

FEBRUARY * MARCH - APRIL, 1942

General

High velocity winds during the fore part of April, and considerably above normal rainfall during the latter part of April and fore part of May prevented an inspection of the Easement refuges until May 19-22, 1942. Winds were of such velocity as to make outside work impossible, and the rains which followed made all roads impassable.

During the period there was very little variance in weather conditions in the area embracing the Fort Niobrara and Easement Refuges. Weather conditions were generally good during February and to March 25-26-27 when a heavy snow and high winds blocked highways and caused some loss of Chinese Pheasants in South Dakota. No other reports of losses were received.

The Eagle Creek and Carr Easement Refuges, approximately 50 miles north of Fort Niobrara have maintained nearly maximum water elevations due to the spring flows. The Lake Andes Refuge, 150 miles east of Fort Niobrara, and Lake Arconge Refuge, lying north of Lake Andes had very little water until the spring rains. All of these areas, with the exception of Lake Andes are now at spillway elevation. The Lake Andes upper (North) unit is full, and the middle and lower (south) units have a generous supply of water. On the whole, conditions appear very much improved for wildlife.

EAGLE CREEK REFUGE

This area is maintained by springs, at all times near spillway elevation. Recent rains served to put considerable water over the spillway and filled up the small areas lying below the main pond.

Two pairs of Blue-winged Teal was the extent of the waterfowl population at the time of our visit to the area.

It is believed that its use by wildlife at any time would be very limited due to the farm buildings, and considerable activity around the pond.

CARR REFUGE.

This area, too, is maintained by springs, and in addition has a large drainage basin. During the rains this spring the run-off was considerable in excess of the spillway capacity and the rancher made a cut through the fill to prevent damage. This cut is four feet deep and to a hard clay bottom. It is planned to slope the sides of the cut and make a rock crossing-spillway.

The fill was made by the rancher, and the Service, with the exception of moving a small shack onto the place for an office, and erecting some fence, has made no contribution to the project. The area apparently serves its best purpose as a resting area for waterfowl, but it is not believed that there is any nesting. No waterfowl were observed at the time of our visit.

May 25, 1942

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KENNETH F. MACDONALD
REFUGE MANAGER