

enough to have stocked the continent, at any rate to the limit of economic safety, had they been adapted to present conditions. The Bluebird population was almost entirely wiped out one winter. Fewer were left of them than of pigeons just after the Petosky rookery was deserted; yet in five years the Bluebird regained its old numbers. But the Bluebird is a strong, virile race, suitably adapted to the conditions of a cultivated country. The pigeon was not; hence it passed away while its close relative, the Morning Dove, still thrives and increases.

It must be borne in mind that our bird population is limited by natural conditions. In most cases this limit was reached long ago, and no more birds can inhabit North America than can find support during the season of least food supply. In a normal or stationary population, the death rate must equal the birth rate or else the population ceases to be stationary. The breeding season increases the population enormously and one way or another this increase must be, and is, reduced to the smaller supporting power of the land through winter.

It is evident that this allows of a considerable margin of reduction and shows that even quite considerable numbers can be destroyed without interfering with the ultimate numbers of the population and that the comparatively few individuals taken by collectors cannot have an appreciable effect upon their number.

The professional collector has come in for popular abuse, far beyond his deserts. In the first place, the professional collector is almost an unknown quantity. He is too scarce in fact to find when wanted. In the next place, there is little or no market for his wares. Few scientists are wealthy or able to pay prices that allow the professional a livelihood. The trade in big game heads and trophies with wealthy sportsmen is considerable and the plumage business for millinery purposes has wrought devastation amongst certain species but the opportunities for professional scientific collectors are small indeed. This is to be regretted as, allowing that the study of birds is justifiable, it follows, as a matter of course, that the man who supplies the material is justified also and is engaged in commendable work. No one person can personally gather material from everywhere, yet extra-limital material is just what the serious investigator requires in his work. Without a system whereby the earnest student can, at least partially, pay the expenses of his explorations, modern science would still be in the dark condition of middle ages. The epoch making field works of Bates or Wallace would have been impossible if they had not found a market for their wares.