



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

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11/7/52*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASON OPENING DESCRIBED

Bird migrations and hunting successes at the beginning of the waterfowl hunting season in continental United States were described today by Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Many waterfowl flocks shifted their flights, the Director said, to take advantage of available water areas as the Nationwide dry spell emptied numerous sloughs, marshes, shallow lakes and ponds.

Summarizing reports from Service agents and flyway biologists working in the field, the Director described conditions, according to flyways, as follows:

Atlantic Flyway: A slight increase in migrations was observed. A large early flight of Canada geese was reported from Lake Mattamuskeet in North Carolina. Good to excellent hunting in the north for the first few days of the season was reported. Black ducks, mallards and pintails, as usual, were the principal birds bagged, with wood ducks common in the mid-Atlantic States. Black ducks, teal and wood ducks, as in other seasons, appeared in most bags in the New England area.

Mississippi Flyway: Gradual flights, building to normal numbers of birds, were observed. There was an unusually early movement of diving ducks into Minnesota and of geese into the central and southern portions of the flyway. Hunting success in general was spotty and the kill was below normal, although some sections of Minnesota reported excellent shooting.

Central Flyway: A slight decrease in early migrations was observed. Hunting success was not too good in the eastern portion of the flyway due to the early freeze which drove out most of the local birds, especially in North Dakota. Success was somewhat better on the western fringe, particularly around the Bear River Refuge. All common species of ducks were present with green-wing teal, shovelers, pintails and mallards appearing in most of the hunters' bags. Prospects of flights from Saskatchewan and Alberta appeared favorable since reports showed birds still in those areas.

Pacific Flyway: Early migrations appeared to bring a greater population of birds than last year. The early flight of pintails, coupled with a late rice harvest, created a serious crop depredation problem in some areas of California. Pintails and widgeon provided the bulk of early season shooting in that State and most hunters had little difficulty in securing limit bags. Hunting success was excellent in southwest Washington but poor in the southeastern part of the State. Very good success was reported for Idaho with a high take in baldpate (75 per cent of the bag) and mallards running next. Nevada showed better than average hunting.

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