

## ROUTING SLIP

## DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

DATE: 8-16-1940✓ MR. SALYER JS ✓① ✓ ~~MRS. WOODIN~~ NH✓ ~~MR. ELMER~~ ad✓ MRS. GARVIN✓ ~~MR. DUMONT~~ PAD

## SECTION OF HABITAT IMPROVEMENT:

~~Mr. Kubichek~~X ~~Mr. Smith~~ RNH~~Mr. Griffith~~ BEG~~Miss Cook~~ swc✓ SECTION OF OPERATIONS:✓ ~~Mr. Ball~~X ~~Mr. Keumoo~~ WT

Mrs. Watkins

Mrs. Kricun

✓ SECTION OF ERA:~~Mr. Rogan~~ HJRX ~~Dr. Bourn~~ WSB

Mrs. Fishman

✓ SECTION OF LAND MANAGEMENT:✓ ~~Mr. Barnshaw~~ B~~Mr. Barnshaw~~ wa✓ STENOGRAPHERS:

Miss Price

~~Miss Whorley~~ W.W.✓ SECTION OF STRUCTURES:✓ ~~Mr. Taylor~~ WUT✓ ~~Mr. Garbison~~ WUT

## REMARKS:

Fort Niobrara Quarterly Report  
May-July 1940Return to: J. Cook

IN REPLY REFER TO

Fort Niobrara  
Narrative Report

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
500 National Building  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 14, 1940

Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

There is enclosed quarterly narrative report for  
the Fort Niobrara Game Preserve submitted by Mr. Geno A.  
Amundson, Refuge Manager, for the period ending July 31,  
1940.

Quarterly grain report for the same period is also  
enclosed.

Very truly yours,

F. C. Gillett  
Refuge Inspector

Enc.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Fort Niobrara  
Narrative Report

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
500 National Building  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 14, 1940

Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

There is enclosed quarterly narrative report for  
the Fort Niobrara Game Preserve submitted by Mr. Gene A.  
Lundstrom, Refuge Manager, for the period ending July 31,

1940.

Quarterly game report for the same period is also

enclosed.

Very truly yours,

F. C. Gillett  
Refuge Inspector

Enc.



\* \* \* \* \*

# INDEX

	Page No.
I. General.	
A. Weather Conditions- - - - -	1
B. Water Conditions- - - - -	1
C. Fires- - - - -	1
II. Wildlife	
A. Waterbirds.	
1. Populations & Behavior, (a) & (b)- - - - -	1
B. Upland Game Birds	
1. Population & Behavior- - - - -	2
C. Big Game Animals.	
1. Populations- - - - -	3
2. Behavior- - - - -	3 & 4
D. Fur-Bearing Animals, Predators, Rodents & Other Animals.	
1. Populations & Behavior- - - - -	4
2. Control- - - - -	4 & 5
E. Fish- - - - -	5
III. Refuge Development & Maintenance.	
A. Physical Development- - - - -	5 & 6
B. Plantings.	
4. Grasses- - - - -	6
IV. Public Relations.	
A. Recreational Uses.	
4. Number of visitors- - - - -	6 & 7
VII. Other Items.	
A. General- - - - -	7 & 8

200  
200

## I. General.

### A..Weather Conditions.

	<u>Rainfall</u>	<u>Max. Temp.</u>	<u>Min. Temp.</u>
May	.21	71.6	43.4
June	1.88	82.4	51.1
July	2.51	91.9	66.3
Total	4.60	Extremes 108 $\frac{1}{2}$	28

Accumulated departure since Jan 1. - 2.04"

The above information received from U. S. Weather Bureau operator  
L. D. Vaughn at Valentine, Nebraska, 5 miles west of Refuge Hdqrs.

Two thirds of the rainfall for July came on the last two days  
of the month, and as June was very dry the growth of all vegetation  
was retarded very severely.

B. Water Conditions. The water levels on the refuge spring fed  
Niobrara river and creeks remains practically the same all during  
the year.

C. Fires. There were several fires in this section of the country  
by lightning during July.

## II. Wildlife.

### A. Waterbirds.

#### 1. Populations and behavior.

(a) Species. The only ducks raised on the refuge this season  
was a blue wing teal on Big Beaver creek, who raised 5 or 6.  
There were some mallards on the north pasture ponds but they  
never brought any young on the water.

(b) Groups. There were no groups of waterbirds on the refuge  
during this quarter.

B. Upland Game Birds.

1. Population & Behavior. The prairie chickens and grouse seem to be as plentiful as always. One old grouse hen brought 10 nice young to the Hdqrs site this year, last year she brought 13 up around the buildings. Each day when it is quite warm they all get on the secondary quarters lawn to drink water out of dishes, and eat the tender grass, at times they bring the lady out of the house when they raid the flower beds. The birds don't seem to mind and return the next day.

Not many pheasants have been seen, this must be because of the heavy foliage for them to hide in along the river, creeks and timber.

The first turkey vultures of the season were noticed May 1.

One of the first days in July about evening I was returning from Valentine, and as I started over the Niobrara bridge on the river I saw a swallow laying on the bridge. A large number of them were nesting under the bridge, so I picked up the bird and started for home. The bird was alive, but had its mouth full of dry dust, and its eyes were filled, and its feathers were badly ruffed up. Someone must have hit the bird with their car.

I cleaned the poor fellow up as much as I could, it kept batting its eyes until they cleared up and it regained consciousness and tried to get away. When I arrived at Hdqrs the swallow seemed fully revived and wanted to fly. I turned it loose and up and up it went and then made a bee line in the direction of the bridge.

Does a swallow have the Homing pigeon instinct?

We had 3 pairs of mourning doves nesting in our houseyard at one time. 1 pair matured and left the nest and the mother bird is again setting on eggs in the same nest, the nest is a last year's robin nest in a cedar tree. 1 pair of young are about grown, and the 3rd pair did not hatch. The little birds pipped the shell open, but were unable to get out. I attribute that to the very dry hot winds during incubation and the scanty frame work used as a nest.

C. Big-Game Animals.

1. Populations. We have 142 buffalo at the end of this period, - 21 of them are new calves.

We have 37 elk on the refuge at this time, 2 of these are young calves observed during the period.

We have 5 native mule deer on the refuge at this time, no fawns have yet been observed.

We have 8 white tailed deer on the refuge at this time, 1 fawn observed during the period.

We have 25 Texas longhorns on the refuge at this time, - 7 of them are new calves.

2. Behavior. The buffalo spend most of their time in the pasture north of the river, however, they do come to the pasture south of the river about once a month for a few days at a time.

A fat old bull was furnished to the Rosebud Indian Agency for feeding a gathering of Indians at Valentine, Nebraska on June 13-14-15, during a Stockmens' Convention.

There may be more elk to add when it is possible to count the calves next fall when they come out of the timber, and when rutting season starts.

5 of the elk are in exhibition pastures near Hdqrs, and the rest in the north pasture.

The first elk calf was noticed on June 4th., and it was a nice sized calf already.

One 4 year old longhorn heifer did not have a calf this year.

The steers on the Christopher place are doing nicely.

I have been unable to count all the new white tailed fawns as yet. We know there are two and perhaps more.

The native mule deer doe that was in the pond pasture has left.

One sees native wild mule deer on almost any part of the refuge during this time of the year. Most of them seem to leave when winter sets in and move east of the refuge along the Niobrara river.

The north buffalo pasture on the hard ground known as the "Crockston Table" was very short during July. However, the last of July rains freshened up the grass and the grama grasses have started growing nicely.

We will have plenty of hay to feed all the game animals this winter if the snow is very deep.

#### D. Fur-bearing Animals, Predators, Rodents and Other Animals.

1. Population and behavior. Not many fur bearing animals were observed during this period because of the heavy cover of vegetation.
2. Control. 7 coyote pups were dug out on the SW part of the

refuge, and we looked over other parts of the refuge for dens, but found none.

I had the 13-striped groundsquirrels poisoned at and around the Hdqrs area as they were damaging lawns and were digging in the newly set out buffalo grass.

We had a battle with some barn rats, that moved under a part of the Hdqrs barn, and dug under the corral shed. We tried Thalium prepared with stale bread, oat groat, and mixed poisoned oats and wheat, but only a few of them took the poison. We had 4 work horses in the barn and corral at the time, and the rats would feed on grain they lost. They were controlled by trapping with steel traps.

#### E. Fish.

1. All the refuge ponds are suitable for soft fish and some of them for trout. The Nebraska Game, Forestation & Parks Commission are using most of the refuge ponds for rearing fingerlings for restocking purposes.

### III. Refuge Development & Maintenance.

#### A. Physical Development.

1. We had an average of 7 WPA men during May and June. Very little development work was undertaken, and most of their time was spent on maintenance projects. We finished salvaging material from the vermin proof fence around the Heimburger pond, and stored the materials. Fencing was salvaged from around some of the other ponds also.

Big game fence corners were rebuilt east of the corrals to facilitate capturing buffalo and elk.

Much time was spent on cleanup at the north storage barn. All the big game fence post were stored in the building, and old wire hauled to the dump on the refuge, and good wire was piled and stored back of a hill NE of the storage barn. The area is much improved.

Buffalo grass sod was transplanted in front of the office and in two abandoned flower gardens to cut down on the amount of irrigation.

The Hdqrs barn was sealed with some salvaged T & G 4" flooring and in connection with this, the old light wires above the ceiling were replaced with armoured cable for better fire protection.

The board gates on the stock fence lines were painted and the basement floor in the Hdqrs house was painted. This material had been on hand for quite sometime.

#### B. Plantings.

4. Grasses. ✓ Range conditions over the refuge are good from the standpoint of having well grassed pastures. The north buffalo pasture has nearly fully recovered from overgrazing.

The grass is very short at this time, but due to recent rains it is improving very rapidly and if additional rains come grazing should be improved by fall.

#### IV. Public Relations.

##### A. Recreational Uses.

4. Number of visitors. Mr. Burnie Maurek spent June 8th & 9th., on the refuge and I received much information from him.

Mr. Francis C. Gillett was here on an inspection trip June 5th & 6th. We covered most of the refuge and discussed many problems.

Mr. Ralph Imler who is making duck nesting studies on the Crescent Lake Refuge and LaCreek Refuge, was here the same time Mr. Maurek was.

Mr. Earl Craven, Refuge Manager from the LaCreek Refuge was here June 21st., and we made up a list of specimens to be taken from our Museum collection for display use at the County Fair near his refuge.

On May 25th., we had 234 County 8th grade graduates visit the refuge.

I took 13 car loads of ranchers over the refuge on June 15th., these ranchers were here for the Stockmens' Convention.

On June 13th I gave a short talk at one of their meetings, I told about the refuge and also about the Predator and Rodent Control branch of the Department.

I was out in the field most of one day helping a party from the Nebraska Game, Forestation & Parks Commission get some moving pictures.

#### VII. Other Items.

A. General. We helped fight fire at a ranch SW of the refuge.

We used cyno-gas G. to kill moths in the specimen cases of the Museum. This gas killed the larva as well as the beetles.

A load of barbed wire was hauled to the Valentine Lakes refuge, and some 18" culverts were hauled back for replacing some rotten pole bridges.

I made a trip to Lake Andes, South Dakota, to inspect property on the WPA project at that refuge, this property was charged to me.

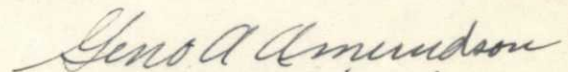
Mr. Andrew Sather, used the refuge truck to help move the Regional Office to Minneapolis, and he returned by way of Sand Lake refuge and brought a load of grain to the LaCreek Refuge.

I made a trip to Mission, South Dakota to examine a ranch owned by Mr. C. Abourezk for a refuge. The creek was dry that ran through his ranch.

Fire tool stations have been checked and water placed in the barrels.

Due to the large number of photographs included with the annual report a month ago, I have nothing of interest to include in this report.

Respectfully submitted.



Geno A. Amundson,  
Refuge Manager.

CC: Regional office.