

Bird Reservations

BY

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PRESENT operations in the United States, in the line of bird-reservations, grew out of the distinct need of preserving certain classes of birds from becoming extinct. We recognize in North America 1,200 varieties of wild birds. The birds that we may distinctly call farm-land birds, such as the native sparrows, the warblers, wrens, orioles, and many other common insectivorous birds, have, despite the contrary claims of calamity howlers, enormously increased in America since the advent of white man. There has, however, been a decrease in the case of certain forest birds. In the open land there have been more plants, more insect-life, more grass and weed seeds, more berry-producing plants, that spring up along the fences and elsewhere to afford an abundant food-supply. As a result birds of that class have increased and we are in no danger of losing that part of our bird-population. As a result of the increased number of insects it is desirable, however, to have an increase of many species of birds, and a great deal has been done, through a general awakening of public interest to the use of feeding devices, nesting boxes, and keeping down the enemies of the birds, to encourage their propagation.

It is chiefly the birds that could be commercialized, either for their flesh, or their feathers, that have suffered great diminution in numbers in North America as a result of man's activities. An important effort to preserve this class of birds is now being carried on in the United States by the establishment of bird-reservations.

Reservation work began in 1902, under the National Association of Audubon Societies for the study and protection of wild birds and animals. This is the best known and most extensively financed bird-protective organization in the world, and we have been in active operation since 1902. A bill making it a misdemeanor to kill a bird destructive to insects or noxious weed-seeds was pushed by the Audubon workers, and has now been enacted in all of the states except Maryland and six or seven of the Rocky Mountain States.