

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIRD LIFE.

(By G. INNESS HARTLEY.)

(Extract.)

Conservation of its wild-life resources is now a policy of the United States Government, and for it as a national policy we have to give thanks mainly to two men, Theodore Roosevelt and Dr. T. S. Palmer. During the Presidential administrations of the former, no less than fifty-three Federal bird refuges were established, to say nothing of several national bison-ranges and at least four national game-preserves. And it was the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, under the supervision of Dr. Palmer, that carried out the work laid down by the President.

The conservation of bird life in the United States, although still only in the stage of infancy, is now fostered in the following ways:—(1) Through the enactment of sane game laws. (2) Through the education of the public to encourage the presence of birds around their homes and farms. (3) Through Government or State wild-life refuges and sanctuaries. (4) Through privately owned preserves, refuges, and sanctuaries. (5) Through State game-farms for propagating birds. (6) Through game protective and breeding associations. (7) Through Audubon societies. (8) Through wild-life protection societies.

The value of game-laws has been discussed and requires no further mention here. A word, however, needs to be said about education. Wild-life study is now being taught in most of the public schools of the United States. Children are familiarised with the common plants, trees, insects, animals, and birds. They are taught to recognise the commoner species and learn something of their habits. To further this work many States have set aside a "bird-day," similar to and often in conjunction with an "arbor-day," on which the public school children plant berry-trees or shrubs, build bird-houses, and make excursions into the woods and fields under the guidance of teachers to study close at hand what they have been taught indoors. In other words, there is a general trend of popular sentiment towards teaching the younger generations to take an interest in birds and other forms of wild life.

A number of agricultural colleges have also taken up the study of economic ornithology as a prescribed course in their curriculum; and the newer generations of scientific farmers are being educated in regard to the cash value of birds on the farm.