of many species may themselves be utilized in numerous ways."

Outstanding Accomplishments of Bureau

Mr. Redington enumerated the more important advances during the year in wild-life research, control, and conservation, among which the following are outstanding:

Enactment by Congress, on February 18, 1929, of the migratory-bird conservation act, and first steps by the Biological Survey looking toward the acquisition of lands authorized thereunder for refuges for migratory birds.

Completion of engineering studies for improving the extensive marshes at the mouth of Bear River, Utah, as a refuge for migratory birds.

Submission to Congress, in accordance with a proviso in the appropriation act for the fiscal year 1929, of a proposed 10-year program of predatory-animal and rodent control on national forests and other public domain and elsewhere in cooperation with State organizations.

Increase in cooperation with the States in predatory-animal and rodent control, as evidenced by provisions by States of cooperative funds totaling \$1,800,000 for the current year as compared with \$1,400,000 for the past year, and increase in the number of States cooperating.

Stimulus to control operations against jack rabbits by finding a market for the pelts, the collection and the sale of which, in addition to ridding crop and range areas of destructive rodents, netted western farmers and stockmen approximately \$2,000,000.

Determining for the benefit of fur farmers that the so-called "distemper" of foxes in captivity covers at least four diseases, and definitely ascertaining the breeding period of the marten.

Completion of a five-year study of quail production, including recommendations for increasing the abundance of quail in covers, controlling natural enemies of the birds, and improving methods of propagation.

Changes in Bureau Organization

With in the year the Division of Land Acquisition, a new division, was created in the Biological Survey, for conducting surveys preliminary to the establishment of migratory-bird refuges; the name of the former division of economic investigations was changed to Division of Predatory-Animal and Rodent Control; and a separate Congressional appropriation was made for the Division of Fur Resources.

"In its research on wild life, its control operations, and its conservation activities," says Mr. Redington, "the Federal Government, through the Bureau of Biological Survey, supplements the efforts of each of the States to protect the species which live there and are enjoyed by its citizens. This work of the Federal Government can be successful only through the whole-hearted cooperation of the States and the people generally, and it may be recorded here that such cooperation is being extended in increasing measure."

Control Facilities

During the year, in addition to Federal funds for rodent and predatory-animal control amounting to about \$560,000, cooperators made available for expenditure by the Biological Survey nearly \$1,400,000, making the total expenditure for such control under the direction of the Biological Survey nearly \$2,000,000. "The success thus far attained with the limited resources," says Mr. Redington, "indicates the even greater accomplishments that might be expected if the bureau were equipped to carry out an adequate control program extending over a period of ten years."

Wild Life Refuges and the Public

In discussing the value of wild-life refuges for public recreation, Mr. Redington says that this feature "deserves development to the greatest extent possible consistent with the use of these areas as refuges for wild life. Each year increasing numbers of students of wild life and others visit the big-game preserves and bird refuges. Facilities at these reservations are not yet sufficient to allow the public to enjoy them to the fullest extent possible without danger to themselves or molestation of the animals.

"Under most conditions, the successful administration of a refuge requires constant supervision. Game and food species must be protected against

encroachments by poachers and often against such destroyers as forest fires. There are likely to be periods during which some predatory forms must be controlled. On the other hand, overabundance of the species to be protected may become a serious menace to their welfare, and arrangements must then be made to prevent overgrazing by disposing satisfactorily of the surplus."

Migratory-Bird Refuges

Preliminary work looking toward the establishment of the new migratory-bird refuges, authorized by the migratory-bird conservation act of February 18, 1929, is under way, Mr. Redington says, adding that at the close of the year authority had been provided by special State legislation for the Federal Government to acquire lands for migratory-bird refuges in nine States, and in 17 others the existing legislation is considered to be sufficient for the purpose."

Enforcement of Protective Laws

Conservationists, sportsmen, and trappers are all interested in obtaining maximum returns from the administration of laws protecting big-game, game birds, and fur bearers, and there has been insistent demand in the last year for an extension of the law-enforcement activities directed by the Biological Survey. The occupation of a game protector is hazardous work, and lack of protection in the performance of his duties not only diminishes the effective execution of the police powers conferred but provokes contempt for the law.

Little opposition has been voiced to the law-enforcement work of the Alaska Game Commission, he said; on the contrary, there are constant demands that more adequate wild-life protective measures be undertaken. Prosecutions of violators have resulted in an exceptionally high percentage of convictions, and substantial fines and jail sentences have been the rule. As a result, the sharp decline in wild life has been checked, and some forms are already being gradually restored. Under wise management, large areas that would otherwise be unproductive can be made to produce valuable annual crops of fur and game indefinitely. These wild animals are a notable feature of Alaska's wild life, attracting from the States and other countries many visitors whose expenditures for equipment, travel, personal services, etc., constitute what is by no means an inconsiderable contribution to the commerce of the Territory.

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