

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BIRD PROTECTION.

BY H. C. BRYANT, CHAIRMAN.

SINCE its last report the Committee on Bird Protection has held two meetings in addition to reviewing many situations by means of letters and memoranda. During the year there have appeared numerous projects needing analysis and support. Some encouraging events in the cause of bird protection have been the increased interest of Congress in conservation matters as indicated by the creation of the Special Senate Committee on Conservation of Wild Life Resources and its pertinent report, issued January 21, 1931, the shortening of the season on waterfowl prescribed by the Department of Agriculture; several federal and state additions to the bird refuge system; numerous articles in magazines designed to increase knowledge relative to birds and their value to mankind; and newspaper publicity campaigns such as that by the Brodie Club of Canada relative to the value of predatory birds.

In that the Committee actively supported the move to repeal the goshawk bounty law in Pennsylvania we are sorry to report that no change was made in this law. On the other hand, we are happy to report that the hawk bounty law in Maryland, the repeal of which the Committee urged, was revoked. What the repeal of this law means in the way of conservation is indicated by the following figures furnished by the State Game Warden: In 1930 the State of Maryland paid a bounty on 22,283 hawks, of which number 13,634 were killed in Dorchester County alone, that county apparently being frequented by large numbers of hawks during their migrations.

This victory for conservation of predatory birds was tempered, however, by the unfortunate changes in Virginia and Maryland game laws that remove protection from the Bald Eagle. Estimates indicate that whereas there are probably not more than 15 pairs of Bald Eagles left in Pennsylvania, there are many pairs near the mouth of the Potomac River in Maryland and Virginia. The persistence of the species in Virginia and Maryland is threatened by this removal of protection from the bird that was chosen as the national emblem. Missouri took a backward step and established

a bounty of 50 cents on hawks, certain owls, and eagles, thus becoming, so far as we are aware, the first state to offer a bounty on eagles. After consideration of various methods for insuring more adequate protection to the Bald Eagle, the Committee feels that if proper information were furnished to women's clubs and like organizations and these groups were stirred to action, sufficient sentiment could be developed to bring about federal legislation giving total protection to this notable bird.

The Committee is unable to report any marked change for the better in the status of any of the species considered to be disappearing except that there seems to be an improvement in regard to the Trumpeter Swan. During the summer of 1931, a census of this species was made in the Yellowstone region by the Wild Life Survey of the National Park Service which revealed 20 adult birds and 15 cygnets. The Sage Grouse in its present restricted range and diminished numbers is in a precarious condition and while we commend highly those states that give it careful protection we deplore the action of certain other states that allowed an open season, especially at a time in August when the young birds are practically helpless. Throughout the country there have been reports of drought conditions and resultant scarcity of waterfowl. It is hoped that the reduced season now provided by federal proclamation may ameliorate this adverse situation.

No instances of the introduction of exotic species entailing danger to native birds have been brought to the attention of the Committee. Experience having shown that discussion of such problems usually does not take place until after the damage has been done, the Committee is anxious to be alert to avoid further unfortunate introductions.

Drainage, lighthouses, oil pollution, and poison campaigns continue to menace certain kinds of bird life.

Fortunately there is a tendency for states to awaken to the oil menace and to take steps to improve the situation. Michigan has a State Commission, and several states have passed laws helpful in controlling oil pollution. Convinced that there is still need for definite action looking toward better control of the oil menace the Committee has decided to present a resolution for action by the American Ornithologists' Union.

It is the belief of the Bird Protection Committee that the dangers in the indiscriminate use of poison should be fully recognized and that control measures should be undertaken only after careful investigation has conclusively proved the necessity therefor, and then only by specialists, in order that bird life may be properly safeguarded.

Particular attention is called to a grave danger that laws against the importation of plumage may need strong support during the next few years. There has been a change in fashions, and feathers are being used more widely by the millinery trade. Inquiries about importation of the plumage of birds said to be of "no value" are becoming increasingly frequent. Staunch support of present protective laws will be necessary.

COMMITTEE:

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\* Hoyes Lloyd, also a member of the Committee, did not sign the report because he is an officer of the Dominion Government.