

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Proposal to Establish Large National Park in Yukon Territory.—On December 8, 1942, the Dominion Government reserved an area of 10,130 square miles along the Canada-Alaska Military Highway, in the southwestern part of Yukon Territory, in order that it may be examined in detail and may be available in its present condition for establishment of a National Park at a later date. This area contains outstanding mountain and glacier scenery, as well as foothills that are the home of a large population of big game, including grizzly bear, mountain goat, Dall's mountain sheep, moose, and Osborn caribou.

Conservation in the National Parks of Canada Attacked and Defended.—The National Parks of Canada are set aside not only as areas devoted to recreational and educational purposes, but also as wildlife sanctuaries, where native wild animals, along with vegetation and the geological formations which contribute to what we call scenery, are to be preserved as far as possible in their natural state, with the influence of man kept to a minimum. Like most policies in a democratic country, this policy is frequently criticized and attacked, especially by persons who want the national parks to produce a maximum quantity of shootable game and who object to conservation of predators such as cougars, wolves, foxes, eagles, hawks, and owls. A recent attack of this kind is found in a paper entitled "Sabotage in the National Parks," published by W. C. Fisher in the issue of *Hunting and Fishing in Canada* for October, 1942. This author claims that "sportsmen are the only true friends of wildlife," that "animals were placed on the earth for the benefit of man," and that "the Parks officials are enamoured with the phrase 'The Balance of Nature.'" He concludes that the National Parks policy with respect to predators must be changed and suggests as a better policy, "Game shall be raised for Mankind," including the tourist, alpine climber, camera man, and sportsman.

A different view of the subject is presented by Professor J. R. Dymond, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, in a paper entitled "Game in the National Parks," which is published in the issue of the same magazine for January, 1943. Professor Dymond points out the need for keeping game populations within such limits that available resources can support them in good condition. He also points out that control by predators, which take the weak and subnormal, tends to improve the game stock, while control by hunters, who seek to kill the finest individuals, tends toward deterioration of the stock. He concludes: "The principle of creating and maintaining National Parks for the preservation of natural life, plant and animal, in representative areas of the different regions of the earth is steadily spreading to all parts of the world."

Publication of a third paper on the subject is promised by the management of the magazine.—HARRISON F. LEWIS.

Golden Eagles and Bighorns

"In the spring of 1940, an eagle's nest was discovered in the very heart of the lambing grounds. Two eaglets were raised in the nest and it was under continuous observation from June 1 to August 1 . . . It need only be said here that no remains of lambs or adult sheep were found . . .

"To date no case of predation by eagles has been seen by a Survey member nor has one been reported for the Crystal Creek area. The conclusion is that eagles may be exonerated of any serious blame for the decline of the Crystal Creek bighorn sheep herd." (Honess, R. F. and N. M. Frost, "A Wyoming Bighorn Sheep study," *Wyo. Game and Fish Dept. Bull.*, 1, 1942: 56.)

"Some eagles nested close to the lambing grounds. One nest was under observation from May 15, at which time the two eaglets were about ten days old, until they left the nest early in July. Pellet examinations and actual observations

during that period indicated that the eagles were feeding on prairie dogs . . . The only other item of food found in pellets or at the nest was a trace of rabbit. These observations are not conclusive, but they do indicate that, in the Tarryall Mountains, the eagle is a minor factor . . .

"No evidence of predation by golden eagles was found." (Spencer, C. C., "Notes of the life history of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep in the Tarryall Mountains of Colorado," *Jour. Mammalogy*, 24, 1943: 9, 11)—F. N. H.

To the Editor of the *Wilson Bulletin*:

In the December, 1942, issue, Mr. Hamerstrom took exception to a filler which appeared in the *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* and attempted to "reveal" the true conditions of the Minnesota caribou herd. He was particularly critical of liberating the animals from an enclosure and then opening a part of the refuge to deer hunting this past fall.

Due to excessive rainfall, it was necessary to turn the animals free, for almost all of the corral is swampy and was filled with water during the summer. The area, opened to deer hunting for eleven days this past fall, lies along the north shore of Upper Red Lake, extending eight miles in length and approximately one and one-half miles in width. It amounts to about 7,680 acres. The nearest part of open territory is about five miles southeast from the corral. In upland country this distance may seem relatively short but the strip between the corral and open area is largely muskeg and open swamp which is virtually impassible until frozen. It is not classed as caribou range, for the Soil Conservation Service technicians have mapped the area as potential waterfowl habitat. They also have outlined the suitable caribou range as extending to the north, east and west of the corral in the opposite direction from the area opened to hunting and well within the sanctuary.

During the hunting season every precaution was taken to protect the caribou. An area of 407,700 acres was maintained as an inviolate sanctuary. The boundaries of the new hunting area were posted with special signs calling the hunters' attention to the species and the penalties for killing one. Extra patrolmen were detailed to the area and every hunter they met was cautioned to be alert to prevent shooting any caribou.

The deer season closed without a single mishap to the protected species. Some of the animals were sighted, not in the newly opened area, but to the north and east of the corral. The "blunder" referred to by Mr. Hamerstrom was, indeed, good wildlife management, for if the animals had been left in the corral they surely would have perished. The deer in the newly opened territory received a reasonable thinning down and no damage was done.

The article is an example of the condition which often occurs—that of hue and cry by sincere persons not familiar with the problem and armed with only a part of the facts.

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I criticize only the deer hunting so close to the point of the caribou release. It is axiomatic that one should expect wild animals, upon release from confinement, to make extensive movements of an exploratory nature. As a corollary, one should expect these movements to include areas of unsuitable range. No one knows exactly what caribou do under these circumstances: too few transplantings have been made. The conservative policy, therefore, would have been to admit the likelihood of such a movement and to safeguard it in every practicable way, recognizing that muskeg and swamp is no barrier to caribou and that the well-meaning of most hunters is no guarantee against accidents.—F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr.

Exotic Game Birds

Ralph T. King has ably discussed the problem of exotic game birds in his article "Is it wise policy to introduce exotic game birds?" (*Audubon Magazine*, 1942, 44:136-145, 230-236, 306-310). His conclusions were:

"(1) Economically the introduction of foreign species has been and undoubtedly will continue to be highly expensive. (2) The number of well intentioned introductions that have resulted in establishment of the introduced species and have since proven to be non-beneficial if not actually injurious is equally as great as the number that have been proven to be desirable. (3) Introductions resulting in establishment always create heavier demands on both foods and coverts, may involve the introduction of new parasites and diseases, and may result in cross-breeding to the detriment of closely related native stock. Furthermore such introductions do not necessarily result in reducing the hunting pressure on diminished native species. (4) Introductions of additional animals into exhausted or deficient environments can only result in the loss of the animals and further deterioration of the environments. (5) Introduced species can and have increased to pest proportions. (6) We cannot be sure of the population behavior, food habits and degree of spread of any introduced species until *several* years after the species has become successfully established. (7) Any successful introduction must inevitably change natural associations and the native fauna to some extent. We cannot tell to what extent until the introduced species is established. (8) Unfortunately we have not taken advantage of our opportunities and as a consequence have learned relatively little about the costs and results of introductions."—F. N. H.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Frederick N. Hamerstrom, Jr., Chairman

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

We take this opportunity to introduce to the Wilson Club three of our new Life Members: George B. Thorp, George H. Lowery, Jr., and Bernard W. Baker. Others will be presented in subsequent issues of the *Bulletin*. We hope the Endowment and Membership Committees will keep us supplied with candidates for indefinite continuation of this series.



GEORGE B. THORP, a former professor of aeronautical engineering at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, has made a hobby of ornithology for many years. He has been president of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania for the past three years; is a leader and one of the sponsors of the Pymatuning Group, whose interest centers in the Pymatuning Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Pennsylvania; is Chairman of the Endowment Committee of the W.O.C.; is a member of the A.O.U., the National Audubon Society, and the Sewickley Valley Audubon Society. He has been engaged in Americanization work in connection with refugees, under the sponsorship of the American Friends Service Committee.