

HELP STOP FIRE ANT FOOLISHNESS (From National Audubon Magazine)

Latest boondoggle proposed by the agri-chemical complex is a \$200 million, twelve-year campaign to "eradicate" the imported fire ant in nine Southeastern States. Many Audubon members will remember the first time the fire ant was "eradicated" — in the late 1950s. The National Audubon Society put a special biologist, ornithologist Harold Peters, into the field to investigate the results. With much scare propoganda about how the ants ate livestock and killed human babies in their cribs, the U. S. Department of Agriculture got money from Congress to launch massive aerial spraying programs, laying down two pounds of dieldrin or heptachlor per acre. These two chlorinated hydrocarbons are similar in persistence but much more toxic than DDT. Public protest and proof of widespread mortality to wildlife and livestock by the insecticides finally brought a halt to the program.

Now USDA, in league with chemical manufacturers and distributors, proposes to use another persistent chlorinated hydrocarbon, mirex. The plan is to spray 1.25 pounds of mirex bait per acre over 120 million acres. Mirex is especially damaging to fish, shrimp, and other marine organisms. Much of the fire ant bait is certain to wind up in rivers and estuaries.

The fire ant, a South American insect that has been present in our Southern states at least since 1918, has never been listed among the major insect pests in any of those states. Moreover, it is easily controlled in any local situation by the application of an effective insecticide, such as mirex, to the mounds inhabited by the ant colonies. But such local and common sense measures could never use up \$200 million of your taxes.

Experience has proved that it takes a massive display of public outrage to head off a pesticide boondoggle. So take pen in hand and write

to Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin, with copy to President Nixon, in Washington D. C. He can stop this asininity. Send a carbon or a similar letter to your Congressman because USDA's lobbyists will be at work trying to convince him that the fire ant is a worse menace to mankind than international communism. Meanwhile, the Environmental Defense Fund and a group of Mississippi scientists and citizens have gone to court to stop the USDA spraying.

"We have moved too slowly in both the executive and legislative branches towards the goal of completion of our National Wilderness System," President Nixon said in a special report to Congress. He reminded the lawmakers that they had before them twenty proposals for additions to the wilderness system, adding that he affirmed "this Administration's intent to pursue the objectives of the national Wilderness Act aggressively in the coming months."

Notice is hereby given that the Executive Council of the Alabama Ornithological Society, because of rises in publication and other costs, has approved an amendment to the By-laws of the Society increasing the dues of active and associate (out of state) members of the Society to \$4.00 effective as of the beginning of the calendar year 1971 and that such an amendment will be presented for adoption during the regular winter meeting of the Society at the business session of the membership to be held at 7:00 p.m. on January 23, 1971, at Robinson's Riverside Motel on Oyster Bay Road (County Route 6) adjacent to the Bon Secour River in Baldwin County, Alabama. Dues for other classes of membership will remain the same. Dated this 18th day of December, 1970.

Wilma J. Lindberg, Secretary
Alabama Ornithological Society