



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

FWS RELEASES ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1948

"The demands made on America's wildlife resources for recreational use show no sign of diminishing and continue to tax the capacities of conservationists to maintain the resources," Director Albert M. Day stated in the Fish and Wildlife Service annual report to Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug which was made public today.

In his report, which covers the activities of the Service for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1948, Director Day said the basic resources of soil, water, forests, and wildlife have suffered long and worldwide abuse. He added however, that the public has become critically aware of such abuse and as a result two fundamental principles of conservation are being brought into sharp focus.

"The first of these," he explained, "is that the natural resources of the earth are interrelated and dependent so that no one resource can be conserved without the conservation of all. The second is that conservation, to be effective, cannot be treated as a series of local, unrelated problems, but must be coordinated over wide geographic areas."

Highlights from the report, under topic headings, follow:

Marine Fishery Research. --The important Pacific Coast pilchard fishery suffered its third successive season of disastrously low catches, the lowest tonnage landed since 1923-24. The total catch for the State of California was only 110,000 tons. With the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and the California Division of Fish and Game, the Service will undertake a cooperative investigation into the failure of this fishery.

Biologists studied the Pacific tunas to obtain preliminary information on the life history, abundance, and distribution of these valuable food fishes.

Shell fishery research was continued, with particular attention being given in Chesapeake Bay to the development of oyster-seed areas.

The Conservation of Alaska Fisheries and Fur Seals. --Research for management of the great red salmon runs of Bristol Bay and Kodiak Island included spawning ground surveys and studies of fresh-water organisms in lakes.

Scientists investigating problems of fur seal management on the Pribilof Islands tagged nearly 20,000 seal pups and made two extensive cruises in north Pacific waters in the M. S. Black Douglas, gathering information on the migration routes and food habits of the seals.

Utilization of Fishery Resources.—Service personnel were detailed as consultants and observers aboard several vessels engaged in freezing fish in Pacific waters.

Maintaining the Inland Fisheries.—During the calendar year ended December 31, 1947, the 97 FWS fish hatcheries produced 2,659,261,576 eggs, fry and fingerling fishes for stocking purposes. Fish cultural stations on the Pacific coast are concerned chiefly with the maintenance of salmon runs in coastal waters. Hatcheries producing warm-water species such as bass and sunfish are supplying large quantities of fish for stocking farm ponds, particularly in the South Central States.

Research in Wildlife Management.—Studies of the effects of DDT on wildlife, begun in 1945, were continued in fiscal year 1948. Aerial applications of DDT were made specifically to observe the effects on wildlife. According to present knowledge of the problem, it is unsafe to apply by airplane more than two pounds of DDT per acre if harm to birds, mammals, and amphibians is to be avoided.

Investigations of wildlife in relation to agriculture and soil conservation practices continued in Maryland and in the southeast.

River Basin Development and Wildlife Needs.—During fiscal year 1948 the Service made field surveys and completed reports on 33 Missouri River Basin projects, 29 sponsored by the Bureau of Reclamation and 4 by the Corps of Engineers, evaluating the basin-wide effects which these engineering projects will have on fish and game populations and habitat in that basin.

Federal Aid to State Projects for the Restoration of Wildlife.—Since the Pittman-Robertson Act became effective in 1938, 2,490 wildlife restoration projects have been conducted under its provisions. During this 10-year period, \$48,175,429 was collected from the 11 percent excise tax on the sale of sporting arms and ammunition, and the Congress appropriated a total of \$34,707,961 to finance the Federal share of the costs.

Land for Wildlife.—An important event of fiscal year 1948 was the establishment of the 44,000-acre Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois, an important link in the chain of Mississippi flyway refuges, particularly valuable in the protection of Canada geese.

The number of national wildlife refuges at the end of the fiscal year was 282, totaling 18,107,024 acres.

Cooperative Control of Predators and Rodents.—To halt depredations on valuable livestock, poultry, and game, 99,452, predatory animals were destroyed by Federal-supervised predator control work during fiscal year 1948. The total recorded take consisted of 90,270 coyotes, 7,223 lynxes, bobcats, and ocelots, 744 stock-killing bears, and 148 mountain lions. The highest kill was recorded in Texas where a total of 28,605 predatory animals were destroyed. In California, 11,329 predators were killed.

The most intensive war ever waged against rats was conducted on a nation-wide basis in 1948 to save grain and food needed for the European relief program. Rats, as the Service pointed out, cause food and grain losses of two billion dollars annually, spread eight deadly diseases, and outnumber the country's human inhabitants. Of the 631 cities which participated in the National Urban Rat Control Campaign, 62 percent enacted rat control ordinances or have rat-proofed city property and improved garbage collection and sewage disposal.

Administration of Federal Statutes for Protection of Wildlife.—A summary of penalties imposed for violations during the fiscal year 1948 of the wildlife conservation laws administered by the Service listed 3,061 convictions for which fines and costs assessed amounted to \$124,602. Jail sentences totaled 734 days.

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