



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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GEESE, DUCKS CROWD WILDLIFE REFUGE;
MORE FOOD TO BE RAISED ON LAKE BOTTOM

Good news for many waterfowl hunters and outdoor enthusiasts everywhere was contained in a Fish and Wildlife Service report received by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes today. The Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina, well-known winter resort of thousands of Canada geese, whistling swans, pintails, mallards, black ducks, and other migratory waterfowl, has as large a population of wintering birds as the area can handle.

A happier New Year note for conservationists was the statement that Service officials are now attempting to provide additional food on the area so that even more migratory waterfowl will be able to stop and feed at the famous Atlantic coast refuge near Pamlico Sound. As soon as the wave action of the water can be controlled on the 15-mile long, 5- to 6-mile wide Lake Mattamuskeet, many acres of waterfowl food plants can be grown on the now unused lake bottom, the report stated.

At present, the major portion of the big, but shallow, lake has a rich layer of soil, but the constant action of the wind-blown waves keeps the lake turbid and makes it impossible for plants to take root. Lake

Mattamuskeet has an average depth of 2 feet and is not more than 3 feet at the deepest point. The conservation agency plans to reduce the wave action to take advantage of the fertile lake bottom that potentially can produce an abundance of waterfowl food.

Dykes thrown across the lake may be one way of cutting down wave action and allowing the rich soil to settle, officials believe. Dr. Maynard S. Johnson, the refuge manager, is also increasing waterfowl food areas on the land portion of the refuge. He is increasing the utility of the marsh acreage by practicing controlled burning where the vegetation is dense, thus allowing new shoots to come up and increasing the area where water can be collected and birds can feed.

Additional feeding areas are also being created by throwing up a double furrow where rain water will collect thus making food available which would not be utilized by waterfowl under ordinary circumstances.

Whatever the results of increasing the feeding areas so that more wild birds can find adequate feeding grounds on the Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, the report of the Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that a "full house" statement would be good news to the outdoor enthusiasts who have watched the progress of the migratory waterfowl in their "come-back" struggle toward numbers that will approach those of the 1890's and early 1900's.

The outlook for migratory waterfowl, the report states, looks promising.