

# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



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### RESERVATION PROTECTOR RESCUES WATERFOWL CRIPPLED BY HUNTERS

Wounded by hunters, 1,865 crippled waterfowl that had flown into Tule Lake Bird Refuge, Siskiyou County, California, were rescued by refuge employees and volunteers aided by a spaniel trained to retrieve crippled birds, during the 1931 open season and the following weeks. The reservation protector, H. M. Worcester, has reported the details to the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the refuge. The protector also reported that 1,359 mortally wounded birds had been given to local charity organizations for food.

In the administration of the refuge, a 10,600-acre reservation established by Executive Order on October 4, 1928, the officials permitted hunters to recover birds falling within the sanctuary, though they did not allow them to carry their guns inside. Many birds, however, Mr. Worcester explained, sailed far into the refuge before they fell--some as much as half a mile. These were not recovered by the hunters, and nearly all of them, the reservation protector believes, would have starved, frozen, or become victims of meat eating animals had it not been for the rescue work. Near the end of the campaign, it was estimated that about 200 eagles had gathered gradually, attracted to the refuge by the disabled birds.

Beginning November 25, Mr. Worcester with deputies and volunteer co-operators gathered the birds daily until January 5. The crippled waterfowl were

retrieved gently by a well-trained Springer spaniel dog. They were then placed in a box on sled runners and taken by the men to near-by special pens on Link River, Klamath Falls, Oreg., where they were cared for and fed.

Kept in open-top pens, the birds were at first allowed to escape when they had recovered enough strength to fly. After finding, however, that a considerable number of the wounded birds left the pens before they were able to find food for themselves, the refuge officials decided to restrain them until they had completely recovered.

Mr. Worcester reported that 1,173 ducks (723 pintail hens, 392 pintail drakes, 19 mallard hens, 21 mallard drakes, 12 widgeons, and 6 gadwalls) were placed in his pens. There were 685 geese (386 Hutchins's and cackling, 209 lesser snow, and 90 white-fronted) and 7 swans cared for. About 30 per cent of the ducks later died, but there was only a 10 per cent loss of the geese.

Eighty-five per cent of the geese recovered alive had broken wings, although less than 17 per cent of the recovered ducks were so injured. Ducks, it was thought, fell much sooner after being winged. The wings of 37 geese were shattered so badly that amputations were necessary. Of these birds 22 were still alive and doing well at the time of Mr. Worcester's report. Many of the winged birds, Mr. Worcester believes, were injured by long-range shooting from hunters' blinds as the birds passed high in the air.

Birds that were killed the refuge officials donated to charity institutions of Tule Lake Townsite, Calif., and Merrill and Klamath Falls, Oreg. Permanently disabled birds they distributed to parks and zoos for exhibition and breeding purposes. Those liberated they first marked with Biological Survey bands to assist in the nation-wide waterfowl studies being made by the bureau.

The rescue work, in the protector's judgment, was highly successful because of the birds saved. In addition, Mr. Worcester believed that the publicity received through the local papers caused "enough comment to make the hunter more conservative in his long range shooting."