



Indiana Dunes State Park has a winter shelter belt that is warm and protected.

BEHIND DUNES IS A SHELTERED BELT VISITED EARLY BY NATURE LOVERS

**Sand Hills and Trees Protect It From Lake Michigan Gales—Flowers in
Profusion, Birds by Myriads, Are Found**

SURPRISING as it may be to you, Indiana Dunes state park, away up in the north of the state, on Lake Michigan, is one of the first to have a large attendance of late winter and early spring visitors. Its gatemen go on duty always about March 1 to welcome and direct visitors and give them maps and answer questions. And the visitors, year in and year out, always appear, and all the wintry, chilly, disagreeable things you can think of will not change it. Why? Because flowers, birds and people have found that this park contains a sheltered and protected area where the winds can not penetrate and nature is at its best.

Take the actual figures for it, just to emphasize the point. Last year the gatemen went on duty February 28, and from that date to April 10, there were 6,600 visitors to this park. There is no guess about this, because it is shown in the cash returns from the ten-cent gate admission.

The facts about the Indiana Dunes state park are interesting and contain a suggestion for others who imagine that the park is merely a strip of sandy beach along a great lake, where one may bathe or sun himself in the summer sun. It is true that the park includes these things, but it also includes something else that is nearly always left out of public imagination and can scarcely be pictured until you see it.

The park's dunes rise from the lake level to a height of 200 feet. In themselves they are something well worth the seeing, whether in summer or winter, spring or fall. But these dunes act as a buffer for interesting winter valleys that lie, protected, quiet and beautiful, with no wind, no chilling cold. The wild flowers found this sheltered area centuries ago and so did the birds. In

more recent years the nature-lovers have found this shelter-belt, and every year these people who love quietude and unspoiled nature, have gone there, in snow and rain, cloudy weather and sunshine, to walk the trails and see the plants, birds and wild animals.

Apparently, these nature lovers have been going to these dunes for years. And they do not go by the hundreds, but by the thousands. Some of them like the snows, some like the sunshine, but they all like the shelter. You may step out of an automobile on the wintry lake shore, where the westerly winds have a sweep at you, and you are chilled through. The wind cuts through the thickest clothing, gets down your neck, even chills your spine; but once you get into the valleys behind the dunes you are warm. The wind may drive at forty miles an hour on the exposed areas, but behind the dunes, in the sheltered valleys, you are warm if dressed in your winter hiking clothes and ready for the open.

The sun beats down into these valleys in February and March and the depressions hold the heat. The chill wind from the lake drives over the top of the dunes and far above you, but the sun's warmth is held there, in a pocket. And the temperature does not change greatly at night. It is lower, of course, but there can be no serious cold wave as spring approaches, because the lake tempers the winds from the north and west. That is why, in the early spring, you may come on acres and acres of flowers behind the dunes at the Indiana Dunes state park. It also explains the presence of myriads of winter birds, which find shelter there.

Two kinds of visitors (Continued on page 28)

BEHIND DUNES IS SHELTERED BELT

(Continued from page 3)

come to the dunes, the summer beach crowds, interested in bathing and sunning themselves on the sands, and the nature lovers, hikers and photographers, who find quiet seclusion. And it does not matter how many may be on the lake front, these regions behind the dunes are always secluded even at the height of the bathing season. Nor does it matter how many nature lovers go there, it is still quiet, because these early, winter-time and spring-time guests are a quiet lot in sympathy with each other and in harmony with the quiet environment.



Where Lake Michigan's shores are cold and deserted in winter.