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SUGGEST WAYS TO PROVIDE
SMALL AREAS FOR WATERFOWL

Three desirable measures in the small-areas-

for-waterfowl program inaugurated recently by the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture and cooperating agencies, are:

1. Create new local breeding areas for waterfowl.
2. Improve or restore existing or former breeding areas.
3. Establish and protect local resting areas throughout the birds' migrating and wintering ranges.

This program, the bureau explained in recommending these activities is primarily intended to encourage the establishment, improvement, and protection of small local refuges and breeding grounds as supplements to larger ones now being maintained by Federal and State agencies. Wild fowl breed freely on suitable small areas, even on those known as potholes or ponds, and in the aggregate such areas are likely to be as important to waterfowl as the larger lakes and marshes. The preservation of these small breeding areas is essential to the maintenance of our waterfowl.

For carrying its recommended measures into effect the bureau offered the following suggestions:

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Creating New Areas

The simplest methods proposed for creating new areas include the division of water into low areas and the damming of small streams. Where conditions permit, a series of dams may be built along a stream. (Farmers' Bulletin 1612-F, gives instructions for building earthen and other dams, and may be obtained free from the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.) These water areas created for the birds' use should be from a few inches to not more than 3 feet in depth. The banks should be marshy and should be protected from grazing. They should not be mowed or otherwise disturbed during the breeding season, and should be protected from fire.

Improving or Restoring Areas

For improving existing water areas or restoring former ones, the Biological Survey recommends that excessive drainage should be checked, old pond sites and marshes reflooded, and water impounded to meet seasonal shortages. Small reservoirs along streams or in depressions will save water for maintaining levels on the areas during periods of shortage and will also help prevent floods. It is important to keep ^{the} variation of the water level within inches, not feet, and so preserve the character and abundance of vegetation needed by the wild fowl both for cover and food. Constant water levels are equally important for fish, fur bearers, and other wild life.

Maintaining Resting Areas

The Biological Survey emphasizes that the utility of inviolate refuges in maintaining stocks of game has been proved beyond all question. Such refuges for wild fowl have been maintained by private shooting clubs, and more can and should be established by other agencies. Properly carried out, the movement can be made highly important in preserving waterfowl.

Local resting areas to be established throughout the migrating and wintering ranges of the birds, the bureau advises, should therefore be protected as inviolate refuges. Setting aside such areas need involve no expense or activity other than control of the land and prevention of trespass. The cooperation of State game protective officials in this work may often be obtained, and this cooperation is especially valuable on account of the additional legal protection it affords. In the case of the resting grounds, as well as of the breeding areas, additional improvement by seeding food and cover plants may be desirable. Directions for this work may be obtained from the Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.

Persons desiring more detailed advice on methods are invited to write to the Biological Survey, Washington, D.C. The bureau also requests information about the improvement of local bird-refuges.

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