



The rattling sonorous call of nesting sandhill cranes rises above the endless symphony of Okefenokee's many bird sounds.

ing the next 30 years. Not until the cream of the timber crop had been harvested were other values given much consideration.

But enough virgin stands of timber remained in remoter parts of the swamp, enough wild game survived to excite the interest of visitors, and in 1919 the Georgia Assembly set the area aside as a game reservation. Eighteen years later the land was purchased by the Federal Government, and on March 30, 1937, the President of the United States issued an Executive order

establishing the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, which is now administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Improvements were made. Headquarters were erected at Camp Cornelia, 12 miles from Folkston on the east side of the refuge. Boat runs were cleared. Picnic shelters and cabins were constructed at a few favorable spots. Okefenokee the beautiful, with its glassy waters reflecting lily and shrub blooms and waving skeins of moss; Okefenokee, with its amazing wildlife; Okefenokee, with all its eerie beauty, became accessible as one of the show spots of America.

RISING ABOVE THE VARIED SOUNDS OF THE SWAMP at intervals are the loud "rusty-pump" whooping of the Florida crane and the far-reaching drumbeats of woodpeckers on shells of dead tree trunks. The squealing cry of the wood duck is heard, the discordant squawks of herons and egrets, the chattering of fox squirrels. At night one may hear the sudden screech of a wildcat and the lonesome hooting of owls. In the spring the bellowing of bull alligators contrasts with the fluting of mockingbirds and many other songbirds. Okefenokee is silent only in the heat of noonday.

Okefenokee is always beautiful, always fascinating; changing with the seasons, but always a scenic wonderland. Its many shallow expanses of water, known as "prairies" by local folk, bloom with color in spring and summer. Waterlilies are everywhere. The bladderwort and pickerelweed thrust purple flowers out into the sunshine. The yellow spikes of "never-wet," and the little white blossoms of floatinghearts—all reflected in glassy waters—help create an illusion of fairyland.