



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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WATERFOWL NESTING PICTURE LOOKS BRIGHTER

Rains which began during the latter part of May in the prairie regions of Canada have improved the outlook for the 1954 hatch of wild ducks, geese, and coots in North America, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay said today.

Earlier reports by Fish and Wildlife Service biologists indicated that satisfactory numbers of waterfowl had returned to the breeding-grounds but late nesting and drought in some areas had caused concern over production prospects.

The rains have improved water conditions in prairie pothole areas and other waterfowl habitats, thus allaying some of the anxiety felt during most of May regarding prospects for waterfowl hunting this coming fall.

It is still too early, however, to predict what the 1954 crop of birds will be, the biologists say. Much of the reported improvement could be offset by unfavorable weather, agricultural operations, predation, and other factors.

The same rains that have improved waterfowl environment have delayed late spring plowing by prairie region farmers, the biologists report. Further delay in plowing, they point out, will enhance the chances for successful nesting.

In eastern Canada, where water conditions are fairly stable from year to year, the potential breeding populations of waterfowl appear to be satisfactory. The nesting season in this area, however, as in the northern portions of the prairie Provinces, is late. Nesting success, therefore, cannot yet be determined accurately enough to warrant a prediction of the season's hatch.

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