

THE INTERIOR  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

OFFICE OF REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
576 CUSTOM HOUSE  
DENVER, COLORADO

REGION No. 2

COLORADO  
IDAHO  
MONTANA  
UTAH  
WYOMING

August 17, 1939

R  
Montana  
Bison Range

Chief, Bureau of Biological Survey  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

We are enclosing Narrative Report for the National Bison  
Range covering the period May 1, 1939 to July 31, 1939 prepared by  
Dr. Robert S. Norton.

Very truly yours,

*Carey H. Bennett*  
Carey H. Bennett  
Acting Regional Director

Enclosure



*WZK*  
*Jue*  
*Carded 7/21*

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R. H. A.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ~~AGRICULTURE~~  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

IN REPLY REFER TO

National Bison Range  
Moiese, Montana

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

FIRST QUARTER

B I O L O G I C A L   N A R R A T I V E   R E P O R T

May 1, 1939 to July 31, 1939

- I. From cool about midway in May to chilly and raining a few days later, the range in temperature varied to very hot and dry in July. The only rain of real consequence came on May 21 and 22, when a cold, heavy shower lasted intermittently for a night and a day. After that date, there have been only dry electrical storms with very light sprinklings of rain.

Early in July, on account of continued dry weather, it was deemed advisable to station a lookout man at the Hi Point tower. Accordingly, he began his work there on July 7; and on July 11, at about 12:30 a.m., an unusually severe electrical storm began. The lookout reported that lightning set two small blazes on the refuge, but that accompanying rain extinguished them quickly. Since that time, some little anxiety has been felt whenever clouds begin gathering in the west and northwest, but we have been fortunate in escaping fire, so far.

II. Wildlife.

A. Waterfowl.

1. Very few wild ducks and geese have used the refuge this summer. However, some ~~of each~~ <sup>birds</sup> have no doubt nested here, as a few could nearly always be seen on Mission Creek, and small numbers were observed entering and leaving the refuge on feeding excursions.

Mr. William Miller, a rancher - living west of the refuge, reported at our headquarters that about 30 wild geese, including mostly young ones, were doing considerable damage to his field of wheat, located on the bank of the Flathead River. He asked how to rid his field of the birds, and was advised by Mr. Carey H. Bennett, who was at the refuge at that time.

B. Upland game birds.

1. The species most commonly seen are: Chinese pheasants, Hungarian partridges, blue grouse, sharp-tailed grouse and ruffed grouse.

*(very few sharp-tailed grouse!)*

After having congregated by the hundreds in the headquarters vicinity, during winter and spring, the pheasants almost entirely disappear for early and mid-summer, during nesting and molting seasons. About the middle of July, hens with their flocks and roosters, still minus some of their tail feathers, are again seen.

A small number of the partridges are seen occasionally on the refuge.

A very few blue grouse are seen in the high country, and one bird has called regularly at the Hi Point lookout station for food and water.

We have reason to believe that there <sup>are</sup> a few sharp-tailed grouse, but it is seldom that they are seen of late.

Occasionally a few ruffed grouse are seen along Mission Creek.

2. In the brush-clearing project, during CCC operations, brush piles were left in the Mission Creek area for game bird shelters and nesting places; and as they seem to be used to quite an extent, other accommodations have not been provided.

*shelters  
done*

3. As the pheasant, which is the only bird we have to feed on the refuge, eats freely in the open, feeding stations have not been established. We have also found that grain, placed on the ground in places--sheltered by overhanging brush, is located and taken by the birds.

C. Predator and rodent control.

1. As predator control on this area is taken care of, for the most part, by a full-time trapper of the Division of Predatory Animal and Rodent Control, we could not report fully on this activity, but can say that coyote hunting is pretty slow in mid-summer.

*Should  
have mentioned  
removed.*

Mr. Young killed two golden eagles, while on refuge patrol, on May 17 and May 23. One of them was observed to have been worrying a group of deer.



2. Two ERA workers were assigned to trapping pocket gophers, during the months of May and June, and they covered 1,280 acres in our Alexander Basin section. 378 gophers were caught the first month, and 672 the second.

F. Other animals.

1. Buffalo

On range May 1, 1939.....	358
May increases.....	45
May decreases.....	2
June increases.....	27
June decreases.....	0
July increases.....	0
July decreases....;	7
On range July 31, 1939.....	421

The buffalo herd continues to do well, as always, and a satisfactory increase has been noted. With a few exceptions, they have shed their winter coating and are sleek-looking and in good condition.

The losses in May were two new-born calves, one of which was left by a young cow without any attention whatever; and the other may have perished from the same cause. However, it was first seen on a road with two eagles feeding on it, so it may have been killed by them also. The decreases in July were four animals, donated to the Flathead Indians for their July 4th celebration, and three that were sold to the Chamber of Commerce, at Kalispell for an Old Timers' picnic.

Arrangements have been completed for the exchange of two bull calves with the Seven Up Ranch, of Cameron, Montana; and, of course, the new blood will be an improvement to both herds. We expect to make this exchange at an early date. *completed Sept. 15th.*

Elk

On range May 1, 1939.....	40
May increases.....	0
May decreases.....	0
June increases.....	0
June decreases.....	0
July increases.....	13
July decreases.....	0
On range July 31, 1939.....	53

The elk continue to be in very fine condition, with a satisfactory increase of calves; and while we do not have first-class browse on the area, we have never sustained any loss, which we could charge to unsatisfactory feeding conditions on the area.

#### Mountain Sheep ✓

On range May 1, 1939.....	47 /
May increases.....	3 /
May decreases.....	1 /
June increases.....	5 ✓
June decreases.....	0
July increases.....	0
July decreases.....	0
On range July 31, 1939.....	54

The one loss in May was a dead ewe, found by Mr. Young on a patrol of the sheep pasture. Most of the animals seen are very fine specimens, and they seem to be doing well as usual.

Four fine rams have been placed in the elk lane for the benefit of visitors, and they have been found to be quite an attraction. The sheep are somewhat wary, but do not endanger themselves by bothering the fences.

#### Mule Deer

On range May 1, 1939.....	135
May increases.....	0
May decreases.....	0
June increases.....	26 /
June decreases.....	0
July increases.....	0
July decreases.....	0
On range July 31, 1939.....	161

The first fawn of the season was seen on June 2, and the earliest ones are fine, hardy animals now. Many sets of twins are noted; and on one occasion, four big, husky fawns were seen with one doe. It might be that another doe was near and out of sight, but, of course, there is the possibility that they were quadruplets. These animals are found in all sections of the range and seem to fare equally well in all locations.

### White-Tail Deer

On range May 1, 1939.....	35
May increases.....	0
May decreases.....	0
June increases.....	12 ✓
June decreases.....	0
July increases.....	0
July decreases.....	1 ✓
On range July 31, 1939.....	46

As these deer stay almost entirely in the brush along Mission Creek, they are noted on the range rarely, and have recently been seen in the headquarters vicinity late in the evening, more than elsewhere at any other time.

The loss in July was that of a two-year-old buck, becoming frightened, attempting to jump a seven-foot fence and getting hung up by a hind leg. The hip was broken, so he had to be killed, and the meat was sold on bid.

This specie continues in good condition and some fine specimens are often noted.

We will undoubtedly be able to report some additional increase in both the species of deer, within the next few weeks, as they begin to bring their young out into the open in the early fall, but such reports are not to be interpreted as indicating that the animals were born just prior to the dates of the reports.

2. The golden eagle is considered to be responsible for the lack of increase in the big horn mountain sheep group. This contention might be borne out by the fact that there are invariably fewer lambs, to be found in late summer than were seen in the spring, and remains of dead lambs can never be located. Therefore, the loss has to be due to some predator, and, as eagles frequent the high country, they are considered to be the cause. In one instance, also, it is possible that a pair of them killed a new-born buffalo calf; and they doubtlessly pick up a deer fawn occasionally.

*Pneumonia also takes its toll of lambs.*  
III. Refuge development and maintenance.

#### B. Plantings.

2. A small plot of 13.7 acres of alfalfa, near the headquarters of the refuge, is tended and harvested.



Three cuttings can ordinarily be made, and the crop is utilized in the feeding of saddle horses and a draft team. The total average annual yield is 25 to 30 tons of hay.

D. Distribution of seed and nursery stock.

1. Receipts.

- a. Crested wheat grass and sweet clover.
- b. Deer Flat Refuge, and Camas Refuge, respectively.
- c. 10 bushels, and 2,520 pounds, respectively.
- d. By truck, in both instances.

*checked  
R.H.A.*

The sweet clover seed will be planted this fall on the refuge, when proper climatic conditions arise.

*what? the  
Crested wheat grass?  
Instructions have been issued  
re this species. W.H.C.*

IV. Public relations.

A. Recreational uses.

1. It is estimated that 500 persons have availed themselves of the use of the picnic ground, during the quarter. Wood and water for cooking are provided, the area is weeded periodically and the toilets are kept clean.

4. Visiting officials of the Government, during the quarter were as follows:

Department of Agriculture--Charles B. Ingram.

Bureau of Biological Survey--Wesley F. Kubichek, Carey H. Bennett, E. F. Grand and R. W. Danielson.

Forest Service--Percy Melis, Thomas Lommasson, E. E. Sandvig and H. M. Wolff.

Bureau of Entomology--William Forsyth.

2,752 tourists and other visitors were registered here and were shown over the refuge, or viewed the animals in the exhibition pasture, according to their own wishes.

Visiting groups were as follows: North Moiese School and PTA, State Convention of Methodists, and Moiese Mormon Group.



# VI. Other items.

## A. Birds noted on refuge.

### GAME BIRDS:

✓ Mourning dove a  
✓ Mallard a  
✓ Pheasant a

### WADING & SHORE BIRDS:

✓ Great blue heron f.  
✓ Spotted sandpiper f.

### HAWKS, EAGLES, ETC.

✓ Turkey buzzard f.  
✓ Sparrow hawk a.  
✓ Night hawk a  
✓ Red-tailed hawk +  
✓ Prairie falcon +  
✓ Golden eagle e  
✓ Rough-leg hawk f.  
✓ Short-eared owl f.  
✓ Magpie a.

### PASSERINES:

Catbird  
Red-shafted flicker  
English sparrow  
Robin  
Arkansas kingbird (nest)  
Bullock's oreole (nest)  
Northern yellowthroat warbler  
Gambel's sparrow  
~~Prairie~~ <sup>also</sup> horned lark  
Eastern kingbird  
Black Phoebe  
Alder flycatcher  
Kingfisher.  
Lewis' woodpecker  
House wren (nest)  
Brewer's blackbird  
Redwing blackbird  
Yellow-headed blackbird  
Barn swallow  
Cliff swallow  
Tree swallow  
Yellow warbler  
Cowbird  
Mountain bluebird  
Scarlet tanager (Immature)  
✓ Upland plover  
Cedar waxwing  
McGilroy's warbler  
Chipping sparrow  
Rock wren  
Meadowlark

*Evening grass bird*  
*Piliated Woodpecker*  
*Stellus jay*  
*R. S. N.*

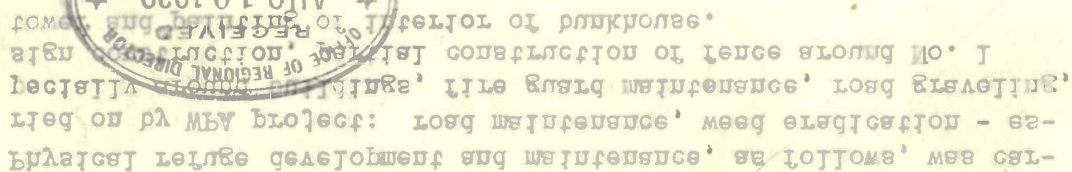
The above species were noted by Mr. Carey H. Bennett, during short strolls in the Mission Creek area on June 20 and July 20. Also, on July 20, a concentration of about 350 meadow larks was seen in the Pauline Canyon area.

Physical refuge development and maintenance, as follows, was carried on by WPA project: road maintenance, weed eradication - especially around buildings, fire guard maintenance, road graveling, sign construction, partial construction of fence around No. 1 tower and painting of interior of bunkhouse.

*Robert S. Norton*

Robert S. Norton,  
Refuge Manager.

Robert H. Wagner



SO' vtao' on 1974 SO' a concentration of about 320 wasdom  
about 1974 in the transition week was on 1974 SO' and 1974  
the whole species were used 44 v. 1974 SO' 1974 SO' 1974 SO'

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
AUG 21 1939  
WILDLIFE REFUGES

HUMKES' ENGINES' ETC.

Shopped anywhere  
Great place person

MAKING OF SHORE BIRDS:

БРЕЖНЕВ  
НАШЕ  
ПОЛНУЮ ДОДУ

GAME BIRDS:

A. Birds noted on refuge.

AT: OFFER 1 2003

Esatelo kingrila  
 H...the powerd jark  
 Samreje e sbellom  
 noltrein lettomflovst matriel  
 Blitock.e oleote (neaf)  
 Vrkensae kingrila (neaf)  
 Korin  
 Kingter sbellom  
 heq-areted licker  
 Sarrila

**• 2023-2024:**