



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY BEGINS JANUARY 10

The Fish and Wildlife Service will "take stock" of the continent's wintering ducks and geese between January 10 and 13, Service Director Albert M. Day announced today.

This 17th annual inventory will determine the trends of increase or decrease in the waterfowl populations and will indicate how the birds survived the barrage of hunters' gunfire during their southern migration.

The inventory of waterfowl is similar to an inventory taken of any large business, Day declared. "Their stock-taking is important because it gives us an appraisal of the potential breeders that will go north in the spring to start the new cycle."

Important wintering grounds from Alaska to Guatemala, including the large West Indies Islands, will again be surveyed. More than 1,000 cooperative observers of the United States, Canada, Mexico and the West Indies will participate, using planes, automobiles, and boats. Director Day said that the Service will employ two planes in the Mexican survey this year; one plane will cover the West Coast and interior highlands, and the other the East Coast. When the East Coast survey is completed, that plane will go on to South America to inspect waterfowl areas in Venezuela and Colombia.

In order to foster a better understanding of the Service's inventory work in Mexico, arrangements have been made this year for representatives of several influential organizations to join in the surveys of waterfowl wintering grounds in the vicinity of Ciudad, Obregon, Mexico. The Duck Hunters' Association of California, the Western Waterfowl Conservation Conference, the Western Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, and the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners will probably have one or two men at Obregon for several days in early January working with Flyway Biologists Robert H. Smith and Dr. George B. Saunders, according to Director Day. Wendell Miller, a waterfowl biologist with the California Fish and Game Commission, will serve as an observer for the Pacific Flyway Committee on the airplane surveys made by Bob Smith over the West Coast and interior areas of Mexico.

The winter inventory is made each year at the close of the last United States hunting season. During this period birds from all breeding grounds and migration flyways tend to concentrate on the wintering grounds where they are relatively stationary. Their populations, therefore, can be more easily appraised at this period.

The Service also surveys the breeding grounds of North America's migratory waterfowl each spring and summer to determine the success or failure of breeding populations.

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