

Office Memorandum
6/14/51



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 1951

WATERFOWL SURVEYS SHOW BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR CENTRAL CANADIAN BREEDING GROUNDS

Latest reports from flyway biologists for the Fish and Wildlife Service are optimistic concerning Central Canadian waterfowl breeding conditions this year, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman said today. Aerial and ground surveys so far indicate generally favorable factors except in North and South Dakota, important duck breeding areas of Central United States.

The surveys are covering important breeding territories in Alaska, the arctic and subarctic sections of Northwestern Canada, British Columbia, the Prairie and Maritime Provinces of Canada, and most of the northern tier of States from California to Maine.

Mr. Day cited a recent sample report sent in by Flyway Biologist Allen G. Smith, "It should be a good waterfowl year in Alberta this year. Precipitation continues and the Province is now in a position 101% of normal--something that has not occurred before since 1948. The breeding population has made a big jump upwards."

Arthur S. Hawkins in Manitoba reporting on May 30 about duck conditions there, states, "Prospects are considerably brighter for a good hatch this year than they were a year ago, although the present breeding population level is well below last year's in southern Manitoba."

Director Day pointed out that although breeding populations are lower, good nesting conditions in Manitoba should mean good hunting for Mississippi Flyway hunters since most of the ducks nesting there travel south in fall along that flyway. This flyway also gets ducks from eastern Saskatchewan. From Regina, Saskatchewan, Biologist John Lynch gives this summing up:

"Much of the Province received showers and some heavy rains during early part of May. Surface water conditions are excellent at the moment (May 12). Should they continue to prevail, prospects look bright for a successful hatch."

A gloomier picture was projected from North and South Dakota and Nebraska. Aerial and ground reports there showed a decrease in both water areas and ducks so far this year.

Because it is physically impossible to make a complete coverage of the continent's immense breeding grounds, the Service and cooperating agencies determine population trends and breeding progress by surveying sample areas. Identical areas are covered each year about the same time and by similar methods.

X X X