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FOOD FOR WILD FOWL IMPROVING

Eelgrass, the staple food of sea brant and an important forage plant for Canada geese and black ducks, seems to be coming back in some sections of its Atlantic Coast range, where serious shortages have occurred recently, reports the Bureau of Biological Survey, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Eelgrass has in the past regained its abundance after similar shortages.

In some parts of its range from Labrador to North Carolina, the eelgrass apparently disappeared during 1931 and 1932, and in other sections the supply dwindled seriously. Effects of this shortage on wildfowl, however, have not been so severe as was feared, the birds having turned to some extent to other sources of food. Brant populations may have been reduced by decreases in the number of young raised the last two summers, but adults wintering in most parts of the eastern seacoast this year are in "fair to good" condition.

Because of the great importance of eelgrass to wild fowl, the Biological Survey and the Canadian National Parks Branch have both made field studies of the shortage, but the cause has not yet been determined. These agencies are charged with the protection of waterfowl in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty between the United States and Great Britain.