



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release MAY 17, 1957

FWS CONSIDERS OUTLAWING ELECTRONIC WATERFOWL CALL DEVICES

The use of electronic waterfowl-calling devices, which are reported to be devastatingly effective in luring birds within gun range, is being studied by the Fish and Wildlife Service with a view toward recommending possible ban or control measures, according to Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross L. Leffler.

The type of call which prompted the discussion is a recording of the sounds of flocks of geese feeding. The new call differs from other recorded or taped calls in its realistic reproduction of the many sounds made by geese on the feeding grounds. The effectiveness of this type of call is so great that extended use of the device could threaten the preservation of the species, Mr. Leffler said.

He said that the problem would be discussed with the Flyway Councils at their meetings in the next six weeks. The deadliness of the use of modern electronic devices involving tape recorders, record players, amplifiers and speakers to attract the geese is emphasized by reports from a number of east coast hunting areas where they were employed last fall. On one farm where there were four shooting pits, the Service has a report that 1,285 geese were killed during the season. In another case, five hunters killed their limit in one hour and 30 minutes and on two occasions during that period as many as 2,000 geese hovered over the blind, it was reported. In still another incident on a "blue bird" day--windless, beautiful weather which usually means very poor hunting--an electronic recording pulled Canada geese out of a Federal migratory bird refuge to a blind 500 yards away where five hunters killed their limit.

A survey in one east coast goose hunting State indicates a kill and crippling loss of 100,000 geese last fall. This is a substantial increase over previous years. State and Federal officials attribute much of this increased kill to the use of electronic calling devices. What would happen if the practice were widespread is causing a great deal of concern to Service technicians.

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