

CONSERVATION NEWS AND NOTES

SAMUEL R. MADISON, *Chairman, Conservation Committee*

Superior National Forest, which adjoins Canada in northeastern Minnesota, is one of the last wilderness lands of the United States that could be retained unimpaired for the benefit of the people. The wilderness continues across the border in the Quetico Provincial Park. Superior National Forest was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909. In the twenties and thirties the Government adopted special policies to exclude resort hotels and to regulate logging. Certain "roadless areas" were created. In recent years airplanes have brought in hunters, fishermen and resort builders to areas which hitherto were accessible only by canoe or afoot. In December, 1949, upon the urging of conservationists and wildlife advocates, President Truman issued an executive order giving the Secretary of Agriculture authority to bar flights over the forest at an elevation of less than 4,000 feet after January 1, 1952. A two year period was thus provided in which resort owners could arrange their affairs to meet the situation, and they were offered equivalent or better locations on the border of the forest. The executive order was issued under the Air Commerce Act of 1926 and was attacked in court. Early in October, the Federal District Court upheld the flight restrictions. The Court held that Congress had established a "governmental purpose and policy whereby this region is to be preserved for the people in its primeval wilderness state". Conservationists hailed the results of the Court's decision. As the *New York Times* editorialized:

"The flying public has its rights as well as the canoeing public and the walking public. But a little lonesome space where nature has her own way, where it is quiet enough at night for one to hear the patter of small paws on leaves and the murmuring of birds, can still be afforded in these troubled days."

The Trumpeter Swan, America's largest waterfowl, is still increasing in numbers. The latest U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service census figures show a total of 571 birds, which is an increase of 36 over last year. In 1935 there were only 73 birds. The Trumpeter Swan was once found throughout most of North America, but its numbers were greatly reduced by relentless market hunting and destruction of its breeding habitat. In 1907, small flocks were discovered at Red Rock Lakes in Montana and in Yellowstone National Park. The United States established refuges for its protection, and transplanted birds to several western national wildlife refuges where new nesting colonies have been formed. Larger flocks breed in Alaska and in Canada, but most of these birds rarely reach the United States, preferring to winter in open patches of water where swift currents prevent the formation of ice.

Two biologists of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service apparently have discovered the breeding ground of the almost extinct Whooping Crane in the marshes of the Great Slave Lake in Canada. The location of their breeding grounds has long puzzled ornithologists. The Whooping Cranes, of which only about 30 remain in North America, winter on the Texas coast, particularly at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

The greatest numbers of ducks, geese and brant seen since the early 1930's are now heading south. The breeding ground surveys indicated a substantial increase in the duckling crops this year. Ten days have been added to the open season in all four flyways of the United States. The regulations for migratory waterfowl hunting are set by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with treaties between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. They are based upon extensive surveys by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the state fish and game agencies, provincial wildlife agencies, Canadian Wildlife Service, and cooperating private organizations concerned with wildlife resources.

The most important problem of the moment in New York State conservation matters is the proposal of the Conservation Department in regard to the future policy of the State with respect to the Forest Preserve. Nothing has been determined, as yet, but the situation bears watching by all of us. The Milmo Committee of eighteen, which has been established by the joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, is currently studying the Forest Preserve question with regard to whether or not the present constitutional provision should be amended. The Committee's recommendations will be of vital concern to us.

We hope you've all read "Cape May's Firing Line" by Kathleen Green Skelton, in the August-September issue of *Nature Magazine*. This graphic account of ruthless killing of hawks in Southern New Jersey, we are proud to point out, was written by a member of our committee.

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE
BIRD CLUBS

MEMBERSHIP OF TWO DOLLARS PER YEAR
INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTION TO THE KINGBIRD

Send Name, Address and Fee to
Membership Chairman

Miss Audrey L. Wrede
3109 Beverly Rd.
Brooklyn 26, New York