

Oct-Dec 1935

CRESCENT LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

QUARTERLY REPORT ON RESERVATION WILD LIFE AND ACTIVITIES
APPURTENANT THERETO.

SECOND QUARTER

FISCAL YEAR 1936

I. Report on wild life observed during the period.

1. Birds observed and definitely identified.

Waterfowl

Mallard
Shoveler
Green-winged Teal
Blue-winged Teal
Canvas-back
Buffle-head
Cadwall
Pintail
Red-head
American Golden-eye
Scaup
Ruddy
Red-breasted Merganser
American Merganser
Hooded Merganser
Coot
Whistling Swan
Canada Goose
Snow Goose
Baldpate
Western Grebe
Eared Grebe
Pied-billed Grebe
American Herring Gull
Ring-billed Gull

Upland Game Birds

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Prairie Hen
Ring-necked Pheasant

Shore Birds

Wilson Snipe
American Bittern
Killdeer
Black-crowned Night Heron
Greater Blue Heron
Avocet
Western Sandpiper
Lesser Yellow-legs

Birds of Prey

Golden Eagle
Bald Eagle
Prairie Falcon
Rough-legged Hawk
Marsh Hawk
Swainson Hawk
Sparrow Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Coopers Hawk
Burrowing Owl
Hoot Owl
Screech Owl

Insectivorous

California Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Brewer Blackbird
Crow
Blue Jay
Brown Thrasher
American Robin
Mourning Dove
Meadow Lark
Barn Swallow

Ducks from the north started coming in during the week of September 29. An estimate taken on Oct. 4th indicated approximately 17000 ducks on the refuge, including Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy, Baldpate, Shoveler, Red-head, Gadwall, and Pintail. Another estimate taken on Oct. 16 indicated approximately 22000 ducks on the refuge including Crescent Lake, However, Approximately 18000 of this number had concentrated on Crescent Lake alone, leaving but very few ducks on the other lakes within the refuge. The native Blue-winged Teal left during the week of Oct. 6th. The peak of migration was reached on Oct. 31st., and an estimate taken on Oct. 31st and Nov. 1st indicated 47000 ducks on the refuge. On Nov. 2nd a cold wave struck, driving all ducks south to open water on Blue Creek and the North Platte River refuge. This cold wave also brought down flock after flock of ducks which passed on over the refuge without stopping at all. No Canada Geese stopped within the refuge during migration, and only 17 Snow Geese stopped, these being observed on the south end of Crescent Lake. By Nov. 5 the lakes had opened up again, and Mergansers, Mallard, and Shovelers had came back in to the lakes, an estimate taken at this time indicated 8000 of these species which had concentrated on Blue Lake. A part of these birds remained until the first week in December. An estimate taken on December 3rd indicated 4000 of these birds on Blue Lake, of which approximately 1000 were Mallard and Shoveler, the remaining 3500 being Mergansers. There were also 11 Swan observed on Blue Lake on December 3rd., these Swan and all ducks left on December 4th or 5th at which time the lakes froze over, and no ducks have been observed on the refuge since that time.

In the early part of October (10) Canada Geese were donated by Mr. George Smith, Oshkosh, Nebraska, and (5) Canada Geese, and (6) Mallard Ducks were donated by Mr. Ed Mitchell, Lisco, Nebraska. The Canada Geese were place in the Gimlet Lake Area, and the Mallard Ducks were liberated at refuge headquarters. During the week of December 1st (5) of the Canada Geese came up missing, and a thorough search for these birds within this area was made, but no sign of them could be found. The remaining ten of these birds have been driven in off of Gimlet Lake to a small grove adjacent to headquarters where they are being fed, and a shelter has been constructed to accomodate them during storms. The six Mallard Ducks which were liberated at refuge headquarters have been making use of the small pool which is the over-flow from the storage tank of the water system, and during the fall decoyed several of their species into this pool, at times this pool was completely covered with ducks.

Ring-necked Pheasants are becoming quite numerous within and around the refuge. Approximately 50 of these birds are wintering around Gimlet Lake and refuge headquarters.

Several coveys of Prairie Chickens were observed during the first part of the quarter, but most of these birds have moved south to the farming country for the winter. A covey of 23 have remained and are wintering at the north end of Island Lake.

2. Animal Life.

Coyotes have become numerous during the quarter, these being sighted quite often while patrolling. I believe that this unusual number of coyotes within the refuge have come in from the north, and from the west, at which places a number of packs of hounds are being used to hunt them, and they have come into the refuge where they are not molested, and I believe that these coyotes will leave the refuge when their denning season starts, at which time they will not be hunted with dog's.

These coyotes are almost sure to come back into the refuge again during the fall of 1936 and 1937, at which time they will be hunted with dog's again, and a hunter should be assigned to the refuge during that time to clean them up while they are here, so that they will not become so numerous that a part of them will take up their abode within the refuge.

Muskrats are well on the increase, a number of new houses have been built on Crane, Hackberry, Island, and Gimlet Lake, but I do not believe them to be numerous enough to make trapping necessary.

Jackrabbits are quite numerous, but are not near as numerous as they were during the fall and winter of 1934. I believe this is due to shooting them off last spring, at which time approximately 300 of them were killed.

Antelope are frequently sighted south of the refuge, have observed from 7 to as high as 21 in a band.

II. Other Activities.

1. Grazing.

During the second week in October 3500 head of cattle belonging to the Abbott Company were moved from the summer range (East Division) to the winter range (West Division) and have been feeding there since that time. The summer range was grazed short, but is in much better shape than it was during the fall of 1934.

2. Protection.

During the open season on migratory birds a majority of my time was spent in patrolling the refuge. No violations were noted. Hunting in this locality was done by local hunters who have always shown a deal of respect for refuge boundaries.

No fires were reported during the fall fire season.

3. Improvements and Developments.

The recently acquired Douglas tract has been partly posted with boundary signs, the posts being drove full of sickle sections to keep cattle from rubbing them out. Posts used for posting this tract were 8 ft. posts and will have to be replaced with longer posts later on so that cattle will not rub the signs off.

A telephone line has been constructed from the Island Lake Fish Camp on the east side of Island Lake to the north-west side of Island Lake at which place it ties in to the telephone line which runs from refuge headquarters to the cabin on the east end of the refuge. This will be used in case fire is sighted from the Island Lake Recreational Area, and also in case violators enter this part of the refuge.

The Harris buildings on the east side of Crane Lake have been torn down and all lumber has been hauled to refuge headquarters.

Headquarters house has been completely weather stripped.

4. Public Relations.

During the open season on migratory waterfowl a number of copies of the 1935 game laws were made and placed in business places in Oshkosh for the use of the public. These were greatly appreciated by a number of hunters.

Respectfully Submitted,

Acting Supervisor,
Crescent Lake Migratory Bird Refuge.