



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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WINTER SURVEY SHOWS DUCK POPULATION DOWN TWENTY PERCENT

The total Continental duck population in January 1960 is 20 percent below the level of January 1959, the Department of the Interior reports.

A slight increase in goose population, a 31 percent increase in brant and a coot population which held steady, but there was a decrease of 17 percent in the numbers of migratory waterfowl in North America in January 1960 compared with January 1959.

This information is based upon the annual winter survey made by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service.

The survey showed that in general the Arctic nesters, which were not affected by the prolonged drought, were present in their usual numbers but that the prairie nesting waterfowl which had been hit hard by three successive dry years were in short supply. But those species which are reported to have "held their own" or to have "increased slightly" are not necessarily in good shape because 1959 was one of the very poor years for migratory waterfowl.

The redhead, the winter survey shows, is in a precarious position. It is one of the diving ducks hit hardest by the long drought and one which has been afforded a high degree of protection during the past two hunting seasons. The 1960 redhead population was 72 percent below its already low level of 1959. The canvasback, another diver which the drought hit hard, was down 28 percent from 1959, and a third diver, the ruddy duck, was down 16 percent from 1959. Other species showing decreases were mallards, 22 percent; greenwinged teal, 32 percent; bluewinged teal, 44 percent; and pintails 27 percent.

The black duck population was not sufficiently high to get out of the "same as last year" category but wood ducks were up 17 percent.

Canada goose numbers were slightly down but snow geese were up 13 percent and the whitefronts up 10 percent. The population of brant doubled on the Pacific coast and that of the Atlantic coast was up 10 percent. For all other species of migratory waterfowl, the population was about the same as last year.

The survey covered the wintering grounds in North America, Central America, and some of the more important marshland areas in Colombia and Venezuela in South America. A large percentage of the birds noted in the two South American countries this year were bluewinged teal.

A total of 1,691 persons throughout the Continent participated in the winter survey. Of these 1,411 were State personnel, 244 were Federal and 36 came from Canada or private conservation associations.

During the survey 133 planes registered 1,055 flight hours and flew 100,027 miles. A total of 1,091 cars were driven 106,990 miles and 92 boats tallied 4,047 miles.

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