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# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

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U. S. sportsmen owe a great debt to the Government of Canada for its part in quadrupling the continental population of migratory waterfowl, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, said today.

"Canada is the nursery for many of the ducks, geese, swans, and other waterfowl which make their winter homes in the United States, and if the Federal government of Canada, as well as the governments of the Provinces, had not cooperated so whole-heartedly in the work of conservationists both in the United States and Canada, we could not have alleviated the so-called 'duck depression' as rapidly as was done."

Nature has done more to bring back the migratory waterfowl population than conservationists could ever do, Dr. Gabrielson declared, pointing out that a severe and lasting drought in the Provinces where most of the waterfowl breed had done much to cause the decline in numbers. Since 1938 these areas have had plenty of precipitation and many of the ponds, lakes, and marshes have gotten back to their natural condition.

"Canada has done whatever she could to assist Nature in bringing the birds back. Millions of acres have been set aside as refuges, especially important in those sections where civilization has interfered with the natural conditions necessary to the life of waterfowl. A total of 84 bird sanctuaries has been established in all the provinces and in the Northwest Territory. In the Western part of Canada some 1,300,000 acres of community pastures are also bird refuges. In addition Canada has many Federal and Provincial parks in which birds receive full protection. Tremendous areas embracing 720,000 square miles have been set aside in the Northwest Territory as game sanctuaries and native hunting preserves and these give some protection to the breeding birds," Dr. Gabrielson said.

"Under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, the Canadian Department of Agriculture has completed more than 20,000 water projects in the Prairie Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. These range in size from small stock-watering ponds to very large storage reservoirs and lakes. This series of projects was begun less than ten years ago but apparently already is having a beneficial effect on the waterfowl population.

"Canada, through the enforcement of its version of our own Migratory Bird Treaty Act, through cooperation with private sportsmen's organizations, through scientific investigation into causes of waterfowl mortality, and through predator control has also aided in the comeback of the waterfowl.

"Certainly the Fish and Wildlife Service could have asked for no more cooperation than Canada has always given it," Dr. Gabrielson said. "It has been a good neighbor indeed."