

## VERMIN (?).

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As Mr. McAtee (in charge of Food Habits Research, U.S. Bureau Biological Survey), so well states, the interest of the sportsman and hunter, which primarily concerns itself with a comparatively few game-birds and mammals, should not be permitted to dominate the whole field of wild-life conservation, inasmuch as there is a large and constantly growing number of persons whose interest in wild life is largely aesthetic and sentimental. Doubtless it hasn't occurred to those who are most energetic in sponsoring wholesale campaigns of "vermin" eradication that, as a matter of fact, all living creatures of the animal kingdom are in the truest sense predatory, for somehow in the scheme of Nature, in order to survive at all, they must prey upon other creatures. In this sense, undoubtedly, man is the greatest predator of all. At any rate, more than any other species, he has transformed and marred the face of Nature by the destructive processes which he has set in motion. Through the diversity of his activities and his conflicting desires, he also has brought about a problem which seems well-nigh impossible of satisfactory solution to all concerned.

We feel that all people should be broad-minded enough to be interested in preserving from total extinction all species of predatory birds and mammals, even though at times and in certain situations some of them may become destructive to man's interests and may have to be brought under control. To the scientist, many such forms represent types that have come down to us out of a very remote past and, moreover, their presence lends an interest and charm to the wilderness or to the countryside, and their total extermination would, to him, represent an irreparable loss. On the other hand, the naturalist and nature lover, with equal breadth of mind, should be able to sympathise with the viewpoint of farmers, fruit-growers, stockmen, and game-breeders who suffer losses through the depredations of predatory species. Their sympathies, moreover, at least should go far enough not to show active antagonism towards reasonable measures of control.

Stated briefly, therefore, our task is to work out in good faith, impugning the motives of none and taking all facts into consideration, a solution of the problem along lines which, as nearly as possible, will bring the most benefit and satisfaction to the greatest number of people.—*"Bird Lore."*