

Animal Sanctuaries in Labrador eBook

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Commission of Conservation Canada

*Animal sanctuaries
in
Labrador*

*An address presented
by
Lt.-Colonel William Wood, F.R.S.C.*

Before the Second Annual Meeting of the Commission of Conservation at Quebec,
January, 1911

OTTAWA: CAPITAL PRESS LIMITED, 1911

Animal Sanctuaries in Labrador

An Address Presented
by
Lt.-Colonel William Wood
before
*the second annual meeting
of the commission of conservation
Held at Quebec, January, 1911*

An Appeal

All to whom wild Nature is one of the greatest glories of the Earth, all who know its higher significance for civilized man to-day, and all who consequently prize it as an



heirloom for posterity, are asked to help in keeping the animal life of Labrador from being wantonly done to death.

There is nothing to cause disagreement among the three main classes of people most interested in wild life—the men whose business depends in any way on animal products, the sportsmen, and the Nature-lovers of every kind. There are very good reasons why the general public should support the scheme. And there are equally good reasons why it should be induced to do so by simply telling it the truth about the senseless extermination that is now going on.

Every reader can help by spreading some knowledge of the subject in his or her home circle. Canada, like all free countries, is governed by public opinion. And sound public opinion, like all other good things, should always begin at home.

The Press can help, as it has helped many another good cause, by giving the subject full publicity. Free use can be made of the present paper in any way desired. It is left non-copyright for this very purpose.

Experts can help by pointing out mistakes, giving information, and making suggestions of their own. And if any of them will undertake to lead, the present author will undertake to follow.

It is proposed to issue a supplement in 1912, containing all the additional information collected in the mean time. Every such item of information will be duly credited to the person supplying it.



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59, Grande Allee, Quebec.

Animal Sanctuaries in Labrador
by
lieut.-Colonel William Wood, F.R.S.C., Etc.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:—

To be quite honest I must begin by saying that I am not a scientific expert on either animals, sanctuaries or Labrador. But, by way of excusing my temerity, I can plead a life-long love of animals, a good deal of experience and study of them—especially down the Lower St. Lawrence, and considerable attention to sanctuaries in general and their suitability to Labrador in particular. Moreover, I can plead this most pressingly important fact, that a magnificent opportunity is fast slipping away before our very eyes there, without a single effort being made to seize it. I have repeatedly discussed the question with those best qualified to give sound advice—with naturalists, explorers, missionaries, fishermen, furriers, traders, hunters, sportsmen, and many who are accustomed to look ahead into the higher development of our public life. I have also read the books, papers and reports written from up-to-date and first-hand knowledge. And, though I have been careful to consult men who regard such questions from very different points of view, and books showing quite as wide a general divergence, I have found a remarkable consensus of opinion in favour of establishing a system of sanctuaries before it is too late. I should like to add that any information on the subject, or any correction of what I have written here, will be most welcome. The simple address, Quebec, will always find me. The only special point I would ask correspondents to remember is that even the best recommendations must be adapted to the peculiarities of the Labrador problem, which is new, strange, immense, and full of complex human factors.

Perhaps I might be allowed to explain that I speak simply as a Canadian. I am not connected with any of the material interests concerned. I do not even belong to a Fish and Game club. My only object is to prove, from verifiable facts, that animal life in Labrador is being recklessly and wantonly squandered, that this is detrimental to everyone except the get-rich-quickly people who are ready to destroy any natural resources forever in order to reap an immediate and selfish advantage, that sanctuaries will better conditions in every way, and that the ultimate benefit to Canada—both in a material and a higher sense—will repay the small present expense required, over and over again. And this repayment need not be long deferred. I can show that once the public grasps the issues at stake it will supply enough petitioners to move any government based on popular support, and that the scheme itself will supply enough money to make the sanctuaries a national asset of the most paying kind, and enough

higher human interest to make them priceless as a possession for ourselves and a heritage for all who come after.



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If, Sir, you would allow me to make one more preliminary explanation, I should like to say that I have purposely left out all the usual array of statistics. I have, of course, examined them carefully myself, and based my arguments upon them. But I have excluded them from my text because they would have made an already long paper unduly longer, and because they are perfectly accessible to every member of the Commission which I have the honour of addressing to-night.

SANCTUARIES.

A sanctuary may be defined as a place where Man is passive and the rest of Nature active. Till quite recently Nature had her own sanctuaries, where man either did not go at all or only as a tool-using animal in comparatively small numbers. But now, in this machinery age, there is no place left where man cannot go with overwhelming forces at his command. He can strangle to death all the nobler wild life in the world to-day. Tomorrow he certainly will have done so, unless he exercises due foresight and self-control in the mean time. There is not the slightest doubt that birds and mammals are now being killed off much faster than they can breed. And it is always the largest and noblest forms of life that suffer most. The whales and elephants, lions and eagles, go. The rats and flies, and all mean parasites, remain. This is inevitable in certain cases. But it is wanton killing off that I am speaking of to-night. Civilized man begins by destroying the very forms of wild life he learns to appreciate most when he becomes still more civilized. The obvious remedy is to begin conservation at an earlier stage, when it is easier and better in every way, by enforcing laws for close seasons, game preserves, the selective protection of certain species, and sanctuaries. I have just defined a sanctuary as a place where man is passive and the rest of Nature active. But this general definition is too absolute for any special case. The mere fact that man has to protect a sanctuary does away with his purely passive attitude. Then, he can be beneficially active by destroying pests and parasites, like bot-flies or mosquitoes, and by finding antidotes for diseases like the epidemic which periodically kills off the rabbits and thus starves many of the carnivora to death. But, except in cases where experiment has proved his intervention to be beneficial, the less he upsets the balance of Nature the better, even when he tries to be an earthly Providence.

In itself a sanctuary is a kind of wild "zoo," on a gigantic scale and under ideal conditions. As such, it appeals to everyone interested in animals, from the greatest zoologist to the mere holiday tourist. Before concluding I shall give facts to show how well worth while it would be to establish sanctuaries, even if there were no other people to enjoy the benefits. Yet the strongest of all arguments is that sanctuaries, far from conflicting with other interests, actually



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further them. But unless we make these sanctuaries soon we shall be infamous forever, as the one generation which defrauded posterity of all the preservable wild life that Nature took a million years to evolve into its present beautiful perfection. Only a certain amount of animal life can exist in a certain area. The surplus must go outside. So sanctuaries are more than wild “zoos”, they are overflowing reservoirs, fed by their own springs, and feeding streams of life at every outlet. They serve not only those interested in animal life, but those legitimately interested in animal death, for business, sport or food. I might mention many instances of successful sanctuaries, permanent or temporary, absolute or modified—the Algonquin, Rocky Mountains, Yoho, Glacier, Jasper and Laurentides in Canada; the Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canon, Olympus and Superior in the United States; with the sea-lions of California, the wonderful revival of ibex in Spain and deer in Maine and New Brunswick, the great preserves in Uganda, India and Ceylon, the selective work of Baron von Berlepsch in Germany, the curious result of taboo protection up the Nelson river, and the effects on seafowl in cases as far apart in time and space as the guano islands under the Incas of Peru, Gardiner island in the United States or the Bass rock off the coast of Scotland.

Yet I do not ignore the difficulties. First, there is the universal difficulty of introducing or enforcing laws where there have been no operative laws before. Next, there is the difficulty of arousing public opinion on any subject, however worthy, which requires both insight and foresight. Then, we must remember that protected species increasing beyond their special means of subsistence have to seek other kinds of food, sometimes with unfortunate results. And then there are the several special difficulties connected with Labrador. There are three British governments concerned—Newfoundland, the Dominion and the province of Quebec. There are French and American fishermen along the shore. The proper protection of some migratory species will require co-operation with the United States, perhaps with Mexico and South America for certain birds, and even with Denmark for the Greenland seal. Then, there are the Indians, the whole trade in animal products, the necessity of not interfering with any legitimate development, and the question of immediate expense, however small, for a deferred benefit, however great and near at hand. And, finally, we must remember that scientific knowledge is not by any means adequate to deal with all the factors of the problem at once.

LABRADOR



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But in spite of all these and many other difficulties, I firmly believe that Labrador is by far the best country in the world for the best kinds of sanctuary. The first time you're on a lee shore there, in a full gale, you may well be excused for shrinking back from the wild white line of devouring breakers. But when you actually make for them you find the coast opening into archipelagoes of islands, to let you safely through into the snug little "tickles," between island and mainland, where you can ride out the storm as well as you could in a landlocked harbour. This is typical of many another pleasant surprise. Labrador decidedly improves on acquaintance. The fogs have been grossly exaggerated. The Atlantic seaboard is clearer than the British Isles, which, by the way, lie in exactly the same latitudes. And the Gulf is far clearer than New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the Banks. The climate is exceptionally healthy, the air a most invigorating tonic, and the cold no greater than in many a civilized northern land. Besides, there is a considerable range of temperatures in a country whose extreme north and south lie 1,000 miles apart, one in the latitude of Greenland, the other in that of Paris. Taking the Labrador peninsula geographically, as including the whole area east of a line run up the Saguenay and on from lake St. John to James bay, it comprises 560,000 square miles—eleven Englands! The actual residents hardly number 20,000. About twice as many outsiders appear off the coasts at certain seasons. So it would take a tenfold increase, afloat and ashore, to make one human being to each square mile of land. But, all the same, wild life needs conservation there, and needs it badly, as we shall presently see.

Most of Labrador is a rocky tableland, still rising from the depths, with some old beaches as much as 1,500 feet above the present level of the sea. The St. Lawrence seaboard is famous for its rivers and forests. The Atlantic seaboard has the same myriads of islands, is magnificently bold, is pierced by fiords unexcelled in Norway, and crowned by mountains higher than any others east of the Rockies. Hamilton inlet runs in 150 miles. At Ramah the cliffs rise sheer three thousand five hundred feet and more. The Four peaks, still untrodden by the foot of man, rise more than twice as high again. And the colouration, of every splendid hue, adds beauty to the grandeur of the scene. Inland, there are lakes up to 100 miles long, big rivers by the score, deep canyons and foaming rapids—to say nothing of the countless waterfalls, of which the greatest equals two Niagaras. This vast country is accessible by sea on three sides, and will soon be accessible by land on the fourth. It lies directly half-way between Great Britain and our own North West and is 1,000 miles nearer London than New York is. Its timber, mines and water-power will be increasingly exploited. It should also become increasingly attractive to the best type of tourist, naturalist

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and sportsman. But supposing all this does happen. The mines, water-powers and lumbering will only create small towns and villages. There will surely be some conservation to have the forests used and not abused especially by fire: and the white man should remember that he is the worst of all in turning a land from green to black. Except in the southwest and a few isolated spots, the country cannot be farmed. At the same time, the urban population must have communications with the outside world, by which regular supplies can come in. This will make the settlers independent of wild life for necessary food; and wild life, in any case, would be too precarious if exploited in the usual way. The traders in wild-animal products, as well as the naturalists, sportsmen and tourists, are interested in keeping the rest of the country well stocked. So that, one way and another, the human and wild-animal life will not conflict, as they do where farming creates a widespread rural population, or wanton destruction of forests ruins land and water, and human and animal life have to suffer for it afterwards. All the different places required for business spheres of influence in the near future, added to all the business spheres of the present, can hardly exceed the area of one whole England, especially if all suitable areas are not thrown open simultaneously to lumbering, at the risk of the usual bad results. So there will remain ten other Englands, admirably fitted, in all respects, to grow wild life in the most beneficial abundance, and quite able to do so indefinitely, if a reasonable amount of general protection is combined with well-situated sanctuaries.

The fauna is much more richly varied than people who think of Labrador as nothing but an arctic barren are inclined to suppose. The fisheries have been known for centuries, especially the cod, which has a prerogative right to the simple word "fish." There are herring and lobsters in the Gulf, plenty of salmon and trout in most of the rivers, winninish in all the tributary waters of the Hamilton, as well as in lake St. John, whitefish in the lakes, and so forth. Then, the stone-carrying chub is one of the most interesting creatures in the world.... But the fish and fisheries have problems of their own too great for incidental treatment; and I shall pass on to the birds and mammals.

Yet I must not forget the "flies"—who that has felt them once can ever forget them? Labrador is not a very happy hunting-ground for the entomologist. But all it lacks in variety of kinds it more than makes up in number of individuals, especially in the detestable trio of bot-flies, blackflies and mosquitoes. The bot-fly infests the caribou and will probably infest the reindeer. The blackfly and mosquito attack both man and beast in maddening millions. The mosquito is not malarious. But that is the only bad thing he is not. Destruction is "conservation" so far as "flies," parasites and disease germs are concerned.



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Labrador has over 200 species of birds, from humming-birds and sanderlings to eagles, gannets, loons and herons. Among those able to hold their own, with proper encouragement, are the following: two loons, two murre, the puffin, guillemot, razor-billed auk, dovekie and pomarine jaeger; six gulls—ivory, kittiwake, glaucous, great black-back, herring and Bonaparte; two terns—arctic and common; the fulmar, two shearwaters, two cormorants, the red-breasted merganser and the gannet; seven ducks—the black, golden-eye, old squaw and harlequin, with the American, king and Greenland eiders; three scoters; four geese—snow, blue, brant and Canada; two phalaropes, several sandpipers, with the Hudsonian godwit and both yellowlegs; two snipes; five plovers; and the Eskimo and Hudsonian curlews. These two curlews should be absolutely closed to all shooting everywhere for several seasons. They are on the verge of extinction; and it may even now be too late to save them. The great blue heron and American bittern are not common, but less rare than they are supposed to be. Except for the willow and rock ptarmigans the land game-birds are not many in kind or numbers. There are a fair number of ruffed grouse in the south, and more spruce grouse in the north. The birds of prey are well represented by a few golden and more bald-headed eagles, the American rough-legged and other hawks, the black and the white gyrfalcons, the osprey, and eight owls, including the great horned owl, the boldest bird of all. The raven is widely distributed all the year round. Several woodpeckers, kingfishers, jays, bluebird, kingbird, chickadee, snow bunting; several sparrows, including, fortunately, the white-crowned, white-throat and song, but now, unfortunately, the English as well. There are blackbirds, red-polls, a dozen warblers, the American robin, hermit thrush and ruby-throated humming-bird.

Both the land and sea mammals are of great importance. Several whales are well known. The Right is almost exterminated; but the Greenland, or Bow-head, is found along the edge of the ice in all Hudsonian waters. The Pollock is rare, and the Sperm, or Cachalot, as nearly exterminated as the Right. But the Little-piked, or *rostrata*, is found inshore along the north and east, the Bottle-nose on the north, the Humpback on the east and south; and the Finback and Sulphur-bottom are common and widely distributed, especially on the east. The Little White whale, or “White porpoise,” is fairly common all round; the Killer is widely distributed, but most numerous on the east, where the Narwhal is also found. The Harbour and Striped porpoises, and the Common and Bottle-nosed dolphins, are chiefly on the east and south. There are six Seals—the Harbour, Ringed, Harp, Bearded, Grey and Hooded. The Harbour seal is also called the “Common” and the “Wise” seal, and is the *vitulina* of zoology. It is common all round the coasts, and the Indians of the interior assert that many live permanently in



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the lakes. Big and Little Seal lakes are more than 100 miles from the nearest salt water. The Ringed seal is locally called “floe rat” and “gum seal.” It is the smallest and least valuable of all, and fairly common all round. The Harp seal is “seal,” in the same way as cod is “fish.” It has various local names, five among the French-Canadians alone, but is specifically known as the Greenland seal. The young, immediately after birth, have a fine white coat, which makes them valuable. The herds are followed on a large scale at the end of the winter season, which is also the whelping season, and hundreds of thousands are killed, females and young preponderating. They are still common along the east and south, but diminishing steadily, especially in the St. Lawrence. The Bearded, or “Square-flipper,” seal is rare in the St. Lawrence and on the Atlantic, but commoner in Hudsonian waters. It is a large seal, eight feet long, and bulky in proportion. The Grey, or Horse-head, seal runs up to about the same size occasionally and is one of the gamest animals that swims. It is rare on the Atlantic and not common anywhere on the St. Lawrence. The “Hoods” are the largest of all and the lions of the lot. They run up to 1,000 pounds and over, and sometimes fourteen feet long. They are rare on the Atlantic and decreasing along the St. Lawrence, owing to the Newfoundland hunters. The Walrus, formerly abundant all round, is now rarely seen except in the far north, where he is fast decreasing.

Moose may feel their way in by the southwest to an increasing extent, and might possibly be reinforced by the Alaskan variety. Red deer might possibly be induced to enter by the same way in fair numbers over a limited area. The woodland caribou is almost exterminated, but might be resuscitated. The barren-ground caribou is still plentiful in the north, where most of the herds appear to migrate in an immense ellipse, crossing from west to east, over the barrens, in the fall, to the Atlantic, and then turning south and west through the woods in winter, till they reach their original starting-point near Hudson bay in the spring. But this is not to be counted on. The herds divide, change direction, and linger in different places. Their tame brother, the reindeer, is being introduced as the chief domestic animal of Eastern Labrador, with apparently every prospect of success. Beaver are fairly common and widely distributed in forested areas. Other rodents are frequent—squirrels, musk-rats, mice, voles, lemmings, hares and porcupines. There are two bats. Black bears are general; polars, in the north. Grizzlies have been traded at Fort Chimo in Ungava, but they are probably all killed out. The lynx is common wherever there are woods. There are two wolves, arctic and timber, the latter now rare in the south. The Labrador red fox is very common in the woods, and the “white,” or arctic fox, in the barrens and further south on both coasts. The “cross,” “silver”

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and “black” variations of course occur, as they naturally increase towards the northern limits of range. The “blue” is a seasonal change of the “white.” The wolverine and otter are common. The skunk is only known in the southwest. The mink ranges through the southern third of the peninsula. The Labrador marten, or “sable,” is a sub-species, generally distributed in the forested parts, like the weasel. The “fisher,” or Pennant’s marten, is much more local, ranging only between the “North Shore” and Mistassini.

From the St. Lawrence to the Barren Grounds three-fourths of the land has been burnt over since the white man came. The resultant loss of all forms of life may be imagined, especially when we remember that the fire often burns up the very soil itself, leaving nothing but rocks and black desolation. Still, there is plenty of fur and feather worth preserving. But nothing can save it unless conservation replaces the present reckless destruction.

DESTRUCTION

When rich virgin soil is first farmed it yields a maximum harvest for a minimum of human care. But presently it begins to fail, and will fail altogether unless man returns to it in one form some of the richness he expects to get from it in another. Now, exploited wild life fails even faster under wasteful treatment; but, on the other hand, with hardly any of the trouble required for continuous farming, quickly recovers itself by being simply let alone. So when we consider how easily it can be preserved in Labrador, and how beneficial its preservation is to all concerned, we can understand how the wanton destruction going on there is quite as idiotic as it is wrong.

Take “egging” as an example. The Indians, Eskimos and other beasts of prey merely preserved the balance of nature by the toll they used to take. No beast of prey, not even the white man, will destroy his own stock supply of food. But with the nineteenth century came the white-man market “egggers”, systematically taking or destroying every egg in every place they visited. Halifax, Quebec and other towns were centres of the trade. The “egggers” increased in numbers and thoroughness till the eggs decreased in the more accessible spots below paying quantities. But other egging still goes on unchecked. The game laws of the province of Quebec distinctly state: “It is forbidden to take nests or eggs of wild birds at any time”. But the swarms of fishermen who come up the north shore of the St. Lawrence egg wherever they go. If they are only to stay in the same spot for a day or two, they gather all the eggs they can, put them into water, and throw away every one that floats. Sometimes three, four, five or even ten times as many are thrown away as are kept, and all those bird lives lost for nothing. Worse still, if the men are going to stay long enough they will often go round the nests and make sure of smashing every single egg. Then



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they come back in a few days and gather every single egg, because they know it has been laid in the mean time and must be fresh. When we remember how many thousands of men visit the shore, and that the resident population eggs on its own account, at least as high up as the Pilgrims, only 100 miles from Quebec, we need not be prophets to foresee the inevitable end of all bird life when subjected to such a drain. And this is on the St. Lawrence, where there are laws and wardens and fewer fishermen. What about the Atlantic Labrador, where there are no laws, no wardens, many more fishermen, and ruthless competitive egging between the residents and visitors? Of course, where people must egg or starve there is nothing more to be said. But this sort of egging is very limited, not enough to destroy the birds, and the necessity for it will become less frequent as other sources of supply become available. It is the utterly wanton destruction that is the real trouble.

And it is just as bad with the birds as with the eggs. A schooner captain says, "Now, boys, here's your butcher shop: help yourselves!" and this, remember, is in the brooding season. Not long ago the men from a vessel in Cross harbour landed on an islet full of eiders and killed every single brooding mother. Such men have grown up to this, and there is that amount of excuse for them. Besides, they ate the birds, though they destroyed the broods. Yet, as they always say, "We don't know no law here," it may be suspected that they do know there really is one. These men do a partly excusable wrong. But what about those who ought to know better? In the summer of 1907 an American millionaire's yacht landed a party who shot as many brooding birds on St. Mary island as they chose, and then left the bodies to rot and the broods to perish. That was, presumably, for sport. For the same kind of sport, motor boats cut circles round diving birds, drown them, and let the bodies float away. The North Shore people have drowned myriads of moulting scoters in August; but they use the meat. Bestial forms of sport are many and vile. "C'est un plaisir superbe" was the description given by some voyageurs on exploring work, who had spent the afternoon chasing young birds about the rocks and stamping them to death. Deer were literally hacked to pieces by construction gangs on new lines last summer. Dynamiting a stream is quite a common trick wherever it is safe to play it. Harbour seals are wantonly shot in deep fresh water where they cannot be recovered, much as seagulls are shot by blackguards from an ocean liner.

And the worst of it is that all this wanton destruction is not by any means confined to the ignorant or those who have been brought up to it. The men from the American yacht must have known better. So do those educated men from our own cities, who shoot out of season down the St. Lawrence and plead, quite falsely, that there is no game law below the Brandy Pots. It is, of course, well understood that a

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man can always shoot for necessary food. But this provision is shamelessly misused. Last summer, when a great employer of labour down the Gulf was telling where birds could be shot to the greatest advantage out of season, and I was objecting that it was not clean sport, he said, "Oh, but Indians can shoot for food at any time—and *we're all Indians here!*" And what are we to think of a rich man who used caribou simply as targets for his new rifle, and a scientific man who killed 72 in one morning, only to make a record? We need the true ideal of sport and an altogether new ideal of conservation, and we need them very badly and very soon.

We have had our warnings. The great auk and the Labrador duck have both become utterly extinct within living memory. The Eskimo curlew is decreasing to the danger point, and the Yellowlegs is following. The lobster fishing is being wastefully conducted along the St. Lawrence; so, indeed, are the other fisheries. Whales are diminishing: the Cape Charles and Hawke Harbour establishments are running, but those at L'Anse au Loup and Seven islands are not. The whole whaling industry is disappearing all over the world before the uncontrolled persecution of the new steam whalers. The walrus is exterminated everywhere in Labrador except in the north. The seals are diminishing. Every year the hunters are better supplied with better implements of butchery. The catch is numbered by the hundreds of thousands, and this only for one fleet in one place at one season, when the Newfoundlanders come up the St. Lawrence at the end of the winter. The woodland caribou has been killed off to such an extent as to cause both Indians and wolves to die off with him. The barren-ground caribou is still plentiful, though decreasing. The dying out of so many Indians before the time of the Low and Eaton expedition of 1893-4 led to an increase of fur-bearing animals. But renewed, improved, increased and uncontrolled trapping has now reduced them below their former level. Hunting for the market seems to be going round in a vicious circle, always narrowing in on the quarry, which must ultimately be strangled to death. The white man comes in with better equipment, more systematic methods and often a "get-rich-and-get-out" idea that never entered a native head. The Indian has to go further afield. The white follows. Their prey shrinks back in diminishing numbers before them both. Prices go up. The hunt becomes keener, the animals fewer and farther off. Presently hunters and hunted will reach the far side of the utmost limits. And then traded, traders and trade will all disappear together. And it might so well be otherwise.



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There is another point that should never be passed over. In these days the public conscience is beginning to realize that the objection to man's cruelty towards his other fellow-beings is something more than a fad or a fancy. And wanton slaughter is very apt to be accompanied by shameless cruelty. To kill off parents when the young are helpless.... But I have already given enough sickening details of this. The treatment of the adults is almost worse in many typical cases. An Indian will skin a hare alive and gloat over his quivering death-agonies. The excuse is, "white man have fun, Indian have fun, too." And it is a valid excuse, from one point of view. When "there's nothing in caribou" except the value of the tongue, the tongue has been cut out of the living deer, whose only other value is considered to be the amusement afforded by his horrible fate. And, fiendish cruelty like this is not confined to the outer wilds. When some civilized English-speaking bird-catchers get a bird they do not want, they will deliberately wrench its bill apart, so that it must die of lingering starvation. Sometimes the cruelty is done to man himself. Not so many years ago some whalers secured a lot of walrus hides and tusks by having a whole herd of walrus wiped out, in spite of the fact that these animals were, at that very time, known to be the only food available for a neighbouring tribe of Eskimos. The Eskimos were starved to death, every soul among them, as the Government explorers found out. But Eskimos have no votes and never write to the papers; while walrus hides were booming in the markets of civilization.

Things like these are not much spoken of. They very rarely appear in print. And when they are mentioned at all it is generally with an apology for introducing unpleasant details. But I am sure I need not apologize to gentlemen who are anxious to know the full truth of this great question, who cannot fail to see the connection between wanton destruction and revolting cruelty, and who must be as ready to rouse the moral conscience of our people against the cruelty as they are to rouse its awakening sense of conservation against the destruction.

CONSERVATION

All the sound reasons ever given for conserving other natural resources apply to the conservation of wild life—and with three-fold power. When a spend-thrift squanders his capital it is lost to him and his heirs; yet it goes somewhere else. When a nation allows any one kind of natural resource to be squandered it must suffer a real, positive loss; yet substitutes of another kind can generally be found. But when wild life is squandered it does not go elsewhere, like squandered money; it cannot possibly be replaced by any substitute, as some inorganic resources are: it is simply an absolute, dead loss, gone beyond even the hope of recall.



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Now, we have seen verifiable facts enough to prove that Labrador, out of its total area of eleven Englands, is not likely to be advantageously exploitable over much more than the area of one England for other purposes than the growth and harvesting of wild life by land and water. How are these ten Englands to be brought under conservation, before it is too late, in the best interests of the five chief classes of people who are concerned already or will be soon? Of course, the same individual may belong to more than one class. I merely use these divisions to make sure of considering all sides of the question. The five great interests are those of—1. Food. 2. Business. 3. The Indians and Eskimos. 4. Sport, and 5. The Zoophilists, by which I mean all people interested in wild-animal life, from zoologists to tourists.

1. *Food*.—The resident population is so sparse that there is not one person for every 20,000 acres; and most of these people live on the coast. Consequently, the vast interior could not be used for food supplies in any case. Besides, ever since the white man occupied the coast, the immediate hinterland, which used to be full of life, has become more and more barren. Fish is plentiful enough. A few small crops of common vegetables could be grown in many places, and outside supplies are becoming more available. So the toll of birds and mammals taken by the present genuine residents for necessary food is not a menace, if taken in reason. In isolated places in the Gulf, like Harrington, the Provincial law might safely be relaxed, so as to allow the eggs of ducks and gulls to be taken up to the 5th of June and those of murre, auks and puffins up to the 15th. Flight birds might also be shot at any time on the outside capes and islands. There is a local unwritten law down there—"No guns inside, after the 1st of June"—and it has been kept for twenty years. Similar relaxations might be allowed in other places, in genuine cases of necessity. But the egging and out-of-season slaughter done by people, resident or not, who are in touch with the outside world, should be stopped absolutely. And the few walrus now required as food by the few out-living Eskimos should be strictly protected. Of course, killing for food under real stress of need at any time or place goes without saying. The real and spurious cases will soon be discriminated by any proper system.

2. *Business*.—Business is done in fish, whales, seals, fur, game, plumage and eggs. The fish are a problem apart. But it is worth noting that uncontrolled exploitation is beginning to affect even their countless numbers in certain places. Whales have always been exploited indiscriminately, and their wide range outside of territorial waters adds to the difficulties of any regulation. But some seasonal and sanctuary protection is necessary to prevent their becoming extinct. The "white porpoise" could have its young protected; and



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whaling stations afford means of inspection and consequent control. The only chance at present is that when whales become too scarce to pay they are let alone, and may revive a little. The seals can be protected locally and ought to be. The preponderance of females and young killed in the whelping season is a drain impossible for them to withstand under modern conditions of slaughter. The difficulty of policing large areas simultaneously might be compensated for by special sanctuaries. The Americans are protecting their seals by restrictions on the numbers, ages and sex of those killed; and doing so successfully. The fur trade is open to the same sort of wise restriction, when necessary, to the protection of wild fur by the breeding of tame, as in the fox farms, and to the benefits of sanctuaries. Marketable game, plumage and eggs can be regulated at out ports and markets. And the extension of suitable laws to non-game animals, coupled with the establishment of sanctuaries, would soon improve conditions all round, especially in the interest of business itself. No one wants his business to be destroyed. But if Labrador is left without control indefinitely every business dealing with the products of wild life will be obliged to play the suicidal game of competitive grab till the last source of supply is exhausted, and capital, income and employment all go together.

3. *Indians and Eskimos.*—The Eskimos are few and mostly localized. The Indians stand to gain by anything that will keep the fur trade in full vigour, as they are mostly hunters and trappers. Restriction on the number of skins, if that should prove necessary, and certainly on the sale of all poisons, could be made operative. Strychnine is said to kill animals eating the carcasses even so far as to the seventh remove. Close seasons and sanctuaries are difficult to enforce with all Indians. But the registration of trappers, the enforcement of laws, the employment of Indians as guides for sportsmen, and other means, would have a salutary effect. The full-bloods, unfortunately, do not take kindly to guiding. Indians wishing to change their way of life or proving persistent lawbreakers might be hived in reserves with their wives and families. The reserves themselves would cost nothing, the Indians could find employment as other Indians have, and the expense of establishing would be a bagatelle. As a matter of fact, in spite of all the bad bargains having always been on the Indian side when sales and treaties were made with the whites, there is enough money to the credit of the Indians in the hands of the Government to establish a dozen hives and keep the people in them as idle as drones on the mere interest of it. But good hunting grounds are better than good hives.



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4. *Sport*.—Sport should have a great future in Labrador. Inland game birds, except ptarmigan, are the only kind of which there is never likely to be a great abundance, owing to the natural scarcity of their food. But, besides the big game on land and game birds on the coast, there are some unusual forms of sport appealing to adventurous natures. Harpooning the little white whale by hand in a North Shore canoe, or shooting the largest and gamest of all the seals—the great “hood”—also out of a canoe, requires enough skill and courage to make success its own reward. The extension and enforcement of proper game laws would benefit sport directly, while indirectly benefitting all the other interests.

5. *Zoophilists*.—The zoophilist class seems only in place as an afterthought. But I am convinced that it will soon become of at least equal importance with any other. All the people, from zoologists to tourists, who are drawn to such places by the attraction of seeing animal life in its own surroundings, already form an immense class in every community. And it is a rapidly increasing class. Could we do posterity any greater injury than by destroying the ten Englands of glorious wild life in Labrador, just at the very time when our own and other publics are beginning to appreciate the value of the appeal which such haunts of Nature make to all the highest faculties of civilized man?

The way can be made clear by scientific study. The laws can be drawn up by any intelligent legislators, and enforced quite as efficiently as other laws have been by the Mounted Police in the North West. The expense will be small, the benefits great and widely felt. The only real hitch is the uninformed and therefore apathetic state of public opinion. If people only knew that Labrador contained a hundred Saguenays, wild zoos, Thousand Islands, fiords, palisades, sea mountains, canons, great lakes and waterfalls, if they only knew that they could get the enjoyment of it for a song, and make it an heirloom for no more trouble than letting it live, they might do all that is needed tomorrow. But they don't know. And the three Governments cannot do much without the support of public opinion. At present they do practically nothing. The Ungavan Labrador has neither organization nor laws. The Newfoundland Labrador has organization but no laws. And the Quebec Labrador has laws but no observance of them.

However, Quebec has laws, which are something, legislators who have made the laws, and leaders who have introduced them. The trouble is that the public generally has no sense of responsibility in the matter of enforcement. It still has a hazy idea that Nature has an overflowing sanctuary of her own, somewhere or other, which will fill up the gaps automatically. The result is that poaching is commonly regarded as a venial offence, poachers taken red-handed are rarely punished, and willing ears are always lent to the cry that rich



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sportsmen are trying to take the bread out of the poor settler's mouth. The poor settler does not reflect that he himself, and all other classes alike, really have a common interest in the conservation of any wild life that does not conflict with legitimate human development. There is some just cause of complaint that the big-game reserves are hampering the peasants in parts of India and the settlers and natives in parts of Uganda. But no such complaint can be raised against the Laurentide National Park, so wisely established by the Quebec Government. The worst of it is that many of the richer people set the example in law-breaking. The numbers of big game allowed are exceeded, out-of-season shooting goes on, and both out-of-season and forbidden game is sold in the markets and served at the dinner tables of the very class who should be first in protecting it.

Partly because Quebec has taken the lead in legislation, and partly because an ideal site is ready to hand under its jurisdiction, I would venture to suggest the immediate establishment of an absolute sanctuary for all wild birds and mammals along as much of the coast as possible on either side of cape Whittle. The best place of all to keep is from cape Whittle eastward to cape Mekattina, 64 miles in a straight line by sea. The 45 miles from cape Mekattina eastward to Shekatika bay are probably the next best; and, next, the 35 from cape Whittle westward to Cloudberry point. As there are 800 miles between Quebec and the Strait, I am only proposing to make from one-tenth to one-fifth of them into a sanctuary. And this part is the least fitted for other purposes, except sea-fishing, which would not be restricted at all, the least inhabited, and the most likely to succeed as a sanctuary, especially for birds.

Cape Whittle is 550 miles below Quebec, 70 below Natashkwan, which is the last port of call for the mail boats, and 50 below Kegashka, the last green spot along the shore. It faces cape Gregory, near the bay of Islands in Newfoundland, 130 miles across; and is almost as far from the north-east point of Anticosti. It is a great landmark for coasting vessels, and for the seal herds as well. A refuge for seals is absolutely necessary to preserve their numbers and the business connected with them. Of course, I know there is a feeling that, if they are going to disappear, the best thing to do is to exploit them to the utmost in the meanwhile, so as to snatch every present advantage, regardless of consequences. But is this business, sense, or conservation? Even if any restriction in the way of numbers, sex, age or season should be imposed on seal hunting, a small sanctuary cannot but be beneficial. While, if there is no other protection, a sanctuary is a *sine qua non*. It is possible that some protection might also be afforded to the whales that hug the shore.

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The case of the birds is quite as strong, and the chance of protection by this sanctuary much greater. With the exception of the limited eggging and shooting for the necessary food of the few residents—the whole district of Mekattina contained only 213 people at the last census—not an egg nor a bird should be touched at all. The birds soon find out where they are well off, and their increase will recruit the whole river and gulf. A few outlying bird sanctuaries should be established in connection with this one, which might be called the Harrington Sanctuary, as Harrington is a well-known telegraph station, a central point between cape Whittle and Mekattina, and it enjoys a name that can be easily pronounced. In the Gulf the Bird rocks and Bonaventure island to the south; one of the Mingan islands, the Perroquets and Egg island to the north; with the Pilgrims, up the River, above the Saguenay and off the South Shore, are the best. The Pilgrims, 700 miles from the Atlantic, are probably the furthest inland point in the world where the eider breeds. They would make an ideal seabird sanctuary. On the Atlantic Labrador there are plenty of suitable islands from which to choose two or three sanctuaries, between Hamilton inlet and Ramah. The east coast of Hudson bay is full of islands from which two corresponding sanctuaries might be selected, one in the neighbourhood of the Portland promontory and the other in the southeast corner of James bay.

There is the further question—affecting all migratory animals, but especially birds—of making international agreements for their protection. There are precedents for this, both in the Old World and in the New. And, so far as the United States are concerned, there should be no great difficulty. True, they have set us some lamentable examples of wanton destruction. But they have also set us some noble examples of conservation. And we have good friends at court, in the members of the New York Zoological, the Audubon and other societies, in Mr. Roosevelt, himself an ardent conserver of wild life, and in Mr. Bryce, who is an ex-president of the Alpine Club and a devoted lover of nature. Immediate steps should be taken to link our own bird sanctuaries with the splendid American chain of them which runs round the Gulf of Mexico and up the Atlantic coast to within easy reach of the boundary line. Corresponding international chains up the Mississippi and along the Pacific would be of immense benefit to all species, and more particularly to those unfortunate ones which are forced to migrate down along the shore and back by the middle of the continent, thus running the deadly gauntlet both by land and sea.

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Inland sanctuaries are more difficult to choose and manage. A deer sanctuary might answer near James bay. Fur sanctuaries must also be in some fairly accessible places, on the seaward sides of the various heights-of-land, and not too far in. The evergreen stretches of the Eastmain river have several favourable spots. What is needed most is an immediate examination by a trained zoologist. The existing information should be brought together and carefully digested for him in advance. There are the Dominion, Provincial and Newfoundland official reports; the Hudson Bay Company, the Moravian missionaries; Dr. Robert Bell, Mr. A.P. Low, Mr. D.I.V. Eaton, Dr. Grenfell, Dr. Hare, Mr. Napoleon Comeau, not to mention previous writers, like Packard, McLean and Cartwright—a whole host of original authorities. But their work has never been thoroughly co-ordinated from a zoological point of view. A form of sanctuary suggested for the fur-bearing Yukon is well worth considering. It consists in opening and closing the country by alternate sections, like crops and fallow land in farming. The Indians have followed this method for generations, dividing the family hunting grounds into three parts, hunting each in rotation, and always leaving enough to breed back the numbers. But the pressure of the grab-all policy from outside may become irresistible.

The one great point to remember is that there is no time to lose in beginning conservation by protecting every species in at least two separate localities.

A word as to the management and wardens. Two zoologists and twenty men afloat, and the same number ashore, could probably do the whole work, in connection with local wardens. This may seem utterly ridiculous as a police force to patrol ten Englands and three thousand miles of sea. But look at what the Royal North West Mounted Police have done over vast areas with a handful of men, and what has been effected in Maine, New Brunswick and Ontario. Once the public understands the question, and the governments mean business, the way of the transgressor will be so hard—between the wardens, zoologists and all the preventive machinery of modern administration—that it will no longer pay him to walk in it. Special precautions must be taken against that vilest of all inventions of diabolical ingenuity—the Maxim “silencer.” No argument is needed to prove that silent firearms could not suit crime better if they were made expressly for it. The mere possession of any kind of “silencer” should constitute a most serious criminal offence. The right kind of warden will be forthcoming when he is really wanted and is properly backed up. I need not describe the wrong kind. We all know him, only too well.

BENEFITS

I am afraid I have already exceeded my allotted time. But, with your kind indulgence, Sir, I should like, in conclusion, simply to enumerate a few of the benefits certain to follow the introduction and enforcement of law and the establishment of sanctuaries.



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First, it cannot be denied that the constant breaking of the present law makes for bad citizenship, and that the observance of law will make for good. Next, though it is often said that what Canada needs most is development and not conservation, I think no one will deny that conservation is the best and most certainly productive form of development in the case before us. Then, I think we have here a really unique opportunity of effecting a reform that will unite and not divide all the legitimate interests concerned. What could appear to have less in common than electricity and sanctuaries? Yet electricity in Labrador requires water-power, which requires a steady flow, which requires a head-water forest, which, in its turn, is admirably fit to shelter wild life. Except for those who would selfishly and shortsightedly take all this wealth of wild life out of the world altogether, in one grasping generation, there is nobody who will not be the better for the change. I have talked with interested parties of every different kind, and always found them agree that conservation is the only thing to do—provided, as they invariably add, that it is done “straight” and “the same for all.”

Fourthly, a word as to sport. I have invoked the public conscience against wanton destruction and its inevitable accompaniment of cruelty. I know, further, that man is generally cruel and a bully towards other animals. And, as an extreme evolutionist, I believe all animals are alike in kind, however much they may differ in degree. But I don't think clean sport cruel. It does not add to the sum total of cruelty under present conditions. Wild animals shun pain and death as we do. But under Nature they never die what we call natural deaths. They starve or get killed. Moreover, town-bred humanitarians feel pain and death more than the simpler races of men, who, in their turn, feel it more than lower animals. A wild animal that has just escaped death will resume its occupation as if nothing had happened. The sportsman's clean kill is only an incident in the day's work, not anxiously apprehended like an operation or a battle. But pain and death are very real, all the same. So death should be inflicted as quickly as possible, even at the risk of losing the rest of one's bag. And, even beyond the reach of any laws, no animal should ever be killed in sport when its own death might entail the lingering death of its young. A sportsman who observes these rules instinctively, and who never kills what he cannot get and use, is not a cruel man. He certainly is a beast of prey. But so is the most delicate invalid woman when drinking a cup of beef tea. Sport has its use in the development of health and skill and courage. Its practice is one of life's eternal compromises. And the best thing we can do for it now is to make it clean. We have far too much of the other kind. The essential difference has never been more shrewdly put than in the caustic epigram, that there is the same difference

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between a sportsman and a “sport” as there is between a gentleman and a “gent.” I believe that the enforcement of laws and the establishment of sanctuaries will raise our sport to a higher plane, reduce the suffering now inflicted when killing for business, and help in every way towards the conversion of the human into the humane. Besides, paradoxical as it may seem to some good people, the true sportsman has always proved to be one of the very best conservers of all wild life worth keeping. So there is a distinctly desirable benefit to be expected in this direction, as in every other.

Finally, I return to my zoophilists, a vast but formless class of people, both in and outside of the other classes mentioned, and one which includes every man, woman and child with any fondness for wild life, from zoologists to tourists. There are higher considerations, never to be forgotten. But let me first press the point that there’s money in the zoophilists—plenty of it. A gentleman, in whom you, Sir, and your whole Commission have the greatest confidence, and who was not particularly inexpert at the subject, made an under-valuation to the extent of no less than 75 per cent., when trying to estimate the amount of money made by the transportation companies directly out of travel to “Nature” places for sport, study, scenery and other kinds of outing. There is money in it now, millions of it; and there is going to be much more money in it later on. Civilized town-dwelling men, women and children are turning more and more to wild Nature for a holiday. And their interest in Nature is widening and deepening in proportion. I do not say this as a rhetorical flourish. I have taken particular pains to find out the actual growth of this interest, which is shown in ways as comprehensive as educational curricula, picture books for children, all sorts of “Animal” works, “zoos”, museums, lectures, periodicals and advertisements; and I find all facts pointing the same way. The president of one of the greatest publishers’ associations in the world told me, and without being asked, that the most marked and the steadiest development in the trade was in “Nature” books of every kind. And this reminds me of the countless readers who rarely hear the call of the wild themselves, except through word and picture, but who would bitterly and justifiably resent the silencing of that call in the very places where it ought to be heard at its best.

Now, where can the call of wild Nature be heard to greater advantage than in Labrador, which is a land made on purpose to be the home of fur, fin and feather? And it is accessible, in the best of all possible ways—by sea. It is about equidistant from central Canada, England and the States—a wilderness park for all of them. Means of communication are multiplying fast. Even now, it would be possible, in a good steamer, to take a month’s holiday from London to Labrador, spending twenty days on the coast and only ten at sea. I think we may be

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quite sure of such travel in the near future; that is, of course, if the travellers have a land of life, not death, to come to. And an excellent thing about it is that Labrador cannot be overrun and spoilt like what our American friends so aptly call a “pocket wilderness”. Ten wild Englands, properly conserved, cannot be brought into the catalogue of common things quite so easily as all that! Besides, Labrador enjoys a double advantage in being essentially a seaboard country. The visitor has the advantage of being able to see a great deal of it—and the finest parts, too—without getting out of touch with his moveable base afloat. And the country itself has the corresponding advantage of being less liable to be turned into a commonplace summer resort by the whole monotonizing apparatus of hotels and boarding houses and conventional “sights”.

And now, Sir, I venture once more to mention the higher interests, and actually to specify one of them, although I have been repeatedly warned by outsiders that no public men would ever listen to anything which could not be expressed in “easy terms of dollars and cents!” And I do so in full confidence that no appeal to the intellectual life would fall on deaf ears among the members of a Commission which was founded to lead rather than follow the best thought of our time. I need not remind you that from the topmost heights of Evolution you can see whole realms of Nature infinitely surpassing all those of business, sport and tourist recreation, and that the theory of Evolution itself is the crowned brain of the entire Animal Kingdom. But I doubt whether, as yet, we fully realize that Labrador is absolutely unique in being the only stage on which the prologue and living pageant of Evolution can be seen together from a single panoramic point of view. The sea and sky are everywhere the same primeval elements. But no other country has so much primeval land to match them. Labrador is a miracle of youth and age combined. It is still growing out of the depths with the irresistible vigour of youth. But its titanic tablelands consist of those azoic rocks which form the very roots of all the other mountains in the world, and which are so old, so immeasurably older than any others now standing on the surface of the globe, that their Laurentians alone have the real right to bear the title of “The Everlasting Hills”. Being azoic these Laurentians are older than the first age when our remotest ancestors appeared in the earliest of animal forms, millions and millions of years ago. They are, in fact, the only part of the visible Earth which was present when Life itself was born. So here are the three great elemental characters, all together—the primal sea and sky and land—to act the azoic prologue. And here, too, for all mankind to glory in, is the whole pageant of animal life: from the weakest invertebrate forms, which link us with the illimitable past, to the mightiest developments of birds and mammals at the present day, the leviathan



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whales around us, the soaring eagles overhead, and man himself—the culmination of them all—and especially migrating man, whose incoming myriads are linking us already with the most pregnant phases of the future. Where else are there so many intimate appeals both to the child and the philosopher? Where else, in all this world, are there any parts of the Creation more fit to exalt our visions and make us “Look, through Nature, up to Nature’s God”?

But, Sir, I must stop here; and not without renewed apologies for having detained you so long over a question on which, as I have already warned you, I do not profess to be a scientific expert. I fear I have been no architect, not even a builder. But perhaps I have done a hodman’s work, by bringing a little mortar, with which some of the nobler materials may presently be put together.

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Number.” The best general history and present-day summary of the world’s fur trade is to be found in a recent German work, a genuine *Urquellengeschichte*. French and English translations will presumably appear in due course. The statistical tables are wonderfully complete. The illustrations are the least satisfactory feature. This book is —*Aus dem Reiche der Pelze. Von Emil Brass: Berlin, Im Verlage der Neuen Pelzwaren-Zeitung, 1911.*