

MORE BIRDS, MORE GREEN



*Conservation is the application of common sense
to the common problems for the common good.*

GIFFORD PINCHOT

THERE ARE MANY CAUSES for the diminution in the numbers of our native birds. Man is responsible for it, either directly or indirectly, to a great extent. The cutting of forests; clearing of shrubbery; mowing of fence rows; draining of swamps; tilling of the land; shooting for food, profit, or sport; destruction of those that injure crops; and burning of land, all have a bearing on the subject. So likewise does the erection of lighthouses, telephone wires, and wire fences; also, the introduction of bird-destroying animals.

Nature also limits the multiplication of birds as well as of other creatures. Over some of nature's checks man has no control, such as the elements, and it is little less than miraculous that so many birds, young and old, escape death. Entire bands of migrating birds are sometimes overcome by storms and swept into the sea. Many starve or freeze to death.

Birds are not always the cheery, light-hearted creatures of summer. Sometimes conditions are most adverse, and for days at a time food is unobtainable. At such times, many a bird that otherwise might starve or freeze to death may be saved by feeding.

WATER, SEED, AND SUET

THE TIME AND EXPENSE required to maintain a food shelf for the birds is trivial, but the good resulting is very great. The food shelf should be placed, if possible, in a sheltered situation, with the southern side exposed, and well out of reach of cats. A south window is a good place and permits observation from within. Suet, cracked nuts, seeds, and grains should be furnished in goodly quantity. When the ground is frozen and no snow is in evidence, warm water is a necessity. A suet ball may be suspended from a branch or under the porch for chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. This is made by winding a piece of suet with cord to keep it from falling to pieces and suspending it by a piece of strong twine, eight to ten inches long. House Sparrows seldom if ever bother a piece of suet so fixed, but more or less trouble will be caused by the sparrows driving other birds from the food shelf. For those birds that will not come to the food shelf, scatter a quantity of the fine litter from the hay loft in some open but protected place. Many of our native sparrows can be attracted in this way. Chaff, mixed with grain, and scattered in a sheltered place near the haunts of Bobwhites may be the means of saving many from death by starvation or freezing. When hard pressed by hunger, Bobwhites sometimes feed about hay stacks in the field or come to the barnyard where, if not molested and a little grain is thrown to them, they will remain throughout the winter.

WINTER CLEANUP

DURING MILD PERIODS, the free lunch counter may not be visited with the same regularity as during inclement weather. At these times, the birds are busy cleaning up the dormant insect life which lies hidden away in crevices between or under the bark, among the fallen leaves, and in various other places. Should these insects escape the birds, insect control would be much more difficult. This winter cleanup of insect life is a "stitch in time," and the encouragement and protection given these feathered friends is well paid back in beneficial service.