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WOULD PRESERVE WONDERS OF OKEFINOKEE SWAMP.

Okefinokee Swamp, "with no counterpart anywhere in the world, and containing numerous features of extraordinary interest which call for permanent national preservation," according to the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture, is threatened by commercial exploitation which will destroy its primeval conditions and remove the last of the three great swamps of the Atlantic seaboard.

Attention to the danger confronting this "greatest natural wonder" of Georgia is called by a writer of the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, in Natural History (the Journal of the American Museum of Natural History). He states, however, that the Okefinokee Society, which was organized in 1918 through local sentiment in Waycross, Ga., a city near the swamp, is taking steps to preserve the region for posterity. The Okefinokee Society, which is prepared to undertake the raising of private funds, plans, after securing the area for a reservation, to present it to the United States Government in order that it may be administered and perpetuated as a national wild-life refuge.

The Okefinokee covers nearly 700 square miles in the southeastern part of Georgia. "Among the fresh-water swamps east of the Mississippi," says the Biological Survey writer, "it is exceeded in size only by the Everglades; and in the richness of its historical and literary associations, in the marvelous beauty and charm of its diversified scenery, and in its

extraordinary interest as a faunal and floral area, Okefinokee Swamp is unique. It has no counterpart anywhere in the world.

"There are several respects in which the swamp would make a particularly useful and valuable reservation under Federal or other auspices. It is a refuge for some exceptionally rare and interesting forms of animal life. It is an important wintering ground for large numbers of migratory waterfowl. It still contains, in spite of extensive lumbering operations, some five hundred square miles of diversified territory in an absolutely primeval state, offering to naturalists unsurpassed opportunities for faunal and ecological studies. Moreover, it has a distinct esthetic value, the extraordinary beauty of its scenery making a strong appeal to all lovers of nature who have been privileged to visit the region."

While the Okefinokee has enjoyed historical and literary renown for over a century, its biological features have been systematically investigated by men of scientific training only within a comparatively few years. These men believe that in the eastern United States there is no area of equal extent which affords such exceptional opportunities for the study of animal life in a primeval environment. With the rapid destruction of natural conditions over the entire country, they say it is of the utmost importance from the standpoint of science that at least a few areas here and there be preserved in their original state.

There are probably between 100 and 200 black bears in its swamp and immediate environments. Other animals that have been noted in the region are Florida deer, Florida otters, panthers, Florida wolves, alligators, wildcats, raccoons, opossums, and skunks, as well as numerous rare and interesting species of fish and fowl.

"The wonderfully rich and diverse plant life of the Okefinokee," it is recorded, "constitutes one of its greatest charms and beauties. And herein one may perceive a veritable illustration of the 'curse of beauty'; for it is the magnificent timber of the swamp that furnishes its commercial value and has invited destructive exploitation."

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