



Ducks, Limited

DUCKS flying south from Canada this fall will not be as abundant as was hoped earlier in the year because of severe drought on the great nesting grounds in the western provinces, Hoyes Lloyd, superintendent of wildlife protection in the Canadian National Parks Bureau, stated at the meeting of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners.

The winter was mild in Canada last year, and there was less than the normal depth of snow. Thaws came slowly in the spring, so that the snow water soaked into the ground instead of forming sloughs and ponds affording good duck nesting sites.

Cool weather and heavy rains in May and June de'ayed the crisis, but during July heat and drought dried up the waters that the duck families needed for survival. Latest available data indicate conditions as bad as they were in the drought year of 1931.

Mallards have probably escaped the decimation caused by drought to other species. Mallards, Mr. Lloyd explained, habitually nest in willow swamps along streams and other areas not seriously affected by lowered water levels.

Why we don't get more ducks faster, despite closed seasons and all the help man has been trying to give his broad-billed friends lately, was told by T. C. Main, general manager of Ducks Unlimited (Canada).

Of 60 million ducks that flew south last fall, 40 million returned to Canada. Of these 40 million, not all are capable of rearing families: there is a large excess of males over females, and of the nesting pairs that do form, about a fifth prove infertile.

After allowing for all these handicaps,

the 40 million ducks arriving at the breeding grounds should produce 109 million ducklings. On this great crop, a whole series of lethal factors go to work. They range from drought, through predatory birds and beasts to poaching Indians and halfbreeds, and they kill some 80 million of the little ducks, leaving only 29 million to go south with their parents on their first migration flight.

Mr. Main expressed the belief that practicable measures can be taken to cut these losses by at least half.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1941

INVENTION

New Machine Bales Discarded Tin Cans

DISPOSAL of empty cans will be facilitated by an invention recently patented. It consists of a tubular press in which the cans are crushed into a compact stack and neatly tied up with wire. It can be operated either by compressed air or hydraulic power. Around filling stations it should be particularly useful. (Mansel S. Wells, Shinglehouse, Pa. Patent No. 2,234,098.)

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THROUGH the cold dank dusk a watcher scans the gaps between the scattered clouds. His first glimpse of oncoming bombers sounds the alarm that sends thousands to the safety of their shelters and the defenders to their duties. Four thousand miles away, aboard a heavily laden freighter, the captain studies the silhouette of a ship on the horizon, to determine whether friend or foe. This is serious work for binoculars, work worthy of those known as the world's finest.

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