

CONSERVATION NEWS

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Salt Marshes: The fight that bird clubs in New York City and on Long Island are waging to preserve upwards to 10,000 acres of salt water marshes has attracted concern from the National Audubon Society in New York to the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in Washington, D. C. These, plus many conservation groups and leaders, are giving plenty of moral support to the effort being mounted by the bird clubs in cooperation with the Nassau and Suffolk County Fish and Game Associations. The two Associations represent 8,000 members on Long Island.

The Audubon Society, for instance, declares that these lands which are threatened with development are "the heart of a key area on Long Island that is vital to the wild waterfowl of the entire Atlantic flyway." It is one of the biggest salt marsh units in the northeast. It is the biggest for the south shore of Long Island wholly within a single township. This simplifies the work to the degree that only one body of voters has to be persuaded to save their wetlands — the residents of the Town of Hempstead.

Hence, the bird watchers and sportsmen have banded themselves together as the Hempstead Town Lands Resources Council. Their initial objective is the preparation of a brochure explaining concisely why the wet lands should be left as they are. This would be the answer to one released by the Township together with Robert Moses, president of (among other things) the Long Island State Park Commission.

This brochure describes consulting engineers' plans for preserving 8,500 acres and converting 1,500 acres for park use — picnic areas, golf courses, etc. Three specific sections of the wetlands would be involved in the parks.

However, the plans have been criticized for revealing no indications that marine biologists were consulted. For example, were the sections selected at least in part for their minimum affect on fish and wild life? The report does not say. Since considerable dredging would be involved, the sportsmen, ornithologists, and conservationists are fearful of widespread detrimental effects. Plans were being pushed this summer for a layman's survey of the area (using all the trained help available). Their findings would be incorporated in the brochure.

The Council's secretary, Mrs. Norman Mellon, has already been doing some scaling on the maps. Mrs. Mellon is a housewife who just wants to keep the wetlands intact. In measuring off for all that would be involved including creeks, she found that 40 miles of mud banks would be destroyed. "Scientists, she asserted, have just really started finding out how fertile mud banks might be. These should not be destroyed until we know more about their potential as far as shell fish in particular are concerned," she said. She typifies the quality of leadership. Rod Vandivert, advertising man and the chairman, is also a neutralist when it comes to hunting or bird watching. But he reveals a welcome one-sidedness in wanting to save these wetlands that he likes to view from his cruiser.

To date, the Council is working with a temporary board of directors. Cornelius Ward, president of the Baldwin Bird Club, is serving as a member representing the ornithologists.

Many persons representing other organizations have attended meetings, joined or served as consultants: Dr. Ira Gabrielson, president of the Wildlife Management Institute; Charles H. Callison, assistant to the president of the National Audubon Society; State Assemblyman R. Watson Pomeroy, chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, and others.

They are watching also to see if the plan of action developed by this Council could serve as a model for other communities seeking to save open space areas.

Membership fees are being used to finance the brochure, which will be aimed for the discernment of those voters who, in the final analysis, are the ones who will have to apply the pressure on the opposition in the Township of Hempstead. Classification of dues and other information about the Hempstead Town Lands Resources Council can be obtained by writing to Mr. Sherwin E. Allen, Treasurer, 1430 North Grand Ave., Baldwin, N. Y.

Golden Eagles: At last, after 20 years of trying, a break-through was achieved for the Golden Eagle. A bill to save it was finally introduced in Congress. June 15, Senator Ralph W. Yarborough of Texas put Senate Joint Resolution 105 into the legislative hopper. This would amend the Bald Eagle Act of 1940 to include protection of the Golden Eagle. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce of which Senator Yarborough is a member. He hoped to have it passed at this session.

New York State's Senator Kenneth B. Keating, in response to the many letters from bird watchers throughout the state, co-sponsored the bill. Addressing the Senate he gave two reasons for passing the bill:

"First, the Golden Eagle resembles the Bald Eagle in so many respects that, as concerns the young birds, only trained ornithologists can recognize the difference. Federal protection of the Golden Eagle would, therefore, have a beneficial effect upon the survival of the Bald Eagle as well.

"Second, the Golden Eagle is a magnificent creature in its own right, but it is on the verge of extinction in many areas because of the sport of shooting such birds from airplanes."

Full credit must go to Senator Keating for his support. As part of the campaign to back him and Senator Yarborough, heaps of letters have been sent out by, among others, the Federation's own Dr. Walter Spofford, Golden Eagle expert from Syracuse, N. Y., and Mrs. Charles Noel Edge, president of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association.

Forest Preserve: Sometimes you hardly know what plans are afoot for the Forest Preserve until you pull the curtain behind you in the voting booth. These proposals are often slipped quietly through the legislature. Thus, voters this November will find a proposed constitutional amendment that would 'improve' the unpaved section of State Route 10 passing through the Preserve at Arietta.

The Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc., fears that this means a federally supported "high-speed, heavy-duty highway." The Club declares in a pamphlet that much timber would then be removed. It argues that such a highway is not warranted. The organization is pushing for a statewide campaign to defeat the amendment. Copies of the pamphlet can be obtained from David L. Newhouse, chairman, Conservation Committee, Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc., 402 Terrace Road, Schenectady 6, New York.

At A Quick Glance: Serious drought on the best duck nesting grounds in the Canadian prairies was reported May 27 by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There were murmurings among conservationists about a closed season if the drought did not let up. National Wildlands News, edited by Devereux Butcher in Washington, was hinting such a stand if rains did not come Dr. Sally F. Hoyt, Region 3 editor of The Kingbird had a fine article in the June-July issue of The Conservationist, telling why the Kingfisher should be protected Congress was considering a bill to protect the Nene, a rare Hawaiian goose. One of us might get out there someday and would like to see it.

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