



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to the PM's of FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1946.

URGES DUCK HUNTERS TO LIMIT KILL

Duck hunters, on the eve of the open season in the northern zone beginning on October 5, were urged today by Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service to exercise the utmost restraint to prevent a further drastic decline in the number of waterfowl. The season in the northern zone, which includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and North and South Dakota, extends to November 18.

Although the daily bag limit has been set at seven birds, Mr. Day declared that hunters, in their own interest, should try to keep well below that limit. Otherwise, indications are that further hunting restrictions may be necessary next year.

As evidence that the waterfowl population is faced with unprecedented decimation, Mr. Day predicted that probably more than 2,000,000 "duck stamps" will be sold to potential hunters this year as compared to 783,000 in 1938 when the season was likewise limited to 45 days.

Records of the duck kill show that it has risen from 16,000,000 in 1943 to 23,000,000 in 1945, he said, and the duck population has dropped from the 125,350,000 estimate of January 1944 to only 80,000,000 in January 1946.

"Cutting the season from 80 days last year to 45 days this year will not prevent the total kill from reaching staggering figures if each hunter persists in shooting until he gets his bag limit each time," he said. "The bag limit is not a

goal to be reached each time a hunter takes to his blind. Instead, it is the legal limit beyond which he must not shoot."

While the Service's development of national wildlife refuges has been a life-saver for ducks, Mr. Day said, and losses of waterfowl through other causes, such as diseases and water limitations, are being fought by every available means, "moderation on the part of the hunter this season may play the major role in halting the two-year decline."

x x x