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WATERFOWL SITUATION  
IS STILL PRECARIOUS

Increases Are Local, Says Biological Survey;  
Do Not Hold Generally

Many species of ducks are still at a seriously low ebb, though the status of waterfowl on the whole is somewhat better today than two years ago, the poorest season we have ever experienced, says Paul G. Redington, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, in a statement issued today (July 10) on the Bureau's waterfowl findings during the last two years.

The statement is as follows:

Waterfowl Conditions in 1933

Continuing the fact-finding program of the past several years with regard to the status of waterfowl in the United States and Canada, the Biological Survey made extended field investigations during the fall and winter of 1932, and the spring and early summer of 1933.

During the seasons 1931 and 1932 waterfowl had reached the lowest point on record, through culmination of unfavorable conditions, including serious and long-continued droughts in many of the most important northwestern breeding areas. This made it necessary to restrict the hunting season to a single month in 1931, and to 2 months in 1932. Many species are still at a seriously low ebb, but the status of waterfowl on the whole is slightly better than in 1931. This is due to some increase in snow and rainfall, consequent improvement in the food supply, and to saving the breeding stock by reducing the kill during the last two seasons.

This statement, it should be emphasized, is based upon a comparison of the present with 1931, the poorest season that we have ever experienced.

Some areas normally favorable for waterfowl have shown good concentrations of birds. Others have been less satisfactory. The most important concentrations during the winter and late autumn of the 1932-33 season, taking all kinds of waterfowl into consideration, took place in western Lake Erie, in central and southern Illinois, in Louisiana, in Texas, on Mattamuskeet Lake, N. C., in South Carolina, and on Chesapeake Bay, in the East; and in Montana, Utah, Washington, and California, in the West. These numerous local concentrations of ducks and geese might easily give the impression that the birds were generally more abundant than was actually the case.

While ducks and geese as a whole are now in somewhat better condition than last year, increased numbers are confined largely to a few species, which for the most part have extensive breeding ranges. Among these the mallard, pintail, black duck, baldpate, Canada goose, and the blue goose, are most in evidence. Ducks with more restricted breeding territories, including the blue-winged teal, lesser scaup, bufflehead, gadwall, shoveller, canvasback, redhead, and the ruddy duck are in many localities fewer than during the previous season. In other localities they are just about holding their own, and where they do show a slight increase they are still in a state so precarious, that an unfavorable nesting, hatching, or rearing season, or combination of other unfavorable circumstances, might easily lead to disaster. Possibilities of such unfavorable conditions are indicated by reports of excessive temperatures and low rainfall during June in the northern part of the Great Plains region of the United States and adjoining southern parts of the Prairie Provinces of Canada.