

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

For Release April 24, 1968

Carroll 343-5634

SURVEY OF WATERFOWL NESTING GROUNDS SCHEDULED NEXT MONTH

An extensive air and ground survey of waterfowl nesting areas in the United States and Canada is scheduled by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife next month amid reports of exceptionally dry conditions on northern prairie regions, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The survey will be conducted by Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and Canadian Wildlife Service. State and Provincial agencies and Ducks Unlimited, Canada, also cooperate in the surveys.

The "prairie pothole" country, which includes the Dakotas, western Minnesota, eastern Montana, and large parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, is often called North America's "duck factory." The potholes are glacier-formed ponds and lakes which, with the right combination of snow and rainfall, are ideal duck nesting sites.

This was the region reported "dry" at the National Waterfowl Council Meeting in Houston in March. With the exception of a belt through Nebraska and the Dakotas which received a heavy snowfall April 3, no improvement has been noted.

Two surveys are made annually. The May observations are of water levels and other conditions that affect nesting success, and of the number of nesting birds.

The second survey, in July, reveals summer water conditions and the success of the hatch. The surveys provide the basis for fall waterfowl hunting regulations.

Crews participating in the surveys will have a three-day preliminary workshop early in May at the Bureau's Northern Prairie Research Center at Jamestown, North Dakota.

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