

Went to
Lake
Tulare

The lake region through southern Oregon and northern California is the most extensive breeding ground in the West for water fowl. In the latter part of May 1905, we crossed the Cascade Range and set out to investigate conditions through the Klamath Country. This extensive area had been the most profitable field for the market hunter in winter and the plume hunter in summer. We secured a staunch row boat, loaded in our supply of provisions, and set out down the Klamath River for the Lower Klamath Lake. We were searching for white herons but after almost a month of cruising the great tule swamps, we saw not a sign of these birds. From the Lower Klamath, we cruised down Lost River and spent two weeks traveling around Tule or Rhett Lake. The white herons that formerly lived in this localith had been entirely exterminated. The great grebe colonies along the northern border of Tule Lake were also a thing of the past. (~~As a last resort, we heard that~~) The only place left in that part of the country where white herons might be found was at Clear Lake about thirty-five miles to the east. But when we were told by reliable parties that some plume hunters had just cleaned out the remnants of the white heron colony that had lived there, we gave up the chase.

I was told by an old hunter that Tulare Lake in the southern part of California had formerly contained many colonies of white herons. Here we still expected to find some of these birds. But during the summer of 1906 while in that locality I talked with one of the men who had made four and five hundred dollars a day while white herons lasted on Tulare Lake. He said the previous year these birds had been so scarce that he had really not made expenses. So for a second

season our hope of finding and photographing these birds here on the Pacific Coast had vanished.

But we had not given up. "If there is one place where a few of these showy birds may still be found, it is out in the Malheur Lake region, in southeastern Oregon," an old hunter told me. So last summer we set out to camp on the trail of the plume hunter and see if we could find a colony of these birds.