



Promoting the Science of Ecology

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The Ideals and Aims of the Ecological Society of America

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## THE IDEALS AND AIMS OF THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

BY VICTOR E. SHELFORD

The development of modern ecology has received its greatest impetus in a few localities where there are physiographic conditions giving diversity of habitats in which environmental dynamics are apparent. While primarily concerned with the physiological relations of organisms to environment, and while tending to become to a marked degree an experimental science, the workers in the field have thus far derived, and probably always will derive, their inspiration from the dynamic relations of organisms to their environments; from the diurnal, seasonal and secular changes in the environments of single species or of communities of species. Still, many investigators with interest in ecology and some actually working in the field, have not had an opportunity to see some of the most significant localities in which ecological field study has been conducted and thus are much handicapped in their understanding of the published accounts, and in relating them to their less diagrammatic situations. The facts, the methods and terms of the different investigators in the field of this new science are accordingly not clearly appreciated in a comparative and comprehensive way by the investigators themselves. It is not possible to carry demonstrations of these difficult natural phenomena to the places of meeting of the national societies, as many other materials are carried and displayed as demonstrations. Thus the Ecological Society of America has grown out of an attempt to accomplish what may be termed a display of the localities which have served to inspire workers in ecological lines.

The various ecological investigators have developed methods for the study of environment and for the study of response to environment. These workers fall into two groups—botanists and zoologists—separated by the present-day organization of science but with much common ground which demands fusion. Methods and terms are not standardized, indeed nature does not bear close standardization, but much is to be gained by a thorough understanding. The diversity of interest in climatological work is illustrated by the topics of the various members of the Society's committee dealing with this one phase of modern ecological interest.

In all the meetings, correspondence and conversations with members of the executive committee and the organizing com-

mittee, a strong opposition to an elaborate constitution and by-laws has been shown. Thus there are no rules governing membership, but without effort the same result has been accomplished without rules, as a scrutiny of the following pages will show that the persons who are now members fall into the following classes:

1. Those who have advanced the science of modern ecology.
2. Those who have attained recognition through their contributions to other fields and who are interested in ecology.
3. Those who have conducted researches in ecology which are not yet published but are wholly or partially prepared for publication.
4. Those who have the training and opportunity to conduct observations of special importance in ecological work.

The future observance of these standards will enable the Society to serve its purposes. The influence which the Society may exert at any time depends not upon the qualifications presented by its members on admission, but upon their accomplishments and activity at that time.

The first regular officers were chosen from the three sections of the country which have, in the past and the present, maintained independent societies or sections of national societies: viz., the Atlantic coast, the middle west, and the Pacific coast. The opportunity presented itself for the Society to hold a sectional meeting for the reading of papers in the summer of 1916, in connection with the meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Association at San Diego. This meeting was held under the supervision of the Secretary of the Society, with a large and enthusiastic attendance. We believe the practice of so choosing officers and permitting such meetings in connection with meetings of sections of other national societies will be beneficial.

It appears that the Society has launched its activities without the usual elaborate constitution and by-laws. It is to be hoped that it may be governed by opportunity to advance the science and assist its members, rather than by the usual cumbersome regulations.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

At the Philadelphia meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science about twenty men interested in ecology met informally on the evening of December 30, 1914, to consider the advisability of organizing an American ecological society. The immediate occasion for the conference was an expression of feeling on the part of Professor R. H. Wolcott and Professor V. E. Shelford to the effect that there was no adequate opportunity for plant and animal ecologists to meet together, and

also that there was for ecologists an urgent need of summer field meetings in addition to the present winter meetings.

The conference was attended by Messrs. Adams, Bartlett, Blodgett, Bray, Brues, Cannon, Cowles, Dachnowski, Griggs, Harshberger, Hill, Jennings, MacDougal, Nichols, Osburn, Pearse, Shantz, Shelford, Shreve, Taylor, and Wolcott, Professor Harshberger being selected chairman. The opinion was practically unanimous that the time was ripe for the organization of an Ecological Society, and it was voted to call a conference of all ecologists interested in the project, to convene in connection with the Columbus Meeting of the American Association. A committee was appointed to call such a conference and present a scheme of organization, the committee consisting of Professor J. W. Harshberger (chairman), Professor V. E. Shelford (vice-chairman), Professor H. C. Cowles (secretary-treasurer), Professor R. H. Wolcott, Professor Charles C. Adams, Dr. Forrest Shreve.

A circular letter was sent out by the Secretary of the Organization Committee in September, 1915, stating what had been done at Philadelphia, calling for expressions of opinion regarding the formation of a society, and announcing the conference at Columbus.

The proposed conference was held at Hotel Hartman, in Columbus, on December 28, 1915, under the chairmanship of Professor Harshberger. About fifty persons were present, nearly all of whom were enthusiastically in favor of the formation of an ecological society. The Secretary of the Organization Committee exhibited over fifty letters from men who were unable to be at Columbus but were interested in the movement. In view of these facts a definite organization was effected under the name The Ecological Society of America. The Constitution given on an adjoining page was proposed by the Organization Committee and was adopted. Officers for 1916 were chosen, and the next regular annual meeting was fixed for Convocation Week, 1916, in New York.

At the organization meeting it was decided to regard as Charter Members not only those present at the organization, but also those who had written the Secretary of their interest in the Society, and those who might wish to join during the early months of 1916. The names which appear in this Handbook comprise the Charter Members (284) and the members elected at the New York Meeting (23). The latter are indicated by asterisks.

## CONSTITUTION

### OF THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Adopted at the Organization Meeting at Columbus, O., Dec.  
28, 1915

ARTICLE 1. The name of this Society shall be The Ecological Society of America.

ARTICLE 2. The object of this Society shall be the promotion of the interests of ecology.

ARTICLE 3. *Membership.* Membership in this Society shall consist of persons interested in ecology. Names of candidates for membership may be submitted by any two members to the Secretary-Treasurer, and presented for election at the next annual meeting, or for special election by the Executive Committee at any time.

ARTICLE 4. *Officers.* The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer. These officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Society, and shall be elected by the Society at the annual meeting, from nominations made by a committee of three appointed by the chair, or from nominations from the floor.

ARTICLE 5. *Meetings.* There shall be a stated annual meeting held in accordance with the action of the Society at the preceding annual meeting, and such field meetings as shall be initiated by any group of members. The Secretary-Treasurer shall give full advertisement of all such field meetings.

ARTICLE 6. *Dues.* The annual dues of the Society shall be \$1.00.

### BY-LAWS

1. The annual meeting of the Society shall be held, whenever practicable, at the same time and place with the annual meeting of the Botanical Society of America and the American Society of Zoologists. If these societies fail to meet at the same city, the Ecological Society will meet with the American Association and its affiliated societies.

2. It is recommended that the organizers of each field trip appoint some one to serve as recorder for the trip.

3. The retiring President and Vice-President automatically become the representatives of the Society on the Council of the American Association.

## FIELD TRIPS IN 1916

**DISMAL SWAMP TRIP.** A trip to Virginia Beach and Dismal Swamp, in eastern Virginia, was conducted by Professor John W. Marshberger on April 23 to 26, 1916. A day was devoted to the dunes and strand near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay and to the adjacent swamps and forests of loblolly pine. Two days were given to the exploration of Dismal Swamp and the shores of Lake Drummond, where the interest centered in the forests of bald cypress and tupelo, together with the numerous vines and palustrine plants which here reach their northernmost limits. Attention was also given to the changes that have been initiated in the Swamp by the great drainage canals which now penetrate it.

An account of the field trip to Dismal Swamp has been published by Miss Margaret C. Stavely, under the title: *The Vegetation of the Wandering Dunes at Cape Henry, Virginia, and Dismal Swamp*. *Forest Leaves*, Vol. 15: 133-135, June, 1916. (Published by the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, Philadelphia, Pa.)

**CHICAGO TRIP.** A four-day field trip to the dunes of Lake Michigan and other localities in the vicinity of Chicago was made from June 14 to 18, 1916, under the leadership of Professor H. C. Cowles, Professor V. E. Shelford, and Dr. George D. Fuller. A day was devoted to a series of ponds at the head of Lake Michigan, in which it was possible to demonstrate the increase of plankton and other aquatic life with the increasing age of the ponds. Considerable time was given to the dunes at Miller, Ind., at Michigan City, Ind., and at Sawyer, Mich., where the successions of plant and animal life were investigated. A study was also made of the successions in and about a tamarack swamp, and of the fauna of a floating bog, its pitcher plants and the tamaracks.

**SAN DIEGO TRIP.** A field trip was made from San Diego to the edge of the Imperial Valley on August 14 and 15, 1916, under the leadership of Mr. Frank Stephens. A trip of over 200 miles was made by automobile, on which the members of the Society and other participants were guests of the San Diego Society of Natural History. Frequent stops were made throughout the trip, and a camp was established on the night of August 14 in the midst of diversified desert vegetation. Interest centered in the chaparral and desert formations that were traversed, and in the birds and mammals by which they are characterized. This trip was particularly significant in the fact that its numerous demon-

strations and discussions exhibited no trace of the existence of arbitrary and academic lines between the diverse interests of the participants.

An account of the San Diego trip, written by several of the members, was published in the Transactions of the San Diego Society of Natural History (Vol. 2: 77-98, 1916).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
GROUPED ACCORDING TO SUBJECTS OF  
MAJOR INTEREST

Plant ecology .....	88
Animal ecology .....	86
Forestry .....	43
Entomology .....	39
Marine ecology .....	14
Agriculture .....	12
Plant physiology .....	7
Plant pathology .....	4
Climatology .....	4
Geology .....	4
Animal parasitology .....	3
Soil physics .....	3
	307

Approximately 50 members of the society are members of the American Society of Zoologists, and 45 are members of the Botanical Society of America. About 70 members not included in the above groups are Fellows of the American Association, and nearly 100 others are members of the Entomological Society of America, the American Association of Economic Entomologists, the Society of American Foresters, the Association of American Geographers, the American Phytopathological Society, the American Society of Naturalists, and other scientific organizations.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE MEMBERS  
OF THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Illinois .....	32	Montana .....	4
District of Columbia .....	30	New Jersey .....	4
New York .....	30	British Columbia .....	3
California .....	20	Indiana .....	3
Massachusetts .....	14	Nebraska .....	3
Minnesota .....	14	Quebec .....	3
Michigan .....	10	Texas .....	3
Pennsylvania .....	10	Hawaii .....	2
Colorado .....	9	North Dakota .....	2
Ohio .....	9	Philippine Islands .....	2
Ontario .....	9	South Carolina .....	2
Wisconsin .....	9	Vermont .....	2
Maryland .....	8	Alberta .....	1
Iowa .....	7	British Guiana .....	1
Kansas .....	7	Canal Zone .....	1
New Mexico .....	7	Florida .....	1
Arizona .....	6	Louisiana .....	1
Connecticut .....	6	Maine .....	1
Missouri .....	6	North Carolina .....	1
Washington .....	6	New Hampshire .....	1
Oregon .....	5	Sweden .....	1
Utah .....	5	Tennessee .....	1
Idaho .....	4	Wyoming .....	1
Total .....			307

## SCOPE OF THE HANDBOOK

The information regarding the members of the Ecological Society which is given in the following pages has been compiled from the answers to the questions on the Enrollment Blank which is filled by each member on admission. In almost all cases it has been necessary to curtail the information supplied, in order to reduce the size of the Handbook. Parenthetical numbers have been used to indicate the question to which each group of statements constitutes an answer. The questions are repeated at the bottom of this page, together with their numbers, in order to serve as a guide to the replies as given in the text of the Handbook.

Almost without exception the members of the Society have indicated a willingness to correspond with other members regarding their fields of work, and the methods or instruments they have used. A few of the members state that they are too busy to enter into extended correspondence of this character. In reply to the fifth question a large number of members have shown their willingness to identify material in the groups to which they have given special attention. In these cases the name of the group is printed in italics.

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY INFORMATION GIVEN IN THE HANDBOOK

1. On what ecological topics have you published papers?
2. In what ecological subjects have you a special interest, or work in progress?
3. In what localities have you carried on ecological work?
4. With what regions are you slightly familiar?
5. In what taxonomic groups are you particularly interested? (*italics indicate willingness to identify material in that group*).
6. With what experimental methods have you had the most experience?
7. With what field instruments have you worked?