

# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### RELEASE DATA ON WATERFOWL SURVEY IN CALIFORNIA GRASSLANDS

The answers from a barrage of questions about waterfowl hunting ranging from "How many did you take?" to "How much did it cost you?", which were aimed at duck hunters who were in the Grasslands area of California during the 1947-48 migratory waterfowl hunting season, are being released jointly today by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Division of Fish and Game.

The purpose of the cooperative study made by these two agencies is to find means to perpetuate and improve waterfowl hunting in California, and to get an economic appraisal of this resource in the Grasslands area--the duck hunting lands on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley between Newman and Dos Palos. This one-year waterfowl study will also include populations, nesting, and feeding appraisals.

So far complete data have been analyzed from 135 personal interviews of random sampling of duck shooters who hunted in that area during the past season. In addition, questionnaires have been received by mail from 601 others. All of the data from this mailed-questionnaire group are now being compiled, but only the hunter-take information has thus far been tabulated for use in this release. The results of these inquiries will be used in determining the economic value of waterfowl resources in Central Valley areas that will be affected by water developments of the Bureau of Reclamation. The study is being financed jointly by the California Division of Fish and Game, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The annual dues paid by the hunters personally interviewed who were members of duck clubs averaged \$112.78. One hundred and thirty-five hunters spent an average of \$26.22 for meals while on their hunting trips; miscellaneous expenses averaged \$31.04. The average amount spent for ammunition was \$17.75 per person. Investment in the personally interviewed group for shotguns, decoys, and similar equipment averaged \$314.00. Investment for hunting clothes averaged \$67.33 per hunter. Better than one-third had investments in duck clubs or lands in the area that ranged from \$250 to \$5,000. Each hunter made 7.78 trips to the area during the year at an average of 120.2 miles per trip.

In regard to waterfowl populations, 64 percent of the hunters personally interviewed said there was more waterfowl in 1947 than in 1946; 15.4 percent said there was less; 13.2 percent said there was about the same number, and 7.4 percent had no opinion. The analysis made to date would indicate that the information contained in the mail questionnaires will be comparable to that obtained by personal interview.

The 736 hunters contacted personally and by mail combined shot for a total of 7,774 days, or an average of 10.56 days per hunter. The average time spent each day in hunting was 3.11 hours.

These men wound up the season with a total average bag of 40.8 ducks. Their total take was 30,037, or an average of 3.86 per day; a 96 percent hunter success. About one-half of these hunters took 1,441 geese which would represent a seasonal average of 1.95. About 12 percent of the hunters bagged 1,980 coots for an average of 2.69 per man.

The sampling by personal interview and by mailed questionnaires is at this time estimated to have covered approximately 45 percent of the normal hunting population of the Grasslands.

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