



Senator George McLean - Father of the Federal Migratory Bird Act 1916 & "Bird Man of Congress"



At the turn of the twentieth century, bird populations were in peril as a result of unregulated shooting for the food and fashion industries. On August 16, 1916, the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) signed the Migratory Bird Treaty (known in Canada as a Convention) to protect these shared natural resources. The treaty was the first international agreement forged to protect wild birds, and among the first to protect any wildlife species. The Migratory Bird Treaty is the foundation for significant achievements in bird conservation that followed.



Sources: www.audubon.org/news/the-evolution-migratory-bird-treaty
www.fws.gov/birds/mbtreaty100/partnerships.php



McLean Game Refuge
 75 Great Pond Road
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*Senator George McLean
 "The Bird Man of Congress" &
 the Federal Migratory Bird
 Treaty Centennial 1916 - 2016*

McLean Celebrates Senator George McLean & The Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial



A Landmark Wildlife Conservation Agreement



The Early 1800s: A SEVERE DEPLETION OF WILDLIFE

It's hard to imagine today that in the New England of the late 1800s - deer, wild turkeys, moose, black bear and beaver were nearly extinct.

With essentially zero regulations in place, market hunters also decimated U.S. bird populations, in part so that well-to-do women could wear hats adorned with ornamental feathers.

By the end of the century, Labrador Ducks and Great Auks were extinct, soon joined by Passenger Pigeons, Carolina Parakeets, and Heath Hens.

Numerous other species were on the brink. Outrage over these alarming trends led to the formation of the Audubon Societies, as well as other conservation groups.

In 1910, an egret plume was worth more than its weight in gold.

THE AUDUBON SOCIETIES CELEBRATE "The Bird Man in Congress"

In the late 1800s, the Audubon Society of Massachusetts was formed for the protection of birds, one of the earliest conservation groups.



In their publication, Bird-Lore (1916, Volume 16), Senator George McLean is recognized for his efforts to push through the Federal Migratory Bird Act:

» *It was his speech, delivered on the floor of the Senate last year, in favor of the Plumage Law, that carried the day, and won for America the distinction of being the leading nation on earth in the matter of bird-protective legislation. He is known as "the bird man" of Congress.*

The Audubon Association and other organizations may labor with all their might for federal legislation, and do much good in stirring up the country to demand protection for the birds; but Senator McLean, more than all others combined, must be given the credit for actually steering our two most important federal laws through the machinery of Congress.

The Audubon Society continues regarding Senator McLean's character:

» *He is modest to a most unusual degree. Perhaps that is one reason why his colleagues esteem so highly his opinion; they know he is not trying to make political capital of his achievements.*

After he has won a great battle for the birds in Washington, he does not boast of his accomplishments, but straightway gives the credit for his work to others.

Everybody loves a generous man, and Senator McLean is generous, as well as strong, influential, and powerful. He first entered the Senate in 1911, and, for the good of the birds and the benefit of mankind, let us pray that he may remain there for very many years to come.



THE FEDERAL MIGRATORY BIRD ACT

Today, the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty is celebrated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Audubon Society as the oldest conservation law on the books. The Audubon Society counts it as one of its first major victories and notes on its website "it has saved millions, if not billions, of birds from predatory human activities."

Migratory birds connect people with nature by adding beauty, sound and color to our world. They provide countless opportunities for enjoyment by birders, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, and have cultural and spiritual importance.

Migratory birds also contribute important environmental benefits, including pollination, insect and rodent control, and seed dispersal, and are good indicators of environmental health because they are so visible and relatively easy to study.

Will you join Senator McLean to carry this Legacy forward?

Senator McLean left you a national and local legacy. Will you carry this legacy forward?

Your charitable support of the McLean Game Refuge provides the stewardship resources to ensure the continuation of a diverse habitat of forest, land and species.

To donate to the McLean Game Refuge please write to McLean Game Refuge, 75 Great Pond Road, Simsbury, CT 06070 or visit the website at <http://www.mcleancare.org/game-refuge>.

