



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's, FEBRUARY 19, 1960

WATERFOWL POPULATION IN MOUNTAIN AND PRAIRIE STATES SHOWS BIG DECLINE

The winter waterfowl survey for the Central Flyway showed a decrease of 42 percent from last year, according to reports from the Albuquerque, N. Mex., office of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. The Pacific Flyway report, released last week, showed a decrease of 18 percent.

The big drop in the Central Flyway was in the wintering duck population. This category was down 47 percent. Goose population was up 17 percent in spite of a 20 percent drop in Canada geese. The increase in the numbers of blue and snow geese wintering in Texas more than counteracted the loss in Canada. Coot population showed a decline of 27 percent.

The wintering populations of canvasbacks, redheads, and ruddy ducks, the three species which have been put into a precarious position by the prolonged drought in the nesting areas, showed a 70 percent decline in the winter survey.

Only Kansas and Wyoming showed an increase in wintering flocks and these increases were slight. The rest of the flyway--Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and the east coast and interior of Mexico reported decreases.

A total of 397 State and Federal observers participated in the survey. Thirty-five aircraft were flown 19,500 miles on the United States portion of the survey. An additional 43,000 miles were traveled by car, boat, and other forms of transportation.

x x x