

COMMUNICATIONS

WORLD BIRD PROTECTION—A LEAGUE BEING FORMED TO PROTECT BIRDS OF ALL COUNTRIES

New York City, Sept. 6, 1923.

Although it has proven a difficult matter to create a political League of Nations, T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, has demonstrated the possibility of creating a league for the very useful purpose of protecting the wild birds of the world. Leading scientific and conservation societies in ten countries have now organized and pledged to active endeavors for the protection of the birds in their countries, and in aiding similar movements in more benighted regions.

This movement was launched at a conference held in London in June last year. On invitation of Mr. Pearson delegates from several countries met in the home of Hon. Reginald McKenna and determined that such action was necessary if much of the valuable bird life is to be saved from despoliation. Among the very active members of this conference were Lord Edward Grey and Lord Buxton of England; P. G. Van Tienhoven of Holland, and the eminent naturalist, M. Jean Delacour of France.

Mr. Pearson, President of this International Committee who has just returned on the U. S. Steamship *Leviathan* from a lecturing and organizing tour through seven of the countries in Europe, said today: "Europe is looking to America for leadership in some of the lines of endeavor in which we as a nation have specialized. There is no country in the world that is so thoroughly organized and has such advanced laws for bird protection as the United States, and many of our methods can be and doubtless will be adopted to meet European conditions.

"Through southern Europe especially very little attention is paid to bird protection. This may be illustrated by the fact that in all of France in the year 1921 there were only sixty convictions for violation of the bird laws. During the same period in New York State alone there were more than one thousand. In Hungary I was told that during the past year with all of the thousands of bird killers in the country not one had been prosecuted. In Italy I saw nets, traps, and various cages used to catch small songbirds for food. There is a vast traffic in the bodies of these little songsters in that country. In Rome I saw in cages small birds whose eyes had been blinded by red hot irons on the theory that in their darkness they would sing better and thus prove more effective decoys in alluring other feathered friends to destruction.

"Our international organization is now in effective operation in the United States, Canada, Australia, Norway, England, Holland, Luxemburg, Switzerland, France, and Italy. Other countries have recently been invited to unite with the movement and action by them may be expected soon. Members of the Committee in the different countries are formed into National Sections, which deal especially with bird protective problems distinctly national in their scope.

"Everywhere I went in Europe our plan was received most cordially."

—From National Association of Audubon Societies, 1974 Broadway, New York City.

KILLING BULLBATS

New York, Sept. 15, 1923.

In many communities the shooting of Bullbats has been going on in this year of Grace, 1923, although in every state where the bird is found, it is protected by state laws. In addition to this there is a federal law imposing a fine of \$50 for every one of these birds that is killed. The reason that the law-makers of our land have enacted statutes of this nature is because that of all the birds that wing their way over our fields and forests there is not one more valuable as an insect-destroyer than the Bullbat. About various villages these birds gather in the late summer evenings to hawk for insects. Many men, either through ignorance or in defiance of the law, amuse themselves by testing their marksmanship. Sometimes the birds are eaten, often they are simply left lying where they fall.

Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies in this city, said today that among the letters of complaint regarding the killing of these birds, which have recently come to him, was one from Biltmore, North Carolina, in which the writer said: "For two afternoons I sat on the front porch and heard the firing of a gun. A Bullbat fell dead on the opposite side of the highway. I crossed the road and made inquiry. The man readily gave his name and said he killed the birds to feed his coon, which he had in captivity, for the purpose of helping teach his dogs to hunt coons. He seemed to be a good natured man and apparently did not know it was against the law to kill insect-eating birds. How I wish the papers would publish more articles regarding the bird laws."

Mr. Pearson added, "I have personally seen wounded Bullbats on the ground the next day after such a hunting party had been amusing itself. The correct name of this bird is the Nighthawk. It belongs to the Family of "Goat-suckers" and is closely related to, but a distinct species from, the Whip-poor-will with which it is often confused in the minds of the country people. In many parts of the South there is found the Chuck-will's Widow, another closely related form. Examination of the stomach of a Nighthawk often reveals a large number of mosquitoes, insects which annoy and constantly carry malaria and other diseases. In shooting a nighthawk a man is killing one of his best feathered friends."—From National Association of Audubon Societies. 1974 Broadway, New York City.