

humanity, and the responsibility for enlightening them falls on those who have mastered the subject in all its details.

In certain sparsely-peopled regions of the globe, where primitive conditions of life still prevail, the destruction of birds and wild animals for food may be considered a necessity of human life; but in more highly developed countries this absolute necessity no longer exists. Nevertheless, the slaughter of wild birds throughout the entire world increases at an alarming rate. Man has already wiped out certain species and is on the point of exterminating others.

For the moment let us group arbitrarily the different categories of bird-life, for which better protection is needed, under the following heads:

1. Gamebirds of upland regions. (This merely means land game birds, as distinct from 2.)
2. Ducks, geese and shore-birds.
3. Birds which feed on insects and on the seeds of weeds.
4. Birds of prey.
5. Birds which are killed for their plumage.

Game-birds of Upland Regions.

Many land-birds, good for food, are reared on lands belonging to private individuals. Altogether these constitute a great wealth. There is no logical reason why States should not act in the same way—in other words, take the necessary precautions to increase the game-birds and permit the use of the excess for food and for sport. As in the case of the private breeder, the State should naturally do all that is necessary to preserve the stock, with a view to ensuring a sufficient annual excess.

This principle applies more particularly to countries where there prevails what one can call the system of free hunting, and where pheasants, grouse, partridges and similar species can thrive. The United States of America is only one of numerous countries where the game-birds of upland regions have greatly diminished and where it is necessary to apply with more care these principles of game-regulation, such as are already in force in private estates, as for example, in Scotland. States, by their negligence regarding the solution of the problem, are losing important advantages from which they might otherwise profit.

At London I have seen, in the market, numerous grouse which I was told were wild birds killed in European and Asiatic countries and sent to England.

In spite of the Argentine law of 1926 forbidding the exportation of the bodies of Tinamous, tens of thousands are still sent from South America to the northern markets.

Game-birds (other than those reared in private estates) can hardly withstand the immense commercialisation rendered possible by refrigeration and by rapid modern transport.