



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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SECRETARY ICKES HAILS HEMISPHERE PACT TO PROTECT NATURE RESOURCES

The United States, acting through the Department of the Interior, is ready to carry forward its part under the Inter-American Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation recently ratified by the Senate, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes said today.

Seventeen American republics, including the United States, now have signed the pact to protect nature and preserve wildlife in the Western Hemisphere. The treaty calls for the establishment and extension of national parks, nature areas, and similar reservations which will preserve natural wonders, exceptional scenery, or places of outstanding historic or scientific interest. It also provides for the protection of wildlife in these areas.

Principal beneficiaries under the pact will be the numerous species of migratory birds that go back and forth between the two continents. These include the Hudsonian curlew, upland plover, and other shorebirds; bobolink, nighthawk, barn and other swallows; most of the wood warblers and vireos; several thrushes; orioles; and many species of the large family of sparrows.

Mammals also will receive consideration under the new pact. Several forms of vanishing or depleted species that will particularly benefit under conservation measures include the huemal, a deer that inhabits the Andes, the brocket, the rare pudu, and other species of South American deer that have been greatly reduced during the last century; the ocelot; the wild chinchilla; and the tapir.

Aside from sentimental reasons, these birds and mammals are of economic value. Food habits investigations have shown, for example, that many song and insectivorous birds are economically important in man's warfare on insect and wood pests.

Ratification of the treaty, insuring participation in the program by the United States, was noted by Secretary Ickes as one of the most significant steps taken in recent years toward preserving scenic areas and wildlife. He was joined by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and Newton B. Drury, Director of the National Park Service, both of whom pledged cooperation of their agencies. The two services will carry out the program within the United States.

Gabrielson Counts on Wildlife Gain

Pointing to the remarkable results that have been obtained in the restoration of North America's migratory birds as an example of what may be done through international cooperation, Dr. Gabrielson asserted, "We have every reason to be optimistic over the results of an international undertaking that includes the entire hemisphere and becomes effective before unwise exploitation has become general."

The migratory bird treaties with Canada and Mexico, Dr. Gabrielson said, made possible the national program for the restoration of North America's migratory

birds. Equally beneficial effects can come from hemispheric cooperation on the conservation of all forms of wildlife, he added.

Dr. Gabrielson was particularly hopeful that the signing of the Convention would lead to negotiations for treaties with Latin American nations to preserve migratory birds along the same lines as the present treaties with Mexico and Canada.

Under the articles of the Convention, the contracting governments agree to assist each other by "lending" biologists for research and field studies. Dr. Gabrielson indicated that the Fish and Wildlife Service stands ready to lend any of its staff whose technical skill may be helpful to any neighboring country.

Drury Sees Hemisphere Park System

The treaty should lead to close, effective cooperation between park officials in the creation and preservation of a system of inter-American parks representative of the finest natural characteristics of the Western Hemisphere, Newton B. Drury, Director of the National Park Service, said.

In addition, he added, there should be an increase in inter-American use of the parks of all the countries. "This will result in just the sort of improved hemisphere relations in which we all are so interested. We shall get to know each other better, and mutual understanding and respect will be one of many benefits."

Also significant, it was emphasized, are the treaty's specific provisions for the protection of wildlife in national parks. Such an area, when properly selected and administered, preserves a complete natural environment; and wildlife is an important factor in this environment. The treaty can be helpful in the efforts of national park wildlife authorities to prevent the threatened extinction of several rare species, particularly those birds which migrate between the Americas.

In signing the treaty, the several republics indicated their acceptance of certain standards which will govern the selection and preservation of national park areas and require conformity to the same high concepts of the use of land and resources.

The treaty states that the "expression 'national parks'" shall denote:

"Areas established for the protection and preservation of superlative scenery, flora and fauna of national significance which the general public may enjoy and from which it may benefit when placed under public control."

"Nature monuments" are described as:

"Regions, objects, or living species of flora or fauna of aesthetic, historic or scientific interest to which strict protection is given. The purpose of nature monuments is the protection of a specific object, or a species of flora or fauna, by setting aside an area, an object, or a single species, as an inviolate nature monument, except for duly authorized scientific investigations or government inspection."

That there will be new national parks is indicated by Article II, Nos. 1 and 2:

"1. The Contracting Governments will explore at once the possibility of establishing in their territories national parks, national reserves, nature monuments, and strict wilderness reserves, as defined in the preceding article. In all cases where such establishment is feasible, the creation thereof shall be begun as soon as possible after the effective date of the present Convention.

"2. If in any country the establishment of national parks, national reserves, nature monuments, or strict wilderness reserves is found to be impractical at present, suitable areas, objects or living species of fauna or flora, as the case may be, shall be selected as early as possible to be transformed into national parks, national reserves, nature monuments or strict wilderness reserves as soon as, in the opinion of the authorities concerned, circumstances will permit."

Article III calls for area protection and provides for recreation:

"The Contracting Governments agree that the boundaries of national parks shall not be altered, or any portion thereof be capable of alienation, except by the competent legislative

authority. The resources of these reserves shall not be subject to exploitation for commercial profit.

"The Contracting Governments agree to prohibit hunting, killing and capturing of members of the fauna and destruction or collection of representatives of the flora in national parks except by or under the direction or control of the park authorities, or for duly authorized scientific investigations.

"The Contracting Governments further agree to provide facilities for public recreation and education in national parks consistent with the purposes of this Convention."

Nations which have signed the Convention include Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Venezuela, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Mexico, Uruguay, Brazil, Guatemala, Colombia, Guiana and Chile.