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"For the 'Preservation of Friends' and the 'Destruction of Enemies:' Studying and Protecting Birds in Late Imperial Russia"

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Bonhomme, Brian. "For the 'Preservation of Friends' and the 'Destruction of Enemies:' Studying and Protecting Birds in Late Imperial Russia." *Environment and History* 13, no. 1 (Feb., 2007): 71–100. doi:10.3197/096734007779748327 . This paper surveys major developments in the Imperial Russian history of wild bird protection and related issues of ornithology during the century or so leading up to the First World War. Emphasis is given to two related outcomes, both of which set the Russian Empire apart from many of its western neighbours: the country's refusal—despite long negotiations—to sign a landmark international treaty on cross-border bird protection (the 1902 Paris Convention), and the fact that the Empire did not pass any significant domestic legislation dedicated to wild bird protection. These are interpreted not so much as failures, however, but as evidence of a broader development. Whereas Russian ornithologists and bird-protection advocates had for most of the nineteenth century sought to imitate or catch up with European and American approaches, by the end of that century many of them had instead become convinced that what worked further west was not appropriate for their circumstances. Pointing to the peculiarities of Russian public habits and culture, as well as to the supposed distinctiveness of the Russian Empire's environmental and geographic conditions, they instead began to focus on game law reform, public education, and other issues—ultimately to little effect. All rights reserved. © 2007 The White Horse Press

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Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/3289
Print date: 28 November 2026 10:00:21