INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON D. C

Release - Immediate.

January 28, 1932.

PICTURES TAKEN FROM PLANE FOUND AIDS IN BIRD STUDIES

Aerial photographing of birds is a valuable aid in studying flock formations and in determining their numbers, officials of the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, have concluded after studying photographs taken on a test flight, January 25. Surveys from the air, however, can only be supplementary to ground observations, the ornithologists of the bureau believe, because of the difficulty in identifying accurately the various kinds of birds seen from the air or shown in a picture.

The experiment was under the direction of Frederick C. Lincoln, an ornithologist of the Biological Survey. After taking off from Bolling Field in an Army photographic plane piloted by Lieut. David W. Goodrich, the party cruised down the Potomac River to near Fort Washington. There Mr. Lincoln located a flock of ducks large enough for the purpose of the experiment, and Staff Sergeant Andrew E. Matos, of the Army Air Corps, operating a battery of aerial cameras, made a series of photographs. For an hour or more, says Mr. Lincoln, the plane circled over the birds at altitudes varying from 1,500 to 300 feet, while the cameras recorded the positions and numbers of the birds, mostly canvasbacks and black ducks, as they were feeding on a bed

of wild celery.

The pictures, it was explained, were taken in series covering the entire area of water on which the ducks were feeding. After the various views were developed they were then matched and arranged in a mosaic showing in one photograph all the ducks in the flock.

The photographs, the Biological Survey explained, were taken over an area where the birds regularly congregate in large numbers and should not be interpreted as representing a general abundance of waterfowl. As a matter of fact, according to the bureau's estimates, there are less than half as many ducks this year even in this region of concentration as there were last year.

--------W--------

645-32