

CURRENT LITERATURE

CARTWRIGHT, B. W. The "Crash" decline in Sharp-tailed Grouse and Hungarian Partridge in western Canada and the role of the predator. *Trans. Ninth North Amer. Wildlife Conference*, pp. 324-329, 1944.

A sketch is presented of the crash in the prairie area in 1942, 1943 when the birds were abundant and then collapsed like a pricked balloon. Cartwright shows that the temperatures were below and rainfall above normal during the critical hatching period. In the falls of 1942, 1943, hunters' bags were composed largely of adults without the proportion of young of the year that would be expected after a successful nesting season. Young gallinaceous birds are very vulnerable to cold, wet weather. Evidently the bad weather at hatching time greatly reduced the

young produced. Sharp-tailed Grouse have a life span of about three years. Three adverse nesting seasons, with bad weather at hatching time might wipe out a species with a three year life span. Renesting after eggs are destroyed by predators results in some broods hatching later, with a chance of better weather for the young, and consequent survival. Predators by destroying a substantial proportion of the first and even second nestings, stagger the nesting attempts and thus may be a major factor in the survival of the species. This may be an important factor for upland game birds. It is not applicable to waterfowl, where later hatched young may find surface water dried up and thus mortality aggravated. This is an important contribution to the problem of predator versus prey.

—A. L. RAND.

BOOK REVIEW

OUR HERITAGE OF WILD NATURE (with a subtitle : A PLEA FOR ORGANIZED NATURE CONSERVATION). By A. G. Tansley, *Cambridge University Press*, 1945, pp., 74, with 26 photographs, many of them full-page (*The MacMillan Canadian Co., Toronto*, \$2.50).

Professor Tansley, who has devoted a lifetime to the teaching of ecology, in "Our Heritage of Wild Nature" most successfully explains "Ecology" to the layman. In 16 short chapters he first presents the case for conservation of Nature and Wild Life in the United Kingdom, then describes British woodlands, grass and moorland, commons, heaths, lakes and rivers, fenland, bog and sea coast, and finally explains why each particular type of landscape is inhabited by just those plants and animals.

In the last five chapters he deals with nature conservation as practised in the past in the United Kingdom, and with the effects of recent changes in land uses due to the war and to social and economic changes.

Although the problems confronting the Conservationist in densely populated England and Scotland are very different from those in Canada, much that is fundamental in wild life conservation applies equally well to Canada. The book is a fine example of practical, applied ecology and might well be required reading for Natural History teachers and for everyone concerned with the preservation of nature and wild life; in fact this little book makes delightful reading for anyone who is interested in nature and nature study. The reader not familiar with British vernacular plant names would wish that Professor Tansley had given the technical names for all species mentioned. The photographs are excellent as is the subject index.

— A. E. PORSILD.



Rand, Austin Loomer. 1946. "The "Crash" decline in Sharp-tailed Grouse and Hungarian Partridge in western Canada and the role of the predator, by B. W. Cartwright [Review]." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 60(5), 118–118.

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