

THE ELEPAIO

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WILDLIFE REFUGES by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson. The Macmillan Company, 1943. This book follows up Dr. Gabrielson's earlier book, "Wildlife Conservation", 1941. While that book dealt with the different phases of conservation, such as soil, water, forest and grass lands, this gives the picture of what has been accomplished since the first federal wildlife refuge was established in 1903. By 1941 there were 272 refuges with an area of over seventeen million acres, nearly half of which is in Alaska.

As Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Dr. Gabrielson has the opportunity to view this vast undertaking as a whole. For instance, it is no use prohibiting the shooting of birds if their breeding grounds in the north and their wintering ranges in the south have been destroyed by drainage. In many cases marsh lands that were invaluable to the birds for breeding or flyway refuges were drained at great expense to provide more land for agriculture. Then it was found that the land was not suitable for that purpose and the long expensive process of restoring it for wildlife had to be undertaken.

Lower Klamath Lake in California and Malheur Lake in Oregon were ruined because of the diversion of their water supplies for irrigation purposes (page 5) "It is a bitter experience to see the ruin of a biological wonderland, to see it become a desert. It brings a mixed feeling of helpless rage and heartsickness, which must be experienced to be understood. Yet those who knew the wonder of Malheur saw it steadily deteriorate. An aquatic paradise became, successively, a shrinking, withering lake, a stinking mud hole, and finally a barren waste. A similar tragic sequence of events occurred in other places, always in the name of progress. But the destruction of Malheur and Lower Klamath, both sacrificed to the greed of man, seemed especially perfidious because they had supposedly permanently reserved for the benefit of marsh loving wildlife."

Dr. Gabrielson has the ability to see all sides of a question, an invaluable quality in the position he holds. On page 184 he discusses the problems arising between the Reclamation Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service. "In all fairness, however, it must be said that a review of the case demonstrates that the faults were not entirely on one side. It now appears that mutual lack of appreciation of the other Service's problems was the real root of the trouble, rather than, as was sometimes alleged by extremists, that the Biological Survey wanted to take over the entire project for the birds or that the Reclamation Service didn't care if it exterminated them. It is certain that when the two Services started to discuss their viewpoints and problems, things began to improve for the birds, and what was even more important, common grounds on which the two managements could meet became apparent."

The author pays generous tribute to his predecessor in office, Jay N. "Ding" Darling. Page 18, "His term of Chief of the Survey was short but he made a major contribution to American conservation. - - "Ding" himself led the way, always doing more than he asked of others."

- - At the height of all this effort "Ding", because of ill health, left the Survey after a short but exceedingly productive stewardship. No man ever contributed more to the conservation movement in so short a time."

Dr. Gabrielson's visit to the Alaskan bird colonies in 1940 gives us one of the most interesting chapters in the book. (An account of this appeared in Bird Lore Volume 42, page 497-506). Here his appreciation of the beauty and interest of bird life finds full expression. The story of the fur seals on the Pribilofs makes another fascinating chapter. Until 1910 this herd of fur seals had been ruthlessly slaughtered by hunters of three nations, Russia, Japan and America, until the once innumerable animals had been reduced to 130,000. In 1911 a convention was signed stopping all pelagic hunting and allowing America to harvest the seals on the Pribilofs. Japan and Canada took 15% each of the harvest and Russia retained the privilege of managing her own herd. By these means in 1941 the animals numbered over two million, yet between 1910 and 1941 over a million skins were taken.

In a book of this kind the omission of all reference to Hawaii is disappointing, but owing to the lack of any representative of the Service here there are probably no reports available in Washington. In the Hawaiian Islands Reservation, set aside by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909, the United States possesses a refuge consisting of a dozen or more islands stretching northwestward from the main islands for 1500 miles. Some of them are volcanic islets thrusting up steep and rugged out of the ocean, others are low sand islands like Laysan and Lisiansky. All are the homes of millions of sea birds, including the black-footed and Laysan albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, terns, boobies, frigate birds, tropic birds and even a few specialized land birds of the greatest rarity and interest. Little is known of their present status due to the difficulty of transportation, but we urge the need of periodic surveys. That these are necessary is shown by the raid of plume hunters on Laysan in 1909 and 1910, after the Reservation was established. This is reported fully in the Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, 1911. Incidentally, this raid is often referred to as a raid by Japanese plume hunters. The men were Japanese but the leader was a man named Max Schlemmer, who was formerly foreman of the guano operations on Laysan. They were arrested, taken to Honolulu for trial and sentenced to 24 hours imprisonment.

Then there is Hawaii National Park with an area of 335 square miles, created in 1916. It contains two active but well-behaved volcanoes, Kilauea and Mauna Loa. Although the park was established to conserve the most spectacular volcanic areas in the United States, it also contains tropical vegetation and bird life of great interest. Many of the Drepanine family of birds, which are peculiar to Hawaii, may be seen close to the Volcano House, and on the barren slopes of Mauna Loa are still to be found a few nene, the native Hawaiian goose. Although it is protected it seems doomed to extinction in a wild state on account of the mongoose, but it may persist indefinitely in a semi-domesticated condition.

In conclusion, the book has a spirit of great things having been accomplished for wildlife conservation but it stresses the need for constant vigilance to see that what has been accomplished shall not be lost and urges the establishment of more refuges in key areas to round out a complete system.

J.d'A.N.

BIRD WALK. Our regular reporter was unable to come for the walk on August 14th, we missed her and she missed one of our best walks. (She insists on a personally conducted walk over the same ground as soon as possible). We had the best of augurs, an elepaio was at the meeting place at the junction of Woodlawn and Alani Drives to greet us. Flitting about in a Java plum tree, unconcernedly inspecting the arriving walkers or picking an insect off a leaf, he was a delight to watch. Woodlawn is a happier place to live in now that the elepaio is also a resident.

We followed the grassy truck road up the valley. Only about ten years ago it was bare and open, now after extensive tree planting it is a beautiful wooded grove. Many of the trees were labelled, one, *Acacia confusia*, was very handsome with shorter but similar leaves to those of the koa. Earlier in the year the same tree had masses of fragrant yellow balls of blossom. As we went on a short distance ahead of us an owl leisurely flapped away, an odd-looking bird with its blunt head and buoyant flight. A "first" for some of the members.

We rested in the next clump of trees, Mrs. Evans told us of the complicated formulae she had been feeding her pet mejiro, which is now on the wing again after a period of being unable to fly. She is going to let us have the secret for the pages of the "Elepaio". After more enjoyable talk of birds we wandered on and at the end of the little valley turned left along the ridge of Puu Pia. Another rest to enjoy the views of the ridges with the afternoon sun giving varied lighting on the sharp buttresses and deep clefts in the steep cliffs. Lehua was in flower, hill robins' songs came faintly from the valley below.

Further along the ridge Miss Kojima asked if I had seen a bird the size of a sparrow with whitish cheeks. I had had a glimpse of it and thought it was a Japanese tit, but it was only a glimpse and I was not certain. We can call it a probable record, yamagaras have been seen before in Manoa Valley.

From the trigonometrical station at the top of Puu Pia at 900 feet elevation a fine view was had of Manoa Valley spread out below. Then a grassy trail down the ridge and across the stream took us back to the cars.

Next walk: meet corner of Nehoa and Punahou, September 11th at 2.00 p.m. for a Tantalus trip.

J.d'A.N.

David Woodside reports that a flock of 132 stilts have been at the Mapunapuna fish pond along the Puuloa road near Moanalua. He saw them first at the beginning of July. This pond has long been a favorite haunt of the stilts, but their presence in July is puzzling. Generally they are there in the winter months. Does this mean that they had an early nesting. They used to nest at Kaelepulu, near Lanikai on this island, 1935 was the last year they nested there and since then it is believed they have nested on Niihau.

Miss Hatch has heard from Mrs. Ebert and Mr. Webb, both wish to be remembered to members. Mr. Webb is in Arizona, birds are scarce there.

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