

an important cause of quail life destruction, reported Bernard V. Travis of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

These ferocious swarming insects attack the eggs as soon as they have been pipped, or the newly hatched quail chicks while they are helpless. They kill from 4 to 16 per cent. of the quail hatch each year.

Predators of the more conventional types, such as foxes and owls, have a greater apparent effect on quail in the Southeast than in the Midwest, it was disclosed in a joint paper by Paul L. Errington of Iowa State College and Herbert L. Stoddard of the Georgia Cooperative Quail Study Association. Smaller numbers of birds and beasts of prey seemed to get more of the quail in the Southeastern region.

Importance of Rats

The investigators did not undertake to present a hard-and-fast explanation, but they suggested a third angle to the problem. In the Southeast, the stock diet of the predators is based on the cotton rat, which is subject to sudden and drastic fluctuations in its numbers. It may well be that at such times the predators, short of cotton-rat meat, may turn to other sources and thereby place very heavy "predation pressure" on the game bird population.

Housing problems are felt as acutely by wild birds as they are by human beings, and one of the immediate responses to anything like a solution is met by birds as it is by the featherless biped population—with an increase in reproduction rate. This was indicated strongly in a report by W. F. Kubichek of the U. S. Biological Survey.

Mr. Kubichek described the measures taken by federal and cooperating workers to restore home conditions to normalcy for both water and upland birds: low dams to refill old ponds and swamps, planting of brush patches for shelter, even the construction of leantos where emergency demanded, planting of patches of food plants.

And the birds came back: "Prairie hens and sharp-tailed grouse have increased tenfold in one year. Waterfowl nesting on federal refuges are exhibiting remarkable annual gains. Other water birds, such as gulls, terns, cormorants, etc., by their invasion of the refuges indicate that the ideal condition is being approached on the federal refuges for all forms of wildlife."

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RETURN OF THE PRONGHORN

Once more numerous even than the bison that covered the plains of the West, the pronghorn has come even nearer extinction. Carefully tended by wildlife administrators, they are now showing signs of a comeback.

EUGENICS

Fear of Children Causes Intellectuals' Race Suicide

RECENT research throws the problem of race suicide directly into the lap of psychologists and educators.

Heretofore it has been a widely held idea that Americans of the more intellectual and economically superior classes were not having large families because they were not able to do so. Health conditions, inferior physical constitutions would prevent those living the soft life of wealth from giving birth to large numbers of children or would cause them deliberately to limit the number of offspring, it was reasoned. Somehow, Nature would balance the gift of mental superiority against a biological inferiority. Men would forfeit a high biological survival for a chance at a sort of intellectual posterity.

Actual research has thrown doubt on the theory of lessening fertility. Now a new study conducted by Dr. Paul Popenoe, of the Institute of Family Relations in Los Angeles, leads him to make the direct accusation that more than two-thirds of the childless homes studied in California are so because the might-be parents simply do not want children.

Why don't married people want children?

The chief reason, as determined by confidential questioning (not of the parents themselves, but of close relatives and friends) is selfishness. They do not want

to be bothered. The wife's career is second in importance.

Economic pressure and marital discord are relatively unimportant, eugenics is negligible.

But looming large in influencing both husband and wife is a neurotic fear of childbirth and of the presence of children in the home.

"A striking commentary on present-day education," says Dr. Popenoe of this strange condition in which married adults are actually afraid to bring children of their own into the world.

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ASTROPHYSICS

Smithsonian Institution Closes Sinai Observatory

THE SOLAR observatory on Mt. St. Katherine on the Sinai peninsula, between Africa and Asia, operated during the past five years by the Smithsonian Institution, has been closed. The station was established in this historic spot to obtain data on the daily fluctuations in solar radiation. Difficulty in transporting supplies to its summit during the winter was one determining factor in the decision to suspend operations, at least for the present.

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