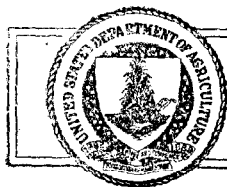


INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

Release - Immediate.

December 4, 1929.

NO EASY CURE-ALL FOR
THE ILLS OF WILD LIFE

There is Too Much Emphasis on New Laws and Too Little
on Enforcing Present Ones, says Redington

Too much emphasis on the need for new game laws and restrictive regulations, and far too little on the extreme importance of adequate enforcement of those already in effect, was said by Paul G. Redington, chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, to be the most serious drawback to wildlife administration in the United States, in an address at the Sixteenth American Game Conference, held in New York City, December 2-3 under the auspices of the American Game Protective Association. Mr. Redington said that in spite of vociferous assertions to the contrary, it is obvious that there is no easy legislative cure-all for the ills that have been visited upon the wild life of this continent by the white man and his industrial civilization. The preservation of habitat of migratory birds and the enforcement of the game laws are of primary and equal importance, he said.

"The passage early in the year of the migratory-bird conservation act," he said, "is a long step forward in the solution of the wild-fowl sanctuary problem, and I am sorry that I can not speak with equal optimism concerning the enforcement situation. I can not imagine any legal instrument better designed for the purpose of safeguarding the welfare of a great national resource than the Migratory-Bird Treaty Act, representing as it does the best thought and effort of a group of men eminently qualified to frame a conservation measure of more than national importance. The act is both powerful and adaptable. The tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that its practical effectiveness in the field is mainly dependent upon a force of but 25 game protectors. The limitations of the enforcement organization allow only one United States game protec-

for for every two States, and these men are given the all but impossible task of enforcing regulations designed to influence the conduct of close to 3,000,000 people. It is evidence of the soundness of the principles of the Act -- and it certainly is indicative of the character and purpose of the men employed -- when we realize that since the passage of the Act the former wholesale slaughter of ducks, geese and shorebirds for the markets has been greatly curtailed.

"I do not mean to infer that game is no longer bought and sold, for there is a persistent underground traffic illegally maintained by the worst type of poacher wherever these birds congregate. The losses from these sources, however, are certainly not comparable with the destruction formerly wrought. In reducing the chief losses we have strained our limited resources to the utmost, and we have required our game protectors to exhibit a type of personal courage and an unflagging attention to duty, night and day, equal to the demands placed upon any police organization in the country.

"A new and vicious type of game-law violator is taking the field in numbers increasing annually. In some of the most important wild-fowl concentration areas in the country we have repeatedly noted the presence of groups of individuals recruited directly from the lowest criminal element of our large cities. The profits that may be had through illegal sale of ducks and geese are often sufficient to tempt an element heretofore principally identified with other illegal transactions and their illgotten profits. These men take the field equipped with every advantage that may be conveyed by the use of the automobile and the motorboat. Some at least do not hesitate to attempt murder, and in going among them the game protector must take his life in his own hands. If the full influence of these millions of people in the United States who want shooting to continue under reasonable limits and seasons and are against law violation, could be brought to bear through coordinated action to secure remedial action that would give our waterfowl protection, the bad situation which now exists might be ameliorated."

Mr. Redington discussed the progress of game conservation in 1929, and enumerated the forward steps that have been taken by the various States, conservation organizations, and individual conservationists. "Many of the States and many of the conservation organizations concerned chiefly with the welfare of the

birds and animals of the wild have moved safely and industriously to register achievements of a distinctly progressive character," he said. "Nor has the Federal Government, through its so-called conservation bureaus, been a laggard in the field. The 1929 record of action stands out clearly, and perusal of it should bring, not complacency, but a great degree of satisfaction, and a desire on the part of all to forge ahead with accelerated speed to tackle the many unsolved problems which we know exist and must be solved.

"Much of the progress that has been made is due directly to the unanimity of purpose and the shoulder-to-shoulder work of the great conservation associations of the country. These bodies, powerful indeed, in the educational field, and many of them contributing much of cold cash to underwrite specific game conservation projects, have joined hands with the game administrators of both Federal and State Governments for the public good.

"If it had not been for the splendid educational ground work established in past years by the American Game Conference, the National Association of Audubon Societies, the American Game Protective Association, the Izaak Walton League of America, the Camp-Fire Club of America, the Boone and Crockett Club, the American Forestry Association, the American Wild Fowlers, the various State game protective associations, and many of the scientific societies and others interested in this big field, we would not be able to enumerate and discuss here the advances that have been made. That there has been some disharmony is well known; constructive disagreement not only is to be tolerated, but by all means encouraged, for I think that we all progress as we gain the point of view of the man who, with reason and in a friendly way, differs with us. But the disharmony that comprehends in its public expression bitterness, a lack of knowledge of the aims and purposes of the individual or organization it is gunning for, misuse of the real facts in the case, and innuendo closely approaching libel, is to be greatly deplored and should receive the censure of all that increasing number of progressive men and women who are, in the march ahead, doing their utmost to establish a unison of stride."

In the Federal field he cited recent progress in the passage of the law authorizing migratory-bird refuges throughout the country, and first steps by the Biological Survey in surveys and examinations of proposed refuge areas. Sur-

veys of food resources have already been made, he said, of 150 separate units, aggregating 1,350,000 acres, and the land examinations, looking toward actual Federal acquisition, have been made on 19 areas in 11 States aggregating 817,312 acres.

Mr. Redington commended Canadian officials for their cooperation with the officials of this country in the efforts to promote the welfare of migratory birds, and spoke of the harmonious relationship existing among the four United States bureaus that represent the major Federal interests in wild life -- the Forest Service and Bureau of Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Fisheries of the Department of Commerce -- and the measures being taken to so coordinate their work as to make it more effective in the solution of the wild-life problems that are common to all.

In discussing the wild life of Alaska, Mr. Redington said that "the administration of a comprehensive game law over an area nearly one-fifth the size of the United States, with a force of only seven wardens, is indeed a difficult task. Visualize, if you can, a district of over 80,000 square miles for which one warden is responsible. These men, in their patrol work, traveled more than 40,000 miles during the last fiscal year. These are Alaskan miles, incidentally, and are not to be reckoned in the same sense as in the States. Much of this distance was made by dog team and with small motor-boats, by poling boat, and on foot.

"The work of the Alaska Game Commission is outstanding among the governmental activities in the Territory, in that it is the only one that is nearly self-supporting. In the past year the revenue collected by the commission amounted to \$65,000. Funds for field operations, provided by Congressional appropriations, totaled \$68,800. This great Territory, populated as it is with large numbers of such big-game animals as moose, caribou, bears, mountain sheep and mountain goats, and a large array of fur-bearing animals, does not as yet receive the necessary funds to carry on the game-law enforcement and allied lines of work effectively."

With regard to the predatory enemies of fur and game animals in Alaska, Mr. Redington said that the conditions are serious, with the coyote widening its range each year. The Territory, with limited Federal aid, is doing its best to cope with the situation. He added that the Alaska Game Commission, created in 1925, recently recommended an open season on the brown and grizzly bears that will meet the protests of residents of the Territory against protecting them when dangerous to life or property, and at the same time give these splendid game mammals the best possible protection in certain islands and areas inland. He emphasized, however, that in campaigns against predatory animals, the objective of the Biological Survey is not extermination of interesting forms of wild life, but reasonable control. Such control, he said, is a problem of no small magnitude, and one that game administrators will have to face for many years, and added that the Biological Survey stands ready at all times within the limitations of its resources to aid the States in this work.

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