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Whiting - Int. 4662



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release MAY 22, 1959

RECLAMATION STOPS FILLING OF MONTANA RESERVOIR TO SAVE NESTING GEESE

Nesting wild geese at Canyon Ferry reservoir in west-central Montana shall have an opportunity to raise a family, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The Bureau of Reclamation said it is delaying the filling of Canyon Ferry reservoir in Montana in an effort to save nests of wild geese.

The unusual situation developed as a result of low water conditions last fall, which caused grass to grow along the shore of the reservoir and attract nesting geese this spring. A gradually increasing number of geese have been nesting along the artificial lake each year.

Commissioner of Reclamation Floyd E. Dominy said that his decision to order the spillway gates opened to halt the filling of the reservoir from spring runoff was to cooperate with State and Federal biologists who are seeking a solution to the problem in future years--as well as to save a portion of this year's goose crop.

D. H. Janzen, Director of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife of the Fish and Wildlife Service, declared that the action was an evidence of cooperation on the part of the Bureau of Reclamation. He stated that the gesture was even more appreciated because the extension of goose-nesting areas is one of the important projects of the wildlife program.

Approximately 100 pairs of nesting geese had set up housekeeping along the reservoir and about 80 nests were lost by rising water before sportsmen called attention to the situation and spillway gates at Canyon Ferry Dam could be lowered.

It is expected that eggs in the remaining nests will be hatched out this week. Geese which lost their nests earlier may reneest again, but not necessarily in the same area.

Commissioner Dominy said that the Chief Warden of the State Fish and Game Commission did not request that the reservoir be maintained at its present level and had indicated that, if it was advisable for operational purposes, the reservoir should continue to be filled inasmuch as appreciable loss had already occurred. The Chief Warden did request discussions with the Bureau to determine if anything could be done in future years to avoid similar problems. The Fish and Wildlife Service, with the cooperation of the State agency, is obtaining additional data on the situation for future consideration.

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