

CONSERVATION NOTES

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THE present picture of the Roseate Spoonbill's condition and prospects in Florida is not quite so rosy as that of last autumn. The Executive Director of the National Association of Audubon Societies tells us in the January-February number of 'Bird-Lore' of a heavy falling-off in the counts of that species. The wardens are making a thorough investigation to determine, if possible, the causes—whether they lie in the birds themselves or in their environment—and they are making a special study of the Spoonbill's food habits. The species appears to be still doing well in Texas. The White Ibis, too, is flourishing in Texas, unusual numbers having been found in the lower Rio Grande Valley. High water in the Everglades and in the Florida prairie country promises a good breeding season for the birds there. The Blue Geese and Lesser Snow Geese wintered in very good numbers on the Louisiana coast and showed an exceptionally large proportion of young to old birds.

DR. PEARSON has met with hearty coöperation from ornithologists and officials in the South American countries and reports the organization of branches of the International Committee in Brazil and Paraguay.

THE Biological Survey reports that the wild-life refuges under its charge now number 266, covering in the aggregate more than 13,500,000 acres of land and water. Sixteen of these, with some 4,000,000 acres, are in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Of the total number, 144 are primarily for waterfowl, 63 for other migratory birds, 29 for non-game birds, and 18 for wildlife in general, while 12 are big-game sanctuaries. The refuges in the Northwest are becoming increasingly important as nesting areas. In 1939 there were some four thousand nests in the Bear River Refuge in Utah, and about 1600 geese are believed to have been raised there. The total waterfowl population there in the fall was estimated at 2,000,000. The Lower Souris Refuge in North Dakota is increasing in productiveness rapidly. It produced 2000 ducks in 1935, 40,000 in 1938, and 100,000 in 1939, according to estimates of the Survey. Cape Romain Refuge in South Carolina is a good nesting ground as well as an excellent wintering area. About 150 Brown Pelicans were raised there in 1939.

A FIVE-YEAR period of research in wildlife management conducted jointly by the Biological Survey, the American Wildlife Institute, and ten State game and conservation organizations terminates this year, and the parties have agreed to renew the coöperation for another five years. The States taking part are Alabama, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Virginia.

THE Wildlife Division of the National Park Service has been transferred to the Biological Survey.

THE United States Coast Guard has been charged with the duty of assisting the Biological Survey in the enforcement of the migratory-bird laws and regulations. In Massachusetts the State Audubon Society has arranged to give members of the Coast Guard instruction in the identification of the birds that migrate coastwise, especially the ducks. The officers of the Coast Guard are coöperating cordially.

ON March 1, an important conservation measure passed the national House of Representatives. This was the revised Barkley Bill giving the Public Health Service control over the discharge of sewage and industrial waste "into the navigable waters of the United States and streams tributary thereto." It may have become law before this number of 'The Auk' is distributed. Though it will not do away with pollution immediately, it does provide a beginning for the work of cleaning up our streams.