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REDUCED WATERFOWL KILL
FORESEEN BY OFFICIALS

Canadian and U. S. Investigators
Find Drought Effects Severe
on Breeding Areas

Severe limitation of the number of waterfowl to be killed the coming season may be necessary as a result of long-continued drought in nesting areas of the United States and Canada, officials of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, indicated to-day, after considering reports of bureau representatives recently returned from expeditions to northern areas of the United States and in company with Canadian officials to the principal duck-breeding areas in Canada. Although Federal regulations governing the shooting of ducks and geese were recently amended to reduce the open season throughout the United States by two weeks this fall and winter, still further restriction of the annual kill may be necessary, the officials stated.

The Biological Survey investigators brought back discouraging reports of unprecedented drought, of lakes and ponds and marshes turned into dusty barrens with no sign of aquatic life. They reported the almost complete absence of water during the breeding period in the great prairie breeding grounds of southwestern Manitoba, southern Saskatchewan as far north as Saskatoon, and Alberta westward to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and northward to the vicinity of Edmonton.

A marked shortage of breeding ducks and young was noted in the great delta region of the Peace and Athabaska Rivers. In tours of several thousand miles the investigators saw only a few dozen small broods of young ducks in an area that in normal years has produced many millions of mallards, pintails, redheads, canvasbacks, bluebills, and teals.

The shallow prairie sloughs and lakes of the region have disappeared following about 10 years of reduced rainfall and three seasons of persistent drought, Biological Survey officials explained, and a far-reaching inquiry sent out by the Canadian Government has failed so far to show that the ducks have found other more remote breeding areas. Not all the ducks and geese that come into the United States are bred in the region surveyed, it was said, but a very large proportion of the wild fowl that make up the great flights know that country as their birthplace, and the shortage of breeding birds and the loss of so many young will have a serious effect upon shooting conditions both in this country and in Canada.

The Canadian and United States Governments under the migratory-bird treaty, it was pointed out at the Biological Survey, are both concerned over the disastrous conditions that now threaten the wild fowl of the continent. The two Governments are therefore endeavoring to avert shortages by devising methods for saving an adequate supply of breeders for next season. The severity of the limitations that may be necessary will not be determined definitely, the Biological Survey officials say, until after further conferences between the authorities of Canada and of the United States and until more information is received from the nesting grounds. It is apparent, however, they say, that the drought, which has caused so much distress and economic loss to farmers and to industry generally, will also directly affect the sportsman. To avert the grave possibilities of a permanent disaster to the wild fowl, the gunners in all sections of both countries will probably be asked to reduce their duck shooting this winter to a minimum, so that enough mature birds will survive to breed and thus enable the flocks to replenish themselves with the return of water to the parched areas.