VEGETATION LINE TRANSECTS OF GOOSE PASTURE AND POOL NO. 1

VEGETATIVE TRANSECTS Clarence Cannon NWR 1970-1980

> PART OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STUDY - PROJECT 2

"Evaluating Production of Moist Soil Plants in the Mississippi River Flood Plain and Their Subsequent Use by Waterfowl"

BY

DONALD J. PETERSON BIOLOGICAL TECHNICIAN

CLARENCE CANNON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ANNADA, MISSOURI

August 25, 1970

INTRODUCTION

Naturally occurring moist soil food plants in the Mississippi River flood plain are highly adapted to changing environmental conditions. Burgess (1970) found that domestic food plants such as Japanese millet, proso millet and buckwheat had little success because of floods, drought, and infestations of wild millet, smartweeds, and foxtail grasses. Burgess also stated that moist soil food plants have an inherent ability to adapt to natural conditions.

Wildlife Management Study - Project No. 2, dated May 15, 1969 was developed to evaluate the production of moist soil food plants in the Mississippi River flood plain and their subsequent use by waterfowl.

PROCEDURE

During the summer of 1970, permanent vegetation line transects were established and run in Goose Pasture and Pool No. 1 at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge.

The Goose Pasture line transect runs north-south. The north point is marked by a permanent steel fence post located ten feet below the top and inside of the north boundary levee. The south terminus, which is due south of the north post, was marked by a permanent steel fence post located 150 feet west of the newly installed water control structure and h0 feet north of the four-wheel drive trail. The length of the transect line is 2,400 feet.

The Pool No. 1 line transect runs north south. The south point is marked by a permanent steel fence post located at the base and north of Bryant's Creek levee. The north point is marked by a permanent steel fence post located 15 feet south of the brush covered drainage ditch. The length of the transect line is 1,025 feet. Figure 1 shows the location of the line transects.

The transects for both pools start at the south and run north along an imaginary straight line to the north post. Only one man is needed

to pull the 100 foot tape measure and record the plant species. The recorder walks north until he reaches the end of a 50 foot or 100 foot distance, depending on the length used, and marks that point.

A one-quarter mile acre square quadrant (3.3 feet on each side) was placed squarely ahead of this point. The next quadrant was walked exactly the same distance north of the previously marked end point. Each quadrant constitutes a sample, and each sample is exactly 50 or 100 feet apart, depending on the length required. The proposed length between samples in Goose Pasture was 100 feet. In Pool No. 1 50 and 100 foot lengths between samples were compared. The 50 foot length provided a more precise analysis of the vegetation. It is recommended that a 50 foot length be used. Figure 2 describes the position of the quadrant and the transect line.

The presence-absence unit of measure for each species was recorded for each sample. This was summarized as a frequency of occurrance, which is defined as "an expression of the percentage of sample plots in which a species occurs". The results were ranked according to percentage and the percentages were rounded off to the nearest whole per cent.

Photographs were taken using Kodachrome II showing the north-facing and south-facing aspect of each line transect, and samples showing conspicuous densities of certain plant species. These slides should be a valuable tool for year-to-year comparisons of the same transect line. Table 1 notes the photographs included in this study.

Water gauge readings from Goose Pasture and Pool No. 1 were also recorded. The importance of including these readings cannot be overestimated. Water level management will be the ultimate result of this study. With out a practical connection to waterfowl management, line transects are a waste of valuable time.

Major moist soil plant species encountered in this study were added to the refuge herbarium. This should be a valuable assistance to students and refuge managers who conduct future line transects at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge.

It is recommended that all vegetation line transects be run in as similar a fashion from year-to-year as possible to provide comparable results.

RESULTS

Plant species encountered in each sample are given in Table 2 and Table 3. The frequency of occurrance of plant species are given in Table μ and Table 5.

In Pool No. 1, Polygonum pennsylvanicum and Echinochloa sp. were the most conspicuous moist soil food plants. Several lower profile plant species such as Convolvulus arvensis, Eleocharis obtusa, and Ammania coccinea occurred in most samples. The variety of plant species in Pool No. 1 was sparse. However, the random heterogeneous mixing of these plants would appear to be quite attractive to the particular and changeable tastes of waterfowl.

The zonation effect of Echinochloa sp., P. pennsylvanicum, and A. coccinea was evident in Goose Fasture. Both the sample data and photographs of the area show 10 to 80 foot zones of a single species occurring on the east end of Goose Pasture. The primary cause of this were slight differences in elevation which resulted in varying depths of standing water. In general, A. coccinea grew in the depressions, P. pennsylvanicum in the transitional zone, and Echinochloa sp. on the drier sites (although often quite wet).

The most abundant plant species in Goose Pasture was E. obtusa. It is low in profile, abundant on low moist sites, and appears somewhat intolerant to shade. It was most commonly associated with A. coccinea and Stellaria graminea.

A. coccinea often occurred in nearly solid stands. During late July, many large seeds developed on each plant. No reference as to its wildlife value could be found. The total quantity of seed produced by this species in Goose Pasture certainly ranks very high.

Goose Pasture and Pool No. 1 have a readily observable plant profile. In general, there are the tall conspicuous species such as P. pennsylvanicum, Echinochlea sp., and Chenopodium album. There was also a low, inconspicuous and frequently dense layer of A. coccinea, S. graminea, E. obtusa, and C. arvensis. The layering and zonation effect of plant species seems to be an important characteristic of moist soil habitats.

MOISTURE CONDITIONS

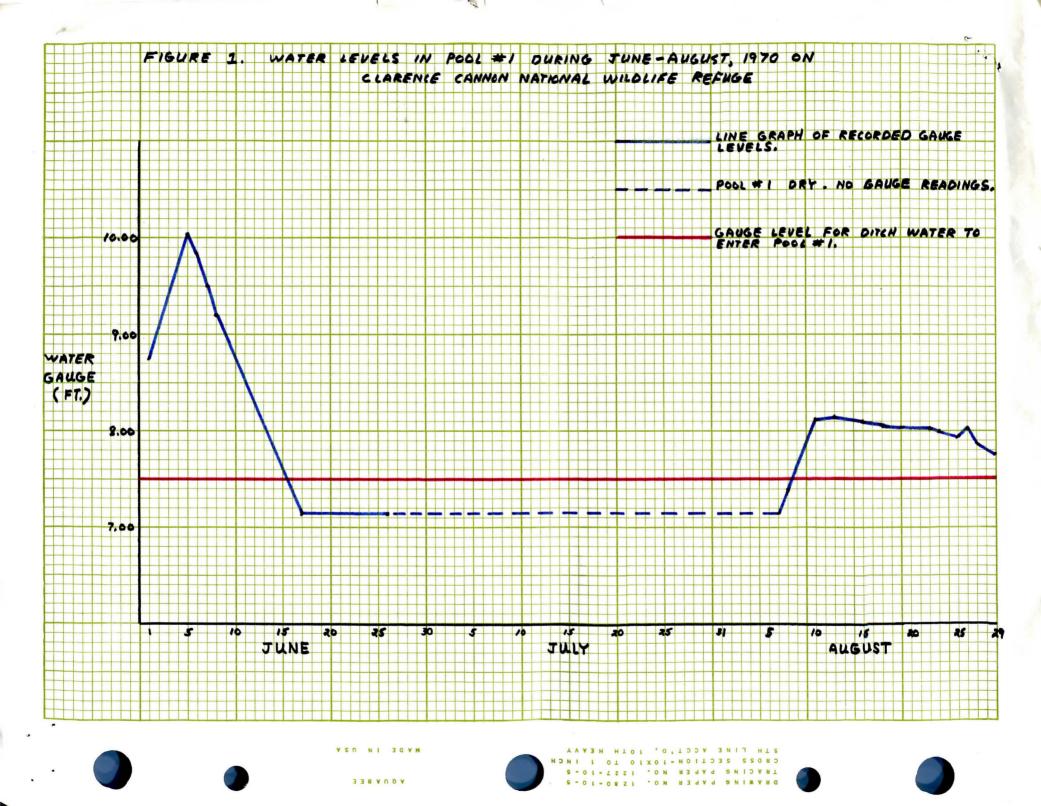
At the time the Goose Pasture transect was conducted, no water gauge had been installed at the water control structure. However, the water level was marked on a steel post. As soon as the gauge is installed, a reading will be obtained from the marked post. In general, only the ditches, four shallow pools and a few depressions contained water.

Pool No. 1 was dry during the transect. The water gauge at water control structure No. 1 read approximately 6.80. This water was in the east-west ditch and was not high enough to enter the pool. (See Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

Continuing development of moist soil areas on Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge make comparisons between Goose Pasture and Pool No. 1 this year and in subsequent years difficult. The number of acres of moist soil habitat will be increasing as funds for development permit. The importance, however, of an initial plant species survey of the newly developed Goose Pasture area will provide valuable information of a changing habitat from cropland to a moist soil habitat.

The effects of drawdown, particularly time and length, appear to have a considerable influence on the development of moist soil food plants. Hopkins (1962) said that too early drawdowns cause unwanted plants to be established before conditions were suitable for the germination of smartweeds and other desirable plants. Uhler (1956) preferred a biennial drawdown to an annual de-watering, because the latter may permit the excessive development of undesirable plants. Meeks (1970) studied drawdowns in Ohio from March to June and found that a May drawdown produced the best vegetation for wildlife. Crail (1951) recommended dropping water levels in Missouri in June to produce wild millet. Burgess (1970) indicated that a July 1 - September 15 drawdown would produce an excellent stand of wild millet at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, while earlier drawdowns would produce inaccessible growths of nodding smartweed (P. lapathifolium).



The large seeded smartweeds (P. pennsylvanicum, P. coccineum), which often occurred in the late millet crop, produced more valuable seeds and less bulk than nodding smartweed.

On Clarence Cannon National Middlife Refuge the ability of naturally occurring moist soil food plants to develop in layers or zones of different plant species under a variety of environmental conditions could adequately replace many cultivated crops.

COST

Manpower - 20 hours - (GS-5 \$3.27/hour Project Cost)	\$ 65.40
Equipment and Supplies	\$ 4.00
TOTAL	\$ 69.40

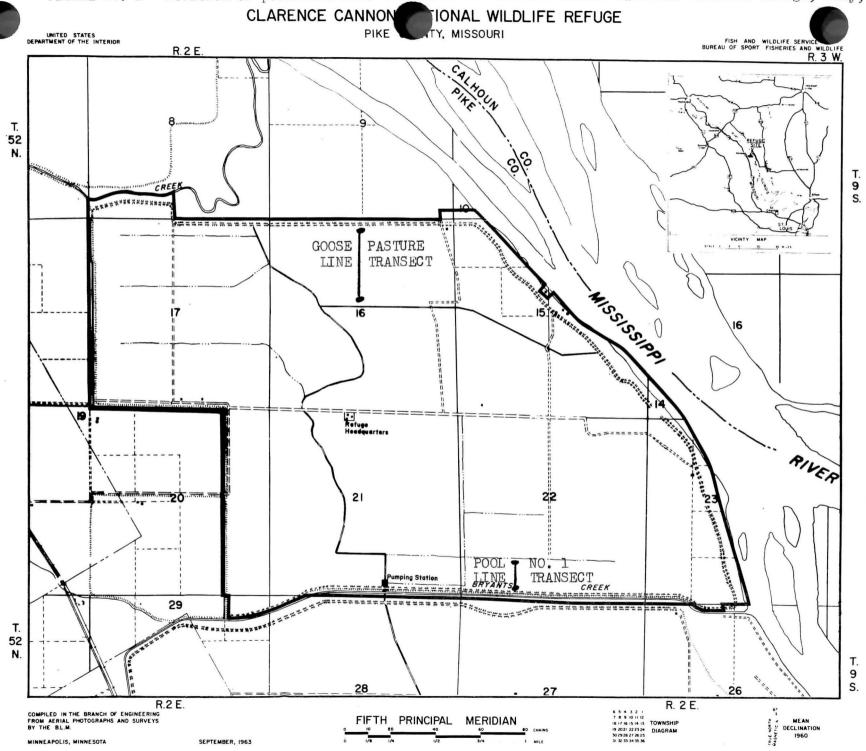


FIGURE II.

Position of quadrant in relation to the transect line.

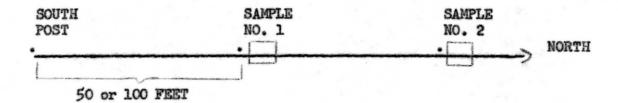


TABLE I.

List of photographs taken during the vegetation line transect of Goose Pasture and Pool No. 1 at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, July, 1970.

PHOTO KEY	DESCRIPTION
A.	Goose Pasture. South boundary of line transect looking north.
В.	Goose Pasture. North boundary of line transect looking south.
C.	Goose Pasture. Sample No. 3 of line transect.
D.	Goose Pasture. Sample No. 8 of line transect.
E.	Goose Pasture. Sample No. 14 of line transect.
F.	Goose Pasture. Sample No. 15 of line transect.
G.	Goose Pasture. Ammania, Echinochloa and Stellaria near Sample No. 17.
H.	Goose Pasture. Ammania, Echinochloa and Stellaria near Sample No. 17.
ı.	Pool No. 1. South boundary of line transect looking north.

¹ _ Colored slides using Kodachrome II. Located in refuge slide collection.

TABLE II.

Plant species observed in samples taken at 100 foot intervals on a vegetation line transect of Goose Pasture at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, July 14, 1970.

SAMPLE		SAMPLE	
NUMBER	SPECIES	NUMBER	SPECIES
1	Algae Polygonum coccineum Callitriche hermaphroditica 95% open water Water depth - 5 inches.	9	P. pennsylvanicum - dense Ambrosia sp. Cyperus sp. E. obtusa
		1.0	P. pennsylvanicum - dense
2	P. coccineum Ammania coccinea		Asclepias sp. Ech. sp.
1	Stellaria graminea Eleocharis obtusa Mudflat. Sparse Vegetation.		Thispi arvense
	naditate sparse vegetation.	11.	P. pennsylvanicum - dense
3	E. obtusa A. coccinea - dense Water depth - 1 inch.		Trifolium sp. Ech. sp. E. obtusa
4	A. coccinea Water depth - 1 inch.	12	P. pennsylvanicum - dense E. obtusa Cyperus sp.
5	A. coccinea		
	E. obtusa Water depth - 2 inches.	13	P. pennsylvanicum Ech. sp. Setaria sp.
6	A. coccinea E. obtusa		E. obtusa Cyperus sp. A. coccinea
7	A. coccinea Polygonum pennsylvanicum Echinochica sp. E. obtusa	14	E. obtusa - dense Stellaria graminea - dense P. pennsylvanicum Ech. sp.
8	P. pennsylvanicum - dense A. coccinea E. ohtusa		Cyperus sp.

TABLE II. - CONTINUED

SAMPLE NUMBER	SPECIES	SAMPLE NUMBER	SPECIES
15	Stellaria graminea - dense A. coccinea E. obtusa	21.	Ech. sp. Stellaria graminea E. obtusa - dense
16	Stellaria graminea - dense		A. coccinea P. pennsylvanicum
	E. obtusa P. pennsylvanicum A. coccinea	22	E. obtusa - dense P. pennsylvanicum A. coccinea
17	E. obtusa - dense Stellaria graminea A. coccinea	23	Stellaria graminea
	Ech. sp.	2)	Stellaria graminea - dense E. obtusa - dense Ech. sp.
18	E. obtusa - dense Stellaria graminea Ech. sp.		F. pennsylvanicum A. coccinea
	A. coccinea	24	Spartina pectinata - dense Asclepias sp.
19	P. Pennsylvanicum Ech. sp. E. obtusa		Trifolium sp. Ech. sp. Cassia fasciculata Ambrosia sp.
20	P. pennsylvanicum - dense Ech. sp.		
		END OF	TRANSECT.

TABLE III.

Plant species observed in samples taken at 50 foot intervals on a vegetation line transect of Pool No. 1 at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, July 31, 1970.

SAMPLE NUMBER	SPECIES	Sample Number	SPECIES
1	Polygonum pennsylvanicum Echinochloa sp. Eleocharis obtusa Cyperus sp. Ammania coccinea	8	A. coccinea C. arvensis P. pennsylanicum E. obtusa
	Convolvulus arvensis	9	A. coccinea C. arvensis
2	P. pennsylvanicum E. obtusa A. coccinea		Abutilon theophrasti P. pennsylvanicum E. obtusa
3	P. pennsylvanicum E. obtusa Ech. sp. C. arvensis	10	A. coccinea P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis E. obtusa
14	P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis Chenopodium album	11	P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis
5	A. coccinea C. arvensis	12	Amaranthus sp. C. arvensis P. pennsylvanicum
	E. obtusa	13	Amaranthus sp. Ch. album C. arvensis
6	A. coccinea Ch. album C. arvensis E. obtusa P. pennsylvanicum	14	P. pennsylvanicum Ch. album C. arvensis
7	A. coccinea P. pennsylvanicum Ch. album Ech. sp. E. obtusa C. arvensis	15	Ech. sp. Ech. sp. P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis
	AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PERSON		

TABLE III. - CONTINUED

SAMPLE NUMBER	SPECIES	SAMPLE NUMBER	SPECIES
16	P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis	19	P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis Ech. sp.
17	C. arvensis P. pennsylvanicum	20	Ambrosia sp. P. pennsylvanicum
18	P. pennsylvanicum C. arvensis	21	Reh. sp. P. pennsylvanicum Ch. album

END OF TRANSECT

Distance between Sample Number 20 and 21 (end of transect) was 25 feet.

Frequency of occurence of plant species from sample plots in Pool No. 1 at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, July 31, 1970.

SPECIES	PERCENT OF FR 50 FEET APART	EQUENCY IN SAMPLES 100 FEET APART
Polygonum pennsylvanicum (smartweed)	95	100
Convolvulus arvensis (field bindweed)	86	80
Eleocharis obtusa (blunt spikerush)	47	50
Echinochloa sp. (barnyard grass)	39	20
Ammania coccinea (tooth_cup)	39	40
Chenopodium album (lambsquarters)	29	30
Amaranthus sp. (pigweed)	10	10
Cyperus sp. (sedge)	5	0
Abutilon theophrasti (Indian mallow)	5	10
Ambrosia sp. (ragweed)	5	10

TABLE V.

Frequency of occurrence of plant species from sample plots in Goose Pasture at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, July 14, 1970.

SPECIES	PERCENT OF	FREQUENCY	IN	SAMPLE
Eleocharis obtusa (blunt spikerush)		79		
Ammania coccinea (tooth-cup)		63		
Polygonum pennsylvanicum (smartweed)		58		
Echinochloa sp. (barnyard grass)		58		
Stellaria graminea (chickweed)		38		
Cyperus sp. (sedge)		17		
Trifolium sp. (clover)		13		
Polygonum coccineum (smartweed)		8		
Asclepias sp. (milkweed)		8		
Ambrosia sp. (ragweed)		8		
Spartina pectinata (slough grass)		4		
Callitriche hermaphroditica (water-starworts)		4		
Algae		4		
Setaria sp. (foxtail grass)		4		
Cassia fasciculata (partidge pea)		4		
Thlaspi arvense (pennycress)		4		

LITERATURE CITED

- Burgess, H. H. 1970. Habitat Management on a Mid-continent Waterfowl Refuge. J. Wildl. Mgmt. 33 (4):843-847.
- Crail, L. R. 1951. Viability of Smartweed and Millet Seeds in Relation to Marsh Management in Missouri. Investigation Project P.-R. Program 13-R-5 Conserv. Comm. Mimmeo.
- Hopkins, R. C. 1962. Drawdown for Ducks. Wisc. Conserv. Bull. 27 (4):18-19.
- Meeks, R. L. 1970. The Effect of Drawdown Date on Wetland Plant Succession. J. Wildl. Mgmt. 33 (4):817-821.
- Uhler, F. M. 1956. New Habitats for Waterfowl. Trans. N. Am. Wildl. Conf. 21:453-469.

REFERENCES

- Fernald, M. L. 1950. Gray's Manual of Botany. Eighth Edition.
- Gleason, H.A. 1952. The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada.
- Mosby, H. S. 1963. Wildlife Investigational Techniques. Second Edition.
- University of Illinois. Agricultural Experiment Station. 1960. Weeds of the North Central States. North Central Regional Publication No. 36. Circular 718. Revised.
- Wildlife Management Study Outline. Project No. 2. 1969. Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge. Evaluating Production of Moist Soil Plants in the Mississippi River Flood Plain and Their Subsequent Use by Waterfowl.

ADDENDUM

The vegetation line transects described are only a small part of this study. Observations covering waterfowl use of Goose Pasture and Pool No. 1 were started in August, 1970, and will continue through Fiscal Year 1971 as long as manpower is available.

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION - 1970

CLARENCE CANNON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

TABLE I.

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION - 1970 CANNON REFUGE

	OBS	AVERAGE	
SPECIES	BROODS	PRODUCTION	BROOD SIZE
Wood Duck	9	62	6.9
Mallard	2	9	4.5
Blue-winged Teal	1	_2	2.0
TOTAL	12	73	6.1

Figures 1, 2 and 3 show the location of broods on the Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge.

One mallard nest with five eggs was destroyed by plowing on the Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge on June 29, 1970.

One wood duck box out of five checked on July 30, 1970 contained five hatched eggs and three unsuccessfully hatched eggs.

TABLE II.

DELAIR DIVISION WATERFOWL PRODUCTION _ 1970

	OBSE	AVERAGE	
SPECIES	BROODS	PRODUCTION	BROOD SIZE
Mallard	1	14	4.0
Wood Duck	1	1	1.0
TOTALS	2	5	2.5

Figures 4 and 5 show the location of broods on Delair Division of Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge.

HATCHING DATES

Table III. shows calculated hatching dates of waterfowl broods on Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge and Delair Division of Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge during the summer of 1970 from brood sub-class data.

TABLE III.

CALCULATED HATCHING DATES

SPECIES FIVE DAY INTERVAL WOOD DUCK MALLARD BLUE WINGED TEAL TOTAL 1 (10) * May 20 - 25 1 (10) * 1 (6) * 1 (6) * May 26 - 31 June 1 - 5 June 6 - 10 2 (17) * 2 (17) * 2 (14) * June 11 - 15 2 (14) * 1 (4) * June 16 _ 20 1 (6) * 2 (10) * June 21 - 25 1 (9) * 1 (9) * June 26 - 30 July 1 - 5 July 6 _ 10 1 (2) * 1 (2) * July 11_15 1 (4) * 1 (3) * 2 (7) * July 16 - 20 1 (1) * 1 (1) * 1 (2) * 1 (2) * July 21 - 25 1 (2) * 10 (63) * 3 (13) * 14 (78) * TOTALS

^{*} Number of ducks produced are in parentheses.

DISCUSSION

Goose Pasture served as brood habitat in June and July for eight of the twelve broods produced on Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge. All but one brood left the area as drought conditions occurred in August.

Development of Goose Pasture from cultivated fields to moist_soil habitat will appreciably increase available breeding and brood habitat on Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge.

FIELD DATA

WATERFOWL - CANNON. NWR LOCATION BRIANTS GREET NEAR ADMPTABLE REMARKS + BROOD SPECIES DATE AGE SIZE WD WOOD DUCK IconIIa REPORTED BY D. ADAMS RAN SCOUGH NEAR 6/24/70 CUT IN RIVER OIKE WOOD DUCK WZ 6 /24/70 سهند کی GOOSE PASTURE WOOD DUCK SAME 6/26/70 VOOD DUCK GOOSE PASTURE anh 2000 DUCK (4) (M) GOOSE PASTURE GOOSE PASTURE VOOD DUCK W(5) NE SW, SEC 23 7/2/70 9/10 BROOD 3 ON 5 WOOD DUCK II_{-} PROBABLY 7/9/70 7) WOOD DUCK GOOSE PASTURE WF SOUTH BOUNDARY GOOSE PASTURE) wood puck Ia 7/10/70 Z BOTH DUKKS Ic 7/15/70 GOOSE PASTURE (M-1) 8 11) woo Duck SW QTR., SEC. 10 W-8) 7/22/70 12) MALLARD PASTURE Ma M-1 3) wood puct 1/22/70 600SE PASTURE ₹ Y) WOOD DUCK 7/23/70 (W-9) 4 GOOSE PASTURE TRAPPED WOOD DUCK 6005E PASTURE TRAPPED M-2 I 6 MALLARD 7/23/20 600SE PASTURF TRAPPED TLa 7/23/70-600SE PASTURE MALCARD TRAPPED 18) MABL 19) BWT 7/27/70 8/18/70 MABLARD APPEARED SMALLER, COULD NOT FLY. MALE CHARACTERISTICS EUID, ON WING. PASTURE GOOSE PROBABLY A LOCAL BUT NOT FOR CERTAIN WATERFOWL BROODS - DECAIR DIVISION LOWER SWAIN MALLARD (M-(1) InIIa INLET (LAKE SIDE) UPPER BUTCHER W-T

	WATERFOW	L BROODS.	- CANNON		-
CLIARD 6/2	29/70 SEC 2	1 5 E	EGGS IN NEST	ABANDONED	DUE TO PLOWING
OUT 8/3	31/70 GOOSE	PASTURE	2 (01+9) II	Ta 9	B-D WAS BANDED
	8-	्रेक्		<u> </u>	