



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

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NORTH DAKOTA OFFICIALS AID IN ADJUSTING DUCK SEASON DIFFICULTIES

Expected difficulty over the North Dakota "native duck" season did not develop, "thanks largely to the cooperative efforts of Governor John E. Davis and other responsible men in the State", Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler said today.

Difficulties had been anticipated because of a North Dakota law which provided for the opening of the season on North Dakota-raised ducks at noon on September 27, three and a half days before October 1, the earliest opening date allowable under the Federal migratory waterfowl hunting regulations.

The Fish and Wildlife Service reports only 15 "pre-season" arrests, 10 on Saturday, September 28, and five on Sunday. Of the 10 arrests on Saturday nine of the hunters were not only violating Federal Law and regulations but were hunting without State licenses.

For several weeks reports from North Dakota indicated that there would be a considerable number of hunters in the marshes during the three and a half days before October 1. The Fish and Wildlife Service had made plans to send additional enforcement agents into the State during that period. However, no crisis developed because of the examples set by Governor Davis and others who said they would not go duck hunting before October 1 and who urged North Dakota hunters to do likewise.

"I appreciate the attitude of Governor Davis, members of his official family, including the State game department, and responsible North Dakota sportsmen", Assistant Secretary Leffler said. "We are also very grateful for the assistance given by the public press, radio and TV on this problem. We in the Department of the Interior have a trying and difficult job doing our part of the task of managing our migratory waterfowl supply to maintain hunting in the face of a declining habitat. We need all the cooperation we can get and we are very fortunate in that respect. The North Dakota officials and citizens 'came through in the pinch' and I know the sportsmen throughout the entire nation respect them for it."

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