



The original Audubon's mountain sheep is gone but the Rocky Mountain bighorn has been introduced in its stead. For three years now it has thrived in fenced pastures and seems to be adapting itself to its new range under a cooperative program with the Montana Fish and Game Commission.

Antelope still use this range, although it lacks sufficient depth to afford year-around habitat. They use the Wildlife Range as well as adjacent ranges, drifting on and off the area. Improvement of the range will contribute to the welfare of this species.

Canada geese have been reestablished along the river and on the upper reaches of the Fort Peck Reservoir. Excellent progress in developing resident flocks has been made. Before 1952, no geese were known to have nested along the Missouri River for many years. During the past five years, the peak concentration observed during migration numbered 6,500, most of which were locally raised birds. Protection from disturbance in addition to the development of food supplies on the river bottoms has contributed to this progress. The potential for further development is very great and, if realized, this area could make a very substantial contribution to the waterfowl population of the Central Flyway.

Mourning doves find the "breaks" much to their liking and are stopping in increasing numbers because the planting of cereal grains on the river bottoms for waterfowl has developed a plentiful food supply. Based on roadside counts, it is estimated present annual production of these ground nesting birds is between 500,000 and 750,000. This area has become the greatest breeding ground west of the Mississippi River.

The mid-grass prairie type on the benchland was the home of several birds and animals which are now precariously balanced on the edge of extinction. The mountain plover, upland plover, and long-billed curlew are becoming rarer. Prairie dog colonies will be permitted to remain here, along with their close associates, the burrowing owl and the very rare black-footed ferret.

The little kit fox of the northern prairies has disappeared over much of its former range, and it may find a retreat in this area. Bald eagles and golden eagles frequent the "breaks" and badlands and find suitable nesting sites in these inaccessible bluffs. The little mountain bluebird, formerly a common resident of this area, has nearly disappeared in recent years.

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Note to Editors: Photographs for illustrating this article are available from the Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C.