

struction and pleasure through such agencies as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, summer camps and national parks. These people are interested in all forms of wild life—including the native game species. While I, myself, take out a hunting license, and have within a year shot quail with exercise of the sportsman's instincts, I am ready to grant that other people have claims on our game for reasons not involving the use of the shotgun. I am willing to grant, not total protection of truly game species of birds, but that the interests of *all* concerned should be heeded in the administration of our natural resources. Far and away the greatest value—recreationally, educationally and scientifically—inheres in our *native* complement of wild animal life.

The common problem of the sportsman and nature student alike is that of *maintaining* our native fauna, as nearly as is possible consistently with the inevitable disturbance due to settlement of our country. The practicable way of saving both our game and our non-game birds in largest measure is to provide refuges for them; to recognize the necessity of leaving here and there strips of wholly natural cover for them, especially by eliminating close grazing and browsing from such tracts; to insure game law enactment and enforcement to a point where the annual draft by hunters will not exceed the annual increase. And a final consideration must be heeded, namely, the danger in permitting the implantation of alien kinds: *We do not want* anything "bigger and finer" than, for example, our own California and mountain quails!

The California Fish and Game Commission has, it is true, done splendid work, upon a sound biological principle, in establishing game refuges here and there in suitable places throughout the state. But in any attempt to plant alien kinds of game within our borders I believe the commission to be wrong. One aim in my present endeavor to give clearly the reasons against such attempt is so that in future years it can not be said that some responsible student of natural history, who should have recognized the dangers threatened, did not speak in time.

JOSEPH GRINNELL

MUSEUM OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY,
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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

A NATIONAL PARK IN THE BELGIAN CONGO

HIS EXCELLENCY BARON DE CARTIER DE MARCHIENNE, Belgian Ambassador, wrote on April 23, 1925, to Dr. John C. Merriam, president of the Carnegie

Institution and vice-president of the National Academy of Sciences, as follows:

Ambassade de Belgique,
1780 Mass. Ave.,
Washington, D. C.

April 23, 1925

My dear Dr. Merriam:

In accordance with our conversation when I last had the pleasure of seeing you, I am now sending you some additional details in regard to the "Albert National Park" ("Parc National Albert"), which has been established in the Belgian Congo for the protection and scientific study of the native flora and fauna.

The advance of civilization into Central Africa has brought with it its inevitably attendant menace to primitive forms of wild life. This National Park has therefore been laid off, under the auspices of His Majesty King Albert, as a sanctuary where both animals and plants and natural scenery may be preserved and where scientists from all over the world may eventually come to study the flora and fauna of Africa in their original and natural surroundings.

During the past few years there has been an ever-increasing influx of big-game hunters and natural scientists into the Belgian Colony which is the last refuge of many rare species of African fauna. The Belgian Government has recognized the necessity of permitting a certain number of such rare animals to be taken for scientific purposes, but has consistently endeavored to preserve these rare species and also to prevent the wanton destruction of other less rare, but harmless, animals, whose slaughter serves no useful purpose.

In these circumstances the Belgian Colonial Authorities have found it necessary to restrict not only private hunting expeditions but also similar expeditions contemplated by many of the most distinguished Museums of Natural History and other scientific bodies.

Among the rare animals which are in danger of extinction is the Gorilla—an animal of extreme interest to scientists. The Belgian Government has, in the past, felt it its duty to permit a few specimens to be killed or captured for strictly scientific purposes, but the time has come when, in the interests of humanity, as well as in the interests of Science itself, steps must be taken to preserve the remaining gorillas from extermination.

A short time ago King Albert's attention was drawn to the possibility of establishing a "sanctuary" for the wild flora and fauna in the Kivu District which lies in the northeastern section of the Belgian Congo.

In this region, besides many other rare wild animals, are still to be found a number of gorillas, perhaps 100 or 200, and it is thought that, if properly protected, they may not only be preserved, but may become so accustomed to man that they may be studied in their native surroundings in a way that would rapidly produce most interesting scientific results.

In pursuance of this idea, His Majesty the King signed a Royal Decree on March 2nd, 1925, defining the limits of the "Parc National Albert," setting forth its pur-

poses and providing severe penalties for violation of the regulations.

The reservation embraces the three volcanoes, Mt. Mikenó, Mt. Karissimbi and Mt. Vissoke. Within this district it is forbidden to kill or capture any kind of wild animal—even those which are dangerous—except in case of legitimate self-defense or by government order. It is also forbidden to destroy eggs or nests of wild birds, or to cut down, up-root or carry away any native tree or plant. Provision is also made for proper supervision and policing of the reserve.

The district above outlined is the region inhabited by rare animals, notably the gorillas, and comprises about 92 square miles. It is intended to surround this special reserve by a second reserve (under less severe restrictions) covering approximately eight hundred square miles.

In this Parc National Albert it is planned to erect a laboratory for biological studies where scientists from all parts of the world may eventually come and study the flora and fauna of the Belgian Congo as well as the geological and meteorological conditions.

In inaugurating this new experiment—the first of its kind in Central Africa—the King and His officials have studied the great American reservations and national parks and have sought the advice of eminent American scientists.

In order that the best results may be achieved it is hoped that this humanitarian and scientific project may receive the sympathetic cooperation of the members of the National Academy of Sciences, and the benefit of their experience and wise counsel.

With deep appreciation of the interest which you have been kind enough to take in the matter and with high regard, I remain, my dear Dr. Merriam,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) E. CARTIER.

This letter was presented at the meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, held in Washington on April 29, and the following resolution was passed by the academy:

The National Academy of Sciences desires to express its gratification at the action of His Majesty the King of the Belgians in the establishment of the *Albert National Park* for the effective preservation of the Gorilla and other animals, together with the protection of the flora of the region; and assures His Majesty of its deep interest and its disposition to cooperate in the realization of the benefits to science and mankind arising from this wise and generous action.

Following action by the academy, the president has appointed a committee consisting of Robert M. Yerkes, *Chairman*, Clark Wissler, E. G. Conklin and F. M. Chapman.

THE SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES OF THE SOVIET UNION

IN a circular sent out a few months ago, the Russian Information Bureau in Washington called attention to the organization in Moscow of the Joint Information Bureau for the purpose of establishing closer relations between cultural and scientific bodies in the Soviet Union and those of other countries.

At a recent meeting (April 5, 1925, in Moscow) of representatives of the principal cultural and scientific societies of the Soviet Union this project assumed more definite form and a broader scope. The Joint Information Bureau was replaced by the more comprehensively named Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which is designed to embrace the cultural societies of the whole Union.

The following officers were elected: *President*, Madame O. D. Kameneva; *Vice-president*, Mr. N. I. Loboda; *Corresponding Secretary*, Mr. D. P. Bukhartsev.

The society has organized the following departments:

(1) Contact Bureau, to establish contacts with foreign societies for the purpose of exchanging information, views, reports, etc., of a cultural and scientific character. This bureau will also engage in answering various inquiries coming from abroad, in collecting general information about cultural conditions in foreign countries, in the exchange of professors and students between the Soviet Union and other countries, in gathering data concerning international and national congresses, conferences and expositions abroad and in the Soviet Union, etc.

(2) The Book Exchange Bureau, which will conduct all exchanges of general and scientific books between the Soviet Union and foreign countries.

(3) Press Bureau, which will look after the compilation and publication of a bulletin of cultural and scientific life in the Soviet Union. This section will also supply foreign countries with articles and notes of cultural interest on the various phases of Soviet life, and it will furnish institutions and organizations of the Soviet Union with clippings from general and technical foreign publications and *vice versa*.

(4) Service Bureau for Foreign Visitors, which will assist foreigners visiting the Soviet Union for the purpose of acquainting themselves with the cultural life and customs of the Soviet Union. This division will likewise extend its services to arrange tours for foreign professors, scientists, etc., visiting the Soviet Union, and reciprocal tours in foreign countries, for study and research, by citizens of the Soviet Union.

(5) Russ-Photo Bureau, which will supply pictorial material covering life in the Soviet Union to