

BRANCH OF WILDLIFE REFUGES NARRATIVE REPORTS

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Stenographers

REFUGE NORTH DAKOTA EASEMENT #6

PERIOD May-August 1955

NORTH DAKOTA EASEMENT REFUGES - DISTRICT NO. 6

BONEHILL CREEK

CHASE LAKE

HALFWAY LAKE

HOBART LAKE

LAKE GEORGE

STONEY SLOUGH

TOMAHAWK LAKE

Throughout the summer all the easement areas had a fair supply of water. In August water levels began dropping considerably on the refuges in the eastern portion of this district due to the lack of rainfalls heavy enough to cause any runoff.

The nesting population of ducks was much less than a year ago; this condition was the same on all the ponds and lakes in this area. The only explanation apparent is that since no winter front of any consequence existed, the ducks moved on through during the spring flight. Nesting conditions on most of the easement refuges were very good. Local farmers also reported that fewer ducks were found in the fields last spring nesting.

During the second week of August mallards and pintails came into this entire area and thus the population on the easement refuges increased many fold over the summer population. They were not all local ducks because the increase was noticeable in most sloughs and lakes.

BONEHILL CREEK

Water levels on this area were fair up until about the first of August. The area back of the dam lowered to an area mostly confined to the creek. The slough in the SW quarter which is filled by the diversion ditch was down 30 inches. The water control structure was in good condition.

This area lies mostly within grazing units but sufficient cover was available for local ducks. The summer population however, was small. Blue-winged teals which generally are quite common were scarce. Mallards, pintails and a few blue-winged teals moved into the refuge in mid-August.

Upland game birds showed very little signs of any increase since they are few to begin with. A few pheasants were noted near the refuge, but no broods were found.

Fur bearing animals are below normal; red foxes are on the increase in this area but local farmers are killing off some to cut down depredation on poultry. Only a few signs of mink and muskrats were noted this summer.

CHASE LAKE

This area has been lost as a federal refuge due to an error in obtaining easements from the State.

HALFWAY LAKE

The water supply on this unit did drop some but not as much as desirable to bring it back to a good marsh. All of the area is still open water. There are no water control structures on the area.

Waterfowl nesting was poor. This refuge also lies mostly within a grazing unit which is grazed heavily; however, cover along fence lines and fields were good but little use was made of it this summer. Mallards and pintails moved into this area in August. The shoveler population throughout this entire district was below normal.

Sharptailed grouse are frequently observed on the refuge; one brood of Hungarian partridge were noted about one quarter of a mile from the refuge.

Predatory animals remain about the same as last year except for possibly an increase in badgers.

HOBART LAKE

This area's water supply continued to drop throughout the summer. By the first of August the north marsh and the large alkali lake was completely dry. Water levels in the fresh water unit were also down but adequate. This section of the easement district needs some heavy snowfalls so that spring run offs can replenish the water supply; the past two winters have been open, thus, little run off has occurred. It is the first time since about 1938 that the north units have been completely dry.

The waterfowl nesting population was below normal; very few broods of ducks were found throughout the summer. Nesting cover on this refuge is very good except for about the fresh water unit which lies in a grazing unit. Mallards and pintails moved into this refuge in August.

Upland game birds are scarce; they consist of a few pheasants and sharptailed grouse. Food and cover was good throughout the period. No broods have been observed.

Predatory and fur bearing animals are below normal in numbers except for badgers. Very few signs of mink could be found around the south fresh water unit.

LAKE GEORGE

This area had a good supply of water all summer. The main salt lake did drop lower than last summer but is still above normal. A new road was built by the township between the two units since the main lake has been flooding the old road.

South fresh water unit was full throughout the period since it is spring fed. Roundstem, bur-reed and other rushes were plentiful in this unit. The submerged pondweeds consisted mostly of coontail and a few beds of sago pondweed.

The shallow alkali lake between the fresh water unit and salt lake had a fair stand of pondweeds consisting mainly of sago pondweed, coontail and water milfoil.

In spite of the attractiveness of this refuge this summer very few ducks nested on the refuge. There was a build-up of pintails, mallards, redheads and canvasbacks in August. Shovelers were scarce as well as blue-winged teals for this area.

There has been no apparent change in the below normal population of fur bearing and predatory animals on the refuge.

White-tailed deer have been observed on the area throughout the summer.

STONEY SLOUGH

All water units were lower than last year but the mains had sufficient water to be quite attractive. Pondweeds were abundant in units three and four and common in unit five. Sago pondweed was the most common followed by numerous beds of coontail. About most of the water units cover was good, thus, providing adequate cover for nesting.

Very few ducks nested on the refuge or in this area. However, ducks began moving in to feed in mid-August and by the end of the month many species were represented. Mallards and pintails were the most common followed by blue-winged teals and baldpates. Shovelers were scarce all summer.

Upland game birds had sufficient food and cover but very few are present on the area. Usually a few pheasants and Hungarian partridges can be observed.

Skunks and badgers appear to be on the increase; local farmers intend to trap heavier this fall.

TOMAHAWK LAKE

Due to the lack of rains sufficient for run off water levels on this area dropped lower than a year ago at this same time. The water

level was 38 inches below spillway crest. However, the water supply was adequate for the waterfowl in the area. Exposed mud flats along shore lines attracted many shore birds. The unit north of the township grade was nearly dry by the end of August.

Submerged aquatics were common in most parts of the lake; they consisted mainly of sago pondweed, water-milfoil, some coontail, white water crowfoot and clasping leaf pondweed.

The waterfowl nesting population was poor this period in spite of the good water supply and excellent cover for such species as mallards, pintails, blue-winged teal and baldpates. By the end of August a few mallards, pintails, canvasback, redheads and blue-winged teals had moved in to feed on the refuge.

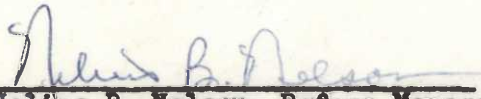
Occasionally a few pheasants may be noted on the refuge. Cover and food conditions were ideal all summer.


This refuge lies entirely within one land owners other farm land. There are several pastures which makes it possible for the land owner to rotate his grazing. The pastures never have been grazed more than about 60% of the available grasses. This leaves good attractive cover. Each year the owner secures a refuge entrance permit to remove surplus fur bearing animals and predators.

Photographs: Attached

Prepared: September 8, 1955

Approved:


Melius B. Nelson, Refuge Manager


Sept. 13, 1955

3-7150a
Cont. NR-1
(Rev. March 1953)

WATERFOWL
(Continuation Sheet)

REFUGE **N. DAK. EASEMENT DISTRICT NO. 6**

MONTHS OF **MAY** TO **AUGUST**, 19**55**

(1) Species	(2) Weeks of reporting period								(3) Estimated waterfowl days use	(4) Production Broods: Estimated seen : total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Swans:										
Whistling										
Trumpeter										
Geese:										
Canada										
Cackling										
Brant										
White-fronted										
Snow										
Blue										
Other										
Ducks:										
Mallard	300	0								
Black										
Gadwall	100	0								
Baldpate	100	6								
Pintail	350	4								
Green-winged teal										
Blue-winged teal	800	6								
Cinnamon teal										
Shoveler	80	0								
Wood										
Redhead	40	0								
Ring-necked										
Canvasback	30	0								
Scaup										
Goldeneye										
Bufflehead										
Ruddy										
Other										
Total Duck Days	1,530									
Total Production (est.)	250	16								
Coot:										

(over)

	(5) Total Days Use	(6) Peak Number	(7) Total Production	SUMMARY
Swans	0			Principal feeding areas
Geese	0			
Ducks	18,045		310	Principal nesting areas
Coots	4,930		58	

Reported by Nellie B. Nelson, Refuge Manager

INSTRUCTIONS (See Secs. 7531 through 7534, Wildlife Refuges Field Manual)

- (1) Species: In addition to the birds listed on form, other species occurring on refuge during the reporting period should be added in appropriate spaces. Special attention should be given to those species of local and national significance.
- (2) Weeks of Reporting Period: Estimated average refuge populations.
- (3) Estimated Waterfowl Days Use: Average weekly populations x number of days present for each species.
- (4) Production: Estimated number of young produced based on observations and actual counts on representative breeding areas. Brood counts should be made on two or more areas aggregating 10% of the breeding habitat. Estimates having no basis in fact should be omitted.
- (5) Total Days Use: A summary of data recorded under (3).
- (6) Peak Number: Maximum number of waterfowl present on refuge during any census of reporting period.
- (7) Total Production: A summary of data recorded under (4).

3-1750
Form NR-1
(Rev. March 1953)

WATERFOWL

REFUGE NO. DAL. BASEMENT DISTRICT NO. 6

MONTHS OF MAY TO AUGUST, 1955

[illegible]

Int. Dup. Sec.,



Chase Lake: 6-27-55 - Banding young ring-billed gulls
with help of a few 4-H'ers.
R164-3



Chase Lake: 6-27-55 - Pelicans nesting on the peninsula
for the first time to the knowledge of the writer.
R164-4



Hobart Lake Refuge: 7-29-55 - Water level on the alkali
lake near the drying-up point.
R164-5



Halfway Lake Refuge: 7-30-55 - High water levels have destroyed all of the marsh growth during the past five years.
R165-6



Stoney Slough Refuge: 8-30-55 - North end of Unit No. 3 - shore line cover heavy; roundstem rushes fringe the shore lines.
R167-2



Hobart Lake Refuge: 8-30-55 - Alkali unit bone dry.
Shows good cover around the unit.
R167-3.



Hobart Lake Refuge: 8-30-55 - Fresh water unit from
south side. Water levels down but adequate.
R167-4