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CCC TO RESTORE VALENTINE LAKES
IN NEBRASKA AS BIRD BREEDING AREA

A recent Executive Order has created the Valentine Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Cherry County, Nebr., a tract of approximately 70,000 acres of what was formerly waterfowl and upland-game breeding range, says the Bureau of Biological Survey. This area, which in late years has been injured by drought and wind erosion that followed overgrazing, is now being restored by a CCC camp, under supervision of the Bureau. When complete, it is expected that hundreds of thousands of ducks will breed on the restored refuge.

Valentine Lakes, the nucleus of the refuge, nestle in the sandhill region of Nebraska, one of the last sections of the Middle West to be occupied. Plum Creek on the east, Schlegel Creek on the north, and Goose Creek on the south, have their headwaters in this lake region. Three other streams, Gordon Creek, Boardman's Creek, and Snake River, approach within a few miles from the northwest side. By diversion of water from Gordon Creek, the total water area of the Valentine group can be increased to more than 30,000 acres, according to the Bureau's estimates.

Although restoration is a big job the Survey expects the Valentine refuge to be one of its most productive sanctuaries for ducks, geese, and upland game. The most numerous species of ducks still nesting on the area are mallards, blue-winged teals, pintails, and baldpates. Prairie chickens and sharp-tailed grouse still remain in goodly numbers and are fed by ranchers in the winter. A few years

ago, ring-necked pheasants came into the section and have increased in numbers, although the European partridges which were introduced at about the same time apparently did not survive. Muskrats, also, were once abundant, and buffalo and antelope once ranged the same hills where cattle now graze.

Under the direction of the Migratory Waterfowl Division of the Biological Survey, an intensive program of restoration and development of the area is now in progress. Supervised by wildlife technicians of the Survey, 200 CCC men are building devices for the control and conservation of water, erecting administration buildings and telephone lines, establishing truck trails, and planting and revegetating the refuge.