

Brewster Medal was awarded posthumously to Witmer Stone for his two volume work on "The Birds of Old Cape May." The next meeting will be held in Boston in October, 1940.

Donald W. Douglass, formerly of Texas Technological College, has been appointed Ornithologist of the Game Division, Michigan Department of Conservation.

William Vogt is having a successful year in Peru studying the guano birds for the Compania Administradora del Guano of Lima. At last report 9,000 cormorants were banded, and he had ordered 100,000 more bands.

Lawrence H. Walkinshaw and Edward M. Brigham, Jr., have become editors of *The Jack-Pine Warbler*, official organ of the Michigan Audubon Society.

Leonard Wing has been appointed Assistant Professor of Game Management at Washington State College, Pullman, Washington.

### WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The Wilson Ornithological Club's Wildlife Conservation Committee proposes to print regularly in this section of the *Bulletin* a summary of information it has gathered and recommendations it wishes to make. Opinions and factual contributions of members are solicited.

In view of the discussions there have been concerning the desirability of the Club's participating in Conservation activities we are taking the liberty of quoting from a personal letter received by your Chairman from one of America's greatest ornithologists, the late Joseph Grinnell. He wrote, "Your report of the Club's Conservation Committee looks good to me, and I hope that you make efforts along the lines indicated. I, too, out here find on the part of a few Cooper Club members an expressed reluctance or aversion to this Club's participating in any sort of 'propaganda' campaign. But I usually find this feeling traceable to certain government or state agencies whose policy seems to be to 'educate' the public to leave guidance in all those matters to those agencies! Observation through the years leads me to believe that in the interests of preservation of wildlife in its totality, said agencies cannot alone be trusted to act always effectively. It is well to have participation widely and audibly by organizations *outside* of the government, such as the Wilson Club, the Cooper Club, and the A.O.U."

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There have been some very encouraging developments in the last year or two in Missouri. Following the passage of an amendment to the State constitution in November 1936, placing the administration of wildlife affairs in Missouri in the hands of an unsalaried, non-political commission, the new Commission has won the first two test-cases before the Missouri Supreme Court:

(1) In the spring of 1938, the Court upheld the power of the Commission to select its Director (Mr. I. T. Bode) without regard to geographic origin.

(2) In the fall of 1938, the Court upheld the power of the Commission to make regulations having the force of law.

Both these powers were clearly stated in the text of the constitutional amendment, but they were challenged and the Commission's powers in these respects have now been confirmed.

In the 1939 Missouri Legislature two moves designed to cripple the work of the Commission were decisively beaten, largely through the influence of the active and independent Conservation Federation of Missouri. These moves were:—

(1) To submit to the electorate, in the fall of 1940, a proposed constitutional

amendment repealing the "conservation amendment" of 1936. This would have necessitated an entire new campaign.

(2) To repeal all provisions of the existing game laws that had been carried over from the former Game and Fish Department. This would have nullified the laws providing the income of the Commission and penalties for infractions of its regulations, and the Commission would have been virtually without income or police power until another Supreme Court case could be decided.

The creed of the new Missouri Conservation Commission is clearly environmental improvement and public cooperation. The State is discontinuing the production of artificially-reared quail and is reducing all liberations to a minimum. At the same time it is emphasizing managed environments and over 1,000,000 acres, exclusive of Federal and State-owned lands, are under cooperative management plans. An example of the Commission's activities along this line is the issuance of a carload (33,000 lbs.) of Korean lespedeza seed to conservation and agricultural organizations in 4/5 of the counties of the State; this was planted in over 1,700 miles of 16-foot strips along field borders, where cover was present but food was scarce.

The laws relating to non-game birds in Minnesota are reasonably satisfactory except as they apply to the hawks and owls. All wild birds except the "English Sparrow, blackbird, Crow, and all species of hawks and owls" are protected. In 1903 the A.O.U., or Audubon Society "Model Law," which did protect the hawks and owls, was passed, but in 1925 it was rescinded through the efforts of the sportsmen who believed in "vermin" control. Since then there have been many "vermin" eradication campaigns sponsored by sportsmen's organizations or the State Division of Game and Fish, in which Crows, hawks and owls, foxes, mink, gophers, spermophiles, etc., have been persecuted. It is needless to state that the hawks and owls destroyed in such campaigns are usually overwhelmingly the more beneficial species, and that the misdirected "conservation" efforts are resulting in much more harm than good. In fairness it must be said that through the efforts of the State Biologist, C. Gordon Fredine, the Conservation Department has been persuaded to remove the more beneficial hawks and owls from the list of species upon which it officially sponsors control campaigns. Sportsmen's organizations continue, however, to conduct hawk and owl "shoots" under the guise of conservation.

It must be recognized that while a change in the law is desirable, the primary need is for education of the general public in scientific conservation principles, because only if the general public understands the situation and is sympathetic, can protective legislature be truly effective. While legislation protecting the more beneficial hawks and owls in Minnesota may not find the general public in an entirely receptive mood, it seems certain that it would do much to prevent the wholesale slaughters that occur in the hawk and owl shooting contests, and it would undoubtedly hasten the processes of education to have such a law on the statute books.

Sporadic attempts have been made from time to time to effect a change in the present law, but the bird students and others in a position to direct a scientific attitude toward the problem have not made the necessary united and concerted effort. Last winter W. J. Breckenridge, G. S. Swanson, and others drew up a bill which provided for the adding of all hawks and owls, except the "Accipiter group" and the Great Horned Owl, to the list of protected birds. This was endorsed by conservation organizations but ended finally among the bills not acted upon by the legislature in the final rush of business.

—WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE  
Miles D. Pirnie, Chairman.