



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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WATERFOWL CONDITIONS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AS SEASON OPENS

A good hatch from late nesting species will be included in the fall flights of ducks from Canada, late August and September surveys of the Fish and Wildlife Service have revealed, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, which conducts the duck production surveys in the principal nesting areas in Canada, said that the fall flights will pretty much conform to the August forecast following extensive earlier surveys. However, slight duck population increases over last year may occur in some flyways. In the earlier forecast, it had been predicted that flights would be about the same as last year in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways with a decline in numbers continuing in the Pacific Flyway.

Local food and water conditions, of course, influence the distribution of birds in the various flyways, and local hunting may not generally reflect the situation in the flyway as a whole, it was pointed out. This is always the case regardless of the over-all situation.

The area which may show improvement in the flight is described as "from the central Dakotas east, probably even to the Atlantic Flyway". The area of improvement includes the Mississippi Flyway.

When the duck nesting commenced, it was stressed, the breeding population in the principal Canadian waterfowl areas was down approximately one-fifth from a year ago despite the reduced kill of last season. The make-up in the loss of breeders and any improvements in the flight which may occur must come as a result of more young birds in the flight. Because these birds are more vulnerable than the gun-shy adults and in order to make certain enough of these birds of the year will survive to bring about an improvement in the status of the breeding population next spring, hunting regulations promulgated by the Department continue to be restrictive.

Reviewing the situation, the Bureau statement said: In general, water conditions in Canada are better than last year although extensive areas in southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta are still seriously affected by drought.

The distribution of water in Canada and along the flight lanes will affect the number of birds and the distribution of birds to particular areas. The drought conditions existing in the southern portions of the two Canadian provinces mentioned may cause a shifting of birds eastward to the better-watered areas.

These possible shifts to the better-watered areas plus the strong late hatch lead to the conclusion that flights in the Mississippi Flyway and possibly in the Atlantic Flyway may show small improvement over last year.

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