



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 1944

The tenth annual migratory waterfowl inventory will be taken this week by observers all over the United States in order to assemble the data on which 1944 hunting regulations will be issued, according to a report by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

Lack of manpower and of transportation may interfere as was the case last year, Dr. Gabrielson said, but the check will be as complete as war conditions will allow and an effort will be made to cover all States. The annual inventory is made under Congressional mandate.

January is selected as the month for estimating the number of migratory waterfowl because this is the time of year the birds are most likely to remain in one locality and be included in the estimate only once. The inventories have been taken each year since January 1935, the low point of the "duck depression" when the numbers were estimated at less than 30 million. Last year, because of careful conservation methods in the interim, the estimated number was placed at 119,600,000.

Estimating the number of migratory waterfowl is an intricate task requiring coordination of a nationwide staff of expert observers, Dr. Gabrielson pointed out. Under the leadership of the five Fish and Wildlife Service regional directors, the corps of observers will have members in each State although most of the observations will be taken along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Coasts, and in the Mississippi Valley.

Inventory figures are not to be considered as accurate counts of waterfowl populations, Dr. Gabrielson declared, but rather as valuable indications of the trends of bird populations. On the basis of inventory figures and other investigations by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Secretary Ickes will adopt the 1944 migratory bird hunting regulations late next summer.

Describing the method of making waterfowl estimates, Dr. Gabrielson stated that observers in each of the five regions in North America report their findings to the regional leader. Returns from the various regions are tabulated, summarized, and sent to Washington, D. C., where Frederick C. Lincoln, who is in general charge of the inventory work, and his staff compile the estimated totals for the various species.

Cooperating in the work of taking the inventory are the National Park Service, Civil Air Patrol, the Naval Air Service, Coast Guard, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, State forestry, game, and fish departments, commercial organizations, and private citizens.