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Indianapolis, Indiana 46226
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- Minnesota Bird Bander
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- The Ring
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Wroclaw, POLAND
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Science and Technology Department
Carnegie Library of Pittsburg
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235 McClelland Boulevard
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Nebraska Ornithologists' Union
University of Nebraska
State Museum
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
- The Raven
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Academy of Natural Sciences
19th and the Parkway
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19100
- Maryland Birdlife
Maryland Ornithological Society
Cylburn Mansion
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- The Living Bird
Laboratory of Ornithology
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- Kiff, Mrs. Ben W., Editor
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The Wilson Bulletin
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University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

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Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643

The Oriole
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University of Georgia Library
Athens, Georgia 30601

EBBA NEWS
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New Hampshire Quarterly
Audubon Society of New Hampshire
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Durham, New Hampshire 03824

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Audubon Naturalist Society
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New York, N. Y. 10024

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

(Birmingham News)

New Bankhead Forest Report

Several weeks ago The Birmingham News printed my letter about the Bankhead National Forest. As a result of that letter, similar letters to our senators, and remarks made on my TV show, "Animal Tracks," I was asked to meet District Ranger William Bustin for a "show me" trip through the Bankhead. Four Forest Service officials spent six hours trying to convince me that all is well in the Bankhead. Because I have received scores of letters on this subject, I believe the readers of The Birmingham News will be interested in the results of that trip. The following are some of the things I learned.

Continued Inside Back Cover

THE FALL AOS MEETING

Livingston and Epps Alabama

OCTOBER 23-24-25
Meeting Begins Friday 23
with Boat trip and supper
on the Beautiful Tombigbee.
Board Boat at 3:00 P.M.
at Dock in Gainesville, Ala.
Go right over Tombigbee bridge
to west bank of river.
Boat trip and Dinner on Board \$2.50
Reservations Must be Received
Oct. 15 or before.
Livingston Inn Motel headquarters
Camping area at Epps. site of Fort
Tombeche. Built by Bienville-1795

Boat Trip from Gainesville - 3 PM

During fiscal year 1970 the timber cut in your Bankhead Forest amounted to 11.2 million board feet. All of this was cut by and for large, privately owned lumber companies and these companies made a substantial profit from your forest. At present 90 per cent of your forest is classified as commercial forest land with only 10 per cent classified for other uses including roads, water, recreation, and special uses. By nature, the Bankhead is a mixed hardwood forest which has already been converted to more than 55 per cent pine, and the declared intention of the Forest Service is to increase the pine. Many species of hardwoods are considered "trash trees" and are deliberately being destroyed and eliminated over large areas.

The aim of the Forest Service is to convert all of the forest, excepting a few small recreation and special management areas, to even-age management. Under this plan each tract would be clear-cut and reforested mostly with pines of even age. Clear-cut tracts are vast eye sores of tangled weeds and poisoned trees. It will take from six to ten years for seedling pines to partially heal the scars on the land.

Dangerous chemicals are used to poison the unwanted trees. The Forest Service is now involved in lawsuits concerning cotton crops allegedly destroyed when these poisons were sprayed from helicopters. The poisons are now injected into the trees. The district ranger admitted to me that no one knows what effects this may have on soil, water, and wildlife as these trees rot.

On the day of my visit the Sipsey River was filled with muddy silt and the Forest Service officials admitted that an unknown portion of this silt comes from the clear-cut tracts. None of these officials would deny that last winter's flooding along the Sipsey was probably aggravated by the clear-cut tracts. As we walked across one of these scarred tracts

we could see ample evidence of soil erosion. The effects on water tables in the area are less obvious.

Three-fourths of all forest land in America is privately owned, yet our national forests are now supplying two-thirds of our nation's sawtimber. The loggers cry there is a timber shortage in America while they are exporting some four billion board feet every year. This is almost 400 times as much timber as the Bankhead produces and roughly enough to build housing for as many people as live in the Birmingham metropolitan area.

As our valuable timber is being exported out of the country, our national forests are being turned into tree farms for the private profit of loggers rather than being preserved as places of recreation, beauty, solitude and conservation for all people.

Our nation's need for recreation areas and for unspoiled areas of natural beauty is growing rapidly while such areas are dwindling in size and number. Such areas are most urgently needed here in the East. Consider the economic bonanza for Alabama if the Bankhead became a national park rather than a tree farm. There would still be plenty of tree farms on privately owned land.

Most urgently needed is federal legislation to accomplish the following: 1. Remove national forests from the Department of Agriculture and put them under the Department of Interior. 2. Limit exports of timber to that which is not needed in the United States. 3. Encourage the growing of forests to lumber size on privately owned land. 4. Emphasize the multiple-use principle in our national forests, with a de-emphasis on lumber and pulpwood production.

BOB TRUETT,

Director, Jimmy Morgan Zoo,
2630 Cahaba Road.