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

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ABSTRACT

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.

KEYWORDS

Bird protection, ornithology, history, Russian Empire, environmentalism

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INTRODUCTION[1]

This paper surveys major developments in the Imperial Russian history of wild bird protection and related contextual issues of ornithology during the century or so up to 1917. It is conceived as an interdisciplinary essay, in dialogue with recent research in both Environmental and Russian History. Primarily, it explores Russian input into a history whose main lines are usually traced in continental Western Europe and (especially) the Anglo-American world – exploring the diverse eighteenth- and nineteenth-century strands from which were woven the whole cloth of modern wild bird protection: its assumptions and priorities, organisations, procedures and laws. In this western context, a large literature now exists chronicling and analysing the development of professional and amateur natural history and ornithology; the organisation of opposition to animal cruelty and the plumage trade; the establishment and history of key entities (such as the RSPB, Audubon Society and so on); landmark legislation (including Britain's 1869 Sea Bird Protection Act); and the various social groups and cultural forces behind these.[2] This paper treats analogous developments in the Russian Empire and their relationship to foreign trends.

Because most of the ornithologists and bird-protection advocates surveyed here were Russian[3] (including non-nationals who lived and worked in the Russian Empire), this paper is inevitably also a case study of Russian national identity – its construction, peculiarities and evolution – during the Imperial period (1689–1917). Much has been written describing a widespread sense among part of the Russian elite, especially in the nineteenth century, that in a great many fields their country was behind or inferior to its most advanced western neighbours. This inferiority complex has recently been explored through the lens of Russian nature and landscape painting by Christopher Ely, who describes painters' successful efforts to overcome it by creating distinctive, iconic and truly *Russian* national landscapes and scenery – images designed to compete with, rather than just to follow, European models.[4] In their modest ways, as will be seen, Russian ornithologists and bird-protection advocates worked from the same perspective on a similar project. Like their national peers in other fields they too were often self-critical in the light of developments abroad, and strove to catch up with them, in some cases with moderate success. However, like their artistic compatriots, Russians did not simply chase foreign leads. They also developed their own ideas about bird study and, particularly, bird protection. By the late nineteenth century many of them were coming to understand Russia as in some ways a unique case, noting on the one hand, the peculiarities of its avifauna, climate and geography, and on the other, the distinctive characteristics of relevant Russian public habits and culture. In this sense, this article chronicles something akin to the 'coming of age' of bird study and protection in the Russian Empire after about 1870. Particular emphasis will be given to two related outcomes, both of which set the Russian Empire somewhat apart

from many of its western neighbours: the country's refusal to sign a landmark international treaty on cross-border bird protection (the 1902 Paris Convention, see below), and the fact that it did not pass any significant domestic legislation dedicated to wild bird protection.

STUDYING BIRDS IN EIGHTEENTH- AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA

Generally speaking – and compared with Britain, Germany and the USA – through 1917 and across the Russian Empire, broad-based popular knowledge, interest or advocacy regarding birds remained at a low level – an important circumstance. The situation began to change only very slowly, and slightly, after about mid-century. Consequently, almost the only people talking or writing much about birds up to then were professional and academic ornithologists. Yet even here, Russian contributions were held in relatively low regard (even among the Russians themselves). The indirect assessment of British naturalist Hugh Strickland was typical. In his famous 'Report on the Recent Progress and Present State of Ornithology' presented at the 1844 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Strickland counted no Russians among the 'central core of internationally-recognised ornithologists' and noted no Russian-sponsored expeditions or studies, though he did include Moscow in a list of cities wherein operated scientific societies 'whose publications included ornithological details'. Strickland was silent on the Russian Empire when noting journals, collections, congresses and other ornithological apparatus, focusing instead on Britain, the USA and Western Europe.[5]

In at least one regard, however, the Russian Empire deserved more credit than this, having by Strickland's time already carried out a century or so of significant work in basic ornithological reconnaissance (including specimen collecting) – in the European parts of the Russian Empire (from Karelia south to the Crimea), in Siberia and in the Pacific Northwest. During 1768-74, for example, the Swedish-born naturalist Johann Peter Falck travelled across Siberia to the Chinese border on a Russian state-sponsored expedition led by Peter Simon Pallas, a Russian-based German-born naturalist. Falck's pioneering ornithological observations were subsequently gathered in volume 3 of his *Contribution to an Understanding of the Topography of the Russian Empire* (1786), covering 222 species of birds in eighty-four pages along with plates of some of these.[6] Falck also collected bird specimens later deposited with the St. Petersburg Zoological Museum, founded in 1832.[7] Probably at the behest of Pallas, an ornithological mission was included among the tasks set a few years later by Empress Catherine II to Joseph Billings who in 1785 was sent to seek out and survey the Northeast Passage along Russia's Arctic coast: 'To collect birds [and their eggs] and cause to be stuffed or otherwise preserved all extraordinary birds observing as closely

as possible their habits, food, propagation, sounds, migrations and habitations, as well as mode of catching them …'[8] Expedition naturalist Carl Heinrich Merck carried out these orders.[9] By Strickland's time the Russian government had organised and sponsored many important Siberian-oriented natural historical expeditions besides these. Significant ornithological descriptions, notes or plates that resulted can be found in works by I.I. Lepekhin,[10] Johan Anton Güldenstädt,[11] Samuel Gottlieb Gmelin,[12] and Simon Peter Pallas.[13]

Particularly important Russian contributions were made during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries still further east in the North Pacific, a virtual *terra incognita* at the time. Surveying specifically the ornithological writings of early Russian, British, American, Spanish and French explorers up to 1830, one modern writer has asserted with justification that Russia 'contributed more than any other country to the early knowledge of the resources' of this region.[14] The massive Great Northern Expedition of 1733–42[15] (also known as the Second Kamchatka Expedition) yielded huge ornithological dividends. G.W. Steller, ship's naturalist on Vitus Bering's journey of 1741–42 in search of Alaska, was first to describe (and thus named) the Steller's Jay, Steller's Sea Eagle and Steller's Eider.[16] One chapter in his general *History of Kamchatka* is dedicated to 'land birds'.[17] His journal (published in two parts in 1781 and 1793) contains further ornithological work on species found across the waters, islands and shores of Kamchatka, Alaska and the many islands in between. His paper on birds' nests and eggs in Siberia appeared earlier, in 1758. Of Steller's many other natural history writings – several on birds – some have been lost, while others, apparently, have yet to be published.[18]

The same set of travels also yielded Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov's *History of Kamchatka and the Kurile Islands with Countries Adjacent*. Published in St. Petersburg in 1754[19] – before any of Steller's works – this was perhaps the 'first book to deal with [Kamchatka's] history and resources scientifically'.[20] It included copious descriptive ornithology in chapters dedicated to 'Sea Fowls', 'Birds which haunt … about the fresh Water', and 'Land Fowls'.[21] Other ornithological observations carried out by this expedition appeared in larger natural history works or more general descriptive travel narratives.[22] And a major Russian publication, Pallas's *Russo-Asiatic Zoogeography*, vols. 1-3 (1811-13) synthesised and summarised discoveries from the above and other expeditions. Thereafter, Russians also helped pioneer the ornithology of Antartica, the expedition of Faddei Faddeevich Bellingshausen in 1819–21 yielding specimens and important new written materials.[23]

It is worth noting, when considering how to assess 'Russian' contributions of this time, that many of the expeditions noted above, though they were organised by Russian institutions, relied heavily for their leadership on imported experts – including the Germans Gmelin, Pallas and Steller, and the Swede Falck. In this regard ornithology simply conformed to the prevailing trend in all fields of

Russian science and technology at the time, stemming from the westernisation policies of Tsar Peter the Great.

As the century progressed, however, at least in ornithology this trend began to turn. In 1853, for example, A.F. von Middendorf, a Russian-born naturalist of Baltic German ancestry, published an account of his observations and collections made in Siberia's frigid Taimyr peninsular during 1843–44.[24] This proved to be a major publishing event, catalysing a great amount of further study of the Russian east, by native- and foreign-born specialists alike.[25] It also provides a stepping stone to the 1870s, by which decade a truly Russian ornithology was clearly emerging. Two developments stand out in this regard. First, in much the same way that Germans had organised and led much of the basic reconnaissance of Russian and Siberian avifauna, so did subjects of the Russian Empire begin to do the same in Central Asia (often referred to at the time as 'Turkestan') and China.[26] Only a few of the most important expeditions can be mentioned here. Best-known, perhaps, are the four journeys of Captain Nikolai Mikhailovich Przheval'skii through Mongolia, northern China and Tibet (1871–73, 1876–77, 1879–80, 1883–85). Aimed primarily at reaching the forbidden Tibetan city of Lhasa, these also yielded (in addition to the discovery of the famous Przheval'skii's wild horse[27]) thousands of bird specimens, including at least twenty previously unknown to science, such as the Black-necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*) and Severtsov's Grouse (*Tetrastes sewerzowi*). Przheval'skii was accompanied on his third expedition by the naturalist V.I. Roborovskii and on his fourth and final one by Roborovskii again and P.K. Kozlov. All were Russians. Following Przhevalskii's death in 1888, his planned fifth expedition went out during 1889–91 under the Russian Colonel M.V. Pevtsov, again with Kozlov and Roborovskii, both of whom scored further important bird discoveries and specimens, many from the then little-studied plateau of Chang Tang. Kozlov proved particularly influential in the study of western Chinese avifauna, journeying there three more times from 1893 to 1909.

Less well-known than Przheval'skii, but even more important for Russian ornithology were the nine expeditions made by the Russian N.A. Zarudnyi: five to Transcaspia during 1879–92 and four to various parts of Persia in 1892–1906, after which he based himself and his studies permanently in Tashkent. His publications on the birds of these regions are extensive. The Russian explorer-zoologist N.A. Severtsov spent more than two decades in various parts of Central Asia between 1857 and 1879, eventually producing perhaps the first comprehensive account of Central Asian flora and fauna. His ornithological collection surpassed 12,000 specimens. Other noteworthy and truly Russian expeditions of the time to Central Asia and China include those of the botanist G.N. Potanin and M. Berezovskii to Kansu, eastern Tsinghai and Szechwan in 1884–86; and of the brothers Grum(m)-Grzhimailo to Sinkiang and Kansu in 1889–90. Travels in the region during 1902 by the botanist-geographer V.V. Sapozhnikov provided

further specimens and helped establish the Central Asian collection at Tomsk University.

The second way in which the Russian Empire began now to assert its ornithological identity was in producing its own world-class ornithologists, who in turn made significant contributions to theory. Notable here is the work of the aforementioned N.A. Severtsov and M.A. Menzbir who, during the 1870s and 1880s, worked out a system of ornithogeographic zonal distribution for the birds of the palearctic region, albeit drawing on models developed in the 1850s by the Englishman P. Sclater.[28]

Menzbir in particular stands as perhaps the first great Russian ornithologist. Based at Moscow University, he was well regarded among his peers internationally, travelled widely, and worked on collections and in museums in Vienna, Leiden, Brussels, Paris and several places in Britain during a long career. He held honorary or corresponding member status in zoological and ornithological societies in France, the USA, Germany and Britain and was elected a candidate member of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1896 (he became a full member in 1929). He was also a long-time member (and president after 1915) of the Russian Society of Nature Enthusiasts (*Obshchestvo liubetelei prirody*). Menzbir relentlessly collected specimens. As of 1912 he owned 12,545 examples covering more than 900 species, mostly of Russian imperial provenance.[29] But his foremost achievement was his monumental *Birds of Russia* (*Ptitsy Rossii*), published in three significantly revised and expanded editions between 1893 and 1918. In the prefaces to each edition, he identified and lamented major problems plaguing Russian ornithology at the time: the absence of a comprehensive published field-guide; existing Russian books that were out of date, out of print or filled with errors; ill-advised innovations in nomenclature; and a paucity of information on distribution and behaviour. [30] And he called for action: Writing in 1895 in tones that mixed scientific objectivity and Russian patriotism, he asserted that the absence of a systematic, comprehensive domestic guide to Russian avifauna promoted reliance on German and English works that were based not on fieldwork but primarily on collections held in Western Europe. Consequently, as guides for Russia and Eastern Europe they were 'fragmentary, distorted' and 'incomplete'. Given such realities, he added, Russian ornithology still 'lagged terribly' behind western developments.[31] (Menzbir did not note another problem frequently cited by Russian ornithologists and conservationists – the paucity of funding available compared with abroad.[32]) Menzbir intended *The Birds of Russia* as an effort to address some of these problems. A recent Russian-language historical assessment considers it 'the first … synthesis of all [then-current] knowledge on the systematics, distribution and biology of the birds of [Russia]', one of the 'more important events in [Russian] zoology' of the period. Although it did not cover all areas of Russia's vast empire, still it had 'a decisive influence on the development of ornithology' in that country

and was for 'several decades … the [standard] desk reference for all Russian ornithologists'.[33]

Menzbir's most important Russian successor was S.A. Buturlin (1872–1938).[34] Buturlin, some of whose career highlights came during the Soviet period, was not exclusively an ornithologist, but rather an incredibly productive polymath with interests in the hunting economy (he is credited with pioneering scientific approaches to hunting in Russia and also wrote some Soviet hunting legislation), Russian far north affairs, and other matters. Another pioneer in ornithological systematics, he 'laid the foundations for describing sub-speciation among the avifauna of the Russian Empire'[35] and mapped in detail the geographical distribution of birds in most parts of Northeast Siberia. He is credited in Russian sources to this day with having solved in 1906 questions by then a century old regarding where and how Rosy Gulls nested.[36] His pre-war collection of ornithological specimens, begun as a youth in the 1880s, had 2,000 birds (plus a separate egg collection). It contained 'almost all known Russian species and subspecies of the time' and constituted 'one of the fundamental collections [anywhere in the world] for the study of Russian avifauna'. Its significance is indicated by the British Museum of Natural History's offer, made at some point before 1909 via Ernst Hartert, to purchase it for a sum recently calculated as equivalent now to one million US dollars.[37] Sadly, Buturlin's original materials for a comprehensive guide to the birds of the entire Russian Empire, almost ready for publication around 1917, were lost forever during the chaos of the First World War, forcing him to begin over. Finally emerging in 1934 as the five-volume *Guide to the Birds of Soviet Union*, it is considered his greatest achievement and the first truly comprehensive work on the birds of what by then had become the Soviet Union.[38] With the general trend of Russian ornithology at the turn of the century, Buturlin was well known and connected internationally. For several years during the early 1900s he was a frequent contributor to *The Ibis* – journal of the British Ornithologists' Union (founded 1858).

By the outbreak of the First World War, the Russian Empire had also developed a solid ornithological infrastructure in several academic settings, including the Department of Ornithology of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Zoological Institute in St. Petersburg, at Moscow University (where Menzbir was based), and in the Department of Ornithology of the Imperial Russian Society for the Acclimatisation of Animals and Plants. Before 1910, Russian ornithologists lacked a dedicated specialised journal. Consequently, most of them published in domestic hunting or more general zoological journals or in foreign ornithological publications. In 1910, however, this lack too was addressed as publication of *The Ornithological Herald* (*Ornitologicheskii vestnik*) began at Moscow University. This appeared four times a year until just after the Bolshevik Revolution.

THE EMERGENCE OF BIRD PROTECTION AGENDAS IN EUROPE AND RUSSIA

The cause of wild bird protection in the Russian Empire also lagged behind western developments, though more in terms of results than of dialogue. Russians did indeed *call* for protection, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, but as noted, and unlike in Britain, the USA and elsewhere, the Russian Empire neither produced nor signed onto any major, dedicated wild bird protection laws. This does not mean, however, that in Russia there was no *interest* in legislation. One should also avoid the temptation to assess these outcomes as failures. As will be seen, Russians worked within somewhat different political, social and environmental-geographical contexts compared with, say, the British. Consequently, they sometimes chose to focus their energies differently: on working bird protection into existing game law rather than pioneering (as many of their European counterparts were doing) a separate tradition of wild bird protection legislation, or on expanding popular education and participation in voluntary bird protection initiatives.

Like other European states, by the nineteenth century the Russian Empire already had a long-standing tradition of offering legal protections to some birds via the game laws. The earliest of these are eleventh-century statutes protecting falcons – used by princes and nobles for hunting. Between then and the late nineteenth century there were innumerable alterations and additions to this corpus of law. Whether in Russia or elsewhere, however, game law typically protected only a very few, mostly food-species (typically pheasants, grouse and the like), and did so for a small set of specific reasons quite different from those behind the later bird protection agendas with which this paper is concerned. Game laws were designed to protect aristocratic privilege and the social exclusivity of the hunt[39] (the birds themselves were largely incidental); or to protect private property (a noble's personal hunting-falcons, for example). By contrast, the sort of wild bird protection that began to flourish across Western Europe and the USA during the second half of the nineteenth century was conceived in a very different context; and it filtered and combined different concerns, often at odds with the game laws.[40] Especially in Darwin's wake, secular- and scientifically minded persons increasingly saw nature as a vast network of interdependency, complexity and fragility, and they concerned themselves with the role of birds therein. This inspired others – of a more utilitarian bent – to think about the practical uses of certain categories of birds and in particular of insectivores as destroyers of insects harmful to crops. Others emphasised the evils of animal cruelty, seen both as demeaning the perpetrator and causing needless suffering to the victim. Still others noted the Christian duty toward good stewardship of nature. Typically, not just a few game species, but many – in some cases, all – birds (and animals) were of concern here. In this context, the legislative and organisational bases for these new trends – dedicated wild bird protection laws,

and groups such as Britain's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) – began to emerge and achieve critical mass across much of the West particularly during the 1860s, '70s and '80s. Most of these trends were in evidence also in the Russian Empire, though with some unique twists.

BIRD PROTECTION IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE: DEBATES, CONCERNS, GROUPS

Although the subject certainly has a longer pre-history, serious and sustained interest among Russians in encouraging, organising and legislating wild bird protection dates from about 1870. Several distinct, but overlapping, concerns began to be articulated around this time, all in one way or another echoing similar developments in the West. It will be useful to approach these in turn.

1. Utility

Some of the most frequently and clearly articulated voices in favour of wild bird protection emphasised issues of utility – especially the useful services provided to agriculture by insectivorous birds. The issue acquired early momentum in 1871 at a general session of the Russian Imperial Free Economic Society (*Imperaterskoe vol'noe ekonomicheskoe obshchestvo*; hereafter RIFES[41]) and was immediately pursued further in two related committees.[42] A statement made to the second of these by the Russian animal welfare advocate V.E. Iverson summed up much of the debate then and subsequently:

> It is a known fact that caterpillars and maggots, as well as the birds that eat them, consume in a day a quantity of food about equal to their own body weight. Thus … 100 birds, weighing about twenty pounds … over the course of ninety summer days would preserve about 1,800 pounds of vegetable matter [that would otherwise have been consumed by insects].

Citing German research, Iverson estimated the total financial loss to Russian agriculture caused by insects at 1.2 billion rubles (over what period is not noted). Insectivorous birds could help cut this loss, he argued, adding that birds' uses went even beyond this, since their droppings also fertilised the soil and helped control fungal diseases. These startling realities, he claimed, went shamefully unacknowledged, both in law and in popular attitudes towards birds:

> 'In [our] hunting laws – both current and projected – only game birds are discussed. There is not even any mention of the types of [insectivorous] species we are talking about here. Of course in one part [of current hunting law] it does say that during a certain time of year it is forbidden to hunt game and indeed any kind of useful birds; but first, there is no clear indication of which kinds of birds are considered

> useful; and second, banning hunting of certain birds *only* for [the close-season] means allowing fully their destruction over the rest of the year.'[43]

(In this particular case, Iverson did not indicate which species he considered useful.)

The Committee ended up making strong statements in favour not only of protection, but of *increasing* populations of insectivorous (and some rodent-eating) birds. Suggested actions focused on three areas. The first was education, where propositions included organising public lectures and exhibits, publishing and distributing brochures and wall-charts, making relevant curriculum reform in village and rural schools, providing outreach to peasant communes, and even establishing a special museum – all designed to promote recognition and better treatment of 'useful' birds and other animals. The second suggestion was for new legislation. Noting that Russia's hunting laws were currently under review by the government, the Commission drew up several draft clauses outlawing the trapping, hunting, killing and other destruction of all birds, eggs and nests – other than those explicitly identified as 'pests' or 'harmful' – at all times of the year. The third proposal was for practical measures – including planting particular tree species and hanging nest boxes – designed to attract insectivorous birds to agricultural areas. Efforts were also urged to lobby and coordinate efforts with the Forest Department and the Ministries of the Interior and Education.[44] Here, indeed, was much of the agenda Russian bird protection advocates would pursue for the remainder of the Imperial era.

As Iverson's citation of German research indicates, Russians were not the only ones interested in the agricultural benefits of protecting insectivores. Besides the Germans, British ornithologists too had already raised the issue, and the British Parliament explicitly considered it in discussions leading to the passage of that country's 1869 'Sea Birds Preservation Act'.[45] In Britain the benefits of protecting such birds were cited more forcefully in debates leading up to passage of the 'Wild Birds Protection Act' of 1872, the year *following* Iverson's comments. In France the idea of protecting insectivorous (and reptile-eating) birds for the benefits of agriculture had been discussed in some depth at least as early as 1854.[46] Russians thus appear to have been joining rather than pioneering this debate. At this time, across nations, there was also great similarity in the species most often noted: swallows, nightingales and blackbirds – all softbills – were perennial and secure favourites; while larks and finches – hardbills whose diets combined seed and insects – invoked mixed sentiments. In Britain and the US, for example, and during the second half of the nineteenth century, sparrows went from being considered friends of agriculture to its enemies.[47] Russian debate, as will be seen, would eventually pursue a slightly different course.

2. Animal Welfare and Anti-Cruelty

The cause of bird protection was advanced also by the founding in 1865 of the Russian Imperial Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (*Rossiiskoe obshchestvo pokrovitel'stva zhivotnym*, hereafter, RISPCA).[48] Modelled closely on similar foreign societies (especially the British RSPCA) the RISPCA focused first and foremost on domestic animals – ensuring they received basic food, water, shelter; were generally kept and transported without undue cruelty; were not used for tasks beyond their strength or abilities; and were slaughtered humanely.[49] The RISPCA committed from the start to achieve these goals by 'assisting, advising, and issuing edicts'[50]; by establishing animal hospitals and slaughter houses; encouraging 'primarily among the simple folk [*prostoi narod*] a sympathy for animals by means of the publication and free distribution of books', 'instruction via the clergy', awards for those who set a good example and efforts to bring punishment upon the worst offenders under existing anti-cruelty laws.[51] (The Society's first successful prosecution was brought in February 1870 against a St. Petersburg merchant who was eventually fined 20 rubles for organising cock-fighting.[52])

The RISPCA quickly expanded its purview from poultry to include caged and wild birds. During 1870–71 it lobbied the Ministry of Internal Affairs to consider a ban on selling small birds on the street and convinced the St. Petersburg Chief of Police (*Ober-Politsiemeister*) to approve turning over to local courts (*mirovye sudi*) individuals accused of such trade.[53] The RISPCA was also an early advocate for protecting insectivorous birds. Interestingly, in this endeavour cruelty arguments were rarely mentioned. Instead the Society emphasised the same themes of utility and agriculture already outlined, for example in 1871 at a highly successful public lecture that attracted an audience of 360.[54] Similarly, in 1874 the Society published a call from N. Vil'kins, one of its most active leading members, to 'turn the attention of the local authorities to the significance of migratory birds for our grain-cultivation and for our forests, point out the importance of protecting them from destruction and the necessity of strict adherence to the [Society's] existing [draft] laws in this regard'. In this particular case Vil'kins cited research by the Paris Entomological Society showing that, in the Dieppe region of France, fees collected from hunting licenses (10,000 Francs profit) were massively outweighed by the loss to agriculture (17,000,000 francs!) caused by insects. For Vil'kin's the connection between these two facts was simple and direct: 'This … clearly shows what significance the protection of insectivorous birds has for Russia – a country of grain-farms and forests.' The RISPCA, he continued, must 'boldly defend these small but strong … allies of mankind'.[55]

Starting in the 1880s, the Society also began opposing the plumage trade. Here, although birds were portrayed as the direct victims of unwarranted cruelty, the Society also pointed out the demoralising effects of the trade on the people involved: from the cruelty of the trapper and trader to the vanity of the mostly

female consumers of hats and other feathery accoutrements. Stamping out the trade was construed as an effort toward 'ennobling' the human spirit through more ethical and moral approaches toward non-human creation.

Little success came of the Society's lobbying and public education efforts, however. For example, whereas in the 1860s the total number of exported birds – mostly but not exclusively dead – numbered 'two or three thousand specimens worth three or four thousand rubles', by 1889 the figure had skyrocketed by one contemporary estimate to '3 million *pud*s valued at one-and-a-half million rubles'.[56] A quarter-century later, in 1915, the figure was put at 'millions of pairs' annually sold both on the domestic and export markets.[57] Though these figures describe 'game birds', it seems clear from contemporary anecdotal evidence that the term was used generically and actually included a very large number of birds killed in the Russian Empire for their feathers as well as their meat and then sold into the international plumage trade – often, interestingly, to Western European countries that had already depleted bird populations from other sources, passed their own bird protection legislation, or signed onto international protection measures.[58]

3. National Image

Many calls for bird protection between 1870 and 1914 were couched in nationalist tones, emphasising the notion that a nation or state would be judged by how it treats its wildlife. (This was also the case in Britain at the same time, and almost certainly in many other places, too.) A good example is provided again by N. Vil'kins, this time in his capacity as Russian delegate to the 1875 International Congress of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, held in London. Vil'kins took Britain's efforts toward more humane treatment of animals as *prima facie* evidence of that country's 'civilised' nature, holding England up as a 'model' for the world. Even though Vil'kins was aware of the persistence in Britain of 'barbarism towards animals', the fact that the country had organised and legislated efforts against this was enough for him to write off such cruelties as reflecting only on 'individuals' not the nation as a whole.[59] Laws, here, were a reflection of national culture.

Vil'kins was far less complimentary or indulgent, however, regarding 'Southern European countries'. Spain was 'cruel', he opined, noting that 'the Spaniard goes [to a bullfight] not to watch the fight, not to compare the strength of the combatants, quite the opposite, [he goes] simply to watch the dying agonies of the animal; he is ready to thrust a dagger into anyone who dares to defend the animal from his torture'. Vil'kins was unwilling to excuse Spanish cruelties merely as the acts of certain individuals. *All* Spanish, 'even women and children', took delight in this 'national pleasure'. Italy came in for similar treatment, guilty of national cruelty of a different sort: an advanced form of 'indifference'. 'You may', he noted, 'frequently meet on the road an old man

[*pater*] driving a gig [*odnokolka*] loudly reciting the Hail Mary and the Our Father, happily thumbing his rosary, yet paying absolutely no attention at all to the suffering of his thirsty, hungry, exhausted horse.' Discussing birds, Vil'kins condemned as a great cruelty the popular Italian practice 'during the time of the carnivals, held under the patronage of His Holiness the Pope' of throwing 'bouquets … with birds tied to them'.[60]

The tendency to view 'southern Europeans' stereotypically as cruel to animals was not exclusive to Vil'kins, nor was it confined to the 1870s. Baron Lauden of the Russian Society for the Acclimatisation of Animals and Plants in 1913 blasted 'southern neighbours' who killed large numbers of small birds – representing 'capital' and 'wealth' – as they passed along migration routes toward Russia.[61] Others raised the issue too, often negatively contrasting the 'mediterraneans' – who ate small birds in significant numbers – with Russians (and others) who did so rarely.[62] Sometimes names were named, with Italy often criticised particularly for the destruction of migratory birds passing through.[63]

The sense of moral superiority some Russians may have felt over some southern Europeans on these issues did *not* translate into a broader indictment of the West, however. In fact, it appears as an exception to the more general conception among Russians that compared to western states Russia was far behind. It is hard to read very far into the primary source material of the period without encountering over and over the same refrain: that Russia needed to catch up. It is not difficult to suspect, even, that some Russians saw bird protection as an opportunity to distance themselves from 'cruel' southern Europe and claim a place instead among the more 'advanced' northern and western states. Thus, in virtually every relevant domain, the same few states provided the models and results to be studied, emulated and achieved: the RISPCA frequently cited the work of its British and American counterparts as the standards against which to judge its own activities; the British RSPB was the premier bird protection outfit; Germany's Organisation for the Protection of German Monuments of Nature, founded in 1906 by Hugo Conwentz, was the premier nature conservation organisation;[64] the best national parks and reserves were American[65] and German (especially Prussian).[66] As late as 1914, Sweden, the British Empire, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were also considered far ahead of Russia in this latter regard.[67]

Matters were much the same regarding bird *study*. Russians were still far behind British, American and West European achievements. Writing in 1912 on the state of Russian scientific ornithology, Baron G.V. Lauden pointed out that so far, 'the ornithologists of our great country … can only follow with envy the biological successes of our western neighbours [… and we] can no longer delay in this cultural work, if we do not wish to deserve being reproached for being backward compared to Western Europe'.[68] Lauden went on to urge Russians to more fully adopt 'advanced' ornithological techniques such as bird-banding and the establishment of observation stations along migration routes. The same

year, Johannes Thienemann, head of the Rossitten bird observatory in East Prussia, delivered a depressing report (for Russians) contrasting the advanced state of work in Germany, Hungary and elsewhere, where, increasingly, birds were being systematically caught, banded, and their migration routes studied, with the 'piles of dead birds' of Russian provenance he had been recently receiving, with all manner of bits of 'string, bands, [and] wires' tied to their legs and feet, rarely with any record of where they had been caught.[69] While lauding the recent proliferation in Russia of amateurs, public organisations and bird samples, the lack of uniform standards and professional procedures, he asserted, demanded quick attention. Russian ornithologists agreed. And the lack even of a comprehensive list of the birds of the Russian Empire was continually lamented through 1917.[70]

4. Romantic, Sentimental and Religious Impulses

Calls for bird protection couched in romantic, sentimental or religious tones were common throughout the West at this time, especially in Germany and the English-speaking countries, where advocates spoke of birds as adornments of nature or 'amiable' country companions, noted their pleasing songs, and pointed out one's Christian duty to be a good steward of nature. It seems obvious that at least some Russians would have felt similarly. And yet none of these impulses appears to have been especially developed or influential in Russia. One can certainly find suggestive anecdotes, however. In the area of romantic sentimentalism, for example, the Empresses Elizabeth (1741–62) and Catherine the Great (1762–96) both decreed protection for nightingales (only) in the woods and grounds around their royal residences, apparently out of appreciation for the beauty of the bird's song.[71] Similarly, birds were a recurrent motif in Russian landscape painting of the nineteenth century, suggesting at least that they held a place in intellectual imaginings of the ontology of Russian rural beauty. The hunting and fishing guides published by Sergei Aksakov in the 1840s–50s are generally credited by historians as having awoken sentimental interest among the educated Russian public in Russian nature and wildlife, perhaps comparable to the role played in Britain by the writings of Gilbert White;[72] and some late-nineteenth-century Russian novelists and playwrights touched on issues of animal cruelty (though rarely birds). But clear linkage between any such ideals and serious debate on bird protection in Russia remains highly elusive. No doubt there is room here for further research.

The same is true regarding the intersection of religion with calls for protection and against cruelty to animals and birds. The RISPCA did periodically link these ideas, claiming, for example, biblical support for the correctness of their basic aims and sometimes seeking out 'important figures of the Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim faiths' for help 'preaching to their congregations' about more humane treatment of animals and birds.[73] But again religious motivations

and persons do not appear to have played a decisive role in shaping debates or moulding opinions.

5. Other Impulses Toward Bird Protection

Brief note should be made of hunters' calls for bird protection. Articulated since at least the 1870s in agricultural conferences and subsequently in hunting journals and elsewhere, these focused, understandably, on maintaining or increasing stocks of the commonly-hunted game species. A bird's usefulness here was usually framed in terms of how tasty it was, or how pleasurable it was to hunt. For this reason some hunting advocates saw no point in protecting smaller birds that Russians, unlike some mediterranean peoples, neither ate nor hunted for sport.[74]

Among academic naturalists, after about 1900, 'rarity' also became an increasingly common part of the lexicon of bird protection. The conservation advocate D.N. Aniutin, for example, spoke in 1914 of the need to protect 'rare, wonderful, interesting, intriguing things' including birds.[75] And two years earlier, Baron G.V. Lauden of the Russian Society for the Acclimatisation of Animals and Plants noted that 'protection must not be limited just to absolutely useful [bird] species, but must also cover harmful ones which, having already become rare, now constitute monuments of nature, and the disappearance of which would greatly impoverish nature'.[76] As well as the sympathy shown here for 'harmful' birds, note should also be made of the term 'monuments of nature' (*pamiatniki prirody*). The term more often connoted not individual species but much larger natural entities such as mountains, valleys, forests and estuaries – what we might now refer to whole ecosystems. Interest in this kind of protection took off rapidly among Russian academic naturalists during the last few years of the Russian Empire. Birds were certainly among the focuses of attention here too, worth preserving for their vital role in these larger ecological webs. It is precisely here, incidentally, that one sees most clearly the influence in Russia of Darwin's ideas about evolution and their connection to bird protection agendas. Birds, like all living organisms, were the product of a long history of natural selection and were integral to their environments. Anyone who cared about the well-being of whole 'natural monuments' and ecosystems had to be concerned also about the fate of the individual species and other component parts of the larger wholes. In general, Darwinism was popular among academic ornithologists, becoming more-or-less canonical by century's end, though not so much among the more varied and conservative sorts at the heart of the anti-cruelty movement.[77] The movement for protecting monuments of nature, best represented by F.E. Falts-Fein, I.P. Borodin, Andrei Semenov-tian-shanskii, G.A. Kozhevnikov and others, eventuated, mostly after the Bolshevik Revolution, in the creation of a major network of Russian and Soviet nature preserves, or *zapovedniki*, about which much has been written in recent years.[78]

'RUSSIANISING' THE DEBATE ON BIRDS

The Russians were still trying to catch up with foreign developments, but by late century, at least in one area, they had begun to forge their own trail. This concerns debate about birds being 'useful' or 'harmful' to agriculture, forestry and the human economy in general. Internationally, the notion seems to have remained fairly fixed well through century's end that each species could be properly and permanently placed either in one category or the other. Although significant debate existed about *which* 'side' a given species was on, and while some were occasionally reassigned (the aforementioned sparrows, for example), in general there does not seem to have been much doubt across and beyond Europe in the viability of the categories themselves. In the 1890s, however, Russians began to buck the trend, insisting against the weight of foreign opinion that birds did *not* always fit easily into such categories, at least not in the Russian Empire. Here, they argued, the size of the country, its diversity of climates, soils, flora and agriculture, and other factors meant that the same species could be useful *or* harmful at different times and places. The relative population density of a given species mattered and, it was proposed, Russian bird populations were more fluid, dynamic and ephemeral than those in, say, Britain. The notion found some support in comparisons of recent studies of Siberian avifauna which, combined, found great differences from one year to the next in the size and composition of bird populations on the lower Yenesei based on 'varying annual climatic changes'.[79] These circumstances necessitated more flexible legislation allowing for regional differences, annual changes in bird demography.

This kind of reasoning was presented to foreign colleagues at least as early as 1891 at the Second International Ornithological Congress held in Budapest. Thereafter, it became a more frequent and popular motif in Russian discourse.[80] It was a factor in Russian participation in the long-winded negotiations for the 1902 Paris Convention on cross-border bird protection (and in Russia's refusal to sign), and in the 1910s, it reappeared as the central theme in a draft for a major reform of the game laws. It is to these developments that we now turn.

RUSSIAN ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD PROTECTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE: THE PARIS CONVENTION

In Europe, serious international interest in cross-border protection, focusing on migratory species, dates at least from the 1868 Agricultural and Forestry Convention held in Germany. At a session of the Convention the idea was mooted that since insectivorous birds beneficial to agriculture did not respect national boundaries, and in many cases were migratory, it was necessary to create an international legislative framework for protecting them.[81] The issue was revisited thereafter at a series of conferences and negotiations spread over the last quarter

of the nineteenth century that regularly brought together representatives from many countries, including the Russian Empire.

At the International Agricultural Conference of September 1873, held in Vienna, representatives from Italy (a 'cruel' southern neighbour from some Russians' perspective) and Austria-Hungary agreed to cooperate in ending the mass destruction of birds within and moving between their countries.[82] Two years later the governments of the same two countries signed an agreement that would be lauded a generation later by a Russian ornithologist as a 'first-of-its-kind agreement unconditionally ban[ning] the destruction of nests, eggs and nestlings, certain methods of hunting birds, and establish[ing] a hunting season from 1 September to the end of February, and so on'.[83] It covered only 'agriculturally useful' species. Beyond these two states further similar activity was ongoing or already accomplished. Britain had already legislated protection for seabirds in 1869 and would do so for all wild birds by 1880. Laws on bird protection appeared in Bavaria in 1866, Saxony in 1876, and Prussia in 1880. There were many others besides.

Interested in catching up with events abroad, Russian ornithologists and anti-cruelty advocates met in 1882 at Russia's First Congress of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and discussed the need to protect migratory birds that flew over or visited the Russian Empire, especially in the ecologically important Caucasus and Black Sea regions. By 1884 *zemstvo*s (local rural governing bodies) in Odessa and some other areas of the Empire had also expressed interest in bird protection, again focusing primarily on useful insectivores.

The international movement, meanwhile, continued to burgeon. Expanding beyond their original home within agricultural conferences, advocates of cross-border bird protection organised the First International Ornithological Congress in Vienna in 1884. Chair Gustav F.R. Radde 'issued a statement arguing the desirability of creating an international convention covering the whole world and based on two legal principles: 1. The hunting of birds by any means other than firearms, and their capture or trade, [should be] conducted only by special permission during [a close season, covering] the first half of the year. 2. Mass capture of birds [should be] banned at all times of the year'. Progress, however, was slow. Seven years later, in 1891, the issue was discussed at least twice at the Second International Ornithological Conference in Budapest and also at an agricultural congress held in The Hague. In 1895 an International Commission on the Protection of Birds Useful to Agriculture met in Paris and drafted protection measures, subsequently signed by delegates from sixteen states. The resulting document was 'sent to governments all around the world' along with an invitation to join.[84] The issue came up that year also at the Second Ornithological Congress (eleven years after the first one) in Budapest.

The momentum thus achieved resulted in a major treaty issued 19 March 1902 in Paris under the title 'Convention for the Protection of Birds Useful to Agriculture', more often referred to simply as the Paris Convention. Setting out

as an eventual goal the 'total protection' of all 'useful' birds, including their nests, eggs and fledglings, the Paris Convention offered a list of about forty entries – mixing species and families – subject to a close season from 1 March to 15 September. It also put curbs on trapping, transporting and selling listed birds. Several exemptions and loopholes were offered, however, including the right for landowners, tenants and others to apply for permission to kill birds or remove nests if they could be shown to interfere with agriculture. Signatory states had three years to come into compliance with the Convention, could 'make necessary changes to weaken' it, and could withdraw at one year's notice. Protected birds included most types of owls, all woodpeckers, all titmice, swifts, nightingales and others prized for their insectivorous or rodent-eating habits. A list of 'harmful birds' appended to the law included jays, magpies, crows, virtually all birds of prey (except owls), pelicans, herons, cormorants and other fish-eaters. The French government would serve as the nexus through which national governments would inform of existing laws or submit new ones under the Convention's umbrella.[85]

The Russian Empire, however, was not among the eleven states to sign on. Nor, conspicuously, were Britain (in other ways in the vanguard of bird protection), the Netherlands, Italy or Norway. Signatory states were Austria-Hungary, Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland. Russia retained the right to sign on later if desired. But eight years on, with the number of signatory nations swollen by the entrance of Canada and the Netherlands, along with submission of national legislation as a sign of cooperation by Britain, India, China, New Zealand, the USA and many others, Russia (and Italy) remained holdouts, limiting themselves merely to 'acknowledging receipt of materials' from the Convention and retaining the right to join later.[86] In the event, however, the Russian Empire never did sign.

The question arises, why not? One reason put forward by Russian ornithologists of the time, or shortly thereafter, involved the state of Russian public taxonomic expertise. A.A. Silant'ev, for example, noted in 1915 that Russians were largely ignorant about birds, especially 'small' ones.[87] Even the Russian Hunting Code of 1892, which concerned relatively few and generally more well-known larger species, foundered on public inability to distinguish between protected and unprotected species.[88] He appears to have had in mind not just the public, but also gamekeepers, forest guards and others charged with enforcing game law! Even among Russian naturalists ornithological knowledge was not what it might be, with Russia still lacking a 'simple list of all of its bird species'.[89] The condition persisted. As late as 1927, the Russian ornithologist D.M. Rossinski still cited his countrymen's popular ignorance of birds as the main problem in the way of preventing the then-USSR from passing bird protection laws:

> Our ornithological fauna is extremely rich with different kinds of game birds, but the population, somehow focusing on the main hunting species, [is] completely unfamiliar with the mass of small birds. In Russia people have some knowledge of

> birds that are bright, and have coloured markings and outer appearance, but even these they don't know all that well. And everything else, so far as the ordinary masses are concerned, is just an unknown mass of birds.[90]

How, then, could Russians be expected to protect birds or be held accountable for breaking laws concerning species that they could not even recognise?[91]

Given Russia's lack of bird knowledge (especially at a popular level), Silant'ev suggested in 1915, the best way forward might *not* be laws at all, but popular education.[92] This was in fact a common thought among Russian conservationists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some of whom looked askance at the average Russian peasant with his low regard for the opinions of scientists and technologists, his provincialism, and his abiding superstitions. The latter, for example, led many peasants to fear and kill all owls and eagle-owls, most of which were included in the Paris Convention as 'useful' species. In other cases, however, peasant traditions promoted bird conservation: for example, it was customary in southern Russia and Ukraine for peasants to put up nest-boxes, particularly for common and rosy starlings; and in Moscow it was an old practice to free caged birds in commemoration of the Annunciation on 25 March.[93] Overall, the number and diversity of Russian and Slavic superstitions about birds is great and has been well studied.[94]

In trying to explain Russia's refusal to sign the Paris Convention contemporaries such as Silant'ev (who supported this decision) also hinted at the economic fallout signing might have entailed. As the statistics for bird exports show, Russia had by the end of the nineteenth century developed a powerful vested interest in continuing to hunt and trap. Both the state and individuals benefited. On the other hand, while Russian bird-protection advocates applauded the growth of the Russian export economy generally, they were mostly unhappy with the manner in which this aspect of it was being done, judging the harvests unsustainable since they were based in large measure on illegal, out-of-season and 'predatory' methods of hunting. Parts of the government appear to have shared these concerns, if sporadically. For example, a general and 'growing decline' in the population of profitable Russian game had been noted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as early as 1856, leading to discussion and even a draft re-script within that organ of game laws before 1860.[95] Nothing came of this, however. By the century's end, calls for abolition of the plumage trade and reform of the game laws continued much as before, but perhaps with an added undercurrent of resentment that European feather fashions, having already caused havoc among bird populations elsewhere, were now significantly focused on Russian birdlife. Silant'ev himself complained bitterly in 1915 that the trade and its depredations had 'bit by bit spread widely across European Russia and also … appeared in Asiatic Russia, [causing] whole regions [the Caucasus and Caspian regions were a particular concern] to have been literally emptied of birds.'[96] Meanwhile, some Russians continued to focus attention on the putative inaction of some other countries, especially southern Europeans, who, it was sometimes

asserted, had done little so far to legislate or otherwise act against the plumage trade.[97] (It should also be noted that the plumage trade had its own organised defenders and lobbies, though these were not primarily Russian.[98])

More speculatively, it is possible also that Russia did not sign the Paris Convention because its ornithologists and government faced less popular pressure to do so than did counterparts from other countries. This would also have derived in part from the relatively low level of interest in birds among the Russian public. (I have found no evidence in Russia, for example, of the kinds of petitions that literally poured into the British Parliament from ordinary citizens in support of bird protection from 1869 on.) Efforts to educate Russians on birds – including the creation from 1898 forward of 'May Unions', children's scouting groups whose leadership emphasised bird conservation and organised activities such as nest-box construction – were still extremely nascent at the time. (Pressure to sign does seem to have been applied by foreigners, however: inaction at Paris convinced 'some persons' that Russia 'is a wild country, in which there reigns a complete lawlessness and where there takes place a mass destruction of small birds'.[99])

Similarly, in the West, especially in Britain, bird protection and anti-cruelty were affairs pushed forward in large part by the middle and upper-middle classes, often urbanites, who pressured legislatures that were increasingly democratically elected. Almost everything was different in Russia. Through 1917 the country was overwhelmingly peasant; the first parliament was authorised only in 1905; and autocracy persisted – the RISPCA and other organisations had to seek official permission to organise and then worked within limits allowed by government censors. Overall, then, the all-important 'middling sorts' and the liberal environments in which they best thrived were mostly absent in the Russian Empire. Notably, a large proportion of those Russians who advocated for birds and animals were not middle but *upper* class. The membership of the RISPCA, for example, was heavily aristocratic (and compared to its American and British counterparts, also very male[100]): almost its entire roster of founding members were ranked nobles, mostly from the upper strata of the Civil Service; some 2 per cent were military officers, and the organisation was immediately sponsored by Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich the Elder (hence the organisation's use of the word 'Imperial').[101]

Other, somewhat less aristocratic organisations that might have pushed for signing the Paris Convention do not appear to have taken up the issue (as institutions). Such was the case for the Kharkov Society of Nature Enthusiasts (founded 1869).[102] Still other relevant societies were founded too late to play a role, including the Russian Society for the Raising of Game and Other Useful Animals (*Rossiiskoe obshchestvo khoziaistvennogo razvedeniia promyslovykh zhivotnykh i predstavitelei poleznoi dichi*, founded 1905), the Khortitsa Society of Defenders of Nature (*Obshchestvo okhranitelei prirody v Khortitse*, founded 1911), and the Society for the Study and Reform of Hunting Affairs in Russia

(*Obshchestvo izucheniia i uporiadocheniia okhotnich'ego dela v Rossii*).[103] Organisations dedicated specifically to birds, and which *were* explicitly interested in their protection, were only just beginning to appear around the time of the Paris Convention. These included the Circle of Enthusiasts of Song Birds and other Wild Birds (*Kruzhok liubetelei pevchei i drugoi vol'noi ptitsy*) founded in 1900 in Moscow by natural history professors V.V. Popov and D.M. Rossinskii and the K.F. Kessler Kiev Ornithological Society, founded in 1906 by V.M. Artobolevskii, a Kiev university professor, in honour of Kessler, a Russian ornithologist. These and other examples of a rapid upturn in the organisation of interest in bird conservation around the turn of the century had little time to achieve much before the onset of the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution.

A final and more important factor to consider is the aforementioned growing Russian resistance to the cast-iron lists of good and bad birds which were fundamental to the Paris Convention. It is noticeable that after disengaging from Paris and from the search for an international agreement, the more flexible 'Russian approach' discussed above was quickly placed at the centre of a new effort at bird protection legislation, this time focused on game law reform.

Even before the era of the Paris Convention, amendments had been made to existing Russian game law on behalf of wild birds. So far, however, the more traditional categorisations had been used, at least where 'harmful' birds were concerned. Thus the 1886 'Established Ruling on Urban and Agricultural Economies' (*Ustanovlenie o gorodskom i sel'skom khoziaistve*), while quite specific about naming which species and their nests might be destroyed – those of hawks, falcons, crows and the like, sparrows and all northern seabirds – was more ambiguous on protected species, referring simply to a ban on capturing 'birds' by means of 'crossbows, nets, or snares, and also during the close season … ' (Articles 1174–75). Article 1173 banned the destruction of 'bird nests' ('predatory' species excepted).[104] An updated hunting law of 3 February 1892 offered only minor changes.[105]

As the new century dawned, the issue was taken up by a Russian Ornithological Committee within the Russian Society for the Acclimatisation of Animals and Plants headed by ornithologist D.M. Rossinskii. Over the following years, this Committee, in association with other leading ornithologists including Silant'ev, worked up a whole series of proposals and legal drafts. Following a major congress of Russian ornithologists held in Moscow in 1914, much of this work was crystallised in the drafting of yet another law. This one, however, appeared set for implementation. Known as the 'Draft Hunting Law of 1915' it promised greater clarity and precision of terminology, expansion of the law's jurisdiction to the whole of the Russian Empire, the outlawing of several techniques or devices for catching birds not covered in previous laws, new licensing requirements, and a longer close season (1 February to July 15

as opposed to the current season of 1 March to 29 June) covering all birds (and other animals) not explicitly exempted.

Most significantly, in recognition of the concern for Russia's supposedly 'unique' size and natural diversity, the draft also envisioned local flexibility in implementation, species lists, and in other areas. Fundamentally, it finally and fully rejected the traditional binary of 'useful' and 'harmful' birds (and other animals). Instead, it offered a *three*-category system which split 'harmful' into 'always harmful' and 'conditionally' so. The former it was always permissible to kill. The fate of the latter – species considered sometimes useful and sometimes harmful to agriculture depending on local conditions, population density and other factors – would be decided on an ongoing basis by local hunting bodies composed of representatives from agriculture, forestry and other relevant backgrounds. Had they been able to read, Russian birds might have been pleased to learn that ornithologists' ongoing advocacy had earned them a modest promotion: the list of 'always harmful' species was dominated by various big cats, along with wolves, and (to at least one naturalist's dismay) badgers. Birds earlier deemed 'harmful' were now considered to be only 'conditionally harmful'.[106]

Silant'ev summed up his own thoughts on the draft at the time by calling it a 'big step forward in comparison with current laws' and more likely to promote the 'preservation of friends' and the 'destruction of enemies'.[107] The draft's main innovation – the refusal to separate all species into harmful and beneficial and the use of the flexible new third category – thus characterised what had by now emerged as a distinct Russian idiosyncrasy in bird protection. In the event, unfortunately, the innovations of the 1915 draft were of little immediate consequence. Despite being accepted the same year by a specially-appointed Hunting Commission within the State Duma (Russian Parliament), with enactment anticipated for the near future, the project was ultimately forgotten – yet another of the victims of the senseless destruction of the First World War.

CONCLUSIONS

Russian developments in ornithology and bird protection seem in many respects to have followed the same lines as their western counterparts and to have occurred in full communication with them. At the same time, and unlike events in, say, England or Germany, there is a clear undercurrent of international competition. Russians felt the need to catch up with their foreign peers – to be understood as anyone's equal. On the other hand, by the close of the nineteenth century many of them had become convinced and vocal about their own identity and of the uniqueness of their circumstances. They understood that their country was unlike any other, at least in Europe, especially in terms of its size and consequent geographical and biological diversity. They also knew well the special challenges inherent in working with a population that was relatively

uneducated, isolated, rural and traditional. The strategies they pursued reflected these realities and were, consequently, 'Russian'. Though this left much room for international cooperation, in at least one venue – the Paris Convention – it proved an obstacle.

The outbreak of the First World War greatly set back Russian advances on both the ornithological and conservationist fronts – the destruction of Buturlin's manuscripts and the failure of the Draft Hunting Law of 1915 respectively are emblematic. The ensuing collapse of the monarchy in March and the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 only made matters worse. Yet ornithologists and conservationists would rebound surprisingly quickly – bringing into the early Soviet period much of the agenda, tools and work of the Imperial period. Echoes of the 1915 draft would see the light of day under the changed political and social environment of the Soviet Union. This, of course, is an entirely different story.

NOTES

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[2] Good gateway sources, including bibliographies for further study, are John Sheail, *Nature Conservation in Britain: The Formative Years* (London: The Stationery Office, 1998); Jeremy Gaskell, *Who Killed the Great Auk?* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robin W. Doughty, *Feather Fashions and Bird Preservation: A Study in Nature Protection* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975); Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998); and Benjamin Kline, *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (San Francisco: Acada Books, 1997).

[3] Space considerations preclude the inclusion of significant biographical material on the many ornithologists and other individuals who appear in this essay. Many of the Russians can be located in the different editions of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (*Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*).

[4] Christopher Ely, *This Meager Nature: Landscape and National Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002).

[5] Cited in Paul Lawrence Farber, *Discovering Birds: The Emergence of Ornithology as a Scientific Discipline, 1760–1850* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press [1982], 1997), 103–4.

[6] The original German title is *Beyträge zur topographischen Kenntniss des russischen Reichs*. Cited from Jean Anker, *Bird Books and Bird Art: An Outline of the Literary His-*

tory and Iconography of Descriptive Ornithology (Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1938), 26, 122.

[7] Ibid., 26.

[8] Quoted in Theed Pearse, *Birds of the Early Explorers in the Northern Pacific* (Comox, British Columbia: Theed Pearse, 1968), 70.

[9] His results were published in expedition secretary Martin Sauer's *An Account of a Geographical and Astronomical Expedition to the Northern Parts of Russia for Ascertaining the Degrees of Latitude and Longitude … of the Whole Coast of the Toulski to East Cape and of the Islands of the Eastern Coast Stretching to the American Coast. Performed by Command of her Imperial Majesty Catherine the Second—by Commodore Joseph Billings in the Years 1785 to 1794, the Whole Narrated from the Original Papers by Martin Sauer, Secretary of the Expedition* (London: T. Cadell, 1802). Merck's own journal from 1787–92 is available as Carl Heinrich Merck, *Siberia and Northwestern America, 1788–1792: The Journal of Carl Heinrich Merck, Naturalist with the Russian Scientific Expedition Led by Captains Joseph Billings and Gavriil Sarychev*, trans. Fritz Jaensch (Kingston, ON: Limestone Press, 1980).

[10] Though the book appears to have been published first in Russian (3 vols., 1771–80; 4th vol. posthumously in 1805; all St. Petersburg), I have been able to find full bibliographical information only on a German edition published soon after as Herrn Iwan Lepechin, *Tagebuch der Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des russischen Reiches … von M. Christian Heinrich Hase*. It contains 'a fairly large amount of information about birds … scattered throughout the volumes' (Anker, *Bird Books and Bird Art*, 26, 154).

[11]Güldenstädt's observations were published posthumously by co-expeditionist Peter Simon Pallas under the title *Reisen durch Russland und im Caucasischen Gebürge* (St. Petersburg 1787–91). Güldenstädt's descriptive writings of the Caucasus remain to this day 'the most authoritative on the birds of that area' according to Michael Walters, *A Concise History of Ornithology* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 71.

[12] *Reise durch Russland zur Untersuchung der drey Natur-Reiche. Gedruckt bey der Kayserl* (Academie der Wissenschaften. St. Petersburg. 4 vols. [the last published posthumously by Pallas], 1771–84).

[13] Peter Simon Pallas, *Reisen durch versch. Provinzen des Russ. Reichs in den Jahren 1768–74* (1770/71–1776). The book was quickly translated and published in Russian as *Puteshestvie po raznym provintsiiam Rossiiskoi imperii* (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk, 1786–1809).

[14] Pearse, *Birds of the Early Explorers*, 11–12.

[15] The Great Northern Expedition was a huge undertaking, unparalleled in eighteenth-century exploration. It consisted of an eastward moving centre – under the command of the Dane Vitus Bering – from which numerous detachment expeditions were sent north to survey sections of the Arctic, and east and south to Pacific destinations including Kamchatka, the Kuriles, Japan and – the centrepiece of the whole venture – Alaska.

[16] Georg Wilhelm Steller, *Journal of a Voyage with Bering, 1741–1742*, ed., O.W. Frost (CA: Stanford University Press, 2002 [c.1988]), 18. This was preceded by Steller's first publication (also posthumous) of a 'Latin treatise on the zoology of the North Pacific … published by the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1751' (Steller, *Steller's History of Kamchatka*. Trans. Margritt Engel and Karen Willmore. Rasmusson Library Translation Series [Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003], viii).

[17] *Steller's History of Kamchatka*, 145–7.

[18] Ibid., 4, 6–7. The 1758 paper on nests and eggs in Siberia was published in *Novi Commentarii* (the journal of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg).

[19] As Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov, *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki*. A publication date of 1735 is cited in some sources.

[20] Pearse, *Birds of the Early Explorers*, 50, 53–68.

[21] Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov, *The History of Kamtschatka and Kurilski Islands with the Countries Adjacent; Illustrated with Maps and Cuts. Translated into English by James Grieve, M.D.* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1962), 152–63. (Translation of source cited in n. 19).

[22] Other persons associated with Bering's expeditions whose (generally minor) bird-related observations have been published include Sven Waxell, A.I. Chirikov, J. von Stachlin and G.A. Sarychev.

[23] Outside of Russia Bellingshausen is better known as Fabian Gottlieb Thaddeus von Bellingshausen. His journal was not published until 1831 (and in only 600 copies). It was translated for the first time [into German] in 1902. The first English translation was made in 1945 by the Hakluyt Society.

[24] Cited in Anker, *Bird Books and Bird Art*, 165, as A.T. (using the German spelling of his middle name) von Middendorf, *Reise in den äussersten Norden und Osten Sibiriens … 1843 und 1844. Mit allerhöchster Genehmigung auf Veranstaltung der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaft zu St. Petersburg ausgeführt und in Verbindung mit vielen Gelehrten herausgegeben von A. Th. V. Middendorff.* St. Petersburg, 1853. The second volume (of four) treated 210 bird species and included 40 lithographic plates.

[25] Including Leopold von Schrenck *Vögel des Amur-Landes* (volume two of his four-volume work, *Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-Lande… 1854–56 im Auftrage der Kaiserl.* Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg ausgeführt und in Verbindung mit mehreren Gelehrten herausgegeben von Leopold v. Schrenck [1858–95]); G.F.R. Radde, *Reisen im Süden von Ost-Sibirien … 1855–59 incl. Im Auftrage der Kaiserlichen Geographischen Gesellschaft ausgeführt von Gustav Radde. Vol. II Die Festlands-Ornis des sudostlichen Sibiriens* (Buchdruckerei von W. Besobrasoff & Co. St. Petersburg, 1863.)

[26] A basic overview of the ornithological aspects of several of these expeditions is in Walters, *A Concise History of Ornithology*, 145. I have drawn on this source for much of the basic information in this and the following paragraph.

[27] The species was first described in 1881. In the absence of a specimen of the common ancestor of the modern domestic horse and Przheval'skii's Wild Horse, experts variously classify the latter as either *Equus ferus przewalskii* (a distinct species apart from the modern horse) or *Equus caballus przewalskii* (a subspecies thereof). Designated during the 1960s as extinct in the wild, a small population has since been successfully reestablished in Mongolia.

[28] On Severtsov, see N.G. Dement'ev, *Nikolai Alekseevich Severtsov, zoolog i puteshestvennik (1827–1885)*, 2nd edn (Moscow, 1948); and R.L. Zolotniskaia, *N.A. Severtsov – geograf i puteshestvennik* (Moscow, 1953). The latter source includes a bibliography of Severtsov's relevant publications. For more on Menzbir (and other Russian ornithologists of the period), see K.A. Vorob'ev, *Zapiski ornitologa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978); and *Moskovskie ornitologi* (Moscow: Moscow State University Press, 1999).

[29] *Ornitologicheskii vestnik*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1912): 191.

[30] M.A. Menzbir, *Ptitsy Rossii (Evropeiskaia Rossiia, Sibir', Turkestan, Zakapiiskaia Oblast' i Kavkaz*. Third Edition (Moscow, 1918), i, iv. Menzbir was particularly critical of Russian and foreign efforts to invent trinomial and quadronomial systems. He urged a 'cleansing' of the nomenclature and a return to Linnaean binomialism.

[31] Ibid., i-ii.

[32] See, for example, 'Obzor russkoi ornitologicheskoi literatury', *Ornitologicheskii vestnik* vol. 4, no. 1 (1913): 60–61.

[33] V.D. Il'ichev and G.N. Simkin, 'Mikhail Aleksandrovich Menzbir.' (No page numbers). Viewed online at Soiuz okhrany ptits Rossii http://www.rbcu.ru/information/personalia/menzbir.html (28 March, 2005).

[34] See *Buturlinskii sbornik. Materialy I Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi pamiati S.A. Buturlina* Ul'ianovsk, 19.09.2002 – 22.09.2002 (Ul'ianovsk: Ul'ianovskii oblastnoi kraevedcheskii muzei 2003). This includes an extensive bibliography of his works (51–67). See also K.A. Vorob'ev, *Zapiski ornitologa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978); and *Moskovskie ornitologi*.

[35] *Buturlinskii sbornik*. 5.

[36] It is unclear from the Russian sources exactly which species is referred to here. The term *Rosy Gull* seems to have been applied to at least three different species in various contexts (*Larus Philadelphia*, *Larus franklinii* and *Rhodostethia rosea*). *Rhodostethia rosea* seems most likely.

[37] Ia. A. Red'kin, 'Vklad S.A. Buturlina v kollektsionnoe delo v rossiiskoi ornitologii.' In *Buturlinskii sbornik*. 202–3. It is unclear whether or not the sale occurred.

[38] S.A. Buturlin (with G.P. Dementev), *Polnyi opredelitel' ptits SSSR*. 5 vols. (Moscow and Leningrad, 1934–41). Though too late to be of direct relevance here, it has been called 'the first comprehensive guidebook to the birds of the Soviet Union' (M.M. Kozlova, 'Literaturnoe nasledie S.A. Buturlina'. In *Buturlinskii sbornik*, 49).

[39] On the history of royal and aristocratic hunting in Russia, see V.E. Boreiko, *Tsarskoe okhoty: ot Vladimira Monomakha do Vladimira Shcherbitskogo*. Seriia: Istoriia okhrany prirody. Vypusk 3. Kiev: Ekologo-kul'turnyi tsentr, 1995.

[40] On British examples of the differences, tensions and interactions of game laws and nineteenth century bird protection laws, see Brian Bonhomme, 'Nested Interests: Assessing Britain's Wild Bird Protection Laws of 1869–1880', *Nineteenth Century Studies* 19 (2005): 47–68.

[41] Founded in 1765 in St. Petersburg by a group of wealthy landowners for the purpose of finding ways to improve agricultural productivity and efficiency. The group was relatively liberal and westernising, serving as a forum for debate on numerous social issues including the abolition of serfdom during the nineteenth century. It lasted until 1919.

[42] One comprising members of the RIFES only, the other adding representatives from the Society of Nature Enthusiasts (*Obshchestvo estestvoispitatelei*), the Russian Horticultural Society (*Rossiiskoe obshchestvo sadovodstva*), and the Russian Entomological Society (*Russkoe entomologicheskoe obshchestvo*). See V.E. Iverson, compiler, *Pervoe desiatiletie rossiiskogo obshchestva pokrovitel'stva zhivotnym: istoricheskii ocherk ego deiatel'nosti v 1865–1875 gg*. (St. Petersburg, 1875), 40.

[43] Iverson, *Pervoe desiatiletie*, 41–3.

[44] Ibid., 44–9.

[45] Bonhomme, 'Nested Interests', 55.

[46] 'Rapport sur les travaux de la Société.' *Bulletin de la Société Impériale Zoologique d'Acclimatation*, vol. 1 (1854): xlvii. A particularly good sense of the French debate can be taken from M.N. de Jonquières-Antonelle, 'Note sur la destruction par l'homme de quelques espèces animals qui lui sont utiles'. In ibid., vol. 4 (1857): 79–90.

[47] I am grateful for this information to J.F.M. Clark.

[48] The Russian title literally translates as 'Russian Society for the Patronage of Animals'. The same Russian wording was often used by Russians to translate the title of the British and American Societies. At other times they translated literally (*obshchestva predokhranenia zhivotnykh ot muchenii*). For the sake of simplicity I have chosen the translation that will allow more instant recognition among Anglophone readers. The RISPCA was based in St. Petersburg. Provincial counterparts, most of them independent of the RISPCA, quickly arose after 1865 in Odessa, Riga, Tiflis and elsewhere. Nearly 100 existed by 1900.

[49] Iverson, *Pervoe desiatiletie*, 3.

[50] These lacked the force of law, of course, although they were often adopted voluntarily by the St. Petersburg police and other organs.

[51] Iverson, *Pervoe desiatiletie*, 4. Laws protecting privately-owned animals from undue cruelty existed in the Russian Empire from at least 1864. They were generally considered by the RISPCA to be insufficient and improperly enforced.

[52] Ibid., 36.

[53] Ibid., 33–4.

[54] Rossiiskoe obshchestvo pokrovitel'stvo zhivotnym. *Istoricheskyi ocherk ego deiatel'nosti, 1865–1875* (St. Petersburg, 1878), 102. The talk, by Iverson, was published in the Society's bulletin the following year (ibid., 106).

[55] *Shestoi mezhdunarodnyi kongress obshchestv pokrovitel'stva zhivotnym v Londone* (1874). Doklad delegata rossiiskogo obshchestva pokrovitel'stva zhivotnym, N. Vil'kinsa (St. Petersburg, 1875), 98–9.

[56] 'O sokranshchenie vesennogo vyvoza dichi za granitsu', *Okhotnich'ia gazeta*, no. 33 (19 August, 1891), page no. missing, first page of issue. One *pud* equals approximately thirty-six pounds.

[57] A.A. Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei i ptits, poleznykh v sel'skom khoziaiztve* (Petrograd, 1915), 37.

[58] The Ukrainian historian V.E. Boreiko confirms that as populations of plumage birds were exhausted in western Europe, Russia came under increasing hunting pressures. He offers the following figures of birds taken for plumage during 1911 only and just from the Russian Caspian coast: 150,000 seagulls**,** 20,000 eider ducks, 3,500 swans. He also records 30,000 sparrows processed and exported in 1892 by a single Moscow establishment and in 1889, '11–42,000 *pud*s' of bird hides sent to Paris along the Moscow-Brest route. The carnage seems to have moved farther and farther east, reaching western Siberia around 1890 – mirroring in some respects a pattern long-ago established by Russian fur-hunters who chased ever farther east in search of valuable furs. See Boreiko, *Belye piatna,* 63.

[59] *Shestoi mezhdunarodnyi kongress*, 70.

[60]Ibid., 71–2.

[61] Baron G.V. Lauden, Imperatorskoe Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Akklimatizatsii Zhivotnykh i Rastenii, *Ptitsevedenie i Ptitsevodstvo*. God IV, Vypusk 1, no. 36 (1912: Moscow), 2.

[62] Silant'ev, *Okhrana* zverei, 15.

[63] See for example, Iverson, *Pervoe desiatiletie*, 48.

[64] In German, *Organisation der Naturdenkmalpflege in Deutschland*. See, for example, D.N. Aniutin, *Okhrana pamiatnikov prirody* (Moscow, 1914), 4. Published as a joint volume with G.A. Kozhevnikov, *Mezhdunarodnaia okhrana prirody* (see n. 66.)

[65] Ibid., 6–29, especially 28–9.

[66] G.A. Kozhevnikov, *Mezhdunarodnaia okhrana prirody* (Moscow 1914), 51. Published as a joint volume with D.N. Aniutin, *Okhrana pamiatnikov prirody.* (Second author and title appear first), 56.

[67] D.N. Aniutin, *Okhrana pamiatnikov prirody*, 6, 38.

[68] Baron G.V. Lauden, Imperatorskoe Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Akklimatizatsii Zhivotnykh i Rastenii, *Ptitsevedenie i Ptitsevodstvo*. God IV, Vypusk 1, no. 36 (1912: Moscow), 1.

[69] Ibid., God III, Vypusk 1–2, no. 27 (1912: Moscow), 1. The Rossitten bird observatory in east Prussia was established in 1901. The town, now part of Russia, is currently called Rybachii.

[70] An outline of the situation, including the best but incomplete listings to date, is in 'Voprosy i otvety', *Ornitologicheskii vestnik*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1911): 209.

[71] Boreiko, *Belye piatna*, 164.

[72] Widely available in translation. See S.T. Aksakov, *Notes on Fishing*, trans. Thomas P. Hodge (Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press, 1997); and *Notes of a Provincial Wildfowler*, trans. Kevin Windle (Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

[73] Iverson*, Pervoe desiatiletie*, 7.

[74] Boreiko, *Belye piatna*, 164–5; D.M. Rossinskii, *Okhrana ptits*. Vserossiiskoe obshchestvo okhrany prirody. (Moscow: Izdanie obshchestva, 1927), 7.

[75] Aniutin, *Okhrana pamiatnikov prirody*, 1.

[76] Baron G.V. Lauden, Imperatorskoe Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Akklimatizatsii Zhivotnykh i Rastenii, *Ptitsevedenie i Ptitsevodstvo*. God IV, Vypusk 1, no. 36 (1912: Moscow), 9.

[77] Darwinism was, however, the target of increasingly vocal and organised Russian criticism from philosophers, the church and elsewhere starting near the turn of the century. For more on the reception of Darwin in the Russian Empire, see Alexander Vucinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: Univ. California Press, 1989); and three articles by James Allen Rogers: 'The Reception of Darwin's Origin of Species by Russian Scientists', *Isis*, 1973, 64: 484–50; 'Charles Darwin and Russian Scientists', *Russian Review*, 1960, 13(4): 371–8; and 'Russian Opposition to Darwinism in the Nineteenth Century', *Isis* 1974, 65: 487–505.

[78] See Weiner. *Models of Nature*.

[79] D.C., 'Review of *A Summer on the Yenesei* by Maud D. Haviland.' In *The Geographical Journal* 45,6 (June 1915), 526.

[80] A.A. Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei i ptits, poleznykh v sel'skom khoziaiztve* (Petrograd, 1915), 37.

[81] See Rossinskii, *Okhrana ptits*, 4.

[82] Ibid.; also, Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei i ptits*, 27.

[83] Rossinskii, *Okhrana ptits*, 4.

[84] Ibid., 5.

[85] The Convention, including schedules of 'useful' and 'harmful' birds appears in full in Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei*, 30–33. It is also available on-line through The American Society of International Law at http://www.internationalwildlifelaw.org/bird_1902.html

[86] Rossinskii, *Okhrana ptits*, 5. By 1910, 29 states were involved in one way or another with the Paris Convention: 13 as signatories, 10 reporting to the Convention on their own bird laws, 4 (including Russia) retaining the right to join the at a later date, and 2 which had entered into dealings or negotiations with the Convention.

[87] Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei*, 12.

[88] Ibid., 6–7, 11.

[89] Ibid., 11, 13.

[90] Rossinskii, *Okhrana ptits*, 5. Russian popular knowledge of *non-avian* wildlife was also rated poorly by Russian experts. See, for example, 'The low level of zoological knowledge among Russian society [*Nizkii uroven' znanii zoologii v russkom obshchestve*]', in G. Norkskii, 'Brakonery i khishchniki. Sredstva bor'by s nimi na zapade' in *Okhotnich'ia gazeta*. Illustrirovannoe ezhenedel'noe izdanie, Vtoroe polugodie (1891), June-December, 428–59.

[91] This raises the question: did the publics of other countries, ones that *did* have such laws, also have better basic ornithological skills? The answer is probably yes. Certainly, several countries, Britain especially, had numerous relatively comprehensive field guides before the end of the nineteenth century. These, moreover, were consumed in significant numbers by an interested public that was also on average more literate than its Russian counterpart. It was in the West, moreover – and especially in Britain, Germany and the USA – that the nineteenth century popular craze for collecting and cataloguing wildlife specimens was most pronounced, and where bird-watching as a hobby was the best developed. Russia contrasts significantly with all of these developments.

[92] Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei*, 14.

[93] Boreiko *Belye piatna*, 163.

[94] See, for example, Jack V. Haney, Trans., *The Complete Russian Folktale: Volume 2: Russian Animal Tales* (M.E. Sharpe, 2000); and A.S. Ermolov, *Narodnaia selskokhoziaistvennaia mudrost v poslovitsakh, pogovorkakh i primetakh*. 4 vols. (St. Petersburg : A.S. Suvorin, 1902–05).

[95] Iverson, *Pervoe desiatiletie*, 34–5.

[96] Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei*, 16.

[97] Aniutin, *Okhrana pamiatnikov prirody*, 38.

[98] Representatives of the plumage trade attended many of the conferences noted throughout this paper. At one – the 1913 Berne Conference for the International Protection of Nature – they spoke of the '100,000s of workers, primarily women' who depended on the plumage trade. See, G.A. Kozhevnikov, *Mezhdunarodnaia okhrana prirody*, 51, 55.

[99] Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei*, 42. This sense, says Silant'ev, was particularly present during later rounds of Paris negotiations and discussions, 1909–13.

[100] The Society counted very few women among its early members. In 1873 a debate on expanding women's activities in the RISPCA and establishing 'special women's committees' (the issue was raised by a few vocal female members) 'did not lead to a polite

resolution of the issue. From everywhere there came only refusals.' At least through about 1890 the situation does not appear to have changed dramatically. Rossiiskoe obshchestvo pokrovitel'stvo zhivotnym. *Istoricheskyi ocherk ego deiatel'nosti, 1865–1875* (St. Petersburg, 1878), 118.

[101] The list of founding members and early officers is in *Istoricheskii otchet deiatel'nosti Rossiiskogo obshchestva pokrovitel'stva zhivotnym so dnia ego osnovaniia …* (St. Petersburg, 1891 [misprinted as 1890 on inside frontispiece), 9–13.

[102] Founded at Kharkov University. See *Ustav obshchestva ispitatelei prirody, pri imperatorskom kharkovskom universitete* (Kharkov: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1869), 1.

[103] I have not been able to ascertain the date of the group's founding.

[104] Boreiko *Belye piatna*, 165–6.

[105] 'Pravila ob okhote.' *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii*. Collection (sobranie) 3, vol. 12, 1892 (St. Petersburg, 1895), 81 (statute no. 8501).

[106] Silant'ev, *Okhrana zverei i ptits* 40–41.

[107] Ibid., 8.