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ALASKA WATERFOWL PRODUCTION SURVEY - 1966

July 14-24, 1966

From: James G. King

James G. King

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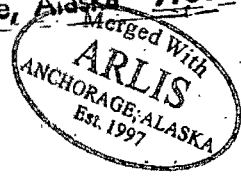
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I. Methods

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An indication of duck production in Interior Alaska is derived from ground observations on two study areas in the Interior. This is the sixth year that brood counts have been made on four large lakes near Tetlin and the fourth year that data is available from 34 lakes of various sizes on the Yukon Flats near Fort Yukon. (See tables). The Yukon Flats data are fairly representative of the average interior habitat and the Tetlin area represents a smaller area of more specialized habitat that is capable of very high production when conditions are good. Observations are made either on foot or from a small canoe and the same method is used each year for each lake.

Goose production data from the Yukon Delta is supplied by the staff of the Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Range.

II. Weather & Habitat Conditions

Spring break-up in Alaska with its attendant opening of lakes and melt water run-off has been from one to three weeks later than the long term average for four of the past five years. Waterfowl on the other hand have continued to arrive in each area within a day or so of the same calendar date each year. If the ice is out and habitat suitable, some species commence nesting almost at once. In a late year nesting may be delayed or unsuccessful due to hunger, flooding, lack of suitable nest sites, etc.

This year spring break-up was again late and in some areas very late and nesting delayed. There was, however, very little flooding. On the Yukon Flats the habitat seems to be in optimum condition with water levels slightly lower than last year and considerably lower than in 1964. Shoreline and emergent vegetation is exceedingly lush and rearing conditions appear excellent. Most other areas are enjoying similar conditions with the exception of the Minto area which was flooded for a long period this year.

III. Waterfowl Production

There seems to be some indication that ducks are adjusting to the current trend of later spring nesting conditions. By now a fairly large portion of our breeding population were themselves hatched in late season. The tables tell the story. Teal especially, and widgeon and scaup appear to have had very good production this year. The indications are that pintail, mallard, shoveler and canvasback are up slightly from last year however the samples of these species are small.

Cal Lensink reports from the Yukon Delta that all species of geese show increased brood sizes and that nesting appears to have been consistently successful. Less information is available on ducks from the Delta but Lensink has the impression that they have done better than last year also.

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Species	TETLIN							YUKON FLATS				
	No. of Broods						% Change from 1965	No. of Broods				% Change from 1965
	'61	'62	'63	'64	'65	'66		'63	'64	'65	'66	
Pintail	19	18	11	4	3	8	+167%	30	9	16	19	+18%
Mallard	34	14	23	2	3	9	+200%	8	3	9	6	-33%
Widgeon	74	18	23	6	7	36	+414%	41	14	39	49	+26%
Shoveler	2	1	--	--	--	--		10	3	8	11	+38%
G.W. Teal	42	30	27	19	16	66	+313%	16	7	18	52	+189%
L. Scaup*	14	2	11	2	--	10		9	0	12	49	+308%
Canvasback	14	18	14	2	3	6	+100%	8	1	13	15	+15%
Total	199	101	109	35	32	135	+322%	122	37	115	201	+75%

* Scaup hatch not complete at time of surveys.

Literary
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 1011 E. Tudor Road
 Anchorage, Alaska 99508