

MONTHLY REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
Fish Springs Refuge
December 24, 1964

I. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning and end of this period, temperatures were fairly high, reaching 70° F on December 23, 1964. However, this month saw 19 nights of below freezing temperatures, including 5, 6, and 11 degree readings only last week. Average temperatures (minimum 29°F, maximum 49°F) were raised considerably the last few days due to unseasonably warm weather.

At first the waterfowl populations continued their decline from early fall counts. About 7 December, snowstorms and continued cold weather to the north apparently pushed mallards, G.W. teal, and pintail onto the refuge. Approximately 5,000 ducks were on the area (a new refuge high) for ten days, with over half departing (mostly pintail) after three nights of near zero weather.

Ponds and sloughs frozen at that time are now completely ice free with waterfowl well dispersed. Except for short periods, pools have only been partially frozen with new, filling ponds especially ice free. Also providing feed and resting areas, these flooded sloughs have been heavily used by mallard, pintail and teal. Three W. swans on H pool this past week. October's swans departed after 2 days. C, D, and E pools partly filled; F pool filling. Farm slough Ia being flooded and now used by 950+ ducks.

Banded This Period: 43 G. W. teal, 47 mallard, 1 canvasback, 10 A. coot.

II. ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Grain bin moved and resealed. Overhead winch - hoist adapted for garage use. Facilities and equipment for wood working shop built and installed in equipment storage building. Refuge tools, equipment and small parts systemized and stored in shelf-bins and cabinets. Oil seal and brushes replaced on Onan #2. Onan #2 removed, taken to Salt Lake for repairs, and re-installed. Routine preventative maintenance on refuge vehicles and equipment continued.

Soil and Moisture - One half of 40 acre experimental farming area plowed. Experimental upland range revegetation plot cleared of brush, disced and seeded (85% completed).

III. PROBLEMS

- 1) Rod through block of Onan #2 (repaired).
- 2) Rotary mower and hitch arrangement to Bombardier often needs adjustments or repairs, although useful for greasewood and smotherweed removal.
- 3) Leasee's activities in diking Middle Springs has caused pressure and siltation apparently resulting in retardation of spring flow and additional movement of water through development of numerous small seeps east of Middle Spring. The net result is only 4 cfs being supplied to experimental farming irrigation ditch instead of the reputed 12-14 cfs.

IV. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Hunting pressure erratic, one or two parties per week. Success good for experienced hunters.

Morris C. LeFever