

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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U.S., JAPAN SIGN CONVENTION FOR PROTECTION OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT,
AND BIRDS IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION

The Governments of the United States and Japan have signed a Convention in Tokyo designed to assure the protection of birds which inhabit both countries, it was announced today.

The Convention marks the culmination of several years of international conservation effort. Following extensive consultation between experts of both countries, the Government of Japan, in June 1968, proposed meetings to the Government of the United States to explore the possibility of a bilateral agreement for the preservation of migratory birds.

The agreement provides that each country develop programs for the preservation of the environment as well as the birds themselves.

Studies undertaken toward this objective have shown that almost 200 species of birds are found in both countries and that 30 or more species move between them. Many species dependent upon Alaskan habitat are seen in Japan, emphasizing the worldwide importance of protecting Alaska's land and waters. Among those species in both countries threatened with extinction are the short-tailed albatross, the peregrine falcon, and the Aleutian Canada goose.

The Convention, which is subject to verification, will enter into force when instruments of ratification are exchanged at Washington. The agreement has an initial duration of 15 years, but it will remain in force indefinitely unless terminated by either party on one year's notice.

The United States Department of State was strongly supported by the Department of the Interior, and, in particular, in recent months, by Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton in the discussions which led to this Convention. The Smithsonian Institution, under its Secretary, S. Dillon Ripley, also played a key role.

This effort emanated from the 12th Meeting, in 1960, of the International Council for Bird Preservation, of which Mr. Ripley is President. At that meeting a resolution by Japan, unanimously supported by other Asian nations, proposed that countries of the Pan-Pacific area conclude conventions for the protection of migratory birds.

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