

SPECIAL RESERVATIONS FOR WILD BIRDS.

It is gratifying to see that the U. S. Government is finally awakening to the fact that it is policy to give more attention to the preservation of wild birds. Such a course is directly in line with the so-much-talked-of conservation of our natural resources.

The part that birds play in the economy of nature by their destruction of insects is of more importance than has been, or is even now, generally realized. In the protection and consequent increase of our birds we utilize a great natural power in the war against noxious insects—pests that are making havoc with our crops to the extent of many millions of dollars yearly.

The agitation of bird protection is bringing tangible results. Laws for their welfare are being extended, made more rigid and perhaps better enforced. A more wholesome observance of the game laws is noticeable.

Reservations are being set apart by the government for the especial benefit of the birds—places where they can resort to breed, or can stop to rest when migrating, unmolested by hunters. These reservations vary greatly in character, some being rocky and almost barren islands, while others are vast areas of marshy waste, grown up to rank vegetation—tempting resorts for waterfowl and the waders. If properly policed these will have a powerful influence for good.

We have these bird reservations not only in the United States proper, but also in Alaska, in the Dry Tortugas islands south of Florida, and at Hawaii. At the latter place several whole islands have been thus set apart, and they constitute one of the largest and most successful breeding places for sea birds to be found anywhere in the world.

Four years ago we had but sixteen of these reserves. During the next year they were increased to 51. Since then the number has been considerably augmented. This shows commendable progress.

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