

Conservation

. . . with Marie Mellinger

South Carolina has a new organization, called Campaign Clean Water, formed to "reclaim and protect the waters of South Carolina. Any one interested can write Campaign Clean Water, Post Office Box, Capital Station, Columbia, S.C. Hopefully, this will be citizens from all over South Carolina, working to curb pollution and keep away threatened ocean dumping, dredging, and damming.

R and E

The words "rare and endangered species" appear with increasing frequency in almost any publication one picks up. S. Dillon Ripley of the Smithsonian Institution estimates that a majority of our animal species will be extinct by the year 2000! The Farm Index states that 34 million acres of rural land, much of it wildlife habitat, will disappear as cities and highways continue to sprawl across the land.

In Georgia, three rare and endemic species of pocket gophers are now extinct. Bob Hillestod, chairman of the rare and endangered species committee of the Southeast section of the Wildlife Society, blames over zealous museum collectors for reducing the population. Since the animals stayed within a small area, a population could be wiped out or severely reduced in one day.

In the *Auk* of April 1973, an article on Cattle Egret foods states, "About 1000 Cattle Egrets were shot in late afternoons at four roosts in Alachua and Marion Counties, Florida between 19 June and 16 July 1969 in connection with another study being made on endoparasites." Florida must consider the Cattle Egret on a par with the Starling!

In the same publication, for January 1973, an article on bird collections states, "American collections contain many thousands of some widely distributed, abundant species, but few or none of the other, rarer forms." They go on to justify scientific collecting, but it is all too easy to collect the "rare forms" into extinction. The so-called ornithologist who boasted of killing 35 Ivory-billed Woodpeckers did this at a time when the species was already well on the way to extinction.

Thirty-five tribes of American Indians, and over 220 other species of animals are now extinct. New York's Bronx Zoo has erected a graveyard exhibit with a headstone for each extinct animal species (except man). Once an animal species is extinct it is dead and buried, nothing will ever bring it back to life.

In the *Anderson Independent* of 5 February 1973, there was an editorial entitled "Endangered." In this the editor writes of efforts to save the kangaroo in Australia, and goes on to say, "Among other instances we note that an international organization has been formed to protect the peregrine falcon; that the government of India has been making efforts to protect the Bengal tiger; that the Soviet Union is cracking down on illegal hunting of sable; and that our own government has been cracking down on hunters who have been mindlessly killing off the American golden eagle.

"Still, we can't help reflecting that there is another endangered species on this planet and wishing that more positive efforts were being made toward curbing its own predatory propensities against itself. We are referring, of course, to man."

Dr. Hugh Iltis wrote, "If we in our human preoccupation let all but corn and cow slide into the abysmal finality of irreversible extinction, our species indeed will have

committed ecological suicide.”

But Harold Martin, in a column about the new organizations formed to try and protect endangered species sums it all up, by saying, “The friends of the animals know that all of us, men and animals alike, are part of the infinitely complex and fragile fabric that makes up the natural world around us. And when any species is destroyed, even one so seemingly insignificant as the prairie dog, we are all the lesser for it.”

And an added note: Buy and use the new endangered species stamps put out by the National Wildlife Federation.

New and Timely

It is already too late for one North Carolina river; *Conservation News* of 1 February 1973 contains an obituary for the Chowan River, ruined by chemical pollution.

North Carolina Legislature failed to pass the coastal lands management act and a state land use planning act, both vitally needed for protection of the environment.

South Carolina has a Special Study Committee on Land Use Planning headed by Lt. Gov. Earle E. Morris. Hopefully they will consider “land as a resource, instead of just a commodity to be bought and sold.”

And on a cheerful note: The federal government has granted \$89,000 to preserve the 85-acre Hemlock Bluffs near Raleigh, N.C. Pinckney Island in South Carolina has been set up as a wildlife area under The Natural Land Trust, Inc., and the Federal Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife.