

ROUTING SLIP

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

DATE: 5-21 1942

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REMARKS:

Brigantine Quarterly
February-April 1942

Return to:

Div. Files

Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge
Quarterly Narrative Report
February, March And April
1942

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I. GENERAL.

A.- Weather Conditions,

We had very moderate Winter weather during the months of February and March, in this district of New Jersey. The ponds on the refuge, and the adjoining bays remained open all through this period. We did not have sufficient snow after January to even keep the ground white, However instead of snow we had a very ample rainfall along the coastal area during the same period, This afforded good feeding conditions for the wildfowl wintering along the New Jersey coast. On the other hand April has been extremely dry, and we have missed the proverbial April Showers.

B.- Water Conditions,

The water in the ponds on the refuge is regulated by the daily tidal flow, The outlets of the ponds being plugged to maintain water levels at six inches below the marsh level. Tidal action also keeps these ponds fresh, and free from objectionable growths. On March 28 and 29 during a severe North East storm the tides rose to about two feet over the meadows depositing considerable debris along the higher elevations, This storm also washed away a great deal of the fill hauled out on the Great Creek Road by the CCC personell during the past Winter.

C.- Fires,

We had no fires on the Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge during the past quarter.

II. WILDLIFE

A.- Water Birds,

I. During the past Winter 50,000 Brant spent the Winter in and around the Brigantine Refuge, and about 30,000 of these spent the greater portion of the time in Reeds Bay adjoining the refuge. This represents about a 10 % increase in Brant in this area over last year. The birds reached their peak during December and remained with us all through the Winter, On April 30th we still have about 30,000 Brant in this same area, and many of them will no doubt remain until late in May.

These birds appear to be in a fine healthy condition, And whatever food it is that they obtain from the local waters they certainly thrive on it. They feed a great deal on what is known as Bay Cabbage or Sea lettuce, and as a result their flesh is so rank as to be unfit for human food after they have been here a couple weeks. I expect this is the effect from feeding on the Bay Cabbage, as I know that years back when we had an abundance of Eel Grass in the local bays and which at the time was the chief food for Brant they were considered as being very palatable. One seldom sees these birds feeding out on the meadows similar as is common of the Canada, and Snow Goose. They also have the habit of congregating in large flocks on their feeding grounds, and it takes a tremendous food supply to support them during the winter months. Our only hopes of a better supply of food for these birds seems to lie in the return of Eel Grass as it was in former times.

2. Next to the Brant perhaps our next most common bird in these parts is the Black Duck, We had 25,000 Black Ducks spend the past Winter in this area. These birds used the ponds on the refuge, as well as the

meadows, to considerable extent for feeding and resting purpose. Of course Black Ducks are considered to be one of choice birds for food, I feel that they showed about an 8 % increase over last year, and the very moderate Winter we had should serve to provide even a greater increase for next season.

The Scaup family also provide considerable sport and food for local hunters, We also had about 25,000 of these wildfowl spend the Winter in the vicinity of the refuge. The open Winter weather with open water provided ideal feeding conditions for the season for Scaup and other diving birds, and I would say that the fowl all came through in fine shape so far as food was concerned.

In addition to the Black Ducks and Scaup we had good numbers of ~~eth~~ other species of wildfowl wintering in this area. We had about 10,000 Goldeneyes, About 2,500 Mallards, 1,000 Ruddy Ducks, 1,500 Buffleheads, 2,500 Pintails, 1,500 Widgeon, 300 Canvasbacks, 25 Red Heads, 50 Shovelers, These birds remained hereabouts all through the Winter. Besides these we had 75 Canada Geese, and 5 Snow Geese that stayed with us the greater portion of the Winter. We also had three Whistling Swans, which is a record in my experience in this area for some years back. As has already been stated the moderate winter weather made it ideal for all these birds to spend the Winter in this section.

3. We have one exception that I dislike to report, and that is the loss of wildfowl from oil resulting from tanker sinkings along the New Jersey coast. This oil in most instances floated up on the beaches with the tides and driven by Easterly winds, and covered long stretches of beach from Barnegat Inlet down to Little Egg Inlet, It averaged from 10 to 25 feet wide, and from two to three inches thick in many places. As

it happened very little of this oil came through onto the refuge, However several hundred wildfowl perished from coming in contact with floating oil in the vicinity of Beach Haven where most of the damage seemed to result. I had two Canada Geese on the refuge brought to me by Game Management Agent Robert Hawley, I cared for these birds for three weeks, when I banded them and released them on the refuge, and I am pleased to report that they took off in good shape. Had more of this oil found its way into our bays no doubt our losses would come much higher. The oil along the beaches will remain a menace to Summer bathers and pleasure seekers for some time to come.

4. Several times during the Winter I visited the area along Delaware Bay in the vicinity of Egg Island, near Fortescue, N.J. During these visits I observe ^{ed} 10,000 Snow Geese using the meadows at Egg Island and vicinity. Mixed in with the Snow Geese were about 50 Blue Geese. This seems to be about the same number of both these species making their Winter home in that same area as long as I have been in these parts. We also had about 20,000 Black Ducks and Pintails on the Killcohook Refuge near Salem, N.J. On one visit during March I estimated 70,000 Black Ducks and Pintails on this refuge. This area is being rapidly filled in by the War Department but still serves as a good resting and feeding ground during the migration periods.

On April 25th I found a Black Duck's nest containing 13 eggs within 15 feet of a much travelled highway crossing the meadows from the main land to Absecon Island on which Atlantic City is located.

5. Shore Birds.

During the month of April shore birds have begun to stop on the flats around the refuge. We have had several hundreds of Yellowlegs ~~and~~

and Black Bellied Plovers. Knots and Dowitchers have become quite numerous, and on one trip with the FWS-187 I counted about 10,000 of these birds of about 50% of each species. On the same day I estimated about 15,000 of the Sandpipers about on the flats around the refuge at low tide. On April 28 about 4,000 Curlew came onto the refuge, and they trade between here and nearby islands. I expect the peak of our shore bird migration will be reached about the middle of May, and so far these birds compare favorably to the flights during the past few years.

On April 29 I saw an old Woodcock with two young birds crossing Great Creek Road near Doughty's Creek. The young birds were already able to make short flights. At present Woodcock appear to be quite plentiful on their breeding grounds in this area.

B. Upland Birds,

About 25 Quail make their home in the vicinity of Headquarters site. I can also hear the call of doves from where I am sitting in my office while writing this report. Flickers, Cat Birds, Mocking Birds, Meadow Larks flit back and forth regularly before our office windows, and we have 4 Ring Neck Pheasants that feed around headquarters. In addition we have a number of Cotton Tail Rabbits right around us. They all seem to realize that they will not be molested.

III. REFUGE DEVELOPMENT

A.- Headquarters Buildings

The dwelling and Service Building at last are nearing completion, and I expect them to be completed about May 25, including painting. Withdrawal of the CCC Camp at Port Republic has left our program somewhat upset. Dyke work and other construction work on the marshes has been abandoned. To date we have completed 7,000 lineal feet of sod bank,

and 30.630 cubic yards of fill, I estimate that this represents about 5 % of the proposed dyke and road construction, and it now appears that no further efforts will be made in this direction for the duration of the pending war.

We have plowed up part of the grounds around headquarter site, and partially levelled it off so that it shows an improved appearance. However there still remains considerable to be done in this line which I hope to be able to accomplish by degrees.

We have been using the new office in the Service Building since April 1, But we are without telephone connection, or electric power. Efforts are under way to secure priority to run the power lines into headquarter site from present point of contact with the Atlantic City Electric Company's line. I hope we may be successful in this effort, as it will be much more efficient, and add to the safety of the buildings when they can be occupied.

B. Equipment.

We have one $\frac{1}{2}$ Ton Chevy Pickup Truck, for use on the refuge and to do local errands. With the exception of the tires this truck is in good condition. We also have the 28 foot patrol boat Laughing Gull, FWS-187, This boat is in good running order and kept ready for instant use. This boat is now kept in the slip cut into Great Creek on refuge property. A dock and walk has also been built at this slip.

We have six Back Packs, and two soda acid fire extinguishers for use for fire protection. These are all in good working order. Our office equipment consists of one steel filing cabinet, One wooden office desk, and three office chairs, All in good condition.

IIII. PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. General

I have maintained close contact with local sportsmen's clubs, And at times have given talks at meetings of the Atlantic County Fish and Game Protective Association, Also the Southern New Jersey Sports men's League. In addition I have attended and addressed local Camp Fire Girl's, and Boy and Girl Scouts. Considerable local interest is being manifested in our local refuge program, and many favorable comments are to be heard. We also receive good support from the local press in printing matters of interest to the general public relative to our wildlife program

B. Official

Game Management Agent Robert Hawley, and Deputy Russel Gallo have been frequent visitors to the refuge, And we have cooperated together on matters pertaining to law enforcement, and other phases of our work. Our local State Game Warden Dana Saxton is also a frequent caller, and at times accompanies me on boat patrols.

Refuge Supervisor John H. Sutherlin has visited the refuge several times during the last quarter, as has also Regional Director S. Barry Locke, and Assistant Director George Tonkin, Richard Griffiths has also made official calls at the refuge. I have always found these visits to be helpful and instructive to me in refuge management.

V. GENERAL

And so we come to the end of another quarter, And though we may not have accomplished all that we had hoped, I feel that considerable progress has been made along some lines, And we have achieved some worthwhile results. Though world conditions may force us to certain curtailments in our program we shall continue on with the facilities at hand to the end that success lies ahead.

Respectfully Submitted

Albert Stadlmeir

Albert Stadlmeir,
Laborer-Patrolman In Charge.

April 30, 1942.



Headquarter Buildings March 15, 1942.



Service Building March 15, 1942.



Headquarter Buildings March 31,,1942.



Headquarter Buildings April, ~~30~~ 1942. 4/30/42.



Main Dyke construction March 25, 1942.



Islands And Ponds Bordering Reeds Bay Apr 25, 1942.



NEST



Black Duck leaving nest 15 feet off public highway between Atlantic City and mainland April 25, 1942.

The nest with 13 eggs in it.

Black Hawk leaving nest 13 feet off ground in tree near highway between Kilauea and Pahoa April 20, 1942.
The nest with 10 eggs in it.

