

Zupan, Jeff and Frank Enders Jr. Winter bird population study-reservoir. *Audubon Field Notes* 20: 476-477.
Sixty-sixth Christmas Bird Count—New York State. *Audubon Field Notes* 20: 134-151.

Corrections or omissions should be called to the attention of the Bibliography Committee: Sally Hoyt Spofford, Chairman, John B. Belknap, Allen H. Benton, and Kenneth C. Parkes.

CONSERVATION AND POLITICS

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The newest gimmick in political campaigning was reported in the June 15 issue of the Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide. It was a Birdwalk for Eugene McCarthy organized in East Hampton by wildlife writer Peter Mathhiessen. The price for watching birds in support of someone's presidential candidacy was \$15 per binocular squinter.

Birding had now been used for politics—but has politics been used very much for conservation? Used, that is, by conservationists? This extremely political year raises the question that has quite often been discussed, but mostly in secluded corners at conferences. Should conservationists become active in politics?

Incumbents and aspirants for Congress, the Legislature, a host of other offices as well as those for President will probably at some time this fall say something positive—and general—about conservation, just as they will about motherhood, fighting and sin. Conservation has been elevated into that “nobody is against it” league.

But where is the political leverage to implement these platitudes, particularly if no conservationists—or very few—can maneuver around in the swivel seats of some law making hall or scribble their signature on laws placed before them on wide, neat mayoralty desks? How many members of legislative or congressional conservation or related committees have merely inherited these posts by seniority or have been assigned them until something more to their interest opens up? How many county supervisors and municipal councilmen are conservationists? How many members of planning, zoning and other commissions (and I don't include the honorific advisory committees whose recommendations, other than planting some trees on Arbor Day, are magnanimously received and filed for future, *very future*, reference) are conservationists? The answers to these questions will provide a good estimate of how much power conservationists can exercise.

One of the most helpless experiences is to be politely, even enthusiastically, received at some hearing that can determine the fate of a particular pristine area and you know that the commission members have never sloshed into a bog while trying to get a closer look at a Rose

Pogonia, or been in an oak-beech woods on a May morning with the warblers waving through, or taken their youngsters on a summer's walk along a meadow brook of clear, cool water. How can they defend the human values, as well as the ecological ones, of these resources unless they have experienced them (presupposing, of course, that they were moved to speak for them, which so often isn't the case)? It's on such a commission and behind the closed doors, when plans are being developed and finalized, that conservation needs an effective voice. But conservation does not have a voice there. Why?

Conservationists generally are not active politically. There is even a resistance to political involvement. Yet, it is the governmental-political system that makes the decision about routing a highway through some marsh.

What may be wrong with politics is that it is left by default to those who are not really interested in issues, but who are concerned more with enjoying some sense of power—and occasionally even personal gain. There's a lot of talk these days about "The New Politics." I don't think any clear definition has crystalized yet. But one phenomenon is observable—the many, issue-orientated people involving themselves in politics who had never been closer to it than once a year in the polling booth. Conservationists are issue conscious. How wonderful it would be if the government structure was filled with people concerned with the issues—and even the party structure permeated with such people serving as committee members and even chairmen.

The committeeman or woman is the person who covers an election district, canvassing and getting out the vote for his or her party. The position in itself doesn't embrace much power, but it involves you on the periphery of the power-exercising structure—the mesh of government and party organization. There you can begin urging policies and appointments. Should you become a zone leader or town chairman, for examples, you would be in even a stronger position to urge that some biologist be appointed to a county public works department.

Organize a Committee of Conservationists in support of an incumbent who has achieved an outstanding conservation record or of a candidate who has taken a clear, comprehensive stand. There is a gamble here—probably considerable influence if your man wins, and not so much if the other wins. For this reason, although you can't form committees in support of a man without strong assurances, conservationists can be active in both major parties so that in either case some conservationist will have access to the victor.

Should conservationists contribute money to campaigns? Probably not as specific organizations, but perhaps as individuals or groups of individuals. Especially if a Committee of Conservationists has been organized. Its members might each make a donation so there would be a good total. At testimonials, which are really means to pay a candidate's

campaign debts, a group could take a table or two. All this is in the interest of a better working Democracy. If more of the public—and especially those who care about one or more issues—contribute, then the office seekers and political parties have to be more responsive to them than to a few large givers who then can swing a lot of power. This has been the idea in back of the annual Dollars for Democrats and Dollars for Republicans campaigns conducted by party committeemen and women.

We are being taxed of our natural resources without representation. Unless conservation has strong representation in the decision making, our Nation may, through obsession with progress plus lack of understanding, be taxed irretrievably beyond the capacity of its natural resources to renew themselves.

IN BRIEF—The bills to allow Mourning Dove hunting on Long Island and to license falconry failed to pass the Legislature. Suggestions and reasons as to what Federation policy should be on allowing or not allowing falconry can be sent to the conservation chairman. . . . Federation member David M. Bigelow, artist and Curator of the Buffalo Museum of Natural Sciences Education Department, has been named a regional vice president of the Constitutional Council for the Forest Preserve. Following its organization to maintain “forever wild” protection of the Preserve in the new and subsequently defeated state constitution, it was made permanent at a meeting in Albany, May 4. Individual memberships of \$3.00 can be sent to its offices: 3rd Floor, 15 East 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. . . . *The Long Island Naturalist*, published by the Baldwin Bird Club and edited by Paul W. Liebold, 58 Hardy Lane, Westbury, New York, 11590, is now available for \$1.00 (two issues) per year. . . . I never realized that conservation articles in *The Kingbird* would be eligible for the John J. Elliott Memorial Award for an article in that publication. So I really couldn’t believe the words I was hearing at the Annual Meeting when Dr. Edgar M. Reilly, Jr., announced for the committee that I received the award for the conservation articles. I must say I felt somewhat sentimental at receiving this award from the Federation in which I have so many good associations and friends. Also, personally it was the best award I could have received anywhere because of my friendship with Mr. Elliott who taught me so much about identification—and even more about the close sense of appreciation one can feel about nature.

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