

NO BORDERS IN CONSERVATION

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I would like to indulge in a few personal impressions from two months of camping this summer. Such feelings occasionally belong in a column like this because conservation isn't just a matter of bill numbers, organizations, telegrams to legislators. Its impellent comes somehow from within one's self. It is motivated by experiences of such exhilaration that they are not recalled without again feeling something of the speechless intensity that accompanied them.

My wife, Ginger, has as much fun describing my gestures and articulations of excitement once this summer as I have in describing their cause—an Osprey which, having come into view from behind a thick growth of trees, dropped a nice-sized, squirming fish. I couldn't think why, when suddenly there whirled into view a magnificent Bald Eagle, its dark coat contrasting dramatically with its ermine-white head. The fish plopped into the shallow water. The eagle casually dropped down, seized the Osprey's abandoned dinner, and flew off to the limb of a nearby tree to enjoy the ill-gotten repast. How often I had read about this, but never dreamed to ever, *ever* actually see this performance. Experiences like this make one eager to halt the decline of eagles and Osprey, to cling to any of our wild life and wilderness that is left.

I can't report that this experience occurred during the two weeks we camped in the Adirondacks. But is my rekindled motivation and interest any less applicable to the problems in our own state? The answer, of course, is no.

Does a conservationist or naturalist really care where political borders are? It occurs to me that the conservationist is perhaps the greatest overlooker of borders that there ever was. He's the person who can be as alarmed over that proposed dam in Alaska as he is over the prospect of a defaced Storm King Mountain on our Hudson River; the person who is as compelled to rush to the rescue of the Nene in Hawaii, the Condor in California, and the leopard in Africa as he is to redress the loss of the Peregrine Falcon in his own New York State. If ever the phrase "One World" had any meaning, it is with the conservationist who looks upon the whole wilderness world as his—and everybody's.

I camped in the woods and along the lakes of two members of that One World: United States and Canada, including national parks in both. I think I can be just as concerned as a Canadian, if necessary, for the great Nova Scotian spruce forests which hike straight to the rims of the huge cliffs that have set down their rocky feet in the salt waters swirling around the edges of Cape Breton Highlands National Park. I lay as much claim to the flat, peaceful marshes and beaches of Prince Edward Island

National Park or the woods-surrounded lakes of Fundy National Park. But Canada need not take alarm at my claim, need not man again the old border fortifications that have become museum pieces. For the conquest is already Canada's—the claim on my affection, for example, of those lakes in Fundy around whose shores Boreal Chickadees and Pine Grosbeaks chattered and flitted by day and in whose evening-tinted waters beaver swam and saucily slapped the surface with their powerful, paddle-like tails.

I hope that every naturalist—and I hope someday everybody is one—anywhere in the world will claim and be claimed by the magnificent and tranquil sights of our own America, not the least being the mountains that roll like soft green swells for miles across the Adirondacks, the inspiring views (although fast being defiled) of the Hudson River and the waving green fields of the spartina on our salt wetlands of Long Island.

I only hope that enough of our citizens will be conquered by the beauty of their own wild land to save what is left of this precious heritage before the chances are lost forever.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON

June 1 – August 15

DAVID B. PEAKALL

At the summer seminar at Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology observers from several areas of the central part of the state compared notes on which species were up and which were down in numbers. Although these are only impressions, with enough observers a reasonable idea is obtained. The overall impression that I received was that common birds are becoming commoner and the less common scarcer. That this may be more than a mere impression is shown by the study made by the Grabers in Illinois (A comparative study of bird populations in Illinois 1906–1909 and 1956–1958. *Illinois Natural History Survey Bulletin*, Vol. 28, Article 3, 1963). In this they compared the census data of Gross and Ray (1906–1909) with their own recent studies. They found that although the total number of breeding birds in Illinois had changed little, the numbers of many species had declined seriously whereas the population of only a few had markedly increased. The increases (population more than doubled) were Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Starling, House Sparrow, Dickcissel, and Savannah Sparrow. The decreases (population more than halved) Turkey Vulture, Sparrow Hawk, cuckoos, Flicker, Red-headed