

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

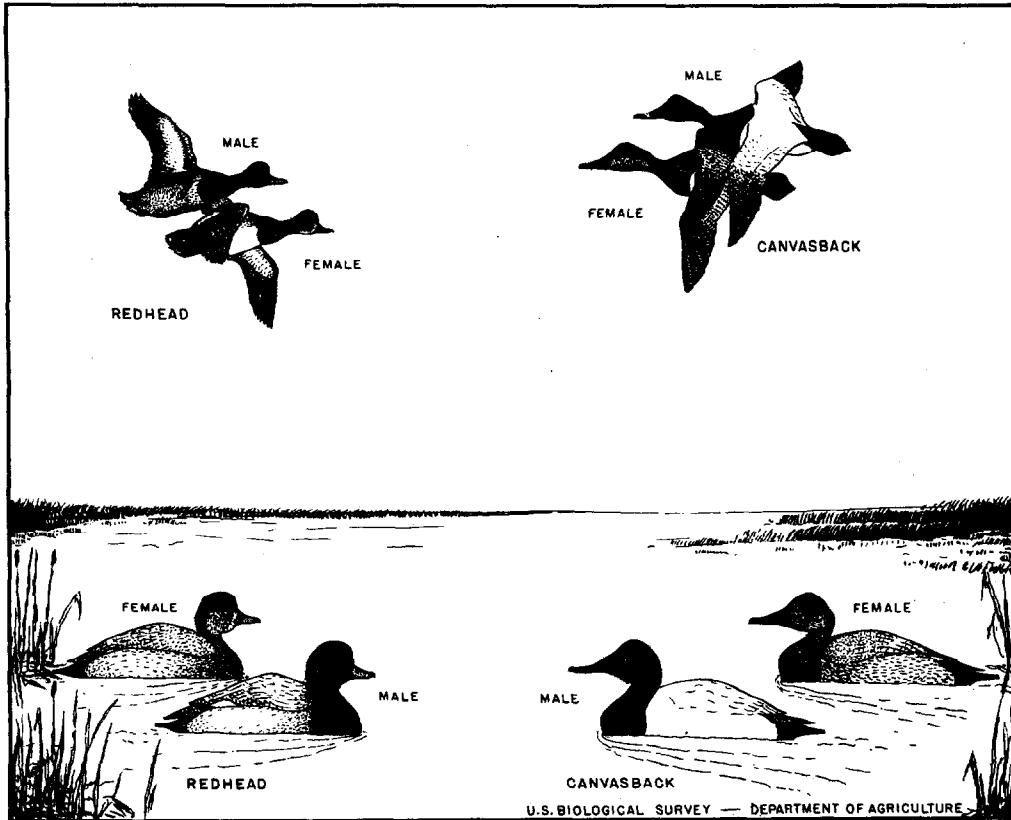


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*! DON'T SHOOT THESE DUCKS!*



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NO SHOOTING NOW IS HOPE FOR  
FUTURE REDHEADS AND "CANS",  
SAYS BIOLOGICAL SURVEY HEAD

Wildfowlers who get their best thrills from hunting redheads and canvasbacks need not lose heart yet, according to Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief of the U. S. Biological Survey. These diving ducks have decreased alarming-

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ly in the past few years, but there are still enough birds left to replenish the species if they have adequate protection.

For the present adequate protection means complete protection, says Gabrielson, and hunters who expect future sport are urged to cooperate in the enforcement of this year's closed season on these birds. "Don't shoot until you know what you're shooting at" should be every sportsman's first rule, and the second maxim for the wildfowler should be "know your birds". No law-abiding sportsman who puts these two rules into practice need worry about his depleting further the breeding stock of canvasbacks and redheads.

Dr. Gabrielson issued his statement on the eve of the open season on waterfowl in the intermediate zone, which begins on November 1. Waterfowl hunting in the southern zone, which includes the Chesapeake Bay region where the largest concentrations of canvasbacks and redheads occur, is not legal until November 26.

If sportsmen knew their birds as well as baseball fans know their batting averages, Gabrielson says, there would be fewer hunters this year saying: "How can I tell a redhead or a canvasback when I see one?" The law excuses no one for ignorance, and even though a hunter may himself feel satisfied with knowing that a duck is a duck, it behooves him to learn how to tell the specially protected species, both for the sake of conserving the threatened birds and of staying out of court.

Hunters exercising due care will, as a matter of fact, have little trouble in identifying their ducks. The species of duck that are not to be shot include the wood duck, ruddy duck, canvasback, redhead, and bufflehead, but the only ones that are fully protected this year for the first time are the redhead and canvasback. In previous years also, the sportsman has had to forego shooting the wood duck, the ruddy duck, and the bufflehead, and this year it is necessary to add only the canvasback and redhead to the taboo list.

To aid sportsmen, the Biological Survey Chief described the outstanding characteristics of the canvasback and redhead. "If the head is red, don't shoot", is one good motto, he said, but often colors are hard to distinguish in the open, and the hunter must therefore rely largely on pattern and outline for his identifications.

"The male canvasback is easy to identify even at a long distance by its white back, and both males and females may be told by their long sloping bills. Canvasbacks don't have foreheads, the bill continuing the tapering lines of the head. The long head, bill, and neck give canvasbacks a 'front-heavy' appearance, making them look as though their wings were set too far back.

"Redheads, like canvasbacks, are fast flying ducks, and at even a relatively short distance present an apparently uniform gray color. They are chunky ducks, and to some extent their round heads and high foreheads will assist in identification. The gray wing-stripe of the redhead is one of the best field characters, as the only other diving duck having a gray wing stripe is the ring-necked duck, and it has a black back."

Summing up the "Don't Shoot" points, Gabrielson said: "Look hard at any fast-flying ducks -- they probably are deep-water species. If they show gray wing stripes, a general uniform gray color, or long tapering heads, slip the safety back into place."

Closing the season on redheads and canvasbacks, Gabrielson points out, is part of a nation-wide program for waterfowl conservation.

Two things are needed in this program -- marshes where the ducks can breed, rest, and find wintering grounds; and breeding stocks to populate these marshes. Marshes are being provided in the Survey's refuge work, and hunting regulations are made to preserve the breeding stocks for future years. In phrasing regulations, the Survey follows the principle that only

the surplus of birds can be taken each year, and when there is no surplus, no birds can be taken without endangering the species. This year it was found that canvasbacks and redheads were so scarce that further shooting would jeopardize an otherwise favorable chance to restore these birds to something approaching their former numbers. Hence, the closed season on these ducks.

States included in the intermediate zone, where waterfowl that may be shot may be taken from November 1 to 30, are: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York including Long Island, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and California.

States in the southern zone, where the season is November 26 to December 25, are: New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

This year's 30 days of wildfowling end in the northern zone on November 8. States in this zone are: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana.

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