

YOUR PRESIDENT SAYS . . .

The celebration of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Federation at Bear Mountain, with the *Rockland Audubon Society*, affords us an opportunity to see another spectacularly beautiful area of our State. So far, each of our meetings has provided us with a field trip in a different section, so that most major avifaunal regions of our State have now been visited — except for the Adirondacks, the Catskills and the St. Lawrence Valley.

At present, I believe, all the regional bird clubs of New York are members of (or have applied for membership in) the Federation. A number of clubs have been organized in the past two or three years, so that today all our larger urban communities — other than Utica — are served by local clubs.

Interest in birds is constantly increasing, yet suitable areas for their study are even more rapidly diminishing. Today in our Country the great danger to birds is not so much intentional killing as extirpation by destruction of essential habitats. The variety of wildlife with which Nature endowed our continent cannot be preserved without preservation of the habitats on which these creatures depend. In New York the important habitats most reduced and threatened are open marshes, wooded swamps, and rich deciduous woodlands.

The spread of urbanization presents an ever-growing problem while at the same time it creates an urgent need. It becomes more and more difficult to preserve anything approaching wild land in the vicinity of our cities. Yet it is our urban population, surrounded by steel and concrete, that most needs the revivifying contacts with Nature. The fact that interest in wildlife has grown at the same time that our population has become more urban reflects an obscure consciousness of this need.

The value of the Federation in helping to mobilize nature-lovers throughout the State regarding legislative problems has already been repeatedly demonstrated. The need for vigilance is ever-present. Some short-sighted materialists continue to see in a virgin forest only lost lumbering opportunities. There are those who would turn our parks and reserves into bench-bordered boulevards containing nothing wilder than a golf course.

While many of these problems must be met on the local level by local organizations, the Federation provides a means by which information and techniques may be exchanged among the various clubs. Several of them have had experience with these problems.

On the scientific side, the Federation committee engaged in planning a modern State birdbook has made a great deal of progress. The stage of gathering and appraising records will soon be reached. The *Kingbird* offers an opportunity for stimulating and aiding the collection of information. While science is its own justification, it should not be forgotten that people appreciate best what they know. Hence the recording and dissemination of ornithological knowledge, though done for its own sake, serves also a useful conservation purpose.

The opportunities for cooperative studies and inter-club activities have not yet been adequately used. There can be no doubt that increasingly the Federation will serve as a clearing house to facilitate such cooperation.

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