

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

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER WILDLIFE AND FISH REFUGE
FEDERAL BUILDING, WINONA, MINNESOTA

ADDRESS REPLY TO SUPERINTENDENT
UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER
WILDLIFE AND FISH REFUGE
AND REFER TO

NARRATIVE REPORT

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER WILDLIFE AND FISH REFUGE,
INCLUDING TREMPLEALEAU AND TALCOT LAKE REFUGES,
MAY 1, THROUGH JULY 31, 1939

100-300
300-300 Ray C. Steele, Refuge Manager

I. Weather Conditions:

Temperatures during this report period have been slightly above normal with precipitation about average, and an absence of sudden flash floods has been beneficial.

II. Wildlife:

A. Waterfowl:

Spring migration was about over by May 1. An apparent late migration record was established on a portion of the Upper Mississippi Refuge in Wabasha County, Minnesota, for whistling swans. A single bird remained until May 13. Waterfowl nesting conditions have been favorable and it is believed there has been a considerable increase in nesting birds. Our observations indicate the order of abundance as follows: Wood duck, blue-wing teal, mallard, and blackduck. We are much encouraged over the apparent increase in nesting blackduck. It is also interesting to record that the wood ducks are apparently nesting in as great abundance as was the case prior to the extensive timber removal in the river bottomlands necessitated in connection with navigation channel improvement work by the War Department. As a matter of fact, indications are that we have a greater abundance of wood ducks this year than for several years past. Artificial nesting boxes have been used to some extent but a vast majority of the birds are nesting in natural situations.

2-38-
Coots have nested extensively in pools No. 4, Alma, and No. 5, Whitman.

Non-game birds have nested in about normal numbers with the exception of a probable increase in herons. Great blue herons and American bitterns are abundant. Green herons have increased, and least bitterns have also shown a notable increase this nesting season. A new breeding record was recorded for American egrets during this

JWC
R. H. S.

Thinnerland

5-28- Trip this Delta for Faras, in search

of American egret nests. Found birds
nesting in rookery consisting of 200
nests; with Blue herons, Black-crowned
night herons, Cormorants & 6 American
egrets among them. Neilson

6-23- Found young American egret
nests. Neilson

II. Thinnerland

6-24- Found young Turkey with 10 young
Neilson

I. Wetland conditions:

6-30- Visited rookery near refuge - found
200-300 herons, approximately
100-200 Cormorants. Schmitt

7-7- great Blue
young American egret flying (rookery
near refuge) American egret still im-
mature in nests. Black-crowned heron
young well advanced, large numbers
flying. Red-tailed hawk crow, one
well grown, 2 very young owls - Schmitt

season. Three nests were located and kept under observation for several weeks. Thirteen young birds were hatched.

Yellow-headed blackbirds nested in abundance in a restricted area near the Village of Weaver, Wabasha County, Minnesota. This apparently is also a new nesting record for this locality in recent years.

Black terns have also increased in numbers. - nested

B. Upland Game Birds:

Upland game birds on the Upper Mississippi Refuge are unimportant. While there are a few quail and ring-neck pheasants, and a very few ruffed grouse on Refuge areas near the upper ends of some of the pools, they are not important.

A few ring-neck pheasants and a few quail apparently nested on the Trempealeau Refuge; however, the numbers of birds found on this Refuge are disappointingly small.

Reports from the Talcot Lake Refuge indicate favorable nesting conditions and it is believed that a considerable number of ring-neck pheasants nested there though this is based upon casual reports.

F. Other Animals:

Conditions have been exceedingly favorable for muskrats on the Upper Mississippi Refuge during this report period and observations indicate that we will have an abundant crop this season. It is assumed that the mink population will also be favorable although observations with regard to mink are rather obscure. A few colonies of beaver frequenting the Upper Mississippi Refuge are holding their own and, in fact, increasing slightly.

III. Refuge Development and Maintenance:

A. Physical Development:

On May 23 a work program was set up under Bureau-sponsored Minnesota W.P.A. project at the Winona warehouse for the construction of four floating boathouses in accordance with Bureau drawing No. 728. The structures were completed during June and will be placed in use at Bellevue, Dubuque and Lansing, Iowa, and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, for the use of the district rangers in storing boats and other equipment. A row of protective piling has also been driven at the Winona warehouse site to provide safer boat moorage under the W.P.A. program.

-5-

6-1-3

6-13-

6-30-39-

7-8-

Conditions have been exceedingly favorable for markets on the

presented these findings to be based upon sworn reports.
conclusions and it is believed that a considerable number of long-week
reports from the LSCOT take better indicate relative hearing

the Ambassador's office: however, the interests of the U.S. in this

A tem long-neck brasses and a tem-drett abbslenfja neafeg on

Stomach on yellow glass near the upper ends of some of the boots' feet
 Little there are a few small and long-neck brasses, and a few small
 brasses some of which on the upper part of the boots are numerous.

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Black fields were also increased in number.

Age 2.

apparently is also a new nesting record for this locality in recent
times near the Village of Menden, Marquette County, Minnesota. This
yellow-headed blackbird nested in abundance in a restricted

several weeks. Fifteen long rides were performed.

season. Three bears were jockeyed and kept under observation for

A small W.P.A. program was continued during May and June at the Talcot Lake Refuge where additional rail fences were constructed, some planting along the fences, filling operations at the headquarters site, and the construction of a small overnight cabin was begun but not finished.

Work under Bureau-sponsored W.P.A. program in Wisconsin continued at the Trempealeau Refuge where a concrete floor was poured in the machine shed, repairing and reconstruction of fences, planting of nursery stock, care and maintenance of landscaping materials, and other incidental work was carried on. Under the Wisconsin W.P.A. project exterior boundary line clearing and posting was also accomplished in La Crosse and Trempealeau Counties.

B. Plantings:

Ten sacks of dried Naias flexilis seed were planted on various portions of the Upper Mississippi Refuge between Wabasha, Minnesota, and Lansing, Iowa.

Cultivated Crops: Approximately sixty acres divided up into twenty food patches have been planted to small grains on the Trempealeau Refuge, including some permanent grass and legumes, alfalfa and crested wheat grass. Corn, milo wheatland, sorghum, amber cane, millet, buckwheat, sudan grass, and soya beans were used in the food patches.

Some five hundred aspen cuttings were planted experimentally as a source of beaver food at the Trempealeau Refuge.

IV. Public Relations:

Visitors: Professor Lundy, biology teacher of the Trempealeau, Wisconsin, High School, visited the Trempealeau Refuge with his class on May 10 and was conducted over the area by Associate Biologist Pulling. Dr. Gabrielson, accompanied by Mr. Nicholson of the Country Gentleman, made a tour of the Upper Mississippi Refuge by boat starting at Clinton, Iowa, and ending at Winona. Dr. Gabrielson met and conferred with each ranger as he travelled through the respective patrol districts.

V. Economic Uses of Refuge:

Hay Permits: Sixteen permits have been issued authorizing the cutting of hay on exterior margins of the Upper Mississippi Refuge beginning with July 15. Only a nominal amount of hay will be cut by each permittee.

VI. Other Items:

very good
Aquatic Vegetation: Conditions have been extremely favorable for aquatic vegetation this season. There is a substantial increase in desirable types, and on the whole the situation is very satisfactory with regard to aquatic cover and food. Special mention is made of the substantial increase in pondweeds; also the increase of wild rice is notable. Reasonably heavy stands are under observation in pools 4 to 8, inclusive, and there is more rice in this area than we have ever before observed. We have also found new beds of wild celery and while small in extent, it is encouraging to know that this valuable food is taking hold in new situations. Wild millet and the smartweeds are holding their own in the older upper pools and gaining in the newer pools. On the whole, the food and cover situation on the Upper Mississippi Refuge is most encouraging and far exceeds our expectations.

