

CONSERVATION NEWS

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I would venture to say that not too many members of the Federation have seen a Golden Eagle. Certainly, there have been few opportunities to see one gracing the skies above New York State. So I consider this all the more a measure of the great conservation spirit that prevails among our membership. The support that has been forthcoming from the clubs and individual members for federal protection of the Golden Eagle has been an important force in the progress that has been made — and has been an inspiration as well.

I can report that a number of clubs and members had a definite role early this summer in bringing a rancher from Texas to testify in behalf of Golden Eagle protection at the hearings conducted by the Senate Commerce Committee. It was a good thing that this man, Mr. Clay Miller, testified because the Texas sheep herders had three witnesses speaking against the bill. It turned out that one of them was a neighbor of Mr. Miller's. Thus a rare opportunity had presented itself to refute some of the claims made against this predator bird. Mr. Miller did effectively call into question many of the assertions made by his neighbor and the other witnesses, according to John Alderman, leader in the fight, who also appeared before the committee. Dr. Walter Spofford of Syracuse, a member of the Federation conservation committee, and Carl Buchheister, president of the National Audubon Society, also testified.

Not the least in the support received from the Federation were the many letters and telegrams — not only at the Senate hearings, but for the House Committee hearings this spring and those that were sent earlier when we first were trying to interest our legislators in taking affirmative action.

The bill was passed by the House, and at this writing had come out of the Senate Committee. The bill had been tagged with an amendment designed to pacify the sheep ranchers. But the Golden Eagle bill leaders were accepting it as an assurance of passage.

According to Mr. Alderman, the amendment provided that a rancher, believing he had an eagle problem, could apply to the governor of his state for permission to institute control measures. However, the governor in turn would have to apply to the Secretary of the Interior. It was felt that this process was cumbersome enough to be almost prohibitive. The bill in the form in which it was approved by the Senate Committee would prohibit the massive killing by airplane hunters that has been so threatening to the Golden Eagle population.

In view of Miss Rachel Carson's new book "Silent Spring", the letter we received from James H. Bush, Record Chairman of the Greene County Bird Club, is certainly timely. Mr. Bush quoted from a story appearing last May in the Catskill Daily Mail:

"Four little bluebirds were found dead in their nest Friday by Miss Emmy Rusack of Catskill. As everyone knows, the bluebirds are becoming extinct (Editor's note: If not yet nearly extinct, their numbers certainly have been dangerously low) and the loss of these four rare little birds is really distressing to all bird lovers. Although the actual cause of death is not known, Miss Rusack said she couldn't help but feel that it was due to indiscriminate spraying of trees. . . ."

I feel that this is the juncture to slip in a commercial on behalf of Miss Carson's book which is a study of the pesticide problem and a work that has not made the chemical companies too happy. For Miss Carson, author of "The Edge of the Sea", deals not only with the possible affect of pesticides on wildlife, but on the health of humans.

You can readily determine the connotation of the book's title, "Silent Spring", as far as wildlife is concerned. It has been published by Houghton Mifflin Company and sells for \$5.00 — surely at your own bookstores.

Miss Carson's detailed treatment includes incidents of particular interest to Federation members — the fight led by Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy to prevent spraying on Long Island five years ago, and the Dutch Elm Disease programs in Buffalo, Syracuse and Westchester Counties.

We have received a communication which warns that the wild character of large roadless areas of the Forest Preserve is being endangered by the indiscriminate use of motor vehicles. D. L. Newhouse, Chairman of the Conservation Committee of

the Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc., warned that lack of control could lead to more serious attempts in the Legislature to break through the now existent constitutional clause protecting the Preserve as 'forever wild'.

The report from Mr. Newhouse reads in part:

Recent studies by the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, conducted with the assistance of the Conservation Department, have shown that the wild character of the large roadless areas of the Forest Preserve is in danger of being destroyed by the indiscriminate use of motor vehicles. Although it is now clear that the Conservation Department has the authority to prohibit such use, it has become evident that the Department has no general policy on this subject, only a few isolated regulations covering specific situations. Furthermore, Mr. Newhouse charges, "it appears that the present administration of the Department has no interest in or desire to prohibit use of motor vehicles, but instead desires authority to permit their regulated use in most of the Preserve."

Robert Snyder, member of the Federation and of the Baldwin Bird Club has been in the forefront of an effort to establish a national seashore in New York State — namely on Fire Island instead of a highway that Robert Moses, chairman of the Long Island State Park Commission, wants to run nearly lengthways on this narrow strip of barrier beach on the south shore of Long Island facing the Atlantic Ocean. Mr. Snyder is secretary of the Citizens Committee for a Fire Island National Seashore.

The Committee has been conducting an educational campaign to arouse the support of citizens for this park which, if established, would be operated by the Department of the Interior. By summer's end, two bills had been introduced in Congress calling for such a park. The sponsors were Rep. John V. Lindsay (Rep., New York) and Rep. William Fitts Ryan (Dem., New York).

Secretary Stewart Udall's assistant, Walter Pozen, told the Committee at a meeting in Washington, D. C., that "Fire Island represents one of the last great opportunities to preserve an invaluable natural resource". He pointed out that "Fire Island is of extreme importance because of its natural features and its close proximity to large centers of population".

The 20-mile, four-lane ocean highway has been backed by the Temporary State Commission on Protection and Preservation of the Atlantic Shoreline, of which Speaker of the Assembly Joseph Carlino is chairman and Mr. Moses is secretary. Speaker Carlino presided over public hearings this summer that were marked by bitterness on the part of residents and summer residents of 18 communities on Fire Island (many of them of long years standing) and of other Long Island resident recreational and conservation leaders opposing the proposal.

Although the Commission subsequently unanimously endorsed the highway project, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, who had appointed the members following the now famous battering March storms of last winter, had not himself taken a stand as of the end of September.

Mr. Snyder said that the seashore committee hopes to get support from conservation organizations throughout the state to give further backing to the bills pending in Congress.

APPLICATION for membership should be sent to the chairman of the membership committee, Mrs. Donald Radke, East Chatham.

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