

OUR PRESIDENT SAYS — — —

As the Federation enters its fifth year, the time is ripe to take stock. Dr. Gordon Meade and Winston Brockner, the two men most responsible for its organization, have guided the Federation as President in its critical, formative years and have left a permanent imprint. It is said that any human institution is the lengthened shadow of a man; but too many men and women have played, and are playing, a vital part in the activities of the Federation to make the epigram narrowly applicable.

The Federation was conceived to facilitate cooperation among the bird clubs and bird students of the State, and to promote interest and conservation of bird life. The usefulness of the Federation is attested by the fact that almost every regional bird club in the State is now a member. In fact the Federation has actively promoted and encouraged the organization of such clubs in areas where none previously existed. Consideration of the extent to which the Federation has fulfilled its purpose may indicate the respects in which more can and should be done.

Conservation

There had long been a need for a state-wide organization to voice the views and mobilize the opinion of bird students before the State Legislature and State officials on conservation matters. The national conservation organizations frequently hesitated to inject themselves into State controversies on the ground that they might be regarded as intermeddling outsiders. Local clubs were often ignorant of the existence of pending measures affecting wildlife, were out of touch with other clubs, and thus were unable to make their weight felt. The organization of the Federation has worked a vital change — chiefly because of the devotion and enthusiasm of Walter Elwood, who served as Chairman of our Conservation Committee until the present year. Our various affiliated clubs have been apprised of important proposed legislation, and their members have been urged to write to State legislators and other officials when the time seemed appropriate. In the field of conservation, to be effective a citizen must do more than vote, he must be willing to write. Constant vigilance is essential not only to promote desirable legislation, but to prevent emasculation of existing conservation laws and forestall the ever-present threat of encroachment on existing sanctuaries, parks and wildlife refuges. The present New York hawk and owl law was essentially the product of our efforts, aided by a number of other conservation organizations, whose assistance was enlisted by the Federation. Not all our battles have been crowned with success; but in this field a vigorous fight is never wholly a loss, for it emphasizes and increases the popular realization of the importance of conservation.

Publications

The Federation's quarterly magazine, *The Kingbird*, provides an important medium for recording knowledge and stimulating bird study. The national ornithological magazines cannot afford to publish much useful material that is essentially of State interest, and few local clubs have the means

of maintaining a permanent publication. The Federation is very fortunate in having the services of our able and energetic Editor, Allan Klonick. He requires support from our membership in the form of articles and notes. We hope that in time the Federation may be able to sponsor other publications, notably an up-to-date distributional account of the birds of New York. The Federation affords an ideal medium for the collection and evaluation of State records.

Exchange of information regarding club activities

The Federation has afforded means of contact among the various clubs scattered throughout the State. Some of these clubs have been in existence for decades. Exchange of information as to methods of establishing and maintaining local sanctuaries, dealing with local conservation problems, keeping bird records, handling club meetings could be very useful. It should be possible for clubs to arrange for periodic exchanges of speakers, field trips, and the like. The newer clubs should not hesitate to seek the advice of the more experienced societies.

Cooperative studies

Students working on field problems frequently need, or could effectively use, reliable observations of watchers in other parts of the State. Through the Federation it is now easy to make contact with other such students of similar interest. The Snowy Owl incursion surveys were facilitated by the existence of the Federation and an effort has begun to correlate hawk migration studies.

The Annual Meeting

The annual convention of the Federation, open to all bird students in the State, has proved a thoroughly enjoyable and instructive event. The paper program, field trip and dinner have resulted in acquaintanceship and cooperation among bird-watchers throughout our State, and have stimulated and encouraged conservation activities. Incidentally these meetings have promoted interest in birds in the localities where they have been held.

Needs of the organization

To encourage maximum affiliation and participation, dues payable to the Federation by affiliated clubs have been made almost nominal (10c for each member of the affiliated club) and members of such clubs can hold any Federation office even though not themselves Individual Members of the Federation. The Federation thus operates on a very restricted budget, and must depend to a large extent upon the dues of Individual Members. Individual membership is obtained by the annual payment of only \$2 (though larger contributions are welcomed). The Individual Member receives a subscription to *The Kingbird*, and personal notices of meetings, but over and above that, he has the satisfaction of knowing that he is making a vital contribution to the one organization representing the viewpoint of New York bird students on a state-wide basis.

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