

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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REPORTS INDICATE THAT WATERFOWL HABITAT IS GOOD

Extensive air and ground surveys of waterfowl nesting areas in the United States and Canada, underway by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, are revealing the best breeding conditions since 1956.

Assistant Secretary Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife, and parks, said that habitat conditions are excellent throughout the prairie pothole region. Preliminary observations by biologists indicate that ducks are present in good numbers.

Studies of number of breeders and water conditions, plus July surveys of nesting success, form the basis for autumn hunting regulations to be set by the Federal Government in August.

Water and ducks are plentiful on the prairies of western Canada, Montana, and the Dakotas. Numbers of water areas in May increased from 1969 in Alberta (14 percent), Saskatchewan (49 percent), Manitoba (74 percent), and Montana (2 percent).

In the pothole country of North Dakota and South Dakota, numbers of water areas were down slightly from a year ago (6 percent). But 1969 was an exceptionally good year by any standards, experts noted.

Duck breeding populations are up from last year, with mallards and pintails at their highest levels since 1959. Final determination of trends in duck populations, however, awaits results of surveys in Alaska, the Northwest Territories, and northern parts of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Although breeding populations seem excellent, their production success depends on maintenance of the good habitat conditions existing in May. Surveys about July 1 will provide the first reading on production prospects.

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