

that nothing has been made in vain as all necessary to maintain the balance of nature.

Therefore if we take the most beneficial or least injurious first we shall turn to the *Galline*. The food of these birds during the breeding season, which is also the most important season for the agriculturalist, consists almost entirely of insect food, chiefly grasshoppers, caterpillars and injurious Coleoptera and Hemiptera. The winter food consists of rose-hips, wild berries and buds, the former a nuisance to the farmer, the latter of no material value. For this reason we may consider *Galline* a beneficial order.

While the *Limicole* are almost entirely insectivorous their indiscretion in destroying many beneficial aquatic forms as well as injurious species classes them more as a neutral order tending to be beneficial.

With *Anseres* the case differs. A duck will eat anything it can get into its mouth, and a wild duck is no exception to this rule. While they destroy large numbers of injurious forms, they do not discriminate, but devour large numbers of beneficial forms, such as frogs, lizards, crayfish, snails, and the larger aquatic beetles and the *Belostoma*, which are all beneficial in keeping in check the innumerable small injurious insects too small to be of use to the ducks. However, were this the only charge, we should acquit them as neutral, which they probably are to the agriculturist. But much graver charges are laid against them which sooner or later will require investigation.

Our governments annually spend large sums of money in replenishing the supply of food fishes in our lakes and rivers, and many species of this order of birds have a decided piscatorial appetite, more especially the open water ducks and merganser, which congregate in large numbers at the spawning beds of our food fishes, and gorge themselves upon the fry and spawn, while game commissioners blame the agency of man for the decrease of food fishes.

I once took from the throat of a shell drake (American merganser) sixty-four small fish, the fry of the whitefish, salmon trout, bass, chub and kindred forms, ranging from one-half to