

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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WATERFOWL BREEDING POPULATIONS HIGHEST IN RECENT YEARS

Results of extensive aerial surveys by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, in cooperation with the State fish and game departments and the Canadian Wildlife Service, show waterfowl breeding populations to be the highest in recent years.

Assistant Secretary Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife, and parks said that the total duck population index is 28 percent higher than a year ago and the highest since the extensive survey program was started in the early 1950's.

Northern breeding areas--Alaska, the Northwest Territories and northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba--are responsible for most of this increase. Breeding populations in the prairie pothole region of Canada are still below those of the 1950's.

Increases from 1969 were general among most important duck species. Breeding mallards and pintails increased about 30 and 20 percent, respectively, and are at their highest levels since 1958 (mallards) and 1960 (pintails).

Green-winged teal appear to be near their peak with a large increase from 1969, while blue-winged teal increased about 25 percent from 1969 and are at their highest level since 1961.

Redheads and canvasbacks showed moderate gains from 1969 (16 percent for redheads and 22 percent for canvasbacks). Canvasbacks are at their highest level since 1959, but remain somewhat below the levels of the 1950's.

The surveys will continue through July to obtain information on duck production success. Early reports suggest a late season with much re-nesting still in progress in the prairie areas of western Canada. Rains such as those received in late June are necessary to insure a good flight this fall.

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