

season lessened the hatch of young birds. In the face of these facts it is no wonder that word comes to us from every part of the state that partridge are very scarce and in some localities that there are none at all. The only thing that will save this specie is a closed season, and it should extend until 1920.

PRAIRIE CHICKEN.

We can only repeat the same story of the prairie chicken that we have recited of the partridge. They are "on their last legs" and must receive attention from this legislature. Scattered flocks of small numbers are seen in some sections of the state, but from many counties the report comes to us that not a single bird is seen. This is a melancholy story as compared to those of a few years ago when they were seen in every county of the state in large flocks, furnishing the most exhilarating sport for both sportsmen and dog, and offering a resistless opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors.

There is a danger line in the resistless law of nature governing these species below which we must not trespass or we invite inevitable extermination. It is conceded by all ornithologists that there is a diverging line below which bird life cannot survive their natural enemies, and a lingering thinning of their numbers by these pests eventually results in their extermination. We are not too sure that our prairie chicken have not approached this line and we submit this information to this legislature to enable it to pass such laws as in its best judgment will conserve this specie. We advise a closed season until 1920.

QUAIL.

Quail are coming back. That sounds good and is full of meaning for these birds were so nearly exterminated in Wisconsin that after 22 years of continuous closed season they are just beginning to recover in appreciable numbers. We believe that at the expiration of the closed season which extends until 1921 we will have them in sufficient numbers to provide short open seasons for taking them. Many of the New England states have lost their quail and despite their efforts to bring them back by the importation of breeding stock, they have accomplished nothing as yet. It is the same story the world over that when you once let your native birds get away, it seems a matter of impossibility to restore them. There has been no degree of success attained by any of the states in the artificial propagation of our native birds. The only safe system is to watch carefully and protect them in their natural habitations.

The last two winters were exceedingly severe, as the heavy sleet and rain storms formed a coating of ice, covering the food supply, and immediately following we were visited with heavy falls of snow accompanied with severe cold weather. It was only through heroic work by this department that tremendous losses of these birds was averted. Feed was supplied by the state and the various protective associations, which was

distributed by our wardens and members of the associations, and the birds survived with very few perishing.

The farmers generally are very choice of the covies that are located on their premises, as they have proven their value to the agriculturist in



BOB WHITE

destroying potato bugs and other destructive insects. Consequently the quail have a generous friend in the farmer and a thrifty spirit of coöperation is redounding greatly to the benefit of the quail.

DUCKS.

We view with optimism the future of all of our waterfowl. The Federal Migratory Bird law has thrown around them that degree of protection that in its scope guarantees their protection throughout the United States. The few years that this law has been in effect has proven the wisdom of its passage in a large increase in the number of birds coming to Wisconsin. Our wardens report that it has been many years since the influx