

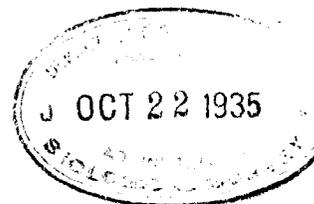
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LAND GRANT COLLEGES STUDY GAME

By Frederic J. Haskin



Washington, D. C.....A brand new profession is about to be built up in the United States. It is the profession of wild life specialist. Partly with Federal funds, nine Land Grant Colleges are to inaugurate special courses of study in the conservation of wild life, and students at these institutions will be provided with a course calculated to instruct them in the propagation of wild life. The experiment stations of the colleges will be used for the purpose.

The plan is part of the larger scheme of wild life conservation, undertaken as a part of the Administration's New Deal program. J. N. Darling, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, is at the head of the movement. Mr. Darling thought that he had an allocation of \$25,000,000 with which to carry into effect his pretentious plans, but technical difficulties have arisen to interfere with the availability of the money. Some money is available but not enough to do all the things immediately which Mr. Darling had planned and which President Roosevelt approved. It seems the Department of Justice is in doubt as to the validity of the allocation and also that Comptroller General McCarl has interposed.

It now has proved possible for the Federal Government to allot to each of four Land Grant Colleges the sum of \$6,000 for wild life experiments. Each College contributes out of its own funds a similar

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amount, and the State Game Commission of each State in which one of these colleges is located adds another \$6,000. The salary and expenses of a representative of the Bureau of Biological Survey will be paid out of this total of \$18,000 and the rest of the money will be used to the best advantage in carrying out the work of game production.

The Congressional appropriation furnished only enough money to allow grants to four colleges, but a sort of syndicate of private corporations has put up the money for the other five. The E. I. duPont de Nemours Company, the Remington Arms Company, and the Hercules Powder Company are the contributors. The interest of these companies lies in the fact that, unless game in the United States remains plentiful, the sales of sporting arms and of gunpowder will fall off. While, in war-time, the sales of such companies enjoy a boom period, over the years the bulk of their production goes to sportsmen. While Mr. Darling appreciates the public-spirited attitude of these private companies in supplementing Congress in providing money, he recognizes an attitude of what has been called enlightened selfishness.

-- Effort to Produce Wild Life --

For many years the Bureau of Fisheries of the Department of Commerce has been stocking streams, lakes, and ponds, and even the open sea with fish. Had it not been for these efforts it is certain that very few fish would now be found in American waters. As it is, the sturgeon has gone from the Hudson River where it thrived in colonial times and some other varieties are almost extinct.

Not before has the same sort of effort been made in behalf of the rest of the wild life. Of course, latterly, the buffalo has been protected but not until it was too late. The buffalo inhabited North America from New York State to the Pacific Coast. There were millions of the animals but they were slain by the millions. There has for some

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years been a Federal law to protect migratory birds and the various States have their own laws establishing closed seasons on certain types of game. But never has there been so concerted an effort as now is being made and never has there been an effort to produce, in addition to protecting, wild life.

One has to go back to memoirs of colonial times to understand to what extent the wild life of America has been destroyed. The skies, according to the early writers, were literally darkened by the flights of birds. Quite a number of species now are completely gone and it is doubtful whether they can be restored from stock brought from other countries. In some cases, such birds do not exist anywhere else and never did. The last heath hen died on Nantucket Island about two or three years ago. It was a curiosity. Actually it was a cock but the generic name of the species is heath hen. The trumpeter swan is about gone, too.

There are some sanctuaries. The National Parks are game preserves but, in terms of the whole country, they do not amount to much. There are some privately maintained sanctuaries, the largest being a bird sanctuary in Arkansas. Millions of birds make it their home. It is an interesting thing that these creatures soon learn where they are safe from man.

-- Making People Game-Conscious --

According to Mr. Darling, this piecemeal handling of the wild life situation is inadequate. The work must be done on a national scale and extend to propagation as well as protection. There is a small group of persons who, for years, have taken the situation to heart and have been studying means of producing more game. Their experience is being availed of by Mr. Darling and he now is convinced that the wild life population can be greatly increased. Nor will this conservation

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interfere with the use of land for tillage. Indeed, Mr. Darling asserts that the presence of game will enhance the value of farm lands.

It will be the effort of the technician assigned by the Bureau of Biological Survey to each of the nine Land Grant Colleges selected to cooperate with the local representative of the State Game and Fish Commission. There are scientists at these schools whose skill also will be enlisted. It is expected that quite a few students will elect to take a course of study in game management and soon will be available as trained assistants. Further, the county agents will be called upon to cooperate in the work.

The cooperation of the entire communities is important also, because it would be difficult to increase the game population consistently if every farmer is going to shoot the birds or other creatures on sight. The Biological Survey experts will advise on what sort of game to concentrate upon. While it is probable that the first efforts will be in connection with bird life, the program is to be extended to cover whatever sort of game can be produced as though indigenous to the region. It is scarcely to be expected that a North Carolina college, for example, will attempt to breed buffalo but it might very properly breed foxes.

With the aid of county agents, it is planned to carry on a sort of community instruction in game preservation to the end that everyone in the region will be more or less skilled in the business of game management. Mr. Darling points out that, in addition to the sport which will be furnished when the game population recovers sufficiently, a source of profit to land owners can be developed. Louisiana is the richest fur State in the Union and an annual income of millions accrues to the hunters and trappers of that region. Other States can develop the same sort of resource. If Mr. Darling has his way, it looks as though in a few years one will scarcely be able to stir out of the house without stumbling over a cassowary.

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