

respond with the dates of greatest local abundance. Consequently, in spite of well-intentioned regulations for game protection, these birds were subjected to continuous hunting over almost the whole of their migration route and during unbroken periods of long duration.

In the early 20th century, it became clear to thoughtful observers in Canada and the United States that unless a co-ordinated scheme of protection was worked out by both countries many valuable species of migratory birds would become extinct. The problem was recognized as an international one and many difficulties had to be overcome before a solution could be found. Finally, the labours of conservationists and statesmen on both sides of the Border were crowned with success by the signing of the Migratory Birds Treaty at Washington on Aug. 16, 1916.

The Migratory Birds Treaty between Canada and the United States may be considered the most important document in the history of wildlife conservation. It established for Canada and the United States (subject to ratification by their respective legislative bodies) the principles of protection of migratory birds. It limited the length of shooting seasons for migratory game birds, and it protected most other migratory bird species not classed as game, with provision for collection of specimens for scientific purposes and for control of birds causing damage.

On Aug. 29, 1917, the Parliament of Canada, by adoption of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, approved the Migratory Birds Treaty and ensured its execution in Canada.

On Apr. 23, 1918, Regulations for carrying out the provisions of the Migratory Birds Convention Act were formulated by Order in Council. These Regulations established annual close seasons, varying according to locality and species, for migratory game birds, but provided that Indians and Eskimos might take *scoters* for food only, at any season.

Under these Regulations migratory insectivorous birds and migratory non-game birds receive permanent protection, again with an exception in favour of Indians and Eskimos, who may at any season take auks, auklets, guillemots, murres and puffins and their eggs for human food and for the use of the skins of these birds for clothing. Special protection in the form of five-year and ten-year close seasons was afforded to a few species of game birds. In some cases, e.g., with regard to swans, cranes and most shore birds, these prolonged close seasons have been repeatedly extended so that the birds receive virtually permanent protection.

The Regulations also provide for the creation by the Government of Canada of bird sanctuaries, which are areas of special protection. Within a bird sanctuary, even the possession of a firearm or other appliance used for killing or capturing birds or the allowing of a cat or dog to run at large, except under special authorization, is prohibited. In approved instances individuals may be given permits to take a limited number of specimens for scientific use or to carry a firearm for the destruction of predatory animals. When a bird sanctuary includes private property, the regulation regarding cats and dogs may be waived to obviate hardship to their resident owners.

The administration of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, including establishment and control of bird sanctuaries under the Act, is carried on by the Canadian Wildlife Service of the Development Services Branch, Department of Resources and Development, in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and in co-operation with the provincial game authorities.