



**ADVANCE RELEASE**

*Office distribution*  
1-21-46

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**INFORMATION SERVICE**

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

For Advance Release to the SUNDAY PAPERS OF JANUARY 20, 1946.

Hunters killed more ducks and geese during the 1945 hunting season than were produced on the breeding grounds, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, reported today to the Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The Fish and Wildlife Service head said he saw in the situation a threat to the future of migratory waterfowl hunting.

At the opening of the 1945 hunting season, the waterfowl population was about 125,000,000, Dr. Gabrielson reported. This figure included a natural increase of around 20,000,000 young to the 105,500,000 birds estimated as the continental waterfowl population in the January 1945 inventory.

Record-breaking numbers of duck hunters were afield in 1945, he pointed out. Duck stamp sales for the three months' period ending September 30, 1945, ran about 16 per cent higher than for the same quarter in 1944. Service officials believe that this figure will mount to 20 per cent or higher when total sales records become known.

In 1944 the sale of 1,458,628 duck stamps broke all previous records. This year it will be nearly 300,000 more.

Examinations made by the Service during the 1945 season revealed an increase of about 25 per cent in the number of hunters. It showed, further, that while most of the duck areas had a smaller flight than for the previous year, the kill, due to extra hunting pressure, was heavier.

"It is obvious from this survey and from other reports coming in from our field men that waterfowl are not increasing in numbers as fast as waterfowl hunters," declared Dr. Gabrielson. "Next year the situation can be expected to be even more serious. More men will be released from military service and more ammunition will be available; but I doubt if there will be more ducks."

x x x