

WHAT IS NATURE !

By Alan Devoe

(Submitted by Marie H. Millers)

NOWADAYS, it is curious that the more concerned men become with science, the less notice they pay to nature. We have got to the strange state where, in our preoccupation with electrons, we think that the heart of nature is to be perceived only through a laboratory lens.

We do not walk now in wooded places, and mark the look of birch thickets and listen to the calling of birds, and seek knowledge in that way. It seems not to occur to us that the intimations to be drawn from some new chemical formula are no nearer to the core of reality than those intimations which can come to a man when he lays his hand upon

the rough bark of a pine, or squints up at the winter sky to see a solitary hawk hovering there, or listens at night to the cry of foxes in a quiet countryside.

There is an old saying about not being able to see the forest for the trees. Today, we can scarcely see nature for the science. True, nature is a matter of chemical fusings and mathematical formulas; but nature is also the singing of phoebes in country meadows in the spring; and the leap of catfish in rush-ringed ponds, and an exultation and a miracle.

And if we would not lose all poetry from our hearts and all intuitiveness from our minds, we would do well, I think, to remember these things.

The Message of Conservation

C. Stuart Francis

AFTER a number of wet years in Saskatchewan we can expect to have a change any time, and perhaps this spring and summer may be as dry as the last few years have been wet. If such is the case, it is the duty of every citizen of this province to be careful with fire; to be sure every match or cigarette is dead out after use; to see that every camp-fire and every land-clearing fire are dead out also, before it is forgotten, or these same fires may be remembered in a very unpleasant and expensive manner. Also it is the duty of every official charged with authority, to see that careless campers and careless settlers are checked up and if found to be unco-operative, to receive the treatment they deserve. The person who does not consider the rights of others cannot expect to get undeserved consideration himself. As conditions exist in our province today, we definitely cannot afford to waste any more of our rich natural resources, and certainly not for the temporary monetary gain of any individual, or group of individuals, who may consider a few dollars gained today ahead of the future well-being of our country.

It is the duty of every BLUE JAY subscriber to endeavour to pass on the message of conservation to everyone he or she comes in contact with, and especially our children. They are the material we can mould more easily for the future good or detriment of our country, according to the direction of our efforts.

Timely Questions and Pertinent Answers

By Ducks Unlimited

Why does wildlife need protection? Chiefly because natural habitat continues to shrink relentlessly in the face of ever-expanding civilization. . . . Because of an equally deadly increase in hunting pressure as human populations expand. . . . And because these hazards, each of comparatively recent origin, are additional dangers to the age-old one of unpredictable weather. Faced by this terrible trio and receiving no protection, many wildlife species soon would be tottering on the brink of extinction.

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What should we know about wildlife? Experience indicates that we cannot know too much about the subject. The more we find out by re-

The Value of Natural History

OF ALL THE JOYS of life which may fairly come under the head of recreation there is nothing that surpasses Natural History. It opens up a world of interest and beauty whose cultivation brings physical, intellectual and aesthetic satisfactions.

Since natural history is pursued out of doors it satisfies the need for healthful physical exercise and at relatively small cost. There is no end to the intellectual interest provided by an interest in birds, plants, trees, and other features of the natural world.

Nothing is more refreshing or more satisfying to our aesthetic natures than a love of the beauty of the world. Speaking of this, Viscount Grey of Falloden, Foreign Secretary of Great Britain during the First Great War, wrote "It was like a great sanctuary into which we could go and find refuge for a time from even the greatest trouble of the world, finding there not enervating ease, but something which gave optimism, confidence and security. The progress of the seasons unchecked, the continuance of the beauty of nature was a manifestation of something great and splendid which not all the crimes and follies and misfortunes of mankind can abolish or destroy."

—*The Federation of Ontario Naturalists*

search and careful observation; the more intelligently we shall be able to manage these grand resources. . . . To ensure that our children and those to follow can enjoy them to an even greater extent than we do today. Wildlife needs water, food and cover. . . . If we see to it that these basic requirements are safeguarded, added to or provided, we cannot go far wrong.

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Who is responsible for wildlife? Some people say, "Let Mother Nature look after her own." . . . Others retort, "Up to the government." . . . Actually, recorded history reveals that Mother Nature isn't quite a match for man-made pressures on wildlife populations. . . . And government is you, so who is responsible?

Nature's Balanced Equation

By John Clayson

(From "The Wood Duck")

A dirt side road travelled at twenty to twenty-five miles per hour with the driver gawking to right and left does not get you anywhere very fast. It may kick up a little dust behind you, but the varied countryside around you kicks up a very different kind of dust inside you. By alchemy quiet rolling farmland on your left, plus the gentian blue of Lake On-

tario on your right, plus the sounds of animal life all around you, catalyzed by the influence of warm afternoon sunlight at your back, reacts to yield calm yet zestful tranquility as you putter along. Early morning or late afternoon colour, as you come over the crest of a hill gives you a "long" look that is a continuing source of pleasure. On the water, glittering sequins from a shaft of early morning sunlight, breaking through unwashed woolly clouds, can produce a brightness within.

GIVE WILDLIFE A BRAKE

Thousands of animal casualties on highways could be avoided this summer if motorists would apply a little *brake* pressure and toot their horns, the National Audubon Society declares. Blinking of headlights at night will often disperse animals that otherwise are transfixed by a steady beam. A considerate driver is a boon to humans and wildlife alike.

Research indicates that a Blue Goose gosling increases its birth-weight by 16 to 20 times during its first two months of life . . . At this rate of growth, an average human infant would weigh between 130 and 160 pounds when seven or eight weeks old.