

ROUTING SLIP

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

DATE: 2-24 1939 42

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REMARKS:

National Bison Treasurers
November - January 1942

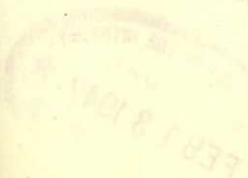
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Nat'l Bison Range
New-gau. 42

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Handwritten:
 Mr. Jones
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I. General

A. Weather Conditions

	Max. Temp.	Min. Temp.
November	62	4
December	61	2
January	41	-21
Extremes	62	-21

The range in temperature for this quarter was considerably greater than for the corresponding period a year ago, when the highest was 57 and the lowest -1. The first ten days of January were the longest cold spell in at least the last five years, the temperatures ranging from -2 to -21 nightly. Precipitation was greater also, although it was not heavy by any means. However, there was a total of 12 to 13 inches of snow on the level on January 8, whereas about 2 inches was the most that fell at one time last winter. The first snow flurries came about mid-November, and there were a few rains in November and December.

B. Water Conditions

During the coldest part of January, Mission Creek and the Jocko River froze over entirely, and Mission Creek was still frozen over except for the swiftest riffles on January 9, when the cold was beginning to lessen somewhat.

It was noted the ice was 12 inches thick at the headquarters where a hole was cut for watering the horses at the corrals, and patrolmen reported riding their horses across the ice at will on patrol trips.

II. Wildlife

A. Waterbirds

1. Populations and behavior

The maximum number of wild ducks on the refuge was approximately 5,000 during the early days of the quarter, 90% of which were Mallards with the remaining 10% including Green-winged Teal, Goldeneye, Blue-winged Teal, Pintail, Mergansers, Bufflehead, Redhead and Canvasback in about the order mentioned. The numbers during the latter part of the quarter are considerably below the numbers, which have been reported in previous years. This is attributed to the fact that no winter feeding occurred until the very last part of the quarter. The lack of artificial feeding would have a tendency to occasion the birds to seek a wintering ground further south. No feeding was done the previous winter, and it is believed the birds were not looking forward to feeding and consequently migrated at about the normal period--at the time of the freeze-up. With the exception of a very short time, less than two weeks, Mission Creek and Jocko River were both pretty well free of ice. Consequently, the few birds remaining were able to obtain a

scant amount of food from the running streams.

B. Upland-game Birds

1. Populations and behavior

The Ring-necked Pheasants have been noted in the refuge all quarter, and especially in the headquarters vicinity, in about the usual numbers. Some Hungarian Partridges have also been noted. The patrolmen have not observed anything out of the ordinary in connection with the other upland game birds, either as to numbers or behavior. The number of grouse of all kinds on the range is very limited, but a few are observed regularly on patrol. Two Sharp-tail Grouse, the rarest game bird on this area, were noted in Alexander Basin in early November.

C. Big-game animals.

1. Populations and behavior

	Buffalo	Elk	Mountain Sheep	Mule Deer	White-tail Deer
November 1	489	77	14	114	41
increases					
decreases	50		1	1	
December					
increases		8			
decreases				2	
January					
increases		30			
decreases		2		2	
January 31	439	113	13	190	41

Buffalo

After working the buffalo herd on October 29-30, the animals selected for disposal were held in the sheep pasture, to be conveniently available for slaughtering. They were driven to the slaughterhouse corrals on November 17, the slaughtering began on November 18 and the last of 50 carcasses were shipped from Moiese on November 28. The herd was in excellent condition for winter due to good range conditions, and have continued in fine shape even through the very cold first half of January. The white buffalo has been hunted up and looked after regularly, and he even came over to the upper side of the headquarters exhibition pasture, to look things over during the latter part of January. The absence of winter loss in the herd is no doubt due to some extent to careful selection of the surplus, to include any animals that are not strictly desirable herd stock.

Elk

The elk herd in general will winter satisfactorily although the extreme cold weather had its effect on them also. During the latter part of January, a very few old bulls were noted to be having a rather hard time, and two were found dead soon after. One of the

patrolman, on January 23, found a bull lying with his feet uphill and unable to get up because of weakness. He put his lariat on a horn tip and pulled the animal around so that it got up. The old fellow just stood and ground his teeth, apparently unable to travel at all, and was probably one of those found dead. It will be noted that new counts in December and January make for total gains of 38 animals. We are not sure that this new count is entirely accurate, and in all probability the total population is slightly in excess of the number shown.

Mountain Sheep ✓

The sheep are checked on frequently, and all three of last summer's lambs were seen as recently as January 22. The old ewe, reported in poor shape last quarter, is still unaccounted for and must have died; and one old ram was found dead in the sheep pasture on November 14. The present total of 13 includes four ewes, three lambs and six rams, two of the latter being in the substation pasture with the ewes. A further reduction of one will be made, if the old ewe is not located soon.

Mule Deer

These deer have wintered well so far and with small loss, even in the coldest weather. It will be re-

membered that there was a considerable loss (15) in January, 1940 when the weather was rather bad, but with somewhat less severe cold and less snow than this year. It is rather a curious fact, however, that the animals remain in fine condition through the winter and then lose flesh and some die when the weather becomes milder and the new grass starts. This is more apparent in the mule deer than in any other species of our big game. There were five losses from natural causes this quarter: one in November, two in December and two in January. The dead animals were found mostly in the Mission Creek section, although one was noted in the high country.

White-tail Deer

The white-tails have wintered well with no known losses so far. All those noted have been in good condition, even recently. The pet white-tail buck, released in the Jocko area last quarter, has not been seen for some time and is likely to have been killed by poachers, as he travelled along the boundary fence most of the time. Other white-tails in the new sections along the Jocko have not been noted either, but this is no doubt due to the heavy cover in the river bottom and the fact that the animals are extremely wild. "Peanuts," the 2-year-old white-tail pet buck

at headquarters, has been missing since early in November. It is believed that he got out some way, to circulate around during rutting season and probably has been killed or he would likely have shown up again along the boundary or at Moiese. Six other mule and white-tail deer have been known to have been outside of the refuge. One was found dead, three were returned and two are unaccounted for. We do not know that all of them got out over the cattleguard at the entrance, but do know that one did from tracks in the snow. On December 14, a 5- or 6-year-old white-tail buck was observed to shed his antlers, probably several days before, as his head was entirely healed and showed no sign of bleeding. Last year, they shed in the early part of January, which was considered early. Another white-tail buck was noted to have shed one antler on December 28.

D. Fur-bearing Animals, Predators, Rodents and other animals.

2. Control by refuge personnel:

	Coyotes ✓
November	4
December	14
January	3

During and after butchering of surplus buffalo, the entrails were distributed over the range for coyote

bait, and a large portion of the catch since that time was at these bait stations. No actual depredations have been observed, but it is well to keep the coyotes controlled as there is a considerable transient population. One renegade dog was also trapped in December, and these are considered as serious a menace to game as the coyotes. What was no doubt a part dog was reported to us as having been seen chasing deer in the Pauline Coulee section. This is being looked after.

E. Fish

1. There is, of course, nothing to report on this subject at this season. However, we have no reason to doubt that everything is normal with them.

III. Refuge Development and Maintenance

A. Physical Developments

1. Soil and moisture conservation operations were large in the way of water development as long as weather permitted, a total of 57 springs having been developed to various degrees. Footings were dug out around them for concrete catch boxes; forms were set and the concrete boxes poured, covers provided and an outlet pipe installed to carry the water to tanks. There were 19 springs in Pauline Coulee proper and the various forks, 16 in Alexander Basin, and 22 along the east side of the substation pasture. Of these, 27

were dug out and concreted, and 30 were dug out. When the weather made water development work impractical, the project continued at headquarters on construction of additional timber tanks and treating of posts to replace those, used from regular refuge stocks. Six tanks 2' x 2' x 16' and three 2' x 2' x 8' in size were constructed, and a total of 685 fence posts were creosoted. Project operations were terminated at the close of January 31, as the allotment had been expended.

WPA project accomplishments consist of reclearing 132 acres of Mission Creek bottomland, 7 acres of new clearing, hauling and placing of 700 yards of gravel in straightening and raising a portion of the headquarters to Moiese road, hauling and spreading 130 yards of topsoil in landscaping work north of the present office, installation of headquarters water pressure system, and continuing of buildings improvement work. Some additional clearing was necessary in the land cleared last fiscal year, due to heavy windstorms last summer and fall. This required much of November and December, and about 7 acres of new clearing east of headquarters was done in January. There has been a rather bad stretch of road between Moiese and the assistant's cottage, due to a curve on a grade, and the grade has now been leveled and the

and the curve widened. About 40 rods of roadway has been improved, and it will be further improved by grading in the spring after it is well settled. By way of improving the appearance of the headquarters area, approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land just north of the present office was given a good covering of soil in preparation for grass planting. It was formerly an uneven grass and weed patch, and will be considerably improved through planting good forage grass for game on it. On rebuilding the warehouse and shop, each part is practically complete since only concrete floors, some shelving and drawers and installation of equipment is about all that remains to be finished. This building is considered 95% complete. A small oil and paint house is entirely complete. The residence, which is being converted from the present office, about 85% complete, some inside finishing and redecorating remaining to be done. The water pressure system has been installed and is working well. The pressure is very good and the new residence can be supplied whenever needed. A steam line was laid from the manager's residence to the wellhouse and a radiator installed, so there will be no freezing in bad weather. Work of remodeling and re-arranging the bunkhouse for office use remains, but it is not an

extensive job. It is considered that the entire building improvement project is 65% complete.

IV. Public Relations

A. Recreation

1. Recreational Uses

Owing to weather conditions and the season, there has been no use made of the picnic ground this quarter. The headquarters exhibition herd of buffalo was turned out in October, so visitation by the public decreased considerably although a few cars of people have been coming in to see the deer in the headquarters area. There were approximately 150 callers, during the quarter.

4. Official and important visitors

Leo L. Laythe, Service	2 days
William T. Krummes, Service	2 days
W. L. Walker, Service	10 hours
Harry Willis, Service	10 hours
Andy Briscoe, WPA Dist. Mgr.	1 hour
W. L. Fetterly, WPA Co. Supervisor	12 hours
Ancil O. Talmage, Service	4 hours
G. L. Sperry, Irrigation Service	1 hour
S. Everett Salter, WPA Chief Timekeeper	12 hours
A. Pat Murphy, WPA General Foreman	12 hours
Robert Cooney, State Big-game Manager	2 hours

Meetings attended officially:

Western Mont. Federation of Commercial Clubs,
Hot Springs, Montana, December 8
Rodeo Association, Polson, Montana. Wildlife movies
shown to 100 in attendance, December 20
Federal Business Association, Missoula, Montana,
January 19
Western Game Federation, Missoula, Montana,
January 25-26-27



Large and small wooden water tanks, constructed under soil and moisture project, for installation at new springs.



Scrap box located in shop area, where small pieces of scrap metal are collected.



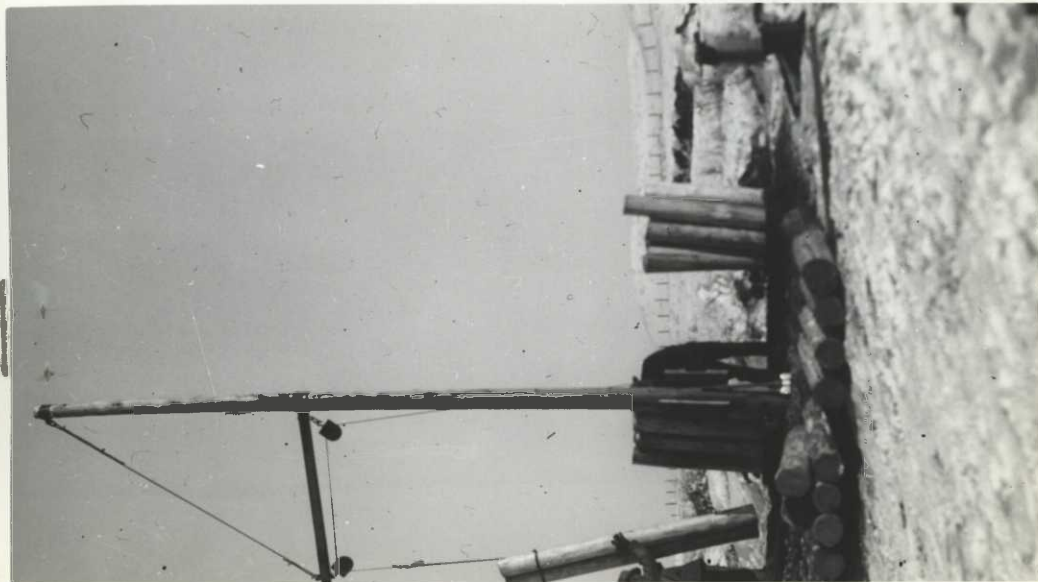
The post-treating plant, formerly located along the Moiese road near the main entrance, was moved to the wood yard area.



The creosote treating plant was much improved when moved to the wood yard. This shows the plant in operation.



Two tanks were sunk at the edge of a gully bank, which was excavated. Banks were walled up with broken up concrete slabs, salvaged from the CCC Camp. Fire boxes are under the tanks.



Method of putting the timbers in the bath and removing them when treated is illustrated. Both tanks can be heated, but we are using the hot and cold method. The new installation is a great improvement over the old and removes an unsightly object from a prominent location.

5

Two tanks were sunk at the edge of a gully bank, which was ex-
cavated. Tanks were walled up with broken up concrete slabs.
salvaged from the CCC Camp. Fire boxes are under the tanks.

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Method of putting the tanks at the edge of the gully bank, which was excavated. Tanks were walled up with broken up concrete slabs. salvaged from the CCC Camp. Fire boxes are under the tanks.