

A STATE ECOLOGICAL SURVEY.

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The fact that the native fauna and flora of Illinois are rapidly disappearing, makes imperative a survey of the state which shall serve not only as a record of the past and present conditions, but which shall throw light upon certain fundamental biological problems.

Illinois by virtue of its geographic position offers exceptional opportunities for the investigation of the factors involved in the development of the prairie and the forest; the study of the post-

glacial migration of both plants and animals; the determination of the methods of competition between biotic associations belonging to four great centers of distribution; the relation of great tension lines to the origin of species.

The fundamental plan of such a survey should be geographic and involve the entire state. Its methods should be ecological and involve the study of both plants and animals from the point of view of the habitat. Taxonomic work should be subordinated to the investigation of biological problems. The bearing of such work upon agriculture, horticulture and forestry is well known. It is the one method of working up the biological resources of a state which will give results valuable alike to theoretical and applied science.

Such a survey carried out under competent direction will provide a fund of information for natural history students throughout the state; will be of assistance to every teacher of botany, zoology and geography; will aid in the solution of many biological problems; will advance our knowledge of the natural resources of Illinois; will aid in their conservation; and will suggest the proper methods for their development.
