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Dr. Ward Visits Oregon 1937

Salmon, as Dr. Henry E. Ward remarked, are funny animals—"you've got to study them before you can tamper with their lives." And that unquestionably is true. Can it be that the eminent head of the department of zoology of the University of Illinois permitted himself an oblique allusion to fishway facilities at Bonneville dam? Distinctly there is a feeling among men who know fish, and who have studied the ways of salmon, that the Columbia river's \$10,000,000 industry did not receive the consideration to which it is entitled, and for which the fish culturists pleaded.

Dr. Ward is spending the summer in Oregon and the Pacific northwest, studying the salmon runs and other phases of fish and of fishing. His interest, of course, is that of the ichthyological scientist, but such men are confirmed conservationists. This is what research teaches. Much of the progress that has been made in the cleansing of American streams may be traced to the indefatigable studies and purpose of Dr. Ward, for it is a crusade in which he has pioneered. Thus when he tells us, as he did on coming to Oregon, that we cannot too soon adopt active and effective measures against stream pollution, he is speaking with the voice of more than casual opinion. The greater the delay the heavier is the penalty—and part of the penalty is assessed against the public health and human life.

It is Oregon's privilege to entertain Dr. Ward, and no doubt he will everywhere meet with hospitality and assistance. But it is perhaps more important—for these are taken for granted—that he receive appreciative cooperation if anywhere in Oregon he discovers and reports a condition that should be remedied, to the end that fish life shall prosper and our recreational heritage be retained unspoiled.

U. S. Wild Life Held Near End

Well-Kept Preserves Only Way to Halt Inroads, Zoologist Warns

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American wild beasts of the forest and wild birds of the air are on their way out, unless—

But let Dr. Henry Baldwin Ward, one of the world's greatest zoologists, say it in his own words:

"Unless preserves are not only established, but maintained inviolate, one may confidently say that most wild life in the United States will disappear in the next 50 years.

"Running roads and the crowds that follow them will not only drive wild life away, but will interfere with its reproduction, thus hastening its disappearance."

Dr. Ward is emeritus head of the zoology department of the University of Illinois, having been active head of the department from 1909 to 1933. He was for many years the permanent secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He holds so many honorary degrees, titles, fellowships, memberships that he always forgets a few of them when giving the list.

He is author of many books on animal life, one volume that is the standard text from Moscow to Melbourne is "Parasites of the Human Eye." Another tome that added greatly to the scientist's fame is "Introduction and Spread of the Fish Tapeworm in the United States."

Visits Here

The Illinois savant spent several days here last week as the guest of Dr. William L. Finley. They are now on a tour of inspection in the Hart mountain antelope refuge in southeastern Oregon.

"I am working on a series of articles on conservation, life history of the salmon, and the relation of animals to disease," Dr. Ward said in an interview just before leaving for the high hills.

"How long will wild life survive in this country?" was asked the expert.

"It is growing less and less with the years," he replied. "Wild life is sensitive to the noises and disturbances and intrusions of civilization, just as people are sensitive to these things. You know, it is a fact that we have far more neurotics than ever before in the world's history.

"Wild life, strange as it seems to so many people, is affected in the same way that humans are, and wild life can't control their nerves like people can. If there is any trouble the animals get out of the country.

"One of the results of building these new roads is that the wild life gets out of the country. If you disturb their love-making and the caring for their young, mammals and birds will stop reproducing. Put a new road through Yellowstone park and the animals will disappear from that section, you'll see very few of them from the highway.

"They will go back into the country. But if you build too many roads there won't be any back country left."

Preserves Needed

Dr. Ward said that the only thing that will keep wild life alive in this automobile age will be preserves, carefully looked after.

"You have a splendid example of this in Oregon in the Mount Hart antelope preserve," he declared. "Before that was established I felt that the antelope would be the next wild animal to go. It was being reduced in numbers so rapidly I was sure it would soon disappear.

"Any wild animal that is protected, if given a chance, will increase rapidly. Look at the buffalo on the plains. They were in such numbers that when they migrated and crossed the tracks of the Union Pacific railroad they would stop trains for hours. There were millions of them, many millions.

"But they were reduced until at one time there were only 2000 in this country. Now, preserves have brought them back, and the herd in Yellowstone is increasing so rapidly that each year the government sells and gives away many head."

Dr. Ward was asked if there are any wolves left.

"There is a very small number left. And almost all of them are in the far western country," he replied. "There are no wolves in the middle west. But the coyote, which is truly a small wolf, has increased in numbers in recent years. The wolves used to take the best of the food, that is, they would take what they wanted, and the coyotes had to chase rabbits.

Coyotes Sly

"Now the coyotes take what they want. The coyote is a sly, hardy fellow; he avoids trouble, he avoids weather. These animals can crawl into a hole and stay there awhile, getting away from severe storms. They don't need to get a meal every day. In fact, human beings would be a great deal better off if they let a day pass without eating every once in a while.

"Right now there are coyotes found on Illinois farms every few months."

Grizzly bear have not been wiped out, the visitor said, but they are rapidly going.

"And cougar, or mountain lion, where they have been hunted zealously have been almost exterminated," Dr. Ward stated, "but this is not altogether a good thing. If you eliminate all predatory animals the deer will multiply so rapidly that they will eliminate themselves ultimately, because they would eat up the forage faster than it could grow."

Snakes came up during the interview, that is, the subject of snakes came up.

"Snakes have their place in life," the scientist maintained. "The useful species are a real help to the farmer. These snakes eat field mice, ground squirrels, grubs and insects, so they really help a very great deal. The bull snake is exceedingly valuable to the farmer.

"Copperheads and rattlers are being exterminated. And say, the rattlesnake bite isn't as dangerous as the raw whisky that is poured down a man to cure him of the effects of the bite. I think a great many more men have been killed by the whisky given them after a rattler's bite than have ever died from the snake's poison. Whisky is not an antidote for snakebite, anyway.

"A bite of the ordinary rattler is rarely fatal to an adult, but it often is in the case of children. The bite of the diamond-backed rattler, a creature of the southern swamps, is very dangerous."

Dr. Ward said that the true squirrels, those with the bushy tails and the saucy ways, have been almost killed off in the middle-western woods.