

## GUARDING THE MIGRATORY BIRDS.

The Dominion Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior has furnished the following data as to the aims and purposes of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, and as to the habits of the birds protected by the Act.

Last year a treaty between Canada and the United States for the protection of useful or harmless migratory birds, the first international treaty ever made in the interests of wild life conservation, was signed at Washington. Those seeking a solution of the problem of the protection of bird life on the continent of North America have for a long time realized that their object would best be reached by international treaty. As long as the matter was left in the hands of the various provinces and states of the two countries, birds protected in one part of the continent might be exposed to destruction, owing to the lack of protective laws, when they migrated to another part.

The Act passed by the Dominion Parliament sanctioning the treaty and providing legislation for its enforcement is known as the Migratory Birds Convention Act. It seems desirable to furnish the public with further information as to its objects. The general public should co-operate with game officers and peace officers to facilitate the strict carrying out of the regulations of the Act. The protection of bird life is of supreme importance.

### Birds That Are Useful.

Insectivorous birds render a magnificent service by consuming insect species which if unchecked would soon multiply to vast hordes that would utterly destroy the forests and devastate the crops. Migratory game birds are of great value as a source of food and beneficial outdoor sport. In addition to their practical service, many birds are very important from esthetic point of view. The handsome plumage and vocal ability of many species add greatly to the beauty of nature and to the pleasure of the outdoors, and even the unmelodious and plain birds help to give character and animation to the open-air world. So much a part of our lives have the familiar birds grown that without them the world would seem to have lost much of its colour, light and interest. The uniform system of protection provided by the Act is a great step toward their preservation and encouragement, and the Act should have the enthusiastic support of every right-thinking citizen.

The economic service rendered by insectivorous migratory birds cannot be overestimated. There are few of us who fully appreciate this service. The fecundity of insect life is almost beyond belief, and tree and plant life in every stage of growth from the seed to maturity, is attacked by myriads of larvae and full-grown insects. If it were not for their persistent enemies, the birds, which devour vast numbers of eggs, larvae and perfect insects, the ravenous insect multitudes would spread desolation throughout the woods and fields. Without the constant help of the birds it would be impossible to protect crops and forests from the innumerable worms, caterpillars, beetles, borers, plant lice and larvae. The forests would not be long in existence but for the unceasing industry of the birds in the pursuit of insects, and protecting and encouraging the birds, and if possible increasing their numbers, is the most practical step that can be taken toward the preservation of the timberlands. All who appreciate the enormous value of the forests will realize the vast importance of bird protection.

For the protection of our forest trees we are particularly indebted to woodpeckers, nut-hatches, creepers, titmice and warblers. There is hardly a crevice in the bark or a single leaf or stem that is overlooked by these birds in their tireless search for insect food, and every foot of ground and litter underneath the trees is minutely examined by the birds for hidden insects. It is of great interest that, to increase their efficiency, nature has assigned different work to the different species according to their habits and equipment, so that while some species with special organization for their tasks, pursue their prey on the trunks and larger limbs, others equipped for their particular work, hunt among the smaller branches and foliage.

In the past farmers and orchardists, as well as those to whom the smallest bird or animal is game, have destroyed large numbers of useful or harmless birds. The farmers and fruit growers did so under the impression that they were protecting their crops or fruit from the birds. Birds sometimes injure the crops of the farmer who in improving his land has cleared away the wild berry bushes and seed-bearing weeds, which provide the natural food of the birds, forcing them to feed upon the cultivated grain or fruit. But the little harm done by the birds, is infinitesimal, when compared with the