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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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WATERFOWL SURVEY PLANS ANNOUNCED

Plans for the annual waterfowl breeding-ground surveys to be conducted in Canada, Alaska, and northern States this spring and summer were announced today by John L. Farley, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The surveys will be made by the Service in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Provincial game branches, State fish and game departments, Ducks Unlimited, and the Wildlife Management Institute. The basic objective, as in previous years, will be to predict the number of wild ducks, geese, and coots that will be migrating southward next fall. The resulting forecast will guide Canadian and United States officials in drafting appropriate hunting regulations (bag limits and number of days) for the 1955-56 waterfowl season.

Aerial and ground observations, beginning on May 1 and extending roughly to August 15, will appraise weather, water, nesting, and other conditions bearing on the number and distribution of breeding birds and the young they produce and rear. By means of the latest sampling methods, representative data will be obtained from all corners of the North American Continent where waterfowl are known to breed.

Because the hunting regulations are drafted on a flyway basis--separate rules for the Pacific, Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic flyways--emphasis will be placed, as in previous years, on predicting the number of birds that will be **traveling down** each of these four flight routes during the hunting season.

Numbered bands will be placed on the legs of many birds during the survey period. When birds thus banded are located later, during or after migration, the accumulated returns will cast valuable light on hunting pressures, mortality rates, and bird distributions.

The preliminary outlook for this year's breeding season is not encouraging. A reduced wintering population of waterfowl, together with low water tables on much of the breeding territory, add up to an unfavorable beginning. Breeding-ground conditions between May and August, however--if highly favorable--can compensate for the discouraging factors.

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