

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

news release

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FALL DUCK FLIGHTS WERE SMALLER, AS ANTICIPATED, SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE REPORTS

Reduced fall flights of ducks were evident across the continent in 1968, the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife said today. Smaller flights had been predicted when more restrictive waterfowl hunting regulations were issued last year.

As expected, mallards appeared to be down as much as 25 to 35 percent. Hunter success was correspondingly low, with hunter participation slightly below normal, Federal game management agents reported. In many areas few young birds were checked in hunters' bags.

Food and habitat were reported good in all flyways.

The goose population was about normal, although some flocks were down as much as 30 percent while others were correspondingly higher. Goose hunting was generally good.

Flyway-by-flyway descriptions:

Atlantic

The northern half of the Atlantic Flyway had slightly fewer ducks than usual. Hunter success was average. Hunting weather started poorly but improved as the season progressed. Duck populations were below average in Maryland and southward. Hunter participation was average, success poorer. Waterfowl migration resembled a steady trickle.

Mississippi

The waterfowl population was low and hunter success poor. Hunting pressure was normal in the southern portion of the flyway, but below normal

in the north. Migrations were late, with few large flights. Mallards were noticeably scarce except for a few localized late flights.

Central

The duck population was low and hunter success poor. The southern portion of the flyway was down 30 percent in ducks--mallards were down 35 percent. Hunting pressure was down as well. Migrations were late and hunting conditions were below average.

Pacific

Populations--particularly mallards--were down noticeably in some areas. Migration was late with fewer young birds appearing. Hunting pressure was down slightly and the harvest down markedly from a year earlier.

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