

Canadian National Parks Branch asked Provincial Ministers of Agriculture to give their views on the value of birds. It noted that "If you think bird protection is unnecessary, read what they say." Excerpts from the paper by P.E.I.'s minister are provided below.

"There is no subject in the field of natural science that is of greater interest than the important position occupied by birds in the great plan of organic nature.

The food relations of the birds are so complicated, and have such a far reaching effect upon other forms of life that the mind of man may never be able fully to grasp them. The position occupied by birds among the forces of nature is unique. Their structure fits them to perform the office of a swiftly moving force of police, large bodies of which can be assembled to correct disturbances caused by the outbreaks of plant and animal life. A swam of grasshoppers appears, or an irruption of field mice, and birds gather to the feast from far and near.

....Birds are classed as useful or injurious only as they affect man or his property. In an uninhabited country birds cannot be ranked as beneficial or harmful, good or bad, for there is no agriculture. With the beginning of agricultural practice all this is changed.

....Most of the animal and vegetable forms that he produces are at variance with those produced by nature and must be continually fostered and protected if they are to maintain their artificial character and excellence.

....The enormous losses which have occurred in this country from the destruction of growing crops by insects must seem incredible to those who do not realize how vast are the number of insects, how stupendous their powers of multiplication, how insatiable their voracity."

....Hence the importance of the study of these natural counter checks, among which birds hold a high place. With the disappearance of our birds, the destruction of the natural wealth by insects forges to the front as a subject of vital importance....

....The millions of the insect world are upon us. The birds fight them for us and when the birds are numerous and have nestlings to feed the number of insects they consume is enormous. They require absolutely nothing at our hands save the privilege of being let alone while they work for us. In fighting the insects we have natural allies in the shore birds, woodpeckers, song birds, swallows and martins, certain hawks, owls and the bats. All these wage war at their own expense.

The farmer might just as well lose \$100 through a short crop as to pay out that sum in labour and material in spraying operations and yet we go on slaughtering our friends and allowing others to slaughter them.

....In view of the known value of the trees of our country each woodpecker is worth about \$20 in cash. Each nuthatch and chickadee is worth \$5 to \$10.

Thousands of busy men and women are to-day striving hard to promote measures that will preserve the valuable birds of the world. They believe that we have no right to squander and destroy a heritage of priceless value which we have done nothing to create and which is not ours to destroy"

ECOPEI PUBLISHES NEW BOOKLET

excerpts from ECOPEI release

Woodlands and Wildlife -what you can do is geared towards helping enhance and maintain healthy wildlife communities in our forests. The 32-page booklet, written by Gary Schneider and lavishly illustrated by Katherine Poole, deals with many issues that affect what lives in the forest.