

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DUCK BREEDING POPULATIONS GENERALLY ON PAR WITH LAST YEAR'S, SURVEY BY FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE INDICATES

Duck breeding populations increased in some areas, declined in others, but overall are about equal with last year, surveys conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service in May and July indicate. Later this month, the Service will announce framework guidelines for the States to use in selecting dates and bag limits for their hunting seasons.

Increases in duck breeding populations occurred in Alaska, the Northwest Territories and northern Alberta, southern Manitoba, South Dakota and Montana. Decreases were recorded in northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba, southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan, North Dakota, Minnesota, and other States.

Increases in breeding populations occurred among gadwall (10 percent), blue-winged teal (16 percent), shovelers (37 percent), pintails (28 percent), canvasbacks (32 percent), and scaup (25 percent). Declines were noted for mallards (6 percent), green-winged teal (13 percent), and redheads (35 percent).

A winter survey of geese indicated that their breeding populations were about normal, except for fewer Atlantic brant. Summer goose production in Alaska and across the Canadian Arctic is poor because of late spring weather, but Canada geese nesting below the Arctic are expected to have at least average production in 1972.

Although June brought rains to the prairie pothole duck nesting regions, the drying trend begun in the spring generally continued. Consequently the

number of water areas suitable for successful nesting was down 32 percent from July a year ago.

Based upon its surveys, done in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service and State and Provincial agencies, the Fish and Wildlife Service believes that hunters in various parts of the country can expect the following situations when seasons open this fall:

Pacific Flyway

Ducks: Flights similar to last year and about average for the 1955-1971 period.

Geese: Smaller flights for several species.

Central Flyway

Ducks: Flights similar to last year and about average for the 1955-1971 period.

Geese: Flights about average, but some concern for white-fronted geese, and the Western Prairie and Tall Grass Prairie Canada geese.

Mississippi Flyway

Ducks: Flights similar to last year and about average for the 1955-1971 period.

Geese: Flights about average, except for geese that nested in the Arctic.

Atlantic Flyway

Ducks: Most species will be coming down the flyway in average numbers; population levels for black ducks remain low.

Geese: Canada goose flight will equal last year's and remain above the past decade's average. Fall flights of brant, however, will be smaller than recent years.

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