

NARRATIVE REPORTS FOR THE
CRESCENT LAKE WIDLIFE REFUGE
1936 - 1937

CRESCENT LAKE

NARRATIVE REPORTS

1936 - 1937

Crescent Lake Refuge

Report of Activities

Month of December

1937

G. E. Wardwell

Refuge Manager

W.E.

W.E.

W.E.

W.E.
W.E.

Foreword:

The adverse weather conditions during the forepart of this month made work at times almost impossible, but in spite of the inclement weather more work was accomplished then during the preceeding month. For almost a week the temperature hovered around the zero mark, and often below zero with a strong wind blowing.

A part of the WPA crew that was detailed on outside work was handicaped by not having the proper clothes for the severe weather, and could only work a short time until they would have to go to the fire, which was kept burning close to the work. The more fortunate that had warm clothing were sent out on the outlaying jobs.

During the latter part of the month, after the required hours were in by most of the men, the weather turned warm and spring like. During this period every effort was made to complete the painting of the roofs of the equipment shed and tank house, shingling of the roof of the saddle horse shed at the Harris Place, and other work impossible to do during severe weather.

A heater was made for the Reo Truck used for transporting the WPA crew from Oshkosh to the refuge, this improvised heater was made from some discarded down spout drains fastened on the exhaust pipe and run into the back of the Truck. Enough heat was obtained to keep the entire crew warm, so that now they arrive at work warm and ready for

Should
be careful
of this

work, instead of having to go to a fire and warm up before they go to work as before. In severe weather as much as thirty minutes was necessary for the men to get warm, and with a twenty five man crew we were losing at least twelve hours a day. With our makeshift heater not only the actual hours has been saved , but the comfort of the men on these long rides to and from work, makes their work on the job more efficient.

Office;

We promised in our last report to have this project 100% complete in our next report. We cannot report this as complete, but can report it 99% complete. The floors will need a few hours work, and doors to be stained, a few other minor details no doubt will come up. We will move the office furniture, and the records this coming ^{week} in our new office.

The walls are of plywood panaling with beveled edges, the ceiling is of plywood squares placed with the grain running in the opposite directions. This with the light stain and a shellac finish, gives it a very pleasing effect.

The lab^{or}atory is of the same construction. The built in cupboards and drawers are trimmed in oak. The work bench on either side of the sink are of oak, sanded down and acid treated, making a very desirable work room.

Mr Albee foremen of the WPA crew is to be commended on the excellent ^{of} of this building.

Cleanup;

This project is about the same as reported last month only the effects of the work can now commenced to be seen. About five miles of old fencing has been torn down on the Harris tract alone, old stack yards have been ~~toon~~ down and posts and wire hauled away. The big willow grove at Island Lake has beeb cleaned of dead limbs. Dead trees were removed where they were leaning on live trees. Where large willows had split, one part dying, these were cut away and the exposed part treated with old oil and paint. This grove we beleive has had its life prolonged many years by this treatment.

Shelters:

From the clean-up project material was gathered for the construction of upland game shelters of the lean-to type.

These shelters were constructed where there was known to be a consen-tration of Phe'sants, Prairie chickens and sharp tail grouse. Ten of these shelters were built on various parts of the refuge, and more will be built as we find where they are needed.

Pheasants have been seen in the shelters at Gimlet Lake, Crane Lake and IslandLake, and no feed has been put in or around them as yet. As the birds are using the shelters and we have had no heavy storms of long duration, we feel that when we do start feeding these shelters will be of a great benefit.

We have just received our supply of feed corn from the Sand Lake Refuge, and will start light feeding to further

acquaint the birds to these shelters.

Equipment:

All equipment is now in first class condition, with the exception of the Ford Pick-up. This machine is now in condition to run, and being used, but the engine uses about a quart of oil every twenty five miles, we have been informed by several mechanics that the only remedy is a reboring job, the cylinders are worn so that new rings will not hold.

The light plant is now working and giving very good service.

Roads:

Several tons of rushes were cut and stacked during the month, to be used on the various roads over the refuge that are almost impassable during the dry period.

One of the ranches adjoining the refuge cut and bunched large quantities of rushes, weeds, and grass, which was left in the fields, and cattle turned into it. We noticed that the stock had eaten the grass and left the balance, and as this was such good road material, we asked the ranchers permission to haul this on our roads. He gave his consent as he was glad to get it off his field. This supply will be hauled direct to the roads where needed, and the balance will be stacked at the various points where an extra amount will have to be placed when needed.

An extra layer of gravel was put on the service court as the first layer was only about one inch in thickness, and was settling into the foundation of clay that was used as a base.

Several loads were placed on our graveled road from Headquarters to the refuge boundry. A surplus^{supply of} gravel is being made a headquarters for future use, contemplating the time when gravel will be needed, and men not available.

Predator Control:

The cold weather of the forepart of the month caused the shunks to hibernate, so few skunks have been caught until the warm weather of the last few days, a few were caught at this time. A Raccoon was caught in a skunk set at Gimlet Lake and signs of another seen. From the reports of local residents this is the first report of Raccoons in the Sand Hill regions.

While looking over sites for the building of nesting islands, a movement was noticed in the mud of a spring like place, and upon investigating it was found to be several large turtles. Some hooks were made and fastened to long poles with which we probed these spots, five large turtles were caught in one hole, several have been caught since with these hooks.

Coyote trapping has been very difficult during December owing to the traps freezing down. It has been almost impossible to make a set that would be affective more than a few hours.

All the private trappers in this district use a fetid scent, and so many amateur trappers that the coyotes are trap wise. We were using a fetid scent on our trapping project, but as the coyotes were so familiar with this scent were compelled to change. A cage 3" x 6" with a sheet metal bottom was built. A coyote was caught and placed in this cage, the

urine was caught from the drain, and used for scent, both at natural scent posts, and made station. This has proved to be very satisfactory scent where coyotes are trap wise. Twelve coyotes were caught in spite of the cold freezing weather, one three legged coyote, and several old fellows were caught.

The young man from the WPA crew who is doing the Predator control work has had very little experience in Coyote trapping, but he is a hard worker, working throughout the month regardless of hours, and has proven to be an apt pupil, and we believe under the slightest of favorable conditions he will be able to do very effective work.

Wildlife:

We have had a very quite month as far as wildlife is concerned. Ducks have all gone south with the exceptions of about fifty that have remained around the flowing wells at headquarters, feeding with the tame ducks in our new duck and goose pen. Several hundred ducks are staying on Blue Creek, a stream about twelve miles from the refuge, that remains open. These birds make the trip to the refuge on days that the ice melts, causing water to stand around the edges of the lakes, on each visit of these birds we notice our band of ducks, that we are feeding, increasing in numbers.

Pheasants are very numerous around headquarters, Crane and Island Lake groves, and at the grove of trees at the west side of Hackberry Lake. A large bank of prairie chickens have been seen almost daily flying over headquarters in the mornings and returning in the evenings. In checking this flight we found they were staying on the highest sand hills during the night returning to the valleys in the daytime to feed.



Predator control
Turtles.



New Duck and Goose pen



Raccoon caught at Gimlet Lake



Building shelter for trappers
Saddle horse



Painting roof of Equipment shed



Taking up lake gauges



Gathering material
for game shelters



Cleaning out willow grove



Bird shelter at Crane Lake



Building shelter



Completed shelter



Completed shelter



Harris house



After clean-up



To be repaired