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MOUSE DAMAGE TO ORCHARDS ACCOMPANIES SEVERE WINTER

Many fine mature apple trees in the eastern fruit regions were completely girdled by rodents during the severe winter weather and will die if prompt action is not taken to save them by bridge grafting, warns the Bureau of Biological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Recent examinations by Bureau specialists revealed a number of threatened orchards in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. The injury, say the specialists, is still in progress, and in the Northern States it may continue until late in April.

Many farmers may already have taken precautions as the result of warnings issued by the Biological Survey last fall. Those who have not would do well, the Bureau advises, to make an examination of their trees at once and, where injury is apparent, take immediate steps to control the mice by means of poisoned bait—prepared as described in Farmers' Bulletin 1397, Mouse Control in Field and Orchard. Methods of bridge grafting to save trees already girdled are described in Farmers' Bulletin 1369, Bridge Grafting. These publications can be obtained at 5 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

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Other Eastern Refuges Developed

Activities similar to those at Swanquarter have already improved two other sanctuaries in the East—the St. Marks Migratory Bird Refuge in Florida and the Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge in Maryland.

Along the shores of Apalachee Bay in Florida, the St. Marks refuge comprises more than 35,000 acres of land and water used by ducks, geese, and sanderlings and other shorebirds. Biological Survey officials consider the area especially valuable because thousands of geese frequent the refuge and graze on the grass-covered areas and rest on the sand flats in the midst of the large marshes. On this refuge a CCC camp between July 1, 1933, and March 31, 1934, constructed 14 miles of truck trails and provided 24 miles of telephone line, thus establishing ready communication between the refuge headquarters, on the site of the former town of Fort Leon, and the outside world and also between the headquarters and a refuge substation at St. Marks lighthouse, some miles away. For fire protection, the workers erected two steel lookout towers and cleared a mile of firebreak. They fenced and landscaped the headquarters site, planted acorns and trees there, and made improvements to existing buildings and erected small structures required in the proper administration of the refuge.

On the Blackwater refuge, near Cambridge, Md., black ducks and blue-winged teal use the marshes and waters as a breeding ground. Mallards and pintails concentrate here, shorebirds find sanctuary, and bobwhites also are among the area's year-long residents. At this refuge the major improvement activities, during a period of nearly 5 months beginning on July 1, 1933, included erection of a telephone line $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, removal of fire hazards on approximately 50 acres of woodland, building 3 lookout towers, clearing 2 miles of roadside, improving timber stands for upland game on

15 acres, constructing 1 mile of new road, renewing and repairing 6 miles of existing roads, drilling two 400-foot wells, and constructing a bridge, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of fence, a machine shed, and an addition to the headquarters dwelling.

Camps Established on Mid-West Refuges

Two camps have also recently been assigned to Biological Survey supervision for work on wild-life refuges in Nebraska—one at the Crescent Lake Migratory Bird Refuge and the other at the Niobrara Big Game Preserve.

The Crescent Lake refuge, an area of nearly 40,000 acres, includes Hackberry and Island Lakes and numerous smaller bodies of water, among the sandhills of Garden County. Ducks, geese, and shorebirds find these attractive, and sage hens inhabit the grass-covered sandhills. Here CCC workers will build fences around the duck-nesting areas on the lakes, and provide ditches, dikes, and wells for maintaining water levels. For efficient administration of the refuge they will make truck trails, install telephone lines, and build a field cabin for overnight use of protectors patrolling the area. This refuge, bisected by a public highway, includes a recreational area, which also will be improved by members of the CCC. Trees and shrubs will be planted—a valuable addition to an area that is now almost treeless.

To Improve Big-Game Preserves

Though primarily an area for buffalo, elk, and antelope, the Niobrara Big Game Preserve (along the Niobrara River, near Valentine, Nebr.) is also a bird sanctuary—frequented by ducks, shorebirds, prairie chickens, sharp-tailed grouse, quail, and other species. A veteran's camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps here will improve the area as a big-game preserve and also make possible its greater development for wild fowl. The workers will build fences for the big game, remove fire hazards, clean up brush, and

construct truck trails. Across small creeks and gullies they will construct dams to conserve water, prevent erosion, and provide ponds for wild fowl. Other improvement activities will include drilling wells and planting trees on the sandhills for erosion control.

Camps Are Educational

These CCC camps are thus carrying on a valuable conservation program, says Mr. Fechner. Their usefulness in furthering conservation, however, he points out, can not be measured alone by the improvements to the sanctuaries. As is well known, the camps are composed to a large extent of young men from 19 to 22 years of age. When they enrolled the great majority of these workers who came to the camps on the Biological Survey refuges knew little or nothing of the fundamentals of or the reason for the conservation and perpetuation of wild life. An opportunity was thus presented to the men in charge to imbue in the minds of these young Americans conservation principals of importance to proper wild-life protection and utilization. Realizing this opportunity, camp superintendents and other members of the Biological Survey staff, through lectures, personal talks with individual workers, motion pictures on wild-life and forest conservation, and by other means, have captured and are holding the interest of the men, many of whom, having lived in cities all their lives, have been entirely unfamiliar with country environment. These young men, say the officials, have displayed a remarkable interest in wild life and in efforts being made by the Government to conserve and perpetuate it. They have also evidenced a just desire to learn more about nature subjects. As those who have enrolled grow older and take various occupations coupled with other forms of useful citizenship they are not likely to forget the lessons they learned in wild-life conservation at the CCC camps.