

## ROUTING SLIP

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

DATE: 5-19 1942☒ MR. SALYER☒ ① ~~MRS. WOODIN~~☒ ~~MR. EIMER~~~~MRS. GARVIN~~☒ ~~MR. DUMONT~~

## SECTION OF HABITAT IMPROVEMENT:

Mr. Kubichek

Mr. Smith

~~Mr. Griffith~~

Miss Cook

☒ SECTION OF OPERATIONS:~~Mr. Krammes~~~~Mr. Gustafson~~

② Miss Baum

Mrs. Kricun

## SECTION OF ERA:

~~Mr. Regan~~~~Dr. Bourn~~

Mrs. Fishman

☒ SECTION OF LAND MANAGEMENT:~~Mr. Barnshaw~~~~Mr. Ackerknecht~~

## STENOGRAPHERS:

Miss Whorley

☒ SECTION OF STRUCTURES:~~Mr. Taylor~~

REMARKS:

Nine-Pipe x Pablo Quarterly  
February-April 1942

Return to:

Div. Files

# INDEX

	Page
I. GENERAL	
A. Weather Conditions--Ninepipe	1
--Pablo	2
B. Water Conditions--Ninepipe	2
--Pablo	3
C. Fires	4
II. WILDLIFE	
A. Waterbirds	
1. Populations and Behavior	
(a) Species--Ninepipe	4
--Pablo	10
(b) Groups--Ninepipe	12
--Pablo	13
2. Food and Cover--Ninepipe	13
--Pablo	14
3. Disease	14
B. Upland Game Birds	
1. Populations and Behavior--Ninepipe	14
--Pablo	15
D. Fur-bearing Animals, Predators, Rodents, and other Animals	
1. Population and Behavior--Ninepipe	16
--Pablo	16
E. Fish--Ninepipe	16
--Pablo	17
III. REFUGE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE	
A. Physical Development--Ninepipe	17
--Pablo	19
IV. PUBLIC RELATIONS	
A. Recreational Uses	
1. Recreational Area--Ninepipe	19
2. Fishing--Ninepipe	19
--Pablo	20
4. Number of Visitors	
Official visitors	20
Other visitors	20
B. Violations	21
V. ECONOMIC USES OF REFUGE	
E. Fur Harvest--Ninepipe	21
--Pablo	21
VII. OTHER ITEMS	
A. General	21
B. Photographs	22



## I. GENERAL

### A. Weather Conditions

#### Ninepipe

The weather during the month of February was far from favorable to the bird life in this valley. Twelve inches of snow covered the countryside and a light crust made matters somewhat worse than they would have been otherwise. A temperature of 19 degrees below on the 18th was the coldest day of the month. On February 24 the ice on Ninepipe was thirteen inches thick. By early March the snow had melted down enough to give the birds a chance, especially in the grain fields harvested by combine last summer. No zero weather was experienced during this month.

The ice stayed on the reservoir until early April, though it had been open around the edges for a couple of weeks enabling the ducks to get plenty of food in the shallow waters on the area. Last year the ice left in early March.

A reasonable amount of rain during April and considerable cloudy and cool weather has made irrigation unnecessary in the valley to date.

Precipitation and temperature charts follow:

	Precipitation		Max. Temp.		Min. Temp.	
	1942	1941	1942	1941	1942	1941
Feb.	1.22	.51	49°	56°	-19°	16°
Mar.	.52	.38	65°	68°	18°	15°
Apr.	1.02	1.37	77°	80°	27°	23°
Total...	<u>2.76</u>	<u>2.26</u>	Extremes..	77° 80°	-19°	15°

#### Pablo

The only noticeable difference in the weather between Ninepipe and Pablo during this quarter was the depth of the snow. Pablo was covered by a blanket sixteen inches deep while Ninepipe had only twelve inches.

A precipitation and temperature chart follows which is incomplete due to the death of Frank Mayer, Water Master, and the consequent change in personel:

	Precipitation		Max. Max..Temp.		Min. Temp.	
	1942	1941	1942	1941	1942	1941
Feb.		.51	49°	56°	-19°	16°
Mar.	.52	.38	65°	68°	18°	15°
Apr.	1.83	1.37	77°	80°	27°	23°
Total...	<u>2.35</u>	<u>2.26</u>	Extremes..	77° 80°	-19°	15°

#### B. Water Conditions

#### NINEpipe

Though the Crow Creek pumping plant of the Indian Irrigation Service was not used during January and early Feb.



due to the extremely cold weather, Ninepipe Reservoir reached its crest April 26, thereby eliminating the chance of destroying nests by late filling.

I greatly appreciate the cooperation of Messrs. Sperry and Dexter of the United States Indian Irrigation Service in raising the level of Ninepipe so early in the season, inasmuch as it was necessary to nearly empty Kickinghorse Reservoir to do so.

A chart showing water levels as compared to 1940 and 1941 follows:

End of:	1942	1941	1940
February-3004.35	3004.65	3005.7	3003.4
March	3006.2	3008.8	3005.4
April	3010.	3009.4	3006.8

Pablo

No water was put into Pablo Reservoir during February or March except a slight amount of local run off from melting snow but early April saw considerable water coming in caused by melting of the snow in the mountains. At the end of the quarter there is considerable more water in this reservoir than at the same time last year.

A chart follows with comparisons at the same dates of 1940 and 1941:

End of:	1942	1941	1940
February	3196.7	3196.2	3198.3
March	3196.8	3195.6	3199.0
April	3204.4	3199.0	3208.8

#### C. Fires

No fires occurred on either area during this quarter.

### II. WILDLIFE

#### A. Water birds

##### 1. Populations and Behavior

##### (a) Species

##### Ninepipe

Common Loon--The first ones seen on the reservoir this season were noted on April 30.

Holboell's Grebe--Two of these birds were noted on April 20.

Horned Grebe--Eight of these birds were noted on April 30.

Western Grebe--Five of these birds were noted on April 30.

Pied-billed Grebe--The first bird of the season was noted on March 23 on a pothole near Charlo. Two were noted on April 20; three on April 30.

Great Blue Heron--One of these birds was noted on March 28. Several have been in evidence since mid-April.



Whistling Swan--The first of these birds noted this season were fifty seen on Ninepipe on March 28. The next morning, March 29, five flocks, approximately 350 birds, flew over within an hour. There were swan on the area the most of the time from then until late April, Some times only a few and at othertimes more. The largest group were here in mid-April when approximately 100 birds were noted three days in succession. The last seen were four here on April 27.

Canada Goose--Twenty of these birds were noted on March 6, the first of the season; there were six seen on March 8 and nineteen on the 18th. An estimated 700 were noted on March 28. Many flocks flew north over the valley during late March and early April besides the many who stopped for a rest. Four nests were located on the islands on April 30. One nest held five eggs, two nests six each, the other nest ten eggs which I believe to be very unusual. No survey has been made on the mainland around the reservoir, but one is contemplated for early May.

Lesser Snow Goose--One bird was noted with six Canada Geese on March 6.

Mallard--Several thousand of these birds spent the winter in the valley. By the middle of March, as soon as there was open water around the edges of the reservoir, caused by the Indian Irrigation Service pumping water into the area, many of them came here to feed. The peak number noted during migration was <sup>an</sup>estimated 23,000 on March 28. On April 30, the ten islands in Ninepipe were visited and a total of twenty-eight mallard nests located. The smallest number of eggs in a nest was three and the largest nineteen. The average per nest was eight and eight tenths.eggs. All but three of the nests were apparently being incubated. On one island three nests were located in a nearly perfect triangle, approximately twenty feet apart. On another island a Mallard nest was found only three feet from a Canada Goose nest. No time has been spent on nest study, except the one-half day spent on the islands.

Gadwall--The several of these birds were seen during the light winter of 1940 and 1941, none were noted during the past winter. The extremely cold weather seemed to drive them further south. The first ones this spring were noted on April,28, when fourteen pair were seen on the south end of the Reservoir.



Baldpate--An occasional bird was seen with the Mallards here during the winter and as soon as it began to warm up in March they began to be more frequently seen. The largest number seen was on March 28 when an estimated 2000 were on this area. There seemed to be approximately one pair of them to two pair of Mallards on the potholes on the farms nearby during early April.

Pintail--Several of these birds spent the winter along the south end of Flathead Lake. One lone male was also frequently seen on Post Creek near U. S. Highway No. 93. The first ones seen on the Reservoir this quarter were nineteen on February 12. An estimated 3000 were on the reservoir on March 21; 5000 on March 28, which was the largest number noted this spring.

Green-winged Teal--A few of these birds could be seen almost any time during the winter, mingling with the Mallards on the open water where the spring creeks run into the south end of Flathead Lake. On February 12, as soon as the water from the pump ditch opened a pool in Ninepipe, twenty three were noted there. On March 18, nine were seen; March 21 four and on the 28 forty-eight were counted,

though there was no doubt many more on the area.

Blue-winged Teal--Three birds, the first of the season were noted on April 29.

Cinnamon Teal--Three birds, the first of the season were seen on a pothole one-half mile west of Ninepipe on March 30. On April 20, three were seen on Ninepipe and on April 30 five were noted.

Shoveller--These birds were first seen on Ninepipe on April 20 when sixteen were noted. They all seem to be mated by <sup>the</sup> time they get this far north. as one sees them here only in pairs in the spring.

Redhead--The first of the season were noted on March 21, while making a duck count on the pump ditch pool at about 11:00 A. M. Eighty-two birds came in, in groups of three to eleven within twenty minutes. Some of them came in low, while others seemed to come from a great height. The largest group noted was 350 on March 28. At the end of the quarter there are many more Redheads here than last year at this time.

Ringnecked Duck--Four pairs of these birds were noted near the picnic area on Ninepipe on April 23. Two pairs were noted on April 30.



- Canvasback--The first birds of the season, forty-nine of them, were noted on March 21. On March 28 one hundred twenty-five were seen. There are still a few here at the end of the quarter.

Lesser Scaup--One female was seen here on February 12. The next ones noted were nine birds March 21 and on March 28 fifty-six were seen. April 30 an estimated 200 were on the area.

American Golden-eye--Six males and two females were seen on February 12. On March 21 nine were noted. The largest group seen this spring were 105 on March 28.

Bufflehead--Seven were noted on March 28 and the same number on April 20.

Ruddy Duck--A pair seen on Ninepipe on April 28 were the first ones noted this spring.

Hooded Merganser--Two were noted on March 18 and on March 28, two again were seen.

American Merganser--Many of these birds have been with us all winter, wherever there was any amount of open water though no large groups have been seen on this area.

Coot--Nine were noted on March 21 and thirty-two on March 28, and an estimated 550 on April 20.

Killdeer--Two noted on March 10 were the first seen this season. By April 1 they were very plentiful.

Wilson's Snipe--One could usually see one or two of these little birds at any time during the winter, provided he walked along one of the small spring creeks that are so plentiful in the valley.

No large concentration has been seen during migration season.

Avocet--The first one of the season was seen on April 18. On April 30 three were seen on an island in Ninepipe.

#### Pablo

Common Loon--Five were noted on this area on April 8. On April 20 eight were noted.

Western Grebe--Three were noted on April 20.

Whistling Swan--Thirty-five birds were seen on this area on April 2.

Canada Goose--An estimated 1000 were seen feeding in a wheat field just outside the refuge fence on March 27. Many north-bound flocks went over this area during that day, though no actual count was made of them. On April 2, 350 birds were noted on the area.



Mallard--With only a small seepage pool open on March 25, ten of these birds were noted. On the 27th, twenty-eight birds were on the same pool. On April 2, the ice was leaving around the edged of the reservoir and many birds were feeding in the shallow waters though no count was made. An estimate made on April 11 indicated approximately 6000 birds on the area, while on April 20 a count indicated approximately 2200.

Baldpate--Approximately 2000 were noted on April 11, while on April 20 a count indicated only about 700.

Pintail--An estimated 1500 were on this area on April 11. On April 20 about 400 were in evidence.

Green-winged Teal--Three were noted on March 27; 200 on April 11; and 280 on April 20.

Shoveller--Six, noted on April 11, were the first of the season on either area. Sixty were seen on April 20.

Redhead--An estimated 1200 of these birds were noted on this area on April 11 which is the largest group noted since I came here.

Ringnecked Duck--Forty, noted on April 11 was the largest group of these birds seen here the last two years.

✓  
Canvasback--A group, estimated at 600 birds,  
were seen feeding along the dyke on April 11. .

✓  
Lesser Scaup--100 were noted on April 11 and  
only fourteen were in evidence on April 20.

✓  
American Golden-eye--Three were noted on the  
area on March 27. Eighty on April 11 and only three  
on April 20.

✓  
Bufflehead--Sixteen were noted on April 20.

✓  
American Merganser--Twenty-two were seen on  
April 11 and seventy noted on April 20.

✓  
Coot--The first large flocks of the season were  
noted on April 7, though no count was attempted.  
An estimated 1400 were here on April 11, 1200 on  
April 20.

✓  
Avocet--Three noted on April 20 were the first  
of the season.

(b) Groups

Ninepipe

The ducks, mostly Mallards, which stayed in the  
valley during the winter, had a pretty tough time  
during February. There was some loss but not so  
much as was expected, considering the weather earl-  
ier in the winter. Farmers' feed lots and hay  
stacks were favorite spots for them while the



snow was deep and crusted over the top. Some complaints were made, but generally, the farmers' took the damage to feed without too much kicking. Several places where there were large concentraions, feeding was done. Otherwise there would have been considerable loss. Present indications are that more Redhead ducks will nest on Ninepipe this year than last.

#### Pablo

Some loss of early nests is expected on this area, due to the lateness of the spring run-off from the mountains. However, the water has been rising fast during the last few days in April and it is hoped the ducks will pick the higher spots where there is heavier cover.

### 2. Food and Cover

#### Ninepipe

Excellent nesting cover for ground nesting birds can be had almost anywhere on this area above the high water line and a heavy growth of cattails will give the diving ducks a good chance to locate their nests where they are safe. Food is readily available on this area. Snails are more plentiful than any place I've ever seen.

There are many water insects and a good growth of vegetation.

#### Pablo

Good nesting cover for the ducks that nest on dry ground is plentiful but very little nesting area for diving ducks is available here. The food situation seems to be fair for either type.

4,400 lbs. of wheat was fed to the ducks in the valley during this quarter. Feeding was done at the main concentration points, with the south end of Flathead Lake, Spring Creek and Post Creek taking the most of it.

#### 3. Disease

No disease has been prevalent on either area during the past quarter.

#### B. Upland Game Birds

##### 1. Populations and Behavior

#### Ninepipe

When the snow got too deep this winter to allow the birds ~~to~~ feed they immediately took up residence in the stubble fields and feed lots on the adjoining farms. The only groups left on the area were a group of approximately 100 birds that fed here at Headquarters, a group of 150 that were just southeast of the Bell hunting

what kind?  
pheasants?



cabins and about 200 that fed at a feeding station on the south side. 300 lbs. of wheat were put out for the groups at the cabin and on the south side. Those near Headquarters fed on the unthreshed wheat which I hauled here from Pablo for them. There was some loss of birds throughout the valley during the winter though not enough to make any showing at present.

A count made in late January and early February by Dr. Phillip Wright and his wildlife majors of the University of Montana, Missoula, and myself indicated 1.1 birds per acre throughout the valley with a ratio of three hens to one cock. *pheasants?*

#### Pablo

A flock of pheasants which I estimated at 2000 fed during February and early March on the stack of unthreshed wheat and on the spoiled wheat which I had thrown out of the steel grain bin. I later found the carcasses of sixty birds that died in that immediate vicinity during the winter. Over forty of them were cock birds with long spurs indicating considerable age, though no post-  
*Pointing from the muddy grain.* ing was done to find anything further regarding the reason for their death. ?

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

1. Population and Behavior

Ninepipe

An occasional coyote track was seen on this area during the early days of this quarter, but very little sign has been seen of late.

A few skunk dens are in use on the area, though the population of them has not, as yet, become too much of a menace to the duck and pheasant nests.

There are also a larger number of muskrats on the area than last spring at this time.

Ground squirrels are getting very plentiful on this area. There has been some complaint from adjoining farmers but nothing serious has arisen as yet.

Pablo

There were frequent signs of coyote on this area all winter though they are not plentiful enough to cause a serious menace to wildlife.

The muskrats will be more plentiful than last year as the Indian trapper on this area was very inefficient.

E. Fish

Ninepipe

Conditions for fish life appear very good on this area.



The bass population seems very good. There are also many perch and bullheads here.

#### Pablo

It seems that conditions should be excellent for fish life on this area. The water is deep and there seems to be an abundance of feed. No one fishes the area so one has no chance of knowing what kinds of fish are there to be taken though bass and perch and bullheads have been seen there.

### III. REFUGE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

#### A. Physical Development

##### Ninepipe

Much of my time during the last half of February was devoted to duck feeding--4,400 pounds of feed being distributed during that time.

At off times work was done on the boat trailer brackets, finally getting them finished and the trailer painted one coat in late April.

The pickup, my only piece of automotive equipment has been greased and checked as necessary. Tires have been shifted around and new spring shackles put on the rear.

A A fence was built, making a pasture of the east end of the refuge area lying on the north side of the road.

The back-pack fire pumps were checked over and repaired in preparation for the coming fire season. One of them

had to have an entire new bottom.

Approximately one-half of the fence around Ninepipe has been checked, repairing broken wires and restapling where necessary.

Part of the service trails were smoothed, rocks picked and holes filled. The trail on the east side and part of that on the south were still too wet when the other was worked.

The headquarters grounds have been cleaned up and the gravelled court has had some work done on it, but is still in need of more.

Drawings were made, a bill of materials figured and gravel hauled for a pump house, but no work has been started on it as no approved plan has been received.

A trench was dug along the house wall, from the south porch to the west door and an asphalt compound put over a crack in the wall in an attempt to stop water from seeping through into the basement.

A few flowers and shrubs have been set near the headquarters residence.

Topsoil was hauled to fill in next to the house where the ground had settled and to fill low spots in the areas west of the house that are to be seeded to brome grass.

One day was spent with Mr. Mushbach at Smith Lake making a bird count on the area.



### Pablo

The service trails have been smoothed, holes filled and part of rocks picked but there is some of this work to be done yet.

Cutting off the posts or frame-work of the service building, to let the building done to compare with the shrinking of the logs, has been partially done and it is planned to finish this work in the near future.

## IV. PUBLIC RELATIONS

### A. Recreational Uses

#### 1. Recreational Area --Ninepipe

A group of Boy Scouts from Ronan held a meeting and had lunch at the picnic grounds on April 12. This is the only group to use the picnic grounds this spring.

#### 2. Fishing--Ninepipe

A few good catches of Bullheads and perch have been taken here this spring though probably eighty per cent of the fishermen fish for bass only. Some very nice catches have been made but not so many as last year according to the ones who fish the area most. The largest bass which I have seen weighed five pounds two ounces, though a seven pound fish was claimed by a Missoula fisherman.

Pablo

4. No fishing was done on this area during this quarter.

4. Number of Visitors

Official Visitors:

George E. Mushbach, National Bison Range, Has made several stops at the office but no time has been spent away from the headquarters grounds.

Clarence Young, Arvin Olswald and Stanley Driscoll, also from the National Bison Range, each made an official visit at the headquarters during the past quarter.

Kenneth F. Roahen, U. S. Game Management Agent, Billings, Montana; one hour conference in office.

Other visitors:

R. H. Lambeth, Deputy State Game Warden in this county, has stopped at the office occasionally.

Al Knutsen of Ronan.

Les Colby, Missoula, President Western Montana Fish and Wildlife Association.

Frank Starina, Deputy State Game Warden, Missoula, Montana.

H. O. Bell, Missoula, Montana.

William Steinbrenner, Missoula, Montana.

I. D. Zobell, Lake County Agricultural Agent, Ronan Montana.



## B. Violations

Four men were apprehended fishing on closed portions of Ninepipe on April 19 and the information turned over to State Warden Lambeth. No report has been received to date regarding disposition of the cases.

## V. ECONOMIC USES OF REFUGE

### E. Fur Harvest

#### Ninepipe

The only trapping done on this area during the past winter was by Indians on a "trapper take all" basis.

Permit No.	Issued to	No. pelts taken	Total income reported
24	Michel Smallsalmon	120 ✓	\$185.00
	John J. Finley	42 ✓	\$55.00

#### Pablo

A permit was issued to Leland R. Sanford for trapping on this area but he proved as inefficient as did the Indian trapper last year.

Permit No.	Issued to	No. pelts taken	Total income reported
68	Leland R. Sanford	47 ✓	\$81.00

## VII. OTHER ITEMS

### A. General

The first large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds was noted on February 12 in the cattails southeast of the Headquarters residence.

The first Mountain Bluebirds of the season were noted  
on March 21.

B. Photographs



Ducks feeding near feed racks on the Stanley Searce farm  
on Spring Creek. Taken 2/26/42. Roll 4. Exp. 1



Frost on Sweet Clover. Taken 2/26/42. Roll 4. Exp. 3.





A pheasant nest destroyed. Indications are that it was destroyed by ground squirrels as there was a den close by as the next picture indicates. Photographs taken on Ninepipe 4/28/42. Roll No. 4. Exp. No. 4.



Taken 4/28/42. Roll No. 4. Exp. No. 7



Boat trailer showing conformation. 4/30/42 Roll No. 5.

Exp. No. 1

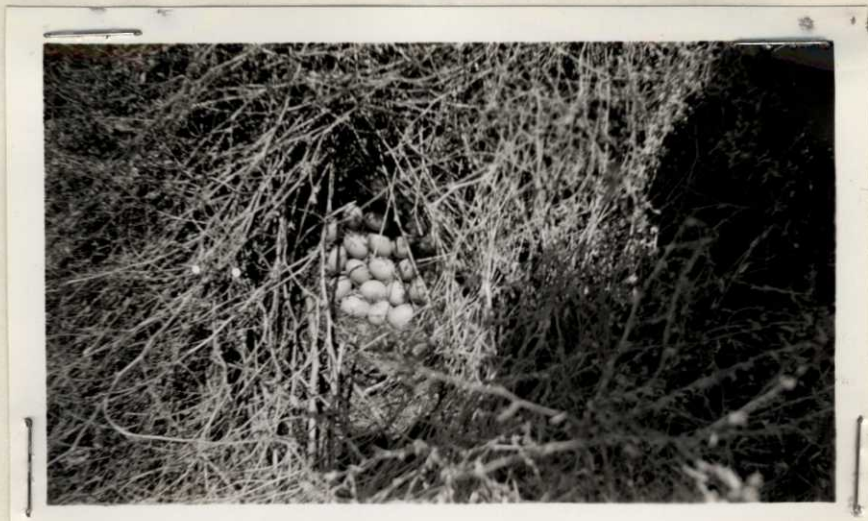




Same - side view. Taken 4/30/42. Roll No. 5, Exp. No. 2



Same - with boat. Taken 4/30/42. Roll No. 5, Exp. No. 3.



Mallard nest, 19 eggs, on an island in Ninepipe. Taken  
4/30/42. Roll No. 5, Exp. No. 5.



Goose nest, 5 eggs, on an island in Ninepipe. Taken  
4/30/42. Roll No. 5, Exp. No. 6.





Goose nest, 10 eggs, on an island in Ninepipe. Taken  
4/30/42. Roll No. 6, Exp. No. 1.

Respectfully submitted

*Ancil O. Talmage*  
Ancil O. Talmage  
Under Refuge Manager



George West, 10 eggs, on an island in Alaska. Taken  
4/20/42. Ref. No. 6, Exp. No. 1.

Respectfully submitted

*Arnold O. Johnson*  
Arnold O. Johnson  
Under Refuge Manager

