

CRESCENT LAKE REFUGE
REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
MONTH OF MARCH
1938

G. E. WARDWELL
REFUGE MANAGER

J. S. M.

True



Burn

Foreword:

It seems but yesterday that we gave a sigh of relief that the Narrative Report for the past month ~~was~~ in the mail. And now another one is due, that calls for a day and most of the night, - hitting the wrong keys, backspacing, groping for words, and trying to describe our activities so as not to boresome and yet at the same time picturing the interesting work that is being done.

March has been a month of interest on this refuge, that cannot be justifiably described. All local people agree that the spring migration of waterfowl has been the greatest in years. Ducks can be seen on all parts of the refuge where there is water. The sight of green grass and budding trees has had its effect on the WPA crew. We cannot make the smallest complaint on the work performed. And will "take back" any ill remarks or thoughts on the working of a WPA crew. and believe the stories and jokes on them should have been directed at the persons in charge of these projects--for the wasted labor, instead of the men themselves.

Seventeen new WPA men were assigned to this project on March ,28, giving us a 36 man-crew. With this size crew we hope to accomplish much.

Road Project:

Work has been carried on without interruption during the entire month on road work. A large amount of work was done on our $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of highway through the refuge. This road has been "patched", and repair work has been done throughout the winter, but as the base was weak, it was necessary to do more than temporary repairs. We are now hauling heavy black soil and placing culverts where needed, digging ditch lines to keep the road drained and doing permanent work wherever any work is done. Rushes and loam were placed on the minor roads to the boundary of the refuge on the East side. Fences were repaired and built to keep stock from using the sandy stretches around lake shores or sandy-cuts in the hills, where the only available road-site would be along a sandy lake shore, or through an extreme sandy cut between steep sand hills. If these roads are left open so that stock can use them, they are soon cut so deep with hoof marks, that travel is soon impossible for cars. This has been slow and tedious work owing to the shortage of equipment. The Reo truck that is being used for the transporting of men from Oshkosh, is used on this work. When the men arrive in the mornings, the "shelter" is removed from the truck, various crews are hauled to work at their appointed places, then the Reo is driven to the road work. It then retruns early enough in the afternoon to pick up the men, at the different points, replace the "shelter" and then the long drive back to Oshkosh.

Water Supply:

The surplus water supply tank was installed during the month. This was a much larger task than contemplated, as all material--sand, gravel, and cement had to be pushed up the steep hill in a wheelbarrow. This was beyond the capacity for a man. So a long rope was fastened to the wheelbarrow frame, then run through a pulley anchored at the top of the hill, then back down the hill again where two men pulled the load the load up, while one man steered the wheelbarrow. It was also necessary to lay a board walk up the hill, to keep from sinking in the sand, and thus preventing a "blow-out" which starts whenever the top soil is disturbed. A permanent walk has been made by nailing cleats across the long boards. This walk will be used whenever necessary to go up to the water-tanks and windmill.

Flag-pole, walks. and driveway:

The large oak post for the anchorage of the flag-pole was set in reinforced concrete to the depth of six feet. The pole will soon be entirely set up and completed.

A flag-stone walk is being laid from the front entrance of the residence, to, and around the flag pole base, on to the front gate of the yard.

A short road was made and graveled from the highway to the front gate, then on to the road into the entrance. This gives the entrance drive a finished appearance. This improvement has been approved by those who have seen it.

Overnight Cabin:

This is now nearly completed. The three rooms have been plastered during the month, and base boards, windows, and door casings have been put on. One more day of painting, cleaning up of the yard, and repairing the fence and around the cabin will complete this project.

Harris House:

The work at the Harris house on Crane Lake will continue for some time, as this has been decided on as a second ary headquarters. The inside of the house has been completed and is now being occupied. The outside of the house was given the ground coat of plaster and the roof painted. The grounds have been cleaned up and now the place has a very pleasing appearance. Plans are being laid to build a garage, bore a well on the hillside above the house and erect a windmill.

Predator Control:

Our rash promise in the last report, to make a showing in this work during March, was fulfilled--at least in part, as a total of 29 predators was taken by our WPA trapper, 8 of these being coyotes. ✓

A decrease can be noted in the amount of predator sign, especially in skunk and weasel. At times we believe the coyotes to be on the decrease, and then again they show up as numerous as before. No doubt this problem will confront us for some time.

Wildlife :

With March came the early migrants. After the black birds on march 3, the first pair of robins were seen, one of which wore a band, but as we have no bird trap, we had no way of finding out more about him. On March 1, about 400 Ring-billed gulls were seen on Round-up Lake, but now they can be seen wheeling to and fro over all the lakes. We are hoping that they will help us with the expected summer grasshopper menace. Friendly little juncos are seen scratching in the new green grass of the lawn. Killdeer are swiftly running here and there, while on fences and yuccas the Western Meadow larks fluff out their yellow vests and sing out to the world, how glad they are to be back.

On the lakes are almost all varieties of our western ducks, -- Canvasback, Mallard, Scaup, Gadwall, Red-head, Greenwing, Teal, Pintail, Baldpate, Mergansers, and Shovellers. Three Golden eye were seen on Crescent Lake, also a few Buffle-heads.

On March 10, an old familiar cry was heard. When the sound was located, 8 Sandhill cranes were seen passing over. Long after they were out of sight, their weird tremulous cries came drifting back to us.

On March 21, the first pelicans were seen resting on Crane Lake. They are now seen on both Crane and Island lakes.

A large migration of Snow geese, with a sprinkling of

Carded
4/23/35
BOM

✓
Blue geese are now using the Refuge and Crescent Lake. One day an exceptionally large migration of Snow geese were reported on Crescent Lake. We hastily picked up camera and glasses and hurried over. As we approached the lake on the western road, the entire eastern shore for miles was a long line of white which resembled at a distance, billowy foam washed toward shore by the wind. At one place the shore made a long point out into the lake which is covered by coarse gravel. Here the geese were congregated by thousands, all busy eating, stretching, and dozing, but withal, keeping up a tremendous clamer that could be heard for a mile away. We tried for a picture but as the sun was directly in our faces, it was impossible. We hope for better luck next time.

✓ *grand sure*

On March 6, while making an observation of the water fowl in the vicinity, a large flight of Pintails were seen while we were crassing Blue Creek. As far as the eye could see bands of ducks were passing overhead. From Blue Creek to the Refuge, about fourteen miles,--we were never out of sight of this flight, and we drove slowly--about ten miles an hour. The only comparison I can make of this grand sight, was the resemblance to the flights of birds in the Eastern Oregon Lake regions of 20 years ago. After returning to the Refuge on this date, several of the ranchers were called on the telephone and all had observed this flight, and all agreed that it was the largest migration in years to take place at one time. At this one flight mentioned, no birds were seen to stop, but the following day all lakes were seen covered with birds of

✓ *grand sure*

various species.

At times we think our "puny" efforts as an individual, is not accomplishing the results that we have hoped for, but to see the waterfowl slowly increasing, it makes us realize that the combined efforts under the Super-plan are showing the desired results.

The observance of Wildlife week at Crescent Lake Refuge

We cast about in our minds what we should do, in doing our part for the observance of our National Wildlife Week.

We decided to invite the Boy Scout troop from Oshkosh to spend the week end at the Refuge. Thirteen boys and their leader arrived early Saturday morning remaining over-night leaving Sunday morning.

We showed them the lakes, and the different birds on the lakes, using Binoculars. We explained the migratory habits of each, what was being done to preserve them.

Stories were told of the large amount of game we had seen, and how we had seen it diminish by the hand of man. They were told that the work we are now doing is for them, and the next generation, how in a few short years they will be the ones to carry on the work.

Predatory animal and Rodent control was explained to them. They were taken to the trap lines, shown how traps were set for the different animals. Beneficial hawks and owls were shown to the boys.

The Federal Wildlife Refuge Map was explained to them, how each refuge played its part to the other on the several flyways.

Around their campfire in the evening we were called upon to tell stories. Stories were told of Desert trap lines, work on Big Game Refuge, Cowboy stories, weaving in our story of conservation.

We feel a great deal was accomplished by this practical teaching to the eager, receptive minds of these boys, and hope it will tend to promote a closer cooperative relationship between the parents and our conservation cause.

We have been told by the parents of several of the scouts that the trip to the refuge had made "believers" out of these boys in wildlife conservation.

COOPERATIVE OBSERVERS' METEOROLOGICAL RECORD

MARCH

CRESCENT LAKE REFUGE (NEBR.)

1938

Date	Maximum Temperature	Minimum Temperature	Amount of Precipitation	Snow Depth
1	61	30	T	
2	62	38	T	
3	60	35	T	
4	35	18	.06	4
5	26	15		3
6	40	1		2
7	48	10		
8	52	16		
9	50	30		
10	46	24		
11	60	22		
12	60	23		
13	60	40	T	
14	45	35	.15	
15	48	40	.13	
16	60	28		
17	68	31		
18	64	29		
19	59	26		
20	64	29		
21	60	35		
22	45	23	T	
23	60	15		
24	68	30		
25	58	32		
26	60	30		
27	58	28		
28	48	30	.08	
29	48	28		
30	40	26		
31	36	18		



7

Guarding nest



7

Pelicans on Crane Lake
Note vegetaion at this lake, ideal cover



Ducks on Crane Lake, Harris house in distance



7

On the left is the Boyd leased land
on the right is the Harris land,
restricted grazing



No grazing on the left



8

Land on the right of the
fence has had one years rest



Placing heavy soil in badly rutted highway



Ditch to drain highway



Was necessary to repair service road
" Note deep ruts "



Mixing concrete and pouring flag pole base



Flag pole base post



Laying flag stone walk



Laying board walk up sand hill



Pulling wheelbarrow up hill



Cement going up



Forms, ready to be poured



Mixing concrete



Putting Cement in forms



Moving tank



Going



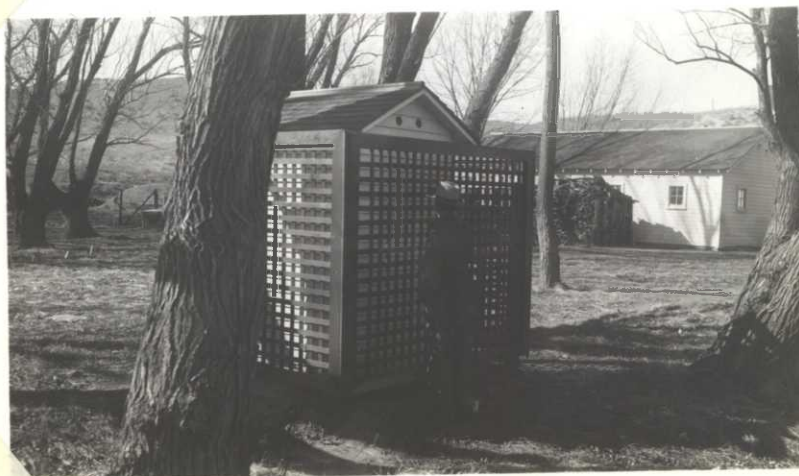
In place



Water tank in place



Cleaning Russian Thistles from driveway



Painting lattice work
around latrine



Predator Control



7

Skunk in trap, and an ideal set



7

Shelling seed corn



x

Several of these bird houses
were put up



x