

# Hunters Are Concerned Over Duck Season

William L. Finley, D. Sc. and Ed F. Averill

Write These Wild Life Articles

## Many Urging Shooting Ban For One Year

The question uppermost in the minds of all duck hunters is, will the next season be opened or closed? If the season is open, how many days will hunters be allowed to shoot and what will be the bag limit?

The question has waxed hot from one end of the country to the other. Members of the American Nature association, Audubon societies, Izaak Walton league, a good many sportsmen and others interested in conserving our resources have put up a strong fight to stop all wildfowl shooting for at least a year. The reasons given are that ducks and geese have greatly decreased in number and some species are in danger of extermination.

Many hunters agree the decrease in waterfowl is noticeable, but contend a limited amount of killing will not endanger the future stock. Agreeing with this viewpoint are many of the state game commissions whose funds come from hunters' license fees. If the duck season is closed the amount of license money received by game officials would be greatly reduced.

A year ago congress passed the duck stamp bill requiring all hunters of waterfowl to pay a license fee of one dollar. This fund amounted to a little over \$600,000 which is used to buy duck refugees. The present congress has made some changes in the stamp bill and it is estimated that about \$800,000 will be added to this fund from licenses if the season is opened next fall. In case of a closed season this fund for sanctuaries will be eliminated.

Laws regulating the shooting of ducks, geese and other migratory waterfowl for 1935 will soon be promulgated by the secretary of agriculture. Various states of the union still have the rights through their legislatures of making laws regarding the hunting or taking of waterfowl, but these laws cannot conflict with federal regulations.

The federal law provides for a two months open shooting season and a daily bag limit of 20 ducks. Any state legislature may reduce the open season, or even close the season, or reduce the bag limit, which would give more protection to the birds. But it would be a violation of the federal statute to lengthen the shooting season or increase the bag limit.

## Today's Bird Walk

Today's bird walk, originally scheduled for the Carver district, has been changed to accommodate summer school students now in the city. Mrs. A. L. Campbell, in charge of bird walk arrangements for the Audubon society, announces the party will meet at N. E. 32d avenue and Sacramento street at 6:30. O. E. Wheeler will be the leader with Mrs. Campbell as assistant.

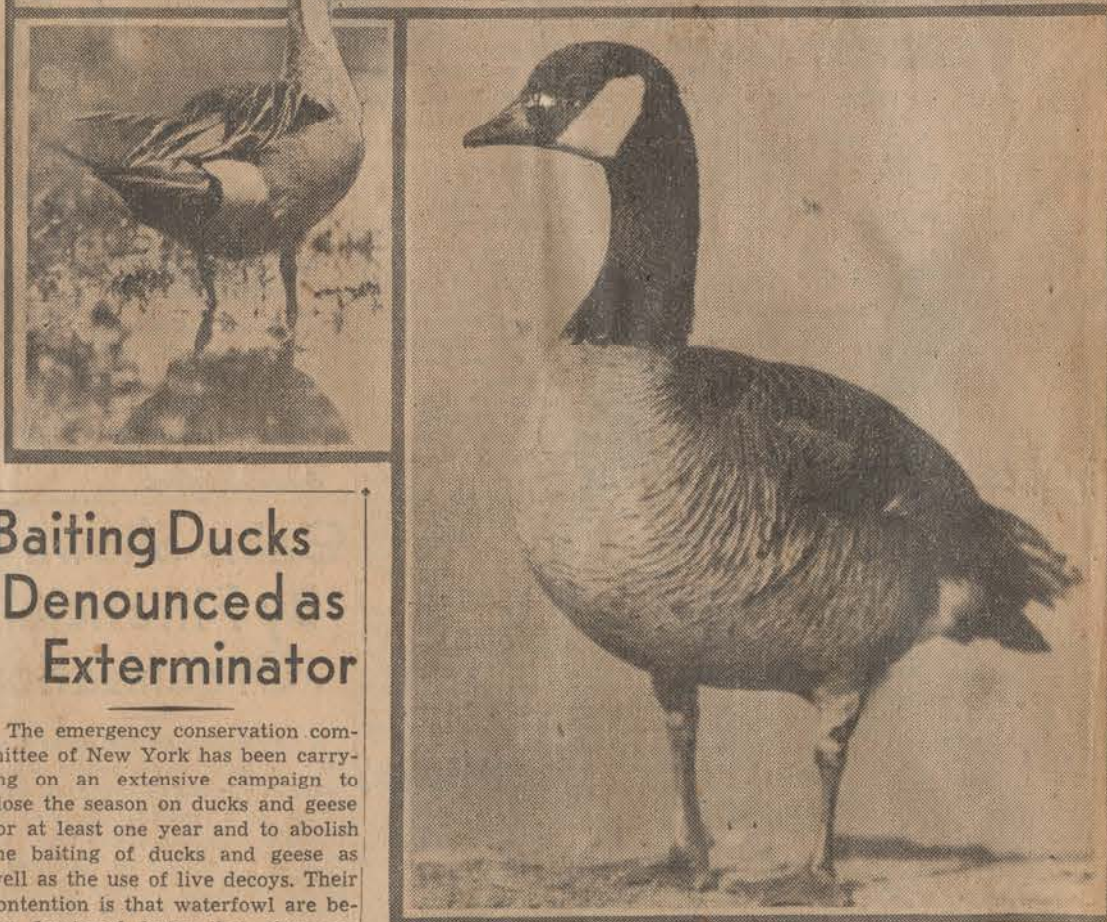
## Dog Is Dumb; He Takes Two Nips

A dog may bite a toad once, but if he does it a second time he has a low intelligence quotient.

When the inexperienced dog bites a toad, a bitter astringent taste is produced in his mouth by the milky poisonous fluid secreted in a pair of large, glandular masses behind the toad's eyes. Biologists of the biological survey say the secretion also protects the toad against most other animals, but not against snakes, skunks, or birds of prey.

Skunks in eating toads usually roll them about roughly with their paws until the poisonous secretion has been discharged and rubbed off.

## Most Talked-of Migratory Fowls of Today



—Photos by W. L. Finley and H. T. Bohlman.

Conservation of ducks and geese is the object of a fight being carried on by game protective organizations throughout the country. Above is a picture of Lake Merritt in Oakland, which is a game reserve. Below on the left is male Pintail and on the right is a Canada goose, commonly called a "honker."

## Columbia River Hunters Prefer Closed Season to Ban on Decoy

According to present indications, if the waterfowl season is open next fall, it will not be for more than 30 days. All shooting over baited land or water may be prohibited, also the use of live decoys. Last year the daily bag limit was 12, which may be lowered for next season.

Opinion expressed by some of the hunters who shoot ducks down the Columbia is that they prefer a closed season instead of elimination of baiting and use of live decoys. The contention is that the natural duck food like wapatoos and swamp grasses

have been exterminated by carp. When the ducks migrate from the north, they concentrate along the Columbia river where the duck clubs scatter a large amount of grain. If the ducks were not fed, they would have to scatter or move on south to keep from starving.

It is well known that duck shooting along the Columbia river and in many other parts of the country is out of range of the ordinary hunter and is controlled by those who lease ducking areas or belong to duck clubs

## Pheasant Has Wide Variety In Feed Likes

Pheasants feed on 100 different species of insects as well as nearly 100 kinds of seed and plants, a year's study by the department of entomology-zoology of South Dakota State college shows.

In a report to the American Game Protective association Oscar H. Johnson, game and fish commissioner of that state, says the pheasant will eat almost anything digestible, which qualifies him for a wider range than any other species of game bird.

Plants and seeds found in crops included foxtail, wild buckwheat, ragweed, bindweed, smartweed, wild sunflower, wild rose, wolfberry, Russian thistle, wild oats, corn, wheat, oats and barley as well as leaves and roots of numerous other plants.

Insects identified in the pheasant crops included cutworms, armyworms, many species of caterpillars, chinch bugs, tarnished plant bugs, buffalo tree hoppers, aphids, seed corn beetles, wire worms, white grubs, flies and their larvae, ants and grasshoppers.

Of approximately 25 pheasants examined in a Pennsylvania study, it was found that only one bird had eaten corn. This particular bird's crop contained only five grains of corn as against 11 beetles that are known to ravage crops. Hundreds of beetles, including many Japanese beetles, and large quantities of weed seeds as compared to only three oat kernels were found in the gizzards and crops of the pheasants studied.

While pheasants do eat some grain, it is usually waste grain picked up after the crops are harvested. During the summer when insects are obtainable the birds seem to prefer them to grain. The pheasant pays the farmer well for his keep.

## Public Knows Cat Is Foe of Bird

Years ago the depredations of the cat on birds caused little concern, but now that 25 million cats blanket the United States many people are waking up to the necessity of protecting birds against them. It is not necessary that householders part with their pets, but these potential bird destroyers should be kept from unduly increasing if effort to keep them from killing our song and insectivorous birds is to be made more effective.

During this season of the year especially watchful care is needed because fledglings, unable to make full use of their wings, flutter to the ground. The sight of helpless young birds on the lawn excites the natural predatory instincts of even a well-fed house cat. Until the young birds are able to leave the ground and look out for themselves, the cat should not be allowed to leave the house unless closely watched.

## Birds Big Asset to Farmer, Gardener

Insects and grubs cause an annual loss of more than \$800,000,000 to the agricultural interests of the United States. Our people pay another \$800,000,000 each year trying to get rid of these pests. This heavy expenditure, the greatest burden of which is borne by farmers, fruit growers and gardeners, would be reduced if adequate provision were made and continued for needs of our valuable insectivorous birds.

The bureau of biological survey says birds are one of nature's important agencies for keeping down the overwhelming hordes of insect life. They urge on all citizens the necessity of putting up nesting boxes and planting shrubbery. Water for drinking and bathing should be provided in summer; food and shelter in winter.

## Birdland's Best Chirper



—Photos by W. L. Finley.

The Russet Back thrush, the sweetest singer in the bird world, is also one of the tamest. Above is a male thrush perched on a raspberry bush and (below) female preparing to feed her young.

## What's a Trout Worth?

By Marshall N. Dana

What is the value of a trout?

My friend, Ed Averill, asks this question. He says he has been invited to make a speech before some business men who may not know.

What is the value of the smile of the sun? What is the value of a foaming stream deep in the gorge where the firs and spruce trees grow?

What is the value of the long, long trail, away from town and away from the crowd, away from the hurry and unfurling toward the blessed peace of the strong mountains?

What is the value of a friend, who is more of a friend under the test of the trail and the quiet camp through the night?

What is the value of the little child's cry of delight with the undefined beauty of things?

Tell me these things. Tell me the value of a soul given as nearly a pair of wings wherewith to fly as is possible while a man lives?

Tell me how to market the blue of heaven and the gold of a summer morning. Tell me how to cash in bravery and sheer loveliness. Tell me how to transmute the thrill of the nearness of the one most loved into the quart measure of commerce.

Tell me how to ring up the out of doors on a cash register.

Then I'll tell you, Ed, the value of a trout.

## Thrush's Song Sweetest of Oregon Birds

"If we take the quality of melody as a test," says John Burroughs, "the wood thrush, the hermit thrush and the veery thrush stand at the head of our list of songsters." Yet it is often difficult to say whether the song of one bird surpasses that of another because bird songs are largely matters of association and suggestion.

Our common thrush is a little different in dress and song from his Eastern cousins. He feeds on the ground, especially among the fallen leaves where the earth is damp and shaded. The body of the bird is russet brown and the breast is buff colored marked with dark brown spots.

### BEST LATE IN DAY

The song of the russet-backed around Portland is best late in the day after all other birds have ceased singing. It comes just before dusk from the shaded canyons or from the firs on my hillside just above the river. It is the vesper hymn I love better than all others.

Every year I find two or three pairs of russet-backed thrushes nesting on our 10 acres. One can always tell the nest of this bird by its position and by the material used. As a rule, it is among the dark foliage or a dark clump of bushes a few feet from the ground. The nest is made almost entirely of moss and leaves. After the foundation is built, the thrush seeks some leaves from the damp ground. These she flattens out and molds into the bottom of the home with her breast. She collects moss for the walls, and when the home is completed, it often looks like a ball of moss fastened in the briers or branches.

### SHY AND QUIET BIRDS

The thrush is so different from the robin. When I go out to the robin's nest in the orchard, the owners are so angry that they dash around yelling "Help! Murder! Get out of here or we'll knock your head off!" Whenever I visit the thrush's home, the mother stayed on the nest until I almost touched her, then she slipped through the branches with a low whistle for her mate. He was near at hand. They were anxious, but they did not relieve their feelings with a great noise and fuss as the robins did. The robins are noisy, the thrushes shy and quiet.

As I watched each time the thrush mother came to feed her young, she lingered at the nest edge. I often saw her sit for several moments at a time looking at her babies and caressing them with a real mother's love.

## What Price Duck Haven When Bird Lies in the Pot?

Ducks may be like people. If they could vote, some might risk taking the chance of another open season and escaping the barricade of shotguns in the flight from Canada to Mexico. There are always some martyrs. The duck population needs sanctuaries where in future they may rest, feed and nest without ever being bothered by man. According to the federal law, the hunting license money is equal to a tax on a duck's head and this is the cash that buys refugees.

It is safe to say that a big majority of the feathered tribe would vote for a closed season for the reason that they have no use for sanctuaries after they are in the pot.



# Bird Slaughter by PWA Causes 'Ding' Darling to Open War on Ickes



## Reclamation Schemes Declared Meaningless

**Drainage of Lakes Throughout the Country Has Killed Millions of Wild Fowl to Give Nothing but Arid Desert Land.**

By John Randolph.

Two important branches of the United States Government seem about to go to war over a difference of opinion as to the relative merits of conservation and reclamation.

On one side is the powerful and pugnacious Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior and overlord of all reclamation work, including that of the PWA.

On the other is G. N. (Ding) Darling, chief of the weaker and far less considerable Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, former newspaper cartoonist and life-long crusader for the preservation of wild life.

Yet for all their difference in strength, the offensive is in the hands of the weaker side, while the Interior Department, with nothing much to fight about, controversy is the Biological Survey's claim that land is being drained and good breeding grounds rented to stockmen at insignificant fees where ducks and other wild fowl should be allowed to breed. Much of this drainage, they claim, is senseless and, far from being even an economic aid, destroys natural resources merely to put men to work. Meanwhile, it is argued, the 150,000,000 wild fowl that inhabited this country once have dwindled to 15,000,000, and the number is diminishing so rapidly that within five years migratory waterfowl will have reached the vanishing point if something is not done.

It is absolutely vital, almost all conservationists believe, that the great breeding grounds, wintering grounds and intermediate resting points on the "fly-ways" be preserved.

### Ickes Busy With Other Matters.

Secretary Ickes, apparently, has a conciliatory attitude toward the conservationists, but is too busy with his vast works projects to spend a great deal of time watching their interests. At least, he has made no attempt to "crack down" in any way.

Secretary of Agriculture Wallace has had no visible hand in the matter so far, and probably does not wish to make an issue over the affairs of a service which has never had any great influence. He is not too friendly to Ickes anyway, as the latter is known to have a hungry eye on Agriculture's Forest Service, which he would like to have transferred to his department.

A hundred years ago, in the vast plains of the Middle West and the plateaus of the Northwest—especially in the Dakotas, Montana and Minnesota—there were thousands of prairie breeding grounds—great marshes, lakes and swamps where migratory water fowl could find both protection and food.

The pioneer seeking the rich free land gradually turned all these bird paradises into ploughed fields and the birds were forced back into a few restricted areas, where most of the wild fowl bred in the United States are hatched.

These grounds are in the Northwest, around small lakes and pot-holes in range land. A few of them are on the Pacific Coast and a few others on the Atlantic Coast.

It is on these lands that the Biological Survey people keep an angry eye.

They are not entirely concerned with drainage of the lakes. The greatest complaint, in fact, is the practice of renting land surrounding them to sheepmen and cattlemen.

### Nesting Birds Need Protection.

Nesting fowl must first have cover, even before they have food. Left in the open, they soon become prey to their natural enemies—hawks, foxes, coyotes, rats and many other small animals.

When sheep are allowed to graze to the water edge of a range lake, all cover, as well as much of the food, is destroyed and the birds must move elsewhere. The Biological Survey people urge that there is an agreement that they shall have at least part of the area around many of these lakes for refuge purposes.

As for the drainage complaint, their principal horrible example is

Lower Klamath Lake, on the California-Oregon border. This lake, 85,000 acres in extent, was once one of the greatest wild-fowl breeding grounds in the West. According to W. L. Finley, sportsman, naturalist, lecturer and indefatigable agitator for wild-fowl conservation, market hunters killed and shipped as many as 120 tons of ducks a year from the lake in the '90s, before the practice was stopped by law.

Finley claims that the lake was drained in spite of the advice of soil experts that its basin was composed of land unsuited for agriculture. When the last water was out it was found that the soil was peat and useless to farmers. The lake had been drained by means of a dam at Upper Klamath Lake.

And then, the conservationists demand, instead of letting nature run its course, the government sold it to a power company, leaving Lower Klamath a waste fit for nothing and depriving thousands of wild fowl of their natural breeding ground.

### Nests at Tule Lake Were Burned.

Another great example is that of Tule Lake in California, a dry bed. Once a year the tules—round reeds, which grow in the basin, are burned off. The conservationists claim that this can be done any time and

J. N. "Ding" Darling, director of the U. S. Biological Survey, examines a queer duck (above). Top center is a Canadian goose near her nest in upper New York State. Darling believes Ickes' PWA men are destroying bird life.



should be done in January or early February. Instead, they say, the Interior Department allowed it to be done in March, at the very time that the wildfowl were breeding. All the nests were burned and Tule Lake produced no fowl that year. Now, it is claimed, the basin is nothing but an arid waste, with not even vegetation for pasture.

But after every example of drainage, they return to the idea that the fowl should be allowed cover around existing lakes.

Against the Army, too, the Bio-

logical Survey has some complaint. They feel that Army engineers are draining lakes in river control work—draining them vainly, and changing the level of rivers not a quarter of an inch.

In the East, marshes are being drained in Maryland and in Delaware, which the conservationists believe should be left alone for the birds, especially black ducks, which breed in this section.

Marshes are being drained in mosquito control work, it is claimed, that control no mosquitoes, and

water drawn out of small lakes which have no mosquitoes while stagnant potholes alive with larvae are left nearby.

Along the East Coast, in Carolina, Georgia and Florida, it is argued, valuable refuge sea-marshes are being dried up where there are no malaria mosquitoes and no humans around to be bitten if there were.

Lake Okeechobee, in Florida, is another point that is being drained, and in the winter months it is a great resort of wild fowl. But the conservationists are ready to con-

cede that there might be some value in draining Okeechobee.

It is their argument that they do not wish all reclamation work stopped, but there where the advantages of conserving wild fowl outweigh possible economic advantages, the water and the cover should be left.

A year ago, Canada, which, with its vast unsettled areas, has no conservation problem yet, showed a higher breeding percentage than the United States. But this year, according to surveys, the United States is ahead. Yet even with this,

On the left, Rainey Wild Life Sanctuary on the Louisiana coast provides the largest refuge for fowl in the country. Above, Secretary Ickes with a bottle of rum. PWA workers rescued from a British frigate sunk in 1781.

## Flyways of Water Flocks Swept Away

**Nesting Spots, Breeding Places and Refuges of Geese, Ducks and Swans Are Burned to Make Work for Unemployed, Experts Insist.**

conservationists say that five years is the limit of the life of great numbers of wild fowl here—unless their program is carried through.

Three areas must be protected for the migrating water fowl. There is the breeding place, the wintering place, and the flyway. The conservationists are now most interested in the breeding places, the source. But they have their problems with the other two.

For instance, there are three great flyways in the United States. One is along the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, another through the States just east of the Rocky Mountains, another along the West Coast. The birds, in migrating, must have lakes and marshes on which to rest en route both ways.

### Birds Cling to Their Hereditary Flyways.

All birds cling to their hereditary flyways, almost without exception. Thus if the Pacific flyway were depleted entirely, no more wild fowl would be seen on the Pacific Coast. None would come from the other two.

The Biological Survey aim is to have resting points—refuges—every hundred miles on each of the flyways. The Mississippi chain, the largest of the three, is almost complete, and the Atlantic flyway is well along.

On the Atlantic lane, incidentally, it is claimed that the Biological Survey saved all the wild swans

of the East by buying the 52,000-acre Mattamuskeet Lake in North Carolina and converting it into a refuge. Also many Canada, snow and blue geese are harbored there.

It should be explained that the Interior Department has control of all public lands not specifically allotted or bought by other divisions of the Government. What lands the Survey owns, it bought from appropriations.

Along the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico, in the great sea marshes, swamps and lakes are the wintering grounds of the American wildfowl—grounds where they must have cover and food in the cold months. Many of these regions are being drained, is the claim, drained and made unfit either for wildfowl or any other purpose.

Along the Texas shores of the gulf are vast lonely stretches which are such a paradise for wildfowl that a few years ago any good cloudy day would find the sky really blackened by ducks and geese.

### Texas Ducks Are Disappearing.

As a boy I hunted in part of this coast, in the rice country of southeast Texas, and the ducks were there by so many thousands that we grew tired of shooting them and would aim a gun at nothing but geese, plover or snipe.

Yet now only a very small fraction of those ducks are reported here. The conservationists claim it is not because of bad conditions there—although hunters in the United States kill some 7,000,000 wild fowl every year, but because the breeding grounds up North and the flyways between have been ruined.

Only 15,000,000 are left now, they say, and with 7,000,000 falling by gun every year and the rest harried from their natural homes by draining ditch, grazing sheep and monster dam, only five more years will see the end of them—unless the Biological Survey's program is allowed to go through without ill-advised hindrance from the other departments of the Government.

Although apparently getting little aggressive support from higher officials of the Agriculture Department, the Biological Survey is not without friends. Almost every wild-life organization and publication in the United States maintains a steady and insistent clamor for the preservation of the breeding grounds and wintering places of the migratory fowl, as well as those of the larger game and the game birds which do not migrate. Many of these societies, including the great and influential Audubon, named for the greatest American nature-lover, maintain their own sanctuaries.

### Ickes Has Little Time for Birds.

Yet now they are confronted with a vast public works program which while not unfriendly to the preservation of wild life and, as far as its chiefs are concerned, willing to listen to reason, has little time to be pondering the safety of ducks and geese.

Ickes himself, it is understood, is willing to make concessions where they can be made without endangering projects of too great economic importance, but he has \$4,000,000,000 to spend and he has to spend it on public works.

It is quite probable that the Secretary of the Interior believes the affairs of a few millions of unemployed and destitute should take up most of his time, and that his department's routine affairs should get nearly all the rest of it. And a subordinate may easily burn the tules off a lake in California without the Secretary learning of it until it is too late to save the geese nesting therein.

Yet the Biological Survey people are angry. They feel that a great deal of their laborious work is being undone as fast as they do it. And Ding Darling, a man who never saw a bird fall without a pang, can not see millions of them die through what he believes to be avoidable Government acts without feeling a hopeless sense of frustration.

With both sides meaning well, there may be a battle in this matter which will yet wake the drowsy summer echoes of a town waiting only for Congress to adjourn in order to go to sleep entirely.