

Synopsis for Waterfowl

When white men first came to this country, wildfowl was everywhere abundant. It formed one of the staple articles of diet. The amount of game was not reduced to any great extent by the early settlers. It was not until recent times when population increased so much that the breeding places for wildlife were destroyed, woods cleared, ponds and marshes drained, and wild tracts cultivated. The constant increase of sportsmen and market hunters, the use of dogs, and the improvement of guns have all helped ~~along this situation.~~ *To lower the waterfowl census.*

The most critical times in the life of the game bird are when the eggs are in the nest and just after the birds are hatched. The nest is placed on the ground where it is sought and destroyed by mink, weasels, foxes, coyotes, skunks, bobcats, and others. In addition to these, roving dogs and house cats are often hunting night and day and leave their trail of destruction. With such an array of enemies, the wonder is that game has lasted so long and so well.

In the face of changing conditions brought about by the rapid settlement of the country, the setting aside of tracts of woodland, lake shores and islands within the limits of which wild birds and animals may be sacredly protected, is the one unfailing resource that can prevent the extermination of certain species. This has often been tried in the case of game birds, and from these recuperating places the birds soon spread out into the surrounding regions. This plan is the one recommended by scientists of the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, and of the American Nature Association. If our game situation of the past forty years has proved one thing, it is that game cannot be made to increase or even hold its own by any number of laws that may be

passed. We need a chain of reserves along our coast region and up and down the whole extent of our country.

During the time that President Theodore Roosevelt was in office, he did more to protect our wild game than any other man. In 1903 he set aside the first reservation ever established solely for the protection of wildfowl. It was Pelican Island in Florida. Then he established other retreats in Louisiana, Michigan, Dakota, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and other places. These were areas that were of no value for agricultural purposes. We have other areas where wild birds are protected, but these were for that purpose alone.

The first tract of land set aside on the Pacific Coast solely for the protection of wild birds was Three Arch Rocks Reservation established October 14, 1907. This is a group of small islands from a half to one mile off the coast of Oregon a few miles south of the entrance to Tillamook Bay. Immense colonies of sea birds are found on these rocks,- California murre, western gulls, Brandt, Baird, and Farallone cormorants, Kaeding and forked-tailed petrels, tufted puffins, pigeon guillemots, and a few black oystercatchers.

The Executive Orders establishing three additional reserves for sea birds off the Washington coast were signed October 23, 1907. These areas embrace about a hundred and thirty rocky islets of no agricultural or commercial value, stretching from Gray's Harbor to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. They are Copalis Rock Reservation, Quillayute Needles Reservation, and Flattery Rocks Reservation. Some of these islands are bare while others are covered with a dense growth of bushes and trees. Beside a few species of land birds, that nest here, there are twelve species of

sea birds,- western and glaucous-winged gulls, black oyster-catchers, white-crested, Brandt and Baird cormorants, Kaeding petrels, tufted puffins, rhinoceros and Cassin auklets, pigeon guillemots, and California murre.

On February 27, 1910, Farallone Reservation was established. This includes the middle and north Farallone Islands and other rocks northwest of these about twenty-four miles west of San Francisco Bay, California. The same varieties of birds are protected here as along the Oregon and Washington coasts.

In Alaska the first six reservations were,- Bering Sea Reservation embracing St. Matthew and Hall Islands, Bogoslof Island Reservation, Pribilof Islands Reservation, Tuxedni Reservation embracing Chisik Island and Egg Island at the entrance of Tuxedni Harbor in Cook Inlet, Saint Lazaria Reservation embracing the island of that name at the entrance of Sitka Sound, and the Yukon Delta Reservation. This last is one of the largest and most important that has ever been established. It embraces all the treeless tundra of the delta of the Yukon, comprising the vast region that lies south of the river and west of longitude 162° 20'. This area protects the breeding grounds of great numbers of swan, geese, ducks, and other waterfowl.

Migratory birds need resting and feeding places as well as breeding places. Such small refuges as Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, Lake Merritt, Oakland, and others have proved how tame wild birds become when protected and fed. Wild ducks and geese rest here from their long travels and may stop to spend the winter. Small game like quail are plentiful and breed here without disturbance.

Theodore Roosevelt knew the value of such havens, for a

few days before he retired from office he signed an Executive Order setting aside seventeen reservoir sites of the Reclamation Service where water is stored for government irrigation projects and other purposes. These were Salt River Reservation in Arizona, East Park Reservation in California, Deer Flat and Minidoka Reservations in Idaho, Willow Creek Reservation in Montana, Carlsbad and Rio Grande Reservations in New Mexico, Cold Springs Reservation in Oregon, Belle Fourche Reservation in South Dakota, Strawberry Reservation in Utah, Bumping Lake, Clealum, Conconully, Kachess, and Keechalus Reservations in Washington, and Pathfinder and Shoshone Reservations in Wyoming. While these places may not serve as large nesting grounds for birds, they will always be valuable to protect flocks during the migrating season.

On February 3, 1909, President Roosevelt created the first large reserve for wild birds outside of what are often considered the natural boundaries of our country, the Hawaiian Islands Reservation, composed of a number of islets and reefs in the western extension of the Hawaiian Archipelago. This reservation comprises the Windward Islands. Beginning at the East, it includes Bird Island, Necker, French Frigate Shoals, Gardner, Laysan, Lisiansky, Cure, and Morell, as well as numerous sunken reefs. This reservation is best known as the ancestral home of great numbers of albatrosses. The preservation of the colonies on these islands is important because Japanese plume hunters have frequently killed great numbers of these birds. Among other birds that are protected here are several terns, petrels, boobies, and tropic birds.

On August 8 and 18, 1908, President Roosevelt protected inland water birds of the Pacific Coast by establishing Klamath Lake Reservation lying partly in Oregon and partly in California, and

Malheur Lake Reservation which includes the waters of Malheur and Harney Lakes. These two reservations were ^{among} ~~two of~~ the largest in the country. Klamath Lake Reservation was later dried up for experimental agriculture, since it was on a reclamation project.

It was a very important step in game preservation when Congress began to utilize forest reserves as game refuges. The first was initiated on the Wichita Forest Reserve in Oklahoma, January 24, 1905. President Roosevelt set aside the entire ^{area} ~~reserve of~~ ~~57,120,000 acres.~~ The Wichita Game Preserve is a much smaller area than the Yellowstone Park, also a game refuge, yet it has splendid possibilities for the protection of quail, prairie chickens and turkeys, as well as various kinds of big game including antelope, elk, deer, and bison.