

of birds has been as great as this year, and many are making the lake regions of the northern part of the state their nesting grounds. Since the enactment of the proper kind of state and Federal laws for their protection, there has been noted everywhere a marked increase compared to the decline noted when unregulated hunting was allowed.

In our judgment it should not be the purpose of any restrictive law to make it so unreasonable as to preclude the possibility of the sportsmen bagging a legitimate limit. And in discussing this question we do not want to be understood as favoring a law that will open up the way for wholesale slaughter, but we do believe that the present law restricting the hours to a "sunrise and sunset" schedule is drawing the line a little too close. In our judgment this law could be extended to 20 minutes before sunrise and 20 minutes after sunset without infringing upon the safety in proper protection. Our very best sportsmen who are as strongly in favor of proper protection as any member of this commission and who are giving us most valuable assistance in the enforcement of the game laws, contend that our present law is too restrictive and should be changed as suggested above.

Wood duck are responding to the closed season provided for them six years ago and are coming back in large numbers. Our wardens report large flocks of them in every part of the state where a few years ago they were seldom seen. Mallards, teal, canvasbacks, redhead, pintail and coots are found in large numbers throughout the watered districts of the state.

So we feel safe in saying that our waterfowl are on the increase and they will continue to be a great source of pleasure and profit to all that enjoy the sport of hunting.

#### GEESE.

Geese have never been considered much of an asset to the sportsmen of Wisconsin. This is easily accounted for, as geese only light in a wide open space of country where their vision is not restricted. Their instinct of avoiding danger is much more keen than that of the other species. They adhere assiduously to nature's warning that self preservation is the first law of nature, and they take no chances. The only places in Wisconsin where any shooting of geese is reported is in Jefferson, Dane, Rock and Walworth counties. They frequently, while on their flight south, light in the open fields of these counties and some of our sportsmen usually wait their coming and occasionally bag a few of them; but these instances are rare.

#### THE FEDERAL MIGRATORY BIRD LAW.

The Federal Migratory Bird law which directs the Department of Agriculture to adopt suitable regulations and prescribe a fixed open and closed season for migratory birds has done more to conserve the migratory birds than all the laws ever passed by any of the states since the necessity for passing protective game laws was conceived. The game laws which

were passed at the last session of our legislature were framed to conform to the Federal law and it has added tremendously to the power and efficiency of our laws. It has not entirely done away with violations, but it has reduced all flagrant violations to the minimum. The Department is now considering the adoption of a Federal bag limit and the prohibiting of the sale of migratory waterfowl. This regulation would add another strong arm to the law which would aid tremendously. The Federal game laws have done more to bring protective legislation in the southern states than any other one thing.

Before the passing of that law, half of the southern states made no pretense at game protection, but now the states are few that haven't a very substantial code of laws which in most of the states are fairly well enforced. The prevailing weakness of the laws in those states is that they allow the sale of game, thus opening the way for wholesale slaughter. Their bag limits are excessive and they show no disposition to economize in saving the birds. Until this last year, their bag limit was 50 birds, but so much pressure was brought to bear by other states in urging that their bag limit was unfair to the more progressive states of the north, that they reduced it to 25 birds.

At the National Association of the Game and Fish Commissioners held at New Orleans the week of October 10, 1916, strong pressure was brought to bear urging that the states adopt a uniform bag limit for migratory birds, giving each state an equal maximum opportunity to share in the spoils of this natural resource. But no agreement was reached. However, we believe that such a resolution will be adopted at our next meeting which is to be held in St. Paul next year. Our sportsmen have claimed for years that we have not been getting a square deal or an equal opportunity with the southern states in taking these birds. We have claimed that we were protecting them rigidly during their stay in the north, carefully protecting them through the breeding season, only to have them slaughtered in the wintering zone in the south. This is absolutely true, but we believe that at our next annual meeting at St. Paul, this condition will be remedied and we will get together on a uniform bag limit and restrict all sale of these birds, which will bring about the desired results.

#### THE FEDERAL LACY LAW.

The Federal Lacy law which prohibits interstate shipment and traffic in game is a powerful weapon for good. This law applies only to states that have laws prohibiting the sale and traffic in game, and Wisconsin is one of that number. We have enforced the Wisconsin laws rigidly and have turned over to the Federal authorities several cases after receiving convictions in our courts. The Federal courts have then imposed additional fines, with heavy costs, which the violators have found a rough and rugged road to travel. It is important to know that one journey through the courts of this process has been sufficient to satisfy the game trafficker. We have never had occasion to make an arrest for a second offense, which convinces us that rigid laws is the true solution of game protection.