

WHEN MAN MUST REDUCE NATURAL ENEMIES.

Man must reduce (not exterminate) certain natural enemies of birds: (1) when he attempts to rear poultry or game birds in excessive numbers; (2) when, because of the disturbance of the biologic balance caused by extensive agricultural operations, he needs to increase the number of insectivorous birds beyond what the land naturally would support; (3) when the most sagacious natural enemies of birds, like the fox and the crow—their own enemies having been reduced or exterminated by man himself—take advantage of the extra protection and food afforded them in civilised communities and thus become too numerous and too destructive; (4) wherever man hunts and destroys wild game he may also reduce somewhat the number of the enemies of the game and thereby relieve the game of a part of the pressure brought to bear against its increase. In all such cases discrimination must be used, and it is unsafe to reduce too far the numbers of any but the most powerful predatory animals.—“*The Natural Enemies of Birds*,” by Edward Howe Forbush.

THE HOUSE CAT.

Missouri Game and Fish Department reports that every time a hunter kills a semi-wild cat he can easily figure that he has saved his daily bag limit of bobwhite quail. A check-up of the results of the co-operative pheasant egg hatch shows that after the 26,000 eggs had hatched, cats caused more deaths of young pheasants than died of natural causes. The toll taken by predatory animals and hawks was very meagre in comparison to the toll taken by cats, the report filed by the 1,600 persons who received eggs revealed. Sportsmen are urged to do their part in curbing the depredations caused by the common house cats permitted to run wild.

Farmers who permit cats to roam on their places are keeping away birds which aid materially in destroying insect pests. City dwellers must be content with only empty bird houses if they keep cats, bird authorities point out, as feeding places, houses and baths are not sufficient incentive for birds when their greatest natural enemies, the cat, is about.