# T. Gilbert Pearson: The Early Years

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Thomas Gilbert Pearson (1873-1943) began his career as an ornithologist in Archer, Florida, near Gainesville. Born at Tuscola, Illinois, 10 November 1873, he was the fifth and last child of Thomas Barnard Pearson and Mary Eliott Pearson, a Quaker farm couple who had moved to Dublin, Indiana, about 1874 and then to Archer in 1882 to grow oranges and vegetables. Archer was a small village surrounded by forests, lakes, and marshes that here and there had been converted into farmland but that for the most part were still relatively undisturbed. As T. Gilbert Pearson put it in 1891, "In this section of the country ... the naturalist may wander to his heart's content through the forest and never see a human being or a cultivated field if he chooses" (Pearson 1891).

By the age of 12, Pearson had met two older boys who were interested in birds and other wildlife. From them he learned the rudiments of collecting. One of them showed him how to make holes in a bird's egg with a small steel drill and force out the egg's contents by blowing into it with a brass blowpipe (Pearson 1937). He was introduced to *The Oologist*, a monthly magazine published in Albion, New York, by Frank H. Lattin, and to Lattin's catalog of supplies, *The Oologists' Handbook*. For several years, the catalog was Pearson's only guide, other than local usage, to the names of the birds. In order to buy equipment, including a gun, which he acquired at the age of 13, he picked blackberries and sold them; from Negro boys he bought trapped quail, dressed them, and sold them; he worked successively in a store and a blacksmith's shop (Pearson 1937). As he collected eggs and skins, he learned to label them and to keep records on printed forms. He began to write brief articles about his collecting experiences. The first one appeared in *The Oologist* for January 1888, when he was 14 (Pearson 1888).

In 1891, the year he turned 18, Pearson acquired a copy of Elliott Coues's *Key to North American Birds*, which enabled him to proceed with his studies at a heightened level of accuracy and understanding (Pearson 1937). He began to mount birds and, occasionally, other animals. He bought business stationery bearing the letterhead: "T. G. Pearson. Field Ornithologist and Oologist. Birds Mounted in first class order. Nests & Eggs Collected and Exchanged" (Pearson 1891-1895). At a restaurant in Gainesville, he met Frank M. Chapman, associate curator of ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and began a relationship that was important to him the rest of his life. Through Chapman, he became that year a member of the American Ornithologists' Union (Pearson 1891-1895; The Auk 1892), a small, relatively new organization of bird students, most of whom lived in the northeastern United States.

Also in 1891, he wrote letters to several colleges, offering to exchange his collection of bird eggs, bird skins, mounted birds, and other natural history objects for a term's enrollment. He was not prepared for college. His formal education had been limited to attendance at the local school for about 4½ months each year, and he had been an indifferent student, preferring his own studies in nature to classroom exercises. The one positive response to his letters came from Lewis L. Hobbs, president of Guilford College, a Quaker school in North Carolina that had a preparatory program. Hobbs wanted to build up the "natural history cabinet" begun at the college by a faculty member who had

resigned. He offered Pearson tuition, board, and room for 2 years in exchange for his collection and his services as curator of the cabinet. Pearson went to Guilford in August 1891. After his qualifications had been examined and his academic weaknesses noted, he was placed in the first year of the 2-year preparatory program. He was enrolled at Guilford for 6 years before earning a bachelor's degree (Pearson 1937, Gilbert 1944, Guilford Collegian 1893).

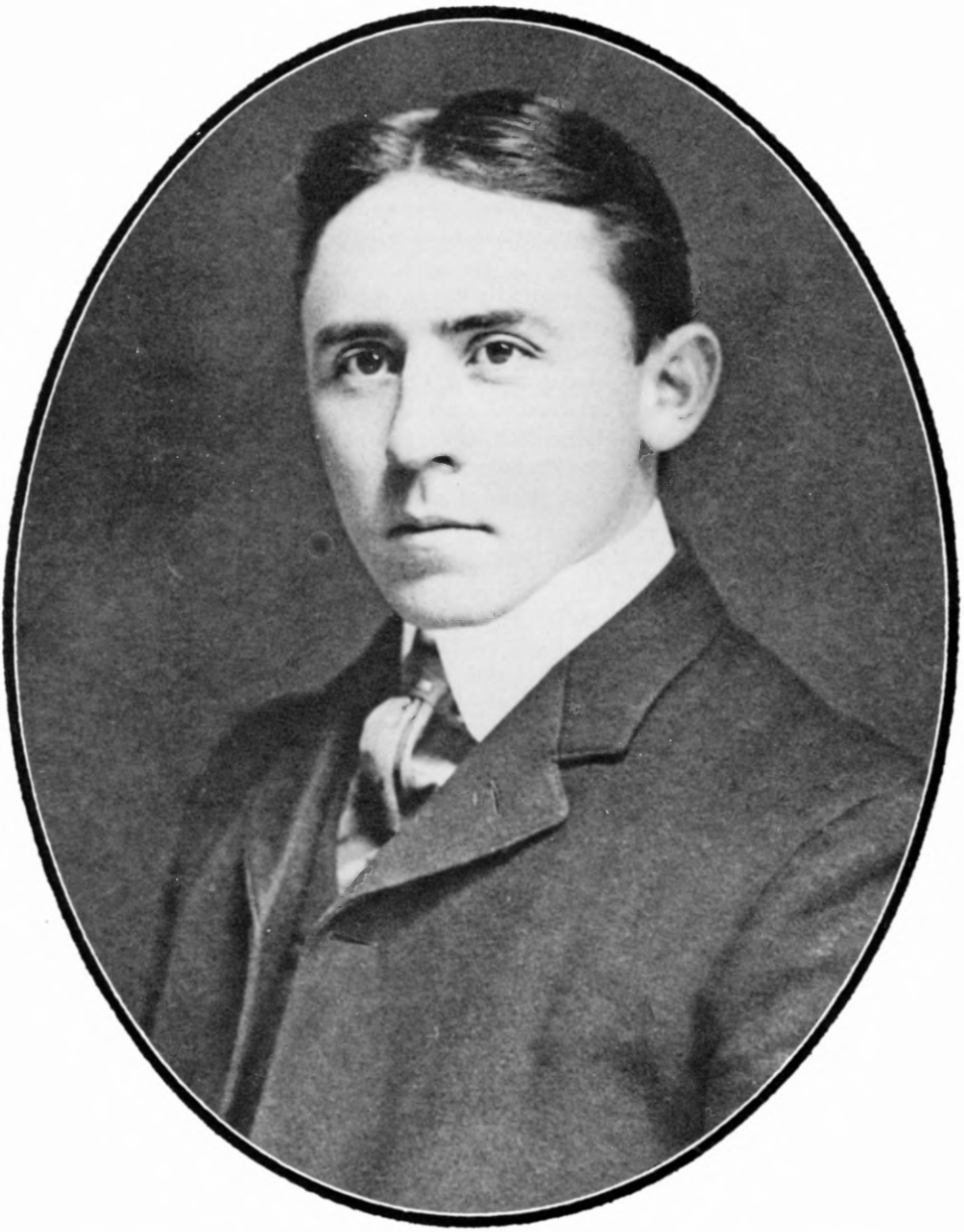
The term "natural history cabinet" applied interchangeably to the collections themselves and the room that held them. After Pearson arrived, new cases were built to accommodate his specimens. The bird eggs alone required an entire case. Representing more than 200 species of birds, the approximately 1,100 eggs consisted largely of specimens Pearson had taken from nests in Florida, but also included others he had obtained by purchase or exchange. There were Razorbill eggs from Labrador, gull eggs from Iceland, jay eggs from Yucatan, and penguin eggs from Cape Horn. In all, birds on five continents were represented (Guilford Coll. Cat. 1891-1892, Guilford Collegian 1891-1893). The egg collection was initially appraised at Guilford as being "probably the largest collection in the state" (Guilford Collegian 1892). Two years later, when more was known about it and Pearson had added to it, it was characterized as the "largest collection of bird-eggs in the South" (Guilford Collegian 1893).

Saturdays, holidays, and summer vacations were spent studying birds and collecting for the museum. To finance his work, Pearson solicited money from well-to-do Quakers in and out of North Carolina. In the fall of 1893, when his initial arrangement with the college had ended, he was given faculty status as museum curator (without faculty privileges—he did not attend faculty meetings) and remunerated with room, board, tuition, and $50 a month (Guilford College Board of Trustees 1873-1918). This arrangement continued until he graduated.

## OPPOSES PLUME HUNTING

During his years as a student at Guilford, Pearson wrote articles about birds for the *Ornithologist and Oologist* and *The Guilford Collegian*. In the *Collegian* also appeared his first writings about the need for laws protecting birds. Hunting needed to be regulated. The use of birds in the millinery trade needed to be restricted. Bird feathers, bird wings, bird heads, or entire birds, sometimes as many as six small birds, could be seen on the hats of thousands of women. Pearson wrote an essay on the importance of protecting herons against plume hunters; it was published in the proceedings of a congress on ornithology held in association with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 (Pearson 1896). In the summer of 1895, he wrote the main text of a pamphlet entitled *Echoes from Bird Land. An Appeal to Women*, in which he described the cruelties of plume hunting as he had witnessed it in Florida.

Oratory was stressed at Guilford. After an awkward first speech, which elicited derisive sounds from the audience, Pearson practiced alone in the woods until he developed skill. Religion was also emphasized. Pearson became a leader in the YMCA. His arguments in behalf of birds were supported by his convictions that the human species' privilege of dominion over other species carried with it responsibilities and that the study of birds and nature in general brought human beings into a closer relationship with God. By 1895, Pearson was receiving invitations from nearby communities to speak on birds; in



T. Gilbert Pearson as a young man, probably during his years as a teacher at Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C. (Photo courtesy of Guilford College)

the summer of that year he taught a class in natural history at the University of North Carolina (Pearson 1891-1895).

In order to continue his education in science beyond the level available at Guilford, Pearson arranged to work part-time in the Chapel Hill office of Joseph A. Holmes, state geologist, for 2 years, 1897-1899, and attend the University of North Carolina (Holmes 1897). Although officially listed as a clerk in the Geological Survey (N.C. State Geologist 1897-1900), Pearson worked largely in the field, collecting data and specimens for the university and for the State Museum in Raleigh, of which Herbert H. Brimley was curator. Pearson also continued to collect data for himself, with the objective of writing a book on the birds of North Carolina.

In April 1898, Pearson accompanied Holmes and other staff members of the Geological Survey on a 10-day expedition to Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. Greatly stimulated by the experience, he asked Holmes to let him stay on for awhile. Holmes consented and did not say when he would have to return to Chapel Hill (Pearson 1937). Pearson withdrew from his classes and did not enroll again until September. For approximately 5 months he was on the North Carolina coast, exploring the Outer Banks, Lake Mattamuskeet, Lake Ellis, Great Lake, Orton Plantation, and other sites that promised to have bird life he wished to observe or collect. Many of his notes were later drawn upon in the writing of *Birds of North Carolina.*

During his stay in Chapel Hill, Pearson contributed notes or articles on birds to *The Auk*, the *Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*, the *North Carolina University Magazine*, and the *North Carolina Journal of Education.* He organized informal classes in ornithology. He also distinguished himself as an orator and served as president of the YMCA (N.C. Univ. Mag. 1898). In the spring of 1899, Pearson was awarded his second bachelor's degree (U.N.C. 1898-1899). Failing to find a way to attend graduate school, he chose between two positions: assistant secretary of the YMCA for North and South Carolina and professor of biology at Guilford College. The first position paid the higher salary but the second gave him the chance to continue studying birds and working for their protection. He selected the second.

## RETURNS TO GUILFORD COLLEGE

At Guilford College once more, Pearson published a checklist of the birds of Chapel Hill (Pearson 1899), wrote articles on birds, and gave public lectures to a variety of audiences, including teachers at the meetings of the North Carolina Teachers Assembly and the Southern Educational Association. When Frank M. Chapman decided to offer to readers of *Bird-Lore*, the magazine he had founded in 1899 as the organ of the state Audubon societies, a list of advisers to whom inquiries about birds could be addressed, he chose Pearson to be the adviser for North Carolina (Bird-Lore 1900). This arrangement continued for many years.

At Guilford, Pearson began work on his first book, using articles he had already published. Designed to stimulate interest in birds among school teachers and their students, *Stories of Bird Life* was published in November 1901 and received favorable reviews in *The Auk*, *Bird-Lore*, and numerous newspapers. In the summer of 1901, before the book appeared, Pearson was appointed to a professorship at the State Normal and Industrial College for women in Greensboro [now University of North Carolina at Greensboro], at a considerably higher salary than he received at Guilford. After teaching a

course in ornithology to teachers in summer school at Chapel Hill (U.N.C. 1900-1902), he attended the Harvard University summer school (Harvard Univ. 1900-1902), where he studied botany, in order to teach it at State Normal.

In New York City, William Dutcher, chairman of the American Ornithologists' Union bird protection committee, read about the publication of *Stories of Bird Life* and wrote to Pearson. The committee had composed a "model law" for bird protection, which by 1901 had been adopted, in various forms, by several states. The committee had also sponsored, through George Bird Grinnell's magazine, *Forest and Stream*, the first Audubon society for the protection of birds. That society had died, but in 1896, with the creation of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the system of state organizations was begun. When Dutcher wrote to Pearson, three contiguous states on the Atlantic coast, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, had still not adopted adequate laws protecting birds. Dutcher asked Pearson to organize a state Audubon society that could exert pressure on the North Carolina legislature (Pearson 1937).

## AUDUBON SOCIETY LEADER

With the permission of President Charles D. McIver, Pearson presented Dutcher's request to the State Normal faculty council, explaining the need for bird protection. McIver appointed a committee of three—Pearson and two others—to plan a mass meeting at which the feasibility of forming an Audubon society could be discussed (State Norm. Indus. Col.1895-1905). On 11 March 1902, approximately 150 people gathered in the college chapel. Pearson made the major address, urging that a society be formed and that it concentrate its energies on education. The Audubon Society of North Carolina was organized, with 147 charter members and with James Y. Joyner, state superintendent of public instruction, as president; Pearson as vice president; Annie F. Petty, the college librarian, as secretary; and Walter Thompson, principal of the South Greensboro Graded School, as treasurer (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1903). All the officers held positions in the state educational system. The constitution reflected the same emphasis: three of the four objectives specified in the constitution were concerned with education; the fourth was a commitment "To labor for better legislation for bird protection" (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1902).

Administrative power in the society was largely vested in an executive committee presided over by Pearson as vice president. By June, adjustments had to be made. Thompson took a job elsewhere and resigned as treasurer; Petty resigned as secretary, having found the duties too heavy to be compatible with her responsibilities as college librarian. Pearson was then moved into the secretary's position, retaining his powers as executive officer, and Robert N. Wilson, professor of physical science at Guilford, became the treasurer. Leaflets on the society, on birds, and on the need for bird protection were written, printed, and distributed throughout the state.

In the summer of 1902, Pearson married Elsie Weatherly, of Greensboro (State Norm. Mag. 1902), whom he had met when he was a student at Guilford and she was attending State Normal. She had made some of the illustrations for *Stories of Bird Life*. Accompanied by his bride, Pearson went to Knoxville, Tennessee, immediately after the wedding. There, at the Summer School of the South, he taught a 5-week class in ornithology (Univ. Tenn. 1902), conducted bird walks, and at night delivered illustrated lectures in a large outdoor auditorium. His offerings were popular, and he returned to the school for several summers thereafter.

From Knoxville, the Pearsons went to Asheville, N.C., for almost 3 weeks. In relative leisure they studied local bird life, but he also discussed bird protection with sportsmen, who urged that the Audubon Society work for statewide legislation to protect game birds as well as nongame birds. After returning to Greensboro, Pearson began to draft, with the guidance of Aubrey L. Brooks, a rising young attorney, a bill for presentation to the legislature. In November, he took the draft with him to Washington, D.C., where he read a paper at the annual meeting of the AOU and delivered an extemporaneous address before the National Committee of Audubon Societies, formed a year earlier (Washington Evening Star 1902, The Auk 1903, Bird-Lore 1902). He was elected to membership on the National Committee and elevated from associate member to member in the AOU. Sometime during the course of the meetings, he spent an afternoon with William Dutcher and Theodore S. Palmer, of the U.S. Biological Survey, going over the draft of his bird bill and discussing bird protection problems in North Carolina (Pearson to Brimley 1902).

After returning to Greensboro, Pearson composed a circular letter and sent a copy to each member of the legislature at his home address. The emphasis was on the Audubon Society, its work, and the need for a law to protect wild birds (Pearson to Vann 1902). Statewide game protection, a potentially divisive issue, was not mentioned, but Pearson's draft bill, containing the provisions of the AOU model law, authorized the Audubon Society to enforce the bird and game laws of the state.

## SOUTH'S FIRST GAME COMMISSION

In 1903, the Audubon bill was introduced into the House of Representatives by Wescott Roberson, a member of the society (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1903). Pearson addressed the House of Representatives in the bill's behalf. The bill was approved in both houses, became law on 6 March, and took effect immediately. Thus North Carolina became the first state in the South to establish a state game commission.

The act defined game birds essentially as they were defined in the AOU model law, which listed as game species all "swans, geese, brant, and river and sea ducks," "rails, coots, mud-hens and gallinules," "shore birds, plovers, surf birds, snipe, woodcock, sandpipers, tatlers, and curlews," and "wild turkeys, grouse, prairie chickens, pheasants, partridges, and quails" (Stone 1902). In deference to hunters of North Carolina, doves, robins, and meadowlarks were added to the list of game birds. Towhees were also on the list of game birds, as a concession to a legislator who intended to put them on the list of unprotected birds but worded his amendment unclearly. Unprotected birds could be killed at any time. They consisted of English sparrows, Bobolinks, hawks, owls, blackbirds, and jackdaws. Pigeons, regarded as domestic fowl, were ignored by the act. The killing or harming of any species not named as being exempt from protection was forbidden.

The Audubon Society was authorized to enforce the Audubon Act and all other laws regulating the taking of game birds and animals. Wardens were appointed by the governor of the state upon the recommendation of the society. Compensation for the wardens was paid by the society from funds raised largely through the sale of hunting licenses, at the rate of $10 per year, to hunters who were not residents of North Carolina. Eight men, including Pearson, James Y. Joyner, Robert N. Wilson, Herbert H. Brimley, and J. F. Jordan, sheriff of Guilford County and a sportsman, were named as incorporators of the society. At the incorporators' first meeting, Joyner declined the presidency but accepted the vice-presidency. Jordan was chosen president, Pearson secretary, and Wilson treas-

urer. An executive committee was named. When it met in April, it gave Pearson full power to direct the society, at an initial salary of $600 a year (Pearson to Brimley 1903). The position was part-time, supplementary to his position as a college professor.

The society began its work as a game commission without any money. Funds raised through membership fees had been spent in publicizing the organization, spreading information about birds, and promoting passage of the Audubon Act. Money from the sale of hunting licenses, which were sold by county clerks of court, was not available until December 1. William Dutcher provided enough money from an AOU fund for Pearson to employ three wardens to protect the sea-bird colonies on the coast. Two thousand linen signs, summarizing laws and identifying protected birds, were also supplied by Dutcher. By the end of the first year, the Audubon Society was prospering. Membership fees amounted to nearly $1,700; the sale of hunting licenses brought in almost $5,000. The warden force consisted of 29 agents stationed in 22 counties and available for duty anywhere in the state (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1904).

Pearson hoped to enforce the laws more by educating the public than by punishing transgressors. He directed the wardens to be teachers as much as law enforcement officers. Unless a violation was particularly flagrant, violators of the law were merely warned on the first offense. A junior department of the society was created, and volunteers were asked to form local junior branches. A library of 10 books was selected, and 50 sets were assembled for distribution to county superintendents of schools who donated $5 to the society and agreed to make the books available to teachers, who were then in turn expected to use the books in teaching natural history to their pupils.

In the summer of 1904, Pearson had an opportunity, for the first time since 1898, to spend a few weeks in field study on the North Carolina coast (Pearson 1904, Pearson 1905). Armed with field glasses and camera equipment rather than a gun, he took notes and made photographs from which slides were produced for use in the stereopticon projector. The collector of bird bodies had become a collector of bird pictures.

Also during the summer, he taught a 3-week course in ornithology at the South Carolina State Summer School, at Rock Hill, lectured on birds at the summer schools of Davidson College and the University of North Carolina, and addressed the State Horticultural Society of Georgia (State Norm. Mag. 1904). From time to time throughout the year, he visited hunting preserves and clubs established primarily by wealthy men from northern states. He solicited their financial support for the Audubon Society and sought their commitment to standards of sportsmanship that would ensure the preservation of game species.

In January 1905, after a donation from a wealthy benefactor, the National Committee of Audubon Societies incorporated itself as the National Association of Audubon Societies. William Dutcher was elected president; Pearson was chosen secretary and special agent in charge of soliciting contributions and building a national membership. The principal national leadership for bird protection thus passed from the AOU bird protection committee to the new association. In anticipation of this development, Pearson had resigned from his teaching position at the State Normal College in December 1904 but had retained the secretaryship of the Audubon Society of North Carolina.

In the summer of 1905, Pearson sought to reorganize and reinvigorate the Audubon Society of South Carolina, which had been established in 1900. He offered classes in ornithology at the summer school of Clemson College and gave public lectures there and

elsewhere in the state (Pearson 1937). He needed to find a counterpart to himself, that is, an established ornithologist who was a persuasive speaker and a skillful organizer and who was willing to administer the society. No such person appeared. Arthur T. Wayne, of Mount Pleasant, was a proficient ornithologist, but he preferred to work alone (Palmer 1954). Pearson turned to persons prominent in education and government. On 10 July, the Audubon Society of South Carolina was reorganized, with Senator Benjamin R. Tillman as president and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Oscar B. Martin as secretary. Pearson assisted the new officers by visiting several towns, soliciting memberships; he also organized an educational department in the society and enrolled 225 teachers as members (Pearson 1937, Bird-Lore 1905).

A bill similar to the Audubon Act in North Carolina, providing for a warden system administered by the state Audubon society, was introduced in the legislature of South Carolina (Bird-Lore 1906). Pearson addressed the legislature in January 1906, hoping to win support for the bill. "I worked like a beaver, in Columbia," he wrote later, "exhausting every device I could think of to get our Audubon bill considered, but the Legislature adjourned without its having been brought to a vote" (Pearson 1937). In the following year, he wrote a new bill, lobbied in its behalf, and, after it became law, helped the Audubon Society organize to meet its responsibilities. The new society president, B.F. Taylor, who impressed Pearson as being a "splendid officer," lent money to the organization, enabling Secretary James H. Rice to begin employing wardens without waiting for hunting license fees to be received in the fall (Pearson to Dutcher 1907, Bird-Lore 1907, Audubon Soc. N.C. 1907).

## SOUTH CAROLINA AUDUBON WARDEN KILLED

Neither President Taylor nor Secretary Rice was able to arouse adequate support for the Audubon Society and the new law. The society's membership remained low; the wardens were slow to make arrests and often unsuccessful in obtaining convictions. By November, one person had been convicted of killing a Great Blue Heron. Although by January 1908, the total number of convictions had risen to 11, many reports of uninvestigated violations were reaching Pearson (Bird-Lore 1907, Pearson 1937). He consulted with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Martin and arranged for Mary T. Moore, school secretary of the Audubon Society of North Carolina, to spend 6 weeks lecturing on birds and bird protection in the public schools and before teachers groups. She worked under Martin's direction and at the invitation of local schools and groups. By the end of her tour, she had spoken a total of 68 times to an estimated 15,000 teachers and pupils (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1908, Pearson to Dutcher 1908). During 1908, several hundred arrests were made by the more than 100 wardens then employed, but convictions were still difficult to obtain (Bird-Lore 1909). Moreover, in September, near St. George, an Audubon warden was assassinated by a man whom Rice believed to be one of two "notorious fish-pirates" who had been threatened by the warden with prosecution (Bird-Lore 1909).

Perhaps the murder was the event that finally convinced the Audubon Society of South Carolina it was inadequate for the task it had undertaken. In October 1908, at its annual meeting, the society adopted a resolution advocating the establishment of a state warden system separate from the society and supported by a license tax on hunters,

resident and nonresident. Bills were drafted for the legislature, which in 1910 created the position of chief game warden and imposed a nonresident hunting license tax but rejected the resident hunting tax. Because of the immediate lack of money to employ wardens, the laws protecting birds had little enforcement in the summer of 1910. Egret rookeries on the coast were plundered by plume hunters, Rice reported, and no one was arrested. In 1911, Pearson used National Association funds to employ wardens on the South Carolina coast. Only four egrets were reported as having been killed during that summer (Bird-Lore 1909-1910, Palmer 1912).

In North Carolina, the Audubon Society, under Pearson's direction, served with growing strength and success for 6 years. By the end of the Audubon year, March 1909, a hundred wardens, some full-time, others part-time, were on duty. During that same year, there were 163 convictions in the courts for violations of the bird and game laws. Half the convictions were for hunting on someone else's land without permission; 17 were for killing squirrels illegally, 16 for killing quails illegally, and 10 for hunting ducks and geese illegally. There were individual convictions for killing woodpeckers, snowbirds, warblers, herons, Blue Jays, buzzards, and nighthawks. There was also one for selling mockingbirds. Because of heavy storms on the coast, the number of sea-birds—gulls, terns, and Black Skimmers—raised during the summer of 1908 was little more than 3,000, far below the 10,000 raised the previous summer but above the 1,700 raised in 1903, the first year the birds were protected by the state society. Moreover, a new species of tern, the Cabot's Tern [Sandwich Tern], had established itself on the protected coast (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1905-1909).

Although there was little open criticism of the Audubon Society, resentment on the part of convicted persons and their friends and sympathizers was growing. Moreover, Pearson's strong influence in the state legislature, exerted through committees friendly to him and the society, rankled some legislators. His unusual role, as an official of the National Association as well as the state society, was at times misunderstood. His travels in behalf of the national organization (to South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Mexico, Virginia, District of Columbia, New Jersey, New York, and the Midwest) were susceptible to being portrayed as pleasure trips, paid for with the receipts from the sale of hunting licenses in North Carolina.

In the legislature of 1909, a bill was introduced to remove Beaufort and Currituck Counties from the Audubon Society's jurisdiction and authorize them individually to sell hunting licenses (good only in the county selling the license) and to employ their own wardens to enforce the bird and game laws. Half the money from the sale of licenses would go to the county school fund. The arrangement had such appeal that after intermittent debates over a week's time, a law was enacted that removed 52 of the state's 98 counties from the Audubon Society's jurisdiction, leaving only 46 in which the society could sell licenses and enforce the law (N.C. House Rep. 1909, N.C. Pub. Laws 1909, Pearson 1937).

North Carolina, the first southern state to adopt a statewide system of bird and game protection, thus became, in 1909, one of the few southern states not to have such a system. By 1916, it was the only southern state other than Mississippi not to have such a system. In 1911, and every 2 years thereafter until success was achieved, Pearson sponsored, through the Audubon Society of North Carolina, a bill to establish a new state game commission.

T. Gilbert Pearson with his daughter Elizabeth. This photograph appears to have been taken on the porch of the home of H.H. Brimley, Ashe Avenue, Raleigh, N.C. (Photo courtesy of N.C. State Museum of Natural History)

It was finally created in 1927, by an act that abolished the Audubon Society and transferred its property to the new commission (N.C. Pub. Laws 1927).

The curtailing of the jurisdiction of the Audubon Society of North Carolina enabled Pearson to devote more of his time to the National Association. He accepted re-election as state secretary on the condition that he would be expected to devote "only such time as could be spared" from duties in the National Association (Audubon Soc. N.C. 1910). Nonetheless, he was probably the best-known game commissioner in the nation. In 1910, he was elected president of the National Association of State Game and Fish Wardens and Commissioners (Pearson to Dutcher 1910, New Orleans Picayune 1910).

William Dutcher had a stroke in October 1910 that rendered him unable to speak or write. The board of directors of the National Association of Audubon Societies bestowed upon Pearson the powers of executive director. In 1911, after it had become apparent that Dutcher was unlikely to recover, Pearson resigned from his position with the Audubon Society of North Carolina. In January 1912, he moved his family, consisting of his wife and three children (Elizabeth, who later married Charles T. Jackson; Thomas Gilbert Pearson Jr.; and William Theodore Pearson, named for William Dutcher and Theodore S. Palmer), to a house on Loring Place, in New York City, where he resided the rest of his life. When Dutcher died in 1920, Pearson became the president of the National Association. He held that position until he retired in 1934. In 1922, he founded the International Committee for Bird Protection, for which he served as president until 1938.

Before leaving North Carolina, Pearson had become so busy with Audubon work that he realized he could not soon write the kind of book on the birds of North Carolina he wanted to write if he did the work alone. Herbert H. Brimley and his brother, Clement S. Brimley, agreed to collaborate with him. The board of directors of the Audubon Society of North Carolina authorized the appropriation of $1,200 to pay for paintings and drawings for the book (Gold 1911); the state Geological Survey agreed to publish it. Although all three men contributed to the text, Pearson did the final drafting (Pearson et al. 1942). In 1913, the book was in the last stages of binding when a fire destroyed the printing establishment. Not until 1919 was the work finally published.

Pearson drew upon his studies and observations in North Carolina in his other works, which include *The Bird Study Book* (1917) and *Tales From Birdland* (1918). He also contributed to and edited *Birds of America* (1917) and *Portraits and Habits of Our Birds* (1920-1921).

In 1924 Pearson's alma mater, the University of North Carolina, awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (Linton 1964).

Soon after coming to North Carolina, Pearson had begun to look upon it as his home state. He continued to do so even while living in New York for more than 30 years. Although he did not attend the organizational meeting of the North Carolina Bird Club, those who did attend voted to include him as an honorary charter member (Chat 1937). He contributed articles to *The Chat*, served on the membership committee in 1940, and delivered a lecture to the annual meeting in 1941. In 1942, after the North Carolina Bird Club had taken advance orders to assure sales, a revised edition of *Birds of North Carolina* was published by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Following Pearson's death on 3 September 1943, Herbert H. Brimley wrote of his friend, "Yes, we shall miss Gilbert Pearson. Men of his stamp are not every day creations" (H.H. Brimley 1943).

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