



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 1950

#### MARSH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT POINTS WAY TO INCREASED DUCK SUPPLY

Barn Meadow marsh, on the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge near Calais, Maine, promises to become an important "duck factory" as the result of a waterfowl development project undertaken by the Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the area, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman reported today.

The method used in the Barn Meadow marsh development to increase duck production by more than 100 percent might well serve as a model for state and private interests in waterfowl development, Secretary Chapman said. The Fish and Wildlife Service is practicing the new management technique wherever possible on its refuges and development areas.

Numerous duck nesting sites, landing and take-off channels for waterfowl, improved feeding areas, and an anti-predator moat, are some of the features which make Barn Meadow a more productive marsh for teal, black ducks, and ring-neck ducks, according to B. E. Smith, manager of the refuge, who is largely responsible for the Moosehorn Refuge development. In addition, increased use of the marsh by muskrats and beavers indicates potential dividends in a fur-harvest.

The number of ducks which could be raised on the old marsh was held down by two factors, and the same two conditions are responsible for much of the decline elsewhere in waterfowl nesting and brood raising, the Fish and Wildlife Service pointed out.

First a periodic flooding of nesting sites was brought about by inadequate control of the water level. As in most marshes the water level fluctuated with rains and the spring run-off from melting snow. This fluctuation either left nesting sites high and dry, and exposed to predators, or flooded the nests, preventing egg hatching. The second negative factor, also typical of many marshes, was a rank overgrowth of brush and coarse vegetation, which gave cover to foxes and raccoons on duck-raids and reduced the production of duck food. Ducks were also unable to fly in and out, or maneuver with ease in the area.

The water level of Barn Meadow marsh is now controlled by a combined dam and outlet. The water is raised or lowered, as the needs of waterfowl management dictate, by putting planks in or taking them out of the dam.

A more radical management practice on the marsh was the construction of a wide moat around the entire perimeter. During the dry season a bulldozer pushed vegetation and earth from the edges toward the center of the marsh, leaving numerous ridges and small islands behind. The moat quickly filled with water, the torn-up

land was planted to duck foods, and the islands and piles of debris were left for duck-nesting sites. Channels were dug and blasted across the marsh to increase the water area available.

According to Refuge Manager Smith, the new concept of waterfowl development will make it possible to rehabilitate many thousands of acres of overgrown beaver meadows, bogs, and vegetation-choked marshes now of little or no wildlife value. These thousands of acres -- in New England and the lake states -- are potential nesting sites and breeding grounds for countless ducks.

x x x