

Chicago Natural History Museum

FOUNDED BY MARSHALL FIELD, 1893

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THE BULLETIN

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Members are requested to inform the Museum promptly of changes of address.

CONSERVATION

So great have been the changes in the vegetation and animal life of the world with the spread of civilized man, that over wide areas the natural phenomena of geographic zoology and of ecology in general are completely secondary, approachable from the agricultural or economic standpoint rather than from the biological. The importance of the study of the conditions of life, undisturbed by the gross effects of civilization, has been increasingly appreciated in recent years. The principal hope for the preservation of natural conditions for the future, in temperate latitudes, and probably in much of the tropics as well, lies in the establishment of state and national parks, in which primitive conditions are maintained, to serve as refuges and sanctuaries for wild life.

It was a memorable experience for the junior author [Karl P. Schmidt] to find the great volcanic peak of Tongkoko at the northeastern tip of the Minahassa peninsula of Celebes, with its rich forest vegetation, dwarf buffalo and babirusa, black apes and tarsiers, mound builders, and flying lizards, set aside as a wild-life refuge by the government of the Netherlands East Indies, some time before 1929, and referred to as a "Natuur Monument." The vast Parc National Albert in the Belgian Congo and the Kruger National Park in the Transvaal are examples on a grand scale of such wild-

life preserves in the tropics and subtropics. Throughout the world there has been a notable growth of appreciation of the aesthetic and other non-economic values of the untouched wilderness, exemplified in North America by the "Wilderness Society."

THOUGHTLESS WASTE

An expanding modern human culture like that of white man in North America or New Zealand tends to progressive and unthinking exploitation of natural resources without consideration of the long-term results; and unfortunately only too often there has been thoughtless waste of resources more valuable or more important than the short-term advantage gained. European agriculture and forestry had largely established a state of balance before the rise of modern mechanized agricultural techniques, and in older countries generally a kind of stabilization has long since been reached, though sometimes only after great losses of natural resources, as in the deforested and eroded areas of China. Even among many otherwise primitive peoples subsistence agriculture has reached a high state of development in which terracing of slopes may be carried to an extent impossible under an exploitative economy.

The fact that in unrenounceable and renewable resources alike, the United States had been conspicuously thoughtless in its overall economy came to be realized, or at least to be publicized, only at about the beginning of the present century. The conferences called by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 and 1909 brought into focus the lines of thought involved in what we have come to think of as the "Conservation Movement" in North America.

LONG-RANGE PROBLEMS

The more far-reaching implications of the conservation movement in the United States concern long-range problems, the halting of waste, the stabilization of the renewable resources of water, soil, and vegetation, and, in general, taking thought as to man's long-range habitation of the earth's surface. In North America and in the parts of the world developed by white man only in the nineteenth century, the problems of substituting "development" for "exploitation" and of halting waste on public lands are acute. The need for wise conservation policies is recognized even in the most optimistic studies forecasting our economic and social future.

The questions as to the future expansion of human populations in the tropics, depending on the control of the specifically tropical diseases of man and of his domestic animals, and on the expansion of tropical agriculture, stumble on grave doubts as to the productivity of soils in regions of heavy rainfall. Consideration of the problems of soil resources and soil conservation on a world scale tend to be pessimistic and to emphasize

THIS MONTH'S COVER

A Christmas card from the Museum to its Members is presented as this month's cover. This drawing introduces the work of Mr. Douglas E. Tibbitts, who was appointed Staff Illustrator on November 1.

the urgency of the problems facing all mankind in the further expansion of its populations and in its further conquest of the earth.

—(W. C. Allee and Karl P. Schmidt, in Chapter 28 of *Ecological Animal Geography*, 2nd Edition, by Richard Hesse, W. C. Allee, and Karl P. Schmidt, in press, by permission of John Wiley and Sons, Inc.). See suggested Reading List on Conservation below:

READING LIST

The following works, obtainable through The BOOK SHOP of the Museum, are recommended as an introduction to the subject of Conservation:

- Bennett, H. H. 1947. *Elements of Soil Conservation*. New York, McGraw-Hill: pp. x, 406, illus.
- Gabrielson, Ira. 1943. *Wildlife Refuges*. New York, Macmillan: pp. xiii, 257, 32 pls., 17 text figs.
- Graham, E. H. 1944. *Natural Principles of Land Use*. New York, Oxford: pp. xiii, 274, 32 pls.
- Gustafson, A. F., C. H. Guise, W. H. Hamilton, Jr., and Heinrich Ries. 1949. *Conservation in the United States*, 3rd Edition. Ithaca, Comstock: pp. ix, 254, illus.
- Jacks, G. V., and R. O. Whyte. 1939. *Vanishing Lands: A World Survey of Soil Erosion*. New York, Doubleday-Doran: pp. 332, 33 pls.
- Leopold, Aldo. 1936. *Game Management*. New York, Scribners: pp. xxi, 481, illus.
- Mouton, H. G. 1949. *Controlling Factors in Economic Development*. Washington, Brookings Institution: pp. 389.
- Osborn, Fairfield. 1948. *Our Plundered Planet*. Boston, Little, Brown: pp. xiv, 217.
- Pinchot, Gifford. 1947. *Breaking New Ground*. New York, Harcourt Brace: pp. xvii, 522, illus.
- Sears, P. B. 1947. *Deserts on the March*, 2nd Edition. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press: pp. xii, 180.
- Vogt, William. 1948. *Road to Survival*. New York, Sloane: pp. xvi, 335, 8 figs.

Among the African mammals exhibited in Carl E. Akeley Memorial Hall (Hall 22) are groups of most of the well-known species of the continent of Africa. At one end of the hall is the largest habitat group in the Museum. It is a scene in southern Abyssinia that shows twenty-three animals of six different species gathered at a waterhole.



1949. "Conservation." *Bulletin* 20(12), 2-2.

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