

office files

4/26/56



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release APRIL 27, 1956

WATERFOWL SURVEYS WILL BEGIN MAY 1

More than 400 American and Canadian Wildlife specialists will participate in the annual waterfowl breeding ground survey which will begin May 1, and in the duck banding program which will start late in June, John L. Farley, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, said today.

Data from the breeding grounds survey will be used with information from the winter waterfowl inventory and last year's hunter kill survey as a basis for discussions leading to preparation of regulations for the next hunting season.

The breeding ground surveys will cover Alaska, Canada and approximately 30 States. There will be 31 airplanes used in the work, carrying 68 wildlife specialists who will cover between 80,000 and 100,000 miles while counting ducks during the summer. In addition there will be about 240 men who will conduct surveys on the ground and 104 men in the banding operations. One plane will be used in the banding work on the Canadian prairies to assist crews in locating banding sites.

The task is a cooperative one, with personnel being supplied by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, the Wildlife Management Institute, the Canadian provinces and the various States.

The breeding ground survey will be made in two parts. The first will measure the size and distribution of the breeding ground population and will be completed about June 1. The second part will be carried out during July, when the routes flown in May will be covered again for the purpose of measuring the production of broods. The banding program will start late in June and will be largely completed by August 1 although some banding on the breeding grounds will continue until mid-September.

While the survey will cover a major portion of North America, the States of North and South Dakota and the southern portions of the prairie provinces in Canada will be the scene of the most intense activity for in that area approximately 65 percent of the duck population in North America is produced. Here the aerial transects are only seven to 12 miles apart. In Quebec and Labrador where the birds are thinly scattered the planes will fly on lines as far as 60 miles apart. In some of the breeding grounds as many as 200 birds per square mile will be sighted.

x x x