

—Let's Go Fishing—
**SURVEYS SHOW
RAPID DECREASE
IN WILD DUCKS**

7,500,000 Fowl Escape
With Wounds to Die
Later.

BY LEFTY LEE
Times Fishing Editor

During the last three years America's wild ducks have become fewer in number. Recently President Roosevelt, by proclaiming the smallest bag limits for hunters in history, has directed attention to the increasing rate of depletion. What is the cause of it all? Special committee of the United States senate has held hearings to secure information on the subject because of its economic importance to the sporting goods, transportation, resort, agricultural and other interests identified with expenditures by sportsmen estimated by federal authorities at \$650,000,000 annually. The recreational interest of more than 6,000,000 hunters also is involved as well as employment of thousands engaged in manufacturing and supplying services.

It has been claimed that over-shooting, modern firearms, poor game law enforcement and numerous other reasons were to blame. The secretary of agriculture last summer at a conference of experts investigated the practice of "baiting" waterfowl. W. C. Henderson, associate chief of the biological survey, within the last few weeks has estimated 7,500,000 ducks annually escape hunters and die from wounds.

Of course all of these reasons contribute to the decline of this great sport, but the real reason is the fact that the size of the annual migrations to the south have been reduced before the birds reach this country and before they could encounter the unfavorable factors stated. Something has been happening on their great prairie breeding grounds. A survey that covered thousands of miles of this breeding area just covered reveals some of the real reasons for the decline, as you readily can see by the reports from the different lakes covered.

Long Lake, in Burleigh and Kidder Counties, North Dakota—This lake is a strongly alkaline lake about fifteen miles long and two miles wide. At the west end water has disappeared recently. Contact was made with the lake at several points along the north shore, but only a narrow streak of water was visible, apparently only a few inches deep. Portions of the lake site were overgrown with marsh plants, others were bare mud flats.

Lake Etta—About three miles long and one-half mile wide. The water has receded to a very low level. A scant shore vegetation was in a dying stage. The waterfowl population on this strongly alkaline lake consisted of six mallard, two shovellers, three pintail drakes, one mallard with six young and forty-five diving ducks, including three families of redheads. The Dawson slough, extending from north of Lake Etta for many miles in a northeasterly direction, was overgrown with marsh vegetation and no water or ducks were visible thereon.

Lake Isabelle—A circular-shaped alkaline lake about one square mile in extent, supported some duck life on the marshes at its southern end. The lake serves as a summer resort.

Buffalo Lake—A saline lake in Kidder county about one and one-half miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide. The water level was about two and one-half feet below normal. Scanty growth of rustus, appearing in a very few spots along the shore, have died. On a miniature inlet, ten mallard and two shoveller drakes were seen and a raft of twenty diving ducks bobbed on the surface in the distance. Horsehead lake, formerly seven miles long and two miles wide, was dry.

From time to time this column will cover the report from other lakes in North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada that were covered during this survey.

John Rusie must be losing his eye, as he shot eight times and only killed seven rabbits.

Hoo Hoo Rhine is the new name for Harold Rhine since he returned from a hunting trip with one owl in the bag.

At Owen park the sportsmen are mixing up their sport, taking to the woods on Saturday and staying over for the fishing Sunday. This resort is open throughout the year and accommodations always are available.

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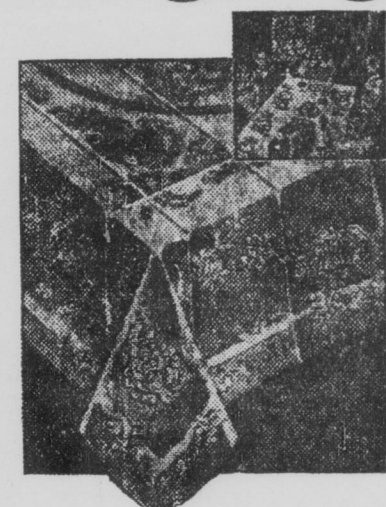
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