

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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CANVASBACK DUCK MIGRATION BEING STUDIED BY SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife announced today that it is making a special study of canvasback duck migration on the continent this year to learn how this species can be better protected during the hunting season.

The Bureau will cooperate with State fish and game departments and Canada in aerial and ground surveys of major movements, specific routes, and important concentration areas.

"If the fall flight continues to decline," Bureau Director John S. Gottschalk said, "stricter hunting regulations may be necessary to assure the canvasback's future as a sporting species."

The canvasback, a favorite of waterfowlers, has been hit hard by recent droughts in its favored prairie pothole nesting grounds.

Because canvasbacks nest in vegetation over water, they are exceptionally vulnerable as potholes get drier. They do not bounce back as quickly as most other ducks when water returns, since growth of nesting vegetation takes at least an additional year.

The Bureau reports that exceptionally heavy rains in the prairie pothole country this fall have improved the outlook for well-watered potholes next spring. Barring another drought next year, canvasback nesting habitat should be in good condition in 1970, with a maximum number of breeding birds returning to rejuvenated nesting grounds, Dr. Gottschalk said.

This fall's flight is expected to be the lowest in recent years based on information from breeding ground surveys. As a result, hunters are permitted a daily bag and possession limit of only two canvasbacks in the Pacific Flyway and one canvasback or redhead in the daily bag and possession limit in the other three flyways.

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HUNTERS TAKE AN ASTONISHING PERCENTAGE OF CANVASBACKS EACH FALL.

REDHEADS~OFTEN FLYING WITH "CANS"~ALSO ARE VULNERABLE.

THERE ARE FEWER FLOCKS OF CANVASBACKS & REDHEADS



LAST SPRING~ CANVASBACKS AND REDHEADS FOUND MORE OF THEIR POTHOLE NESTING SITES DRY.

PUDDLE DUCKS NEST FAR FROM WATER - BUT "CANS" AND REDHEADS NEST OVER THE WATER; THEY NEED IT FOR PROTECTION AND SURVIVAL

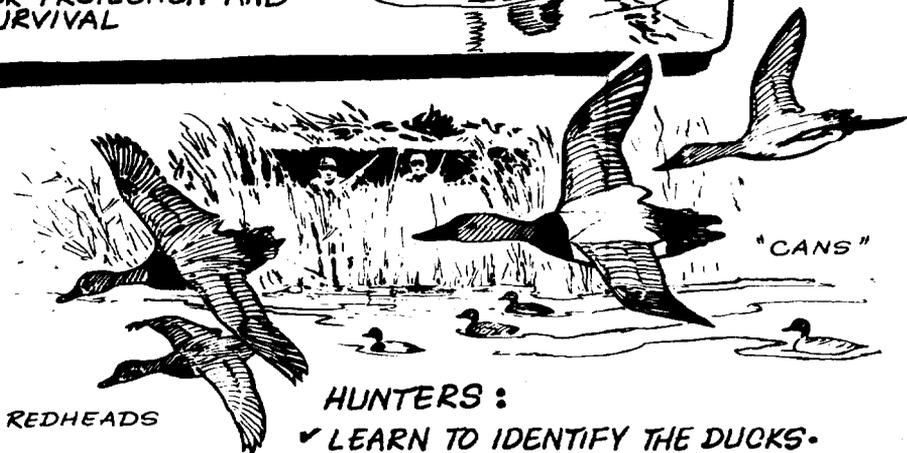


THIS SUMMER - THERE WAS A DROUGHT IN THE NESTING AREA



NESTS WERE LEFT HIGH AND DRY, SO THAT MORE PREDATORS COULD GET THEM

REDHEADS



HUNTERS :

- ✓ LEARN TO IDENTIFY THE DUCKS.
- ✓ LET THE BIRDS COME CLOSE; THEN YOU'LL KILL CLEAN OR MISS CLEAN.
- ✓ PASS UP CANS AND REDHEADS, SO THEY'LL BREED FUTURE FLOCKS

U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife