



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DUCK "BAGS" LOW-FLYING, DUCK-COUNTING PILOT

Counting ducks from the air sounds like harmless work, but Leon D. Cool, game management agent-pilot for the Fish and Wildlife Service, disagrees. The ducks are likely to become aggressive and knock you right out of the air, he mournfully discovered this summer, while on an aerial survey of waterfowl nesting grounds in Canada. He related the story today in Washington, D. C.

Flying 150-ft. above northern Alberta's sparsely-populated bush country, near Lake Utikuma, Mr. Cool's Stinson L-5 plane crashed into a duck in mid-air. The bird got caught in the plane's engine cowling, cutting off the air flow.

The motor became dangerously over-heated, forcing Mr. Cool and his flight companion, Roy Anderson, agent of the Alberta Game Commission, to search for a place to set the plane down.

At the end of the lake, they saw a likely-looking "meadow," into which they landed. To their sorrow, the "meadow" was actually a boggy marsh. Their non-amphibious plane was hopelessly grounded in a couple of feet of mud for the next three days.

A Cree Indian discovered their plight, and brought four non-English speaking, horse-borne comrades to help the game agents out of the marsh. They built pole skids, lashed them together, set plane's wheels on the skids, and tied the wheels down. After Mr. Cool had set his brake, the Indians and their horses towed the plane three miles to a point where a small runway was built in several hours.

Before taking off to count ducks again, Mr. Cool and his Canadian companion gratefully gave the Indians their most valuable remaining possessions: \$21 in cash and a brand-new hatchet and case.

A native of Michigan, game agent-pilot Cool is 35-years old, and has been in the Fish and Wildlife Service for two years. He is presently stationed at Leonardtown, Md., with the Service's Branch of Game Management.

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