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URGE HUNTERS TO SPARE BIRDS
IN CRITICAL YEAR FOR WATERFOWL

The hunting season that opens next Thursday (November 16) will be a critical time for waterfowl and the sport of wild-fowling, according to the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

During the present emergency, the Biological Survey urges every sportsman to be moderate in shooting, to see that the kill is made chiefly from the more abundant species, and to encourage the same practices among others.

The Bureau also urges gunners to retrieve all crippled birds. At least 7,500,000 birds, it estimates, are crippled and lost annually -- a serious decrease in the stock of breeding birds without any resulting benefit, except to the creatures that prey on the unfortunate cripples.

For several years, say Survey officials, our waterfowl have been in a bad plight, and the present situation is almost as serious as the 1931 emergency that led to a one-month season and induced the President to issue a proclamation in behalf of the birds. Canvasbacks, redheads, scaups, blue-winged teals, and several other species of ducks are at an exceedingly low ebb, even though they may be abundant in a few favored spots. The only ducks likely to be fairly plentiful this fall are pintails, mallards, and black ducks.

Overshooting, declare officials of the Bureau, is one of the chief causes of the decrease in waterfowl and the only one that can be remedied immediately. Obviously, they state, the first thing to be done is to reduce the kill in order to make sure of saving a satisfactory breeding stock.

With a breeding stock provided for, we should proceed at once, say the biologists, to carry out the program already undertaken to restore water areas, to set aside sanctuaries, and through research, to find whatever practical means there may be to increase the production of ducks and geese by helping them against their enemies, and by preventing the losses occasioned by disease. All these things, they point out, will be of the greatest benefit ultimately, but most of them require time measured in years as well as adequate financial support.