

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Since our spring meeting, ornithology and conservation in Alabama have been greatly augmented. Mrs. Blanche E. Dean has published her helpful book, "Let's Learn the Birds in Alabama;" the people in Alabama are becoming aware of the political fire ant program in Alabama and its dangers to man and beast; and we have good news about the Gulf Island Refuge.

Blanche Dean has done a very good job in publishing her small bird book. We won't compare it with Tom Burleigh's, "Birds of Georgia," which is fresh off the press, and which is a very superior state bird publication. Mrs. Dean's book is written for the beginner and is stimulating and should provide much help to those starting out. Copies of this book may be obtained from Mrs. Dean at 1228 South 29th Street for \$1.25 each. They should be good gifts to young and beginning bird students.

The fire ant situation is quite interesting. The U. S.D.A. started the program with a leaflet, "Facts About the Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program," in which many false propaganda statements were made. The worst error was the fallacious thought that a true eradication of the fire ant could be accomplished. Any sensible biologist who knows the situation realizes that this cannot be done, especially with the proposed program. After the U.S.D.A. program progressed, and it was increasingly evident that wildlife was endangered, the U.S.D.I., Fish and Wildlife Service in collaboration with several states set up research programs to determine what the effects of broadcast insecticide treatment are on wildlife. In Alabama, the A.P.I. Wildlife Research Unit set up a research program near Camden in Wilcox County. In a recent release of information it was shown that the Bob-white Quail was completely eliminated by the insecticides used, and that over 23 different species of birds were killed as well as many mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes. Dr. Clarence Cottam of the Welder Wildlife Foundation,

Sinton, Texas, and former assistant Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, remarked in a letter that after our studies were over we would find that the wildlife was killed and that the fire ant had survived. We are hoping that shortly the U.S.D.A. will be glad to let this program drop and that it will avoid such political footballs in the future.

Mr. F. C. Gillett, who is Chief of the Division of Wildlife of the Regional Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, recently wrote that the island refuge situation on Petit Bois and other islands in the Gulf of Mexico that are available as refuges will be placed under active refuge management shortly. There are still 717 acres in Petit Bois Island, 1,270 acres in Horn Island and all of Round Island in private ownership. These lands should be obtained from this ownership for the Fish and Wildlife Service. Our job of helping get these lands released is still present. Anything we can do to aid in convincing the private holders of our need for this refuge land will speed up the acquisition.

The Alabama Ornithological Society has had a wonderful opportunity to show its interest in these political situations in which our wildlife needed protection. It was an opportunity, and still is, for us to individually and as a group, in the name of the A.O.S., stand up for and be heard in our demands for better conservation. This is one of the main reasons for the existence of the A.O.S. and it is our individual duty to see that our society functions to promote better conservation.

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Julian Dusi  
Auburn, Alabama