NARRATIVE REPORT FOR OKEFENOKEE WILDLIFE REFUGE

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

1938

Waycross being the point nearest the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge for which accurate temperature and precipitation data are available to the writer, we give the following from the official Waycross Bulletins.

HIGHEST AND LOWEST TEMPERATURES - For August, 104° on the 25th, 26th, and 27th and 68° on the 23rd. For September, 96° on the 5th and 51° on the 22nd. For October, 90° on October 10, 41° on the 26th.

RAINFALL - For August, 4.50 inches. For September, 7.52 inches. For October, 2.58 inches.

The water level in the Okefenokee was below the point we consider normal during the entire three months by about 12 inches until October 24th when 2.40 inches in 24 hours put the water level up about 8 inches, but still low enough to make it hard going with a pole boat to many points where the trip is easily accomplished with four inches more water. There was less rain over some of the Refuge in September than at Waycross, and more in October.

FIRES - We had no fires to contend with during these three months.

WTK

Nbw Swe Bwm WEeh 1-21-39

Cypress tops and Spanish Moss - This is not a Snow Scene - Temperature 92

WILDLIFE * During early August the latest hatchings of Wood Ducks learned to fly and there is certainly a substantial increase in the number of native Wood Ducks in the Okefenokee.

Very few White Ibis were seen after July. The writer saw 47 Wood Ibis in two flocks near the Canal on September 21 - only 3 or 4 after that on October 7 near Big Water.

not in area The writer saw one Wilson's Snipe on St. Simons Island, 60 miles east of the Refuge, on Sunday, September 25th.

The first Migratory Ducks reported were fifteen Green-winged Teal on October 5th in an old mill log pond on part of the Refuge at Hopkins, Georgia. Since that date a few Mallards and Black Ducks have been noted on each trip into the open parts of the Refuge, but migration of ducks to the Okefenokee has been late and slow. Someone much further north facetiously remarked, near the end of October, that ducks seemed to be "flying back north." I imagine this will all be very different by Thanksgiving day.

It is rather early to make statements regarding any definite increase in the number of Florida Cranes. We think they have increased, but estimating would be a big job. We do think, and with fairly good reason, that there are probably 250 in the Okefenokee and two or three are still usually to be seen near the boat landing at Camp Cornelia.

Two or three Florida Cranes are usually to be seen near the boat landing at Camp Cornelia

On October 25, Guide Roddenberry saw about 50 Canada Geese flying low over the Refuge and on October 27 Mr. Silver and I saw 36. These probably stopped, but for a few hours only, as usual. Ten Canada Geese were seen by Lem Griffis near Billy's Lake on October 24. Honks of other flocks were heard over both sides of the Refuge.

Herons, blue and white, including Egrets are seen everywhere in Okefenokee. The regular fall migration has been taking some birds away and bringing some in but in no such numbers as will be noted within another month when the numbers of ducks, snipe, woodcock and robins will be at the peak. The wildlife population of Okefenokee is never decreased by emigrants in any such numbers as it is increased by immigrants in November.

The writer has not seen a King Rail in Okefenokee for a year or more but a few have been reported. I am sure there are a few.

UPLAND BIRDS - Mourning Doves are reported to be plentiful all around the Refuge and from all reports there is an exceptionally good crop of quail this year, and it has been a good season for Wild Turkeys.

Black Bears are plentiful and in October many black gum limbs could be seen bent or broken by Bruin in quest of gum berries, but in August and September they seemed to be "hog hungry" and a number lost their lives at the hands of the

farmers while satisfying that hunger. However, quite a number were successful foragers and we had complaints against our Bruins. Several residents within a few miles complained that our Bruins would come out of the Refuge at night, eat their hogs, and go back in the Refuge to sleep all day.

DEER are quite numerous and reasonably safe so long as they remain in the Refuge, [illegible]

RACCOONS are coming back very satisfactorily, and during the next three months we will make an effort to learn something definite regarding the status of the Otter in the Okefenokee.

REFUGE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

PATROLMAN'S CABIN - Concrete basement poured and log walls erected to roof plate.

CLEARING AND CLEANING CHANNELS - 3300 square yards, from which all partially floating debris was removed. This, however, is not to be construed as completed, as there remains a tremendous amount of debris submerged in approximately four feet of mud that will require a light dragline, mounted on a barge, to remove.

TRUCK TRAIL, BF-1 TO CAMP CORNELIA - Weak spots in surface reclayed and regularly maintained by tractor grader.

Two small outboard motor boats constructed for Fargo side of Refuge. Logs for cabin and Service Building flitched by sawmill.

Boardwalk to Floyd's Island partially cleared of over-hanging brush. Work suspended due to low water, causing slow transportation.

Markers made for Route of General Floyd through Swamp in 1838.

Site for Guides' Cabins, Patrolmen's Cabins, and Service Building at Camp Cornelia cleared off and construction stakes set.

Fence Right of Way-clearing, Eastside of Refuge, begun September 28 and approximately two miles completed.

Surveys made of Jones Island area and Boat Landing area at Camp Cornelia. Road from Refuge boundary line on Fargo side to boat landing on Jones Island ($7\frac{1}{4}$ miles), 80% completed.

PUBLIC RELATIONS - During August, September, and October, 1395 man days were spent by fisherman who took from the areas open for fishing the following:

use of refuge for fishing

	Perch	6054
	Bass	653
(Jack)	Pickerel	978
(Mudfish)	Grinnel	986
	Catfish	1594
		10265

carbed Burn

Just another fisherman near "Big Water" - an osprey

Besides fishermen, there were 249 visitors, including 65 members and guests of the Georgia Ornithological Society, 14 members of the Georgia Entomological Society, Dr. Thomas Abercrombie, Mr. Alfred Jones, President of the Sea Island Company, Mr. Charles N. Elliott, head of the State Parks Department, Mr. Jeff McCord, Director of Athletic Department at Emory University, Mr. Elliott's father, E. M. Hudson, Atlanta capitalist, and Lee S. Trimble, Executive Vice-President and Manager of the Macon Chamber of Commerce, and regarding the meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society, held October 8 and 9 at the fishing camp of E. L. Griffis and the Log Cabin occupied by Mr. Earle R. Greene, I quote Mr. Greene as follows:

"Those making interesting talks and taking part in the discussions during the evening included: Miss Mabel T. Rogers of the Milledgeville Bird Club, Mr. Ivan Tomkins of the US Dredge "Morgan" at Savannah, Mrs. James C. Oliver, President of the Atlanta Bird Club, Mrs. Grannis and Mrs. Lawson of the Kentucky Garden Club, Dr. R. J. H. DeLoach of Statesboro, Mrs. K. G. Berrie of the Brunswick Board of Trade, Mr. Robert McClanahan of the U. S. Biological Survey, Dr. Charles Carpenter, Director of Herty Laboratories in Savannah, Dr. T. H. D. Griffits of Savannah, Mr. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., Southern Representative of the National Association of Audubon Societies, Mr. William T. Vogt who is Editor of Bird-Lore of New York City, Mr. Ray Werner of Atlanta, Mr. George Dorsey of College Park, and Dr. Hugh Harris of Emory University.

"The meeting closed with "Bedtime Stories" by Lem Griffis, official Refuge Guide. An early start was made on Sunday morning for Billy's Lake and Billy's Island, where the members scattered in groups for bird study and other interesting observations. At noon, a luncheon of sandwiches, salad, coffee, cake, etc., was had at the boat landing and the return to camp made shortly afterward. a number expressed a desire to come again and see more of the swamp proper as the time allotted was limited. Two guests stayed over and made the trip next day to Minnie's Lake, Floyd's Island Prairie, and the Big Water section.

"Officers elected for the coming year were: - President, Earle Greene; 1st Vice-President, Dr. Wallace Rogers; 2nd Vice-President, Dr. R. J. H. DeLoach; Regional Vice-Presidents, Mr. Sam Anderson of Milledgeville, Mrs. Victor H. Bassett of Savannah, Mr. Herbert L. Stoddard of Thomasville, Mr. Don Eyles of Atlanta; Executive Secretary, Mrs. James C. Oliver; Treasurer, Mr. Ray C. Werner; Editors-in-chief of the "Oriole" are Ivan R. Tomkins and Herbert L. Stoddard; Business Manager, Mrs. Hugh H. Harris; Editors of Educational Department, Miss Mabel T. Rogers and Miss Hattie Rainwater; Regional Reporters, Miss Malvina Trussell, Mr. Bill Griffin, Mrs. James R. Cain; Historian-Librarian, Miss Anne Pfeiffer. It was decided to hold the spring meeting in the mountains of North Georgia.

Although a number of interesting birds were seen, the large crowd and the limited time prevented much scientific study. It seemed to be the general opinion of those present that the Biological Survey was doing a very worth while work in this Refuge."

REFUGE VIOLATIONS: One night in August a most flagrant violation was perpetrated, 15 or more alligators were killed in Billy's Lake - Three men living in Fargo were suspected but we had no positive evidence. Some empty rifle cartridges were found in a boat that was supposed to be used by the parties killing the alligators and a rifle supposed to be the one used was located and cartridges were fired in it and sent, with those found in the boat, for examination and comparison. If it could be proved that all were fired in the same rifle we would have made arrests - but upon examination it could not be definitely proven that all were fired in the same rifle. We may yet get something that would warrant arrests.

Removed and burn

A few logs and cross ties were cut over the Refuge lines by parties cutting on adjacent lands, these trespasses were promptly stopped and full values collected or in process of collection. One other violation on the Fargo side occurred in September when two men and a 14 year old boy went i n to Jones Island at night after being lost for several hours and

finally getting in the Refuge near midnight. They made camp and stayed next day without permits. They caught six fish and killed one small alligator and left the Refuge the next night. The two men convinced us that they knew nothing of the Wildlife Refuge, but had heard of the Okefenokee Swamp and wanted to see it. After having the two men come to Waycross on several occasions which they did willingly - we were satisfied they had done nothing with intent to violate any law and that hereafter they would be friends of the Refuge in every way and we have taken no action against them. With nearly 300,000 acres of Swamp it is an easy matter for one to enter and stay in it for days without being observed but on all the east side, and large areas in the upper and lower parts of the Refuge our Patrolmen and Deputy Game Wardens found no signs of trespass. If any more violations occur on the Fargo side I shall feel that we should in some way increase our force on that side.

GRAZING - We shall have something with regard to grazing in our next report as we are working on this now.

Respectfully submitted,

John M Hopkins

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