



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release JUNE 1, 1948.

WATERFOWL NESTING PROSPECTS APPEAR BRIGHTER

Although flooded highways in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are delaying the surveys now being made of the waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada, preliminary reports from the Manitoba area indicate that the nesting population to date appears to be higher than last year, Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, stated today.

Reporting on May 13, Robert H. Smith, Service flyway biologist, said, "Considering waterfowl as a group and the southern Manitoba habitat as a whole, indications are at this date that the nesting population is somewhat greater in 1948 than in 1947. There is, however, no evidence of a general and important improvement in waterfowl numbers throughout the Province."

The major floods, according to Biologist Smith, occurred before most ducks had started nesting. Some first nestings, however, are known to have been destroyed by high water, particularly at Delta Marsh, from water flowing from Lake Manitoba over Clandeboye dam.

Mr. Smith emphasized that an indirect effect of the late spring has been extensive late burning which may prove to be an unusually important cause of nest destruction in 1948.

Prairie Province have seldom, if ever, started the nesting season with so many water areas available for ducks. Waterfowl experts of the Service, however, point out that this excess water is not in itself a guarantee of heavy fall flights. Observations in the Dakotas indicate that floods and abnormally strong run-offs often attract laying birds to higher ground where the nests may fall under the plow before hatching, or to temporary pools which may dry up and leave broods of ducklings too far from water for survival. Already, the Dakotas are experiencing strong, hot winds that are sucking the moisture from the earth at such a rate as to warrant serious statements from the leading farm newspapers of that region.

Good production of waterfowl in the prairie sections still hinges on continued sufficient rainfall during the next few weeks.

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