



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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MENACE TO WILD DUCKS REMOVED

Because there was a needless destruction of thousands of game birds every season at Las Vegas, Nevada, in allowing oil and oil waste from the shops of the Union Pacific railway system to be deposited on a pool of water covering 5 acres, which the birds were in the habit of resorting to, especially at night, reports were made to county and State game officials and finally to the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The birds, alighting on the oil-covered water, got their feathers so matted by the sticky fluid that it was impossible for them to fly. Though some reached land they eventually died from exposure and slow starvation, while as many as 98, mostly ducks, were found dead on the pool at one time.

Dr. E. W. Nelson, Chief of the Biological Survey, suggested that practicable measures could be taken to prevent a further discharge of oil where it would be a menace to migratory wild fowl, and W. H. Constock, general manager in charge of railroad operations in the area, replied that acting on his suggestion the company had authorized an expenditure of \$1,800 for the installation of an oil recovery plant which would remedy the situation.

Commenting on this action, Dr. Nelson stated that such prompt cooperation of railway officials with conservationists is an excellent example which it is predicted will be followed by companies and individuals in other parts of the country, who are responsible for similar waste.

Several bills, also, have been introduced in Congress designed to prevent water pollution by oil and oil waste, especially where it is a menace not only to wild birds, but fish and shell-fish, and where it contaminates the water at bathing beaches.

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