



Conservation

... with Marie Mellinger

Threat to the Santee-Cooper

Another threat to South Carolina's few remaining wilderness areas came with a proposal to log the Santee-Cooper Swamp. This swamp comprises a unique ecological community of cypress and tupelo. Conservationists responded to this with a deluge of letters to senators and representatives, and a joint resolution was introduced and passed stopping timber cutting for one year so that a comprehensive study of the ecological effects of timber cutting could be made. The Charleston Natural History Society revealed another threat to the Santee National Wildlife Refuge. Because of joint state and federal land ownership the Refuge is threatened by proposed plans for a massive recreation development favoring people over wildlife. This would completely destroy the value of the Refuge as a wildlife sanctuary.

Rare and Endangered Species

In 1964, 78 species of wild life were listed as rare and endangered in the United States. By 1967 the list had grown to 139 species, and by 1971, latest reports list 418 species. These lists do not include the big game animals and other wild life endangered in Africa, Asia, South America, and other parts of the world. Every day we read a press release or an editorial suggesting still another species becoming rare or endangered. The Peregrine Falcon, the Red-shouldered Hawk, the Red-tailed Hawk (said to have decreased in numbers by 70% in some areas), the Prairie Chicken, the meadow vole, the Herring Gull, all joining the eagle, the Osprey, the timber wolf, and the alligator, on the road to extinction. On 24 November 1970 Secretary Hickel added eight more species of whales to this list.

Why? There are basically many reasons all attributed directly or indirectly to man-pesticides, chemical pollution, oil pollution, sewage and waste pollution, loss of

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habitat through logging, draining, building, and power dams, sport hunting, trophy hunting, and such local civic madness as rattlesnake round-ups, or the world's largest possum hunt.

Of all these the use of pesticides is probably the most apparent. Here are headlines from INSIGHT, put out by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife—

IBIS IN TROUBLE MERCURY NEW THREAT TO MEN AND ANIMALS DIELDRIN THREAT TO EAGLE GROWING ET TU UTAH IBIS SHELL THINNING IN SPARROW HAWKS

In a release from W.G. Duncan, we quote, "From soil or water pesticides enter the ecosystem and become the equivalent of a disease, polluting and infecting life in varying degrees at all levels. Entering the ecosystem means that living creatures that are exposed to a substance such as DDT incorporate it in some manner within their bodies. From there it begins a seemingly endless journey as it is concentrated, reconstructed, and passed on to progeny and predators. Once a contaminant enters the ecosystem it appears in unexpected places." It has been proven that DDT kills eagles, Bobwhite, Herring Gulls, oysters, meadow voles, penguins, seals, shrimp, crabs, and both fresh water and salt water fish. The estuaries are the natural collection point for DDT runoff from inland areas and the collection of DDT there can affect the entire food chain in coastal areas.

Yet DDT is but one offender; there are herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, rodenticides, nematocides, and miticides. All together, an article in the Atlanta *Constitution* tells us that there are 56,000 pesticides registered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is estimated, however, that 25 basic chemicals constitute 90% of pesticide use in the United States. Children have died from exposure to pesticides used on tobacco crops.

Use of Mirex to get rid of the fire ant is considered especially dangerous to wild life, as it too, can enter a food chain and accumulate in living things. It can kill birds and mammals and affect their reproduction. Sprayed over marshes it has been proven to kill Robins, Blue Jays, catfish, Turkey, quail, Brown Thrashers, kingbirds, and deer. It has a highly cumulative effect on many organisms.

Chemical pollution, caused when the residues and dyes from chemical plants drain into streams and rivers is another source of danger to wild life. A high accumulation of mercury has been discovered in Shovelers, Pintails, Mallards, and Blue-winged Teal in Michigan and North Dakota. Mercury contamination in fish has resulted in bans and warnings in Canada and 20 states, including Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. A long stretch of the Savannah River was recently closed to fishing because of mercury contamination. In Alberta Province, the pheasant and Hungarian Partridge season was closed because of mercury infested birds. In Michigan mercury was found in squirrels, rabbits, grouse, and quail. Eggs of Red-breasted Mergansers, cormorants, Great Blue Herons, and Common Terns have been found to be sterile because of mercury poisoning.

The wintering duck populations of this continent have dropped as much as 350,000 in one season because of oil spills. Dr. Walter Brekinridge in a recent lecture said as many as 100,000 birds have died in a single oil swoop, and he considers it one of the major hazards to bird migrants. Migrating birds also have to contend with towers, lights, great expanses of glass in buildings, all extreme dangers to bird travel. The picture of 54 dead redstarts picked up under one tower is not a comforting sight.

Sewage accumulating in lakes and streams is another hazard to wild life. Below Winston-Salem, 150,000 fish died in the Yadkin River, killed by raw sewage that

depleted their oxygen supply.

Opening National Parks and Wildlife Refuges in response to public pressure for hunting, or on the lame excuse of an over-population of some species, poses still another serious threat. Dr. Gordon Wilson wrote, "The zeal of deer hunters who surround Mammoth Cave National Park each season and their determination to bag a deer makes me think of gangsters. But for an enlarged ranger force and severe handing out of fines, one season would destroy every deer in the park and much other wild life, for the man with the gun likes to take a pot shot at any living thing."

What can we do about our rare and endangered wild life?

1. Protest hunting from airplanes, or from any moving vehicle such as a jeep, snow-mobile, or motorcycle. Stop all bounty hunting of wolves, coyotes, and other species.
 2. Protest the collecting of wild species for use by biology classes. Frog assembly-dissecting kits are already available, and if wholesale collecting of live frogs and other amphibians for high school and college classes is not stopped, soon there will be none to collect.
 3. Swear off the use of furs and skins of wild animals and reptiles, and boycott stores that sell such items. Protest newspaper advertising of such items as reptile bags or leopard coats.
 4. Discourage the use of magazines, newspaper, radio, television, or films, to make a hero of the trophy hunter, or the man who kills the biggest beaver, hawk, or wild cat. Encourage enforcement of all existing laws protecting wildlife. Protest when sports-writers advocate killing crows or other birds for sport. Tell your local Chamber of Commerce that you do not approve of snake hunts or possum hunts held for tourist promotion.
 5. Support the conservation organizations like the CCNC, ECOS, the Sierra Club, National Audubon, and others in their fight to establish refuges and save wilderness areas, and in their fight against the use of pesticides.
 6. Let your representatives know how you feel about legislation on conservation issues.
 7. Never use Dieldrin, Endrin, Aldrin, Toxaphene, Heptachlor, DDT, Chlordane, Lindane, mercury, lead, or arsenic. Use only those detergents that are free of phosphates.
 8. Read the Yearbook, MAN, AN ENDANGERED SPECIES, available from the Supt. of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, for \$1.50.
- MAN, also an ENDANGERED SPECIES—it gives you something to think about, doesn't it?