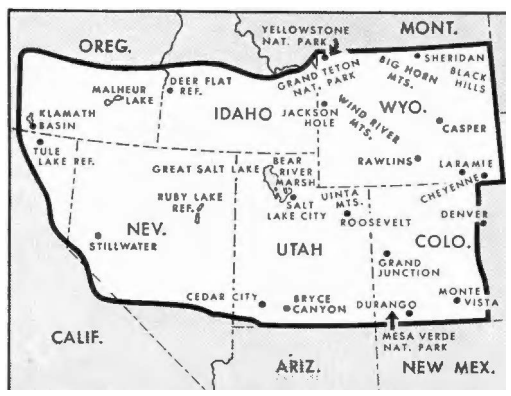


GREAT BASIN, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.—The most salient observation from this varied region of different climates and altitudes



is that the drought is broken, even if temporarily. We had a long, hard, snowy winter—second only to the great blizzard of 1949. Ruby Lakes, Nev. had 26 per cent more snow than usual in the mountains of its watershed. Bear River Refuge, north of the Great Salt Lake, expects enough water to supply the whole refuge. Durango, Colo. reports double last year's snow pack in the San Juan Mountains, and so it goes. Therefore, the great federal refuges of the Great Basin expect to be back in business again, and there will be abundant water in the Central Rockies as well. The Monte Vista Refuge is adding another 320 acres in the San Luis valley of southern Colorado. There is enough water to do the job.

Swans—Thirty-eight Trumpeter Swans wintered beside the highway on Flat Creek in Jackson Hole, Wyo. in the Nat'l Elk Refuge (*RLM*). This Jackson Hole group, in spite of poor breeding seasons, as last year, has steadily increased and before long most of the suitable nesting sites, such as relatively small permanent ponds, will be in use. These ponds are mostly in Grand Teton Nat'l Park and the surrounding national forest. Clair Aldous reported 23 Trumpeters wintered at Ruby Lakes, eastern Nevada. Whistling Swans normally spend the winter in the Klamath Basin, but this year, with the cold and deep snow cover, they were fed by army helicopters in late January. Over 3 tons of feed were dumped to 1100 swans and 2000 geese. The swan peak at Klamath (Tule Lake) came on March 11 with 4020 birds (*EO'N*).

Ducks and Geese—The abundant moisture flooded the whole Bear River Bay at Bear River Marshes. Consequently, the spring migration of ducks in February and March was spread out, but there were fewer birds than last year in almost every species, except Am. Widgeon, Ruddy Duck and Canada Goose. This is probably a result of last year's poor breeding season. The highest number of a given species was: Pintail, 51,450; Am. Widgeon, 19,000; Canvasback, 12,850; Green-winged Teal, 12,250 (usually second most common—last year 43,100) (*RDJ*). Most of the Central Rockies were still frozen up at the end of this period because of the tough winter.

Owing to the increased number of geese and lack of water and food on contiguous areas, the number of waterfowl on the great Klamath Basin refuges was 71 per cent higher than in 1960 (*EO'N*). The high in ducks was 275,060 on Dec. 2. Duck totals at Bear River were: Pintail, 123,200; Am. Widgeon, 40,400; Shoveler, 38,700; Ruddy Duck, 19,800; Mallard, 6790; Bufflehead, 5580, with lesser numbers of other ducks. The spring peak for geese was March 11 with: 280,400 Snow, 30,000 White-fronted, and 5590 Canada.

Deer Flat Refuge, Idaho, this year, unlike last, froze completely. The high count of ducks the first week in December was 366,000. As always, these were mostly Mallards, but this peak is about half of last year's (*GC*). At Monte Vista, Colo. the peak in ducks was early in December as usual, but there were not as many as the year before. Mallards peaked at 46,698, representing the bulk of the ducks. The Pintail was the next most common with 4800 (*CRB*). Therefore, ducks are much reduced in this area but geese have increased or are holding their own. Few rarities were reported. Mrs. Lambertsen had a Hooded Merganser at Saratoga Lake, Wyo. in February. Three Wood Ducks wintered at Monte Vista (*CRB*).

Eagles—The greatest excitement this winter was provided by the Bald Eagle survey. This bird lends itself to counting since it is strictly confined to open water, a limited commodity in this Region in winter. Therefore, the Bald Eagles are concentrated, unlike the Golden Eagles, which are scattered. The count has shown many more Bald Eagles than was thought possible. There were 56 along the Colorado River from Dotzero at the headwaters down 200 miles

(Mrs. LE). Bear River Marshes had a good wintering population with a high of 43 on March 13 (RDJ). There were 37 on the 3 great refuges of the Klamath Basin: Tule Lake, Lower Klamath and Upper Klamath, Jan. 21 (EO'N). There were at least 14 on a 75-mile stretch of the North Platte River in eastern Wyoming (OKS); 9 on the Snake River near Nampa, Idaho, Jan. 13 (Mrs. HES); 9 wintered at the Monte Vista Refuge, southern Colorado (CRB); 4 on the Animas River near Durango (OR); 3 at Parowan, Utah (SM), and other scattered birds. If all the open water in this Region were covered, this area would turn out to be a major wintering ground of the Bald Eagle, since many of the streams are fast moving and remain open in spite of very cold weather. All major rivers of this Region appear to winter Bald Eagles. Only a small part of the area has been covered so far.

Hawks—There was a concentration of 73 Rough-legs at Tule Lake and Lower Klamath on Jan. 21 (EO'N). No other great concentrations were reported. Three Peregrine Falcons wintered at Monte Vista, Colo. (CRB), and 2 at Bear River Marshes (RDJ). This shows that this bird winters in this Region in small numbers. Few rare birds were reported this winter, but we have a report of a Harlan's Hawk at Honey Lake, northeastern California, Jan. 26 (ROP & TC, Jr.). This is believed to be the 7th record for California. However, many observers are not familiar with this bird.

Owls—No important numbers were reported but the number and species are available of owls wintering at Monte Vista Refuge (CRB). These were: Horned Owl, 16; Short-eared Owl, 12; Flammulated Owl, 2; Barn Owl, 3; Long-eared Owl, 8.

Waxwings—Bohemians were reported in numbers, as usual. L. M. Baylor estimated 5000 in the environs of Pocatello, Idaho. However, they seemed to go farther south than usual: 35 at Cheyenne, Wyo., Jan. 9 (Mrs. RDH); numbers at Hotchkiss, Colorado mesa country (Mrs. JJC). At Durango, Colo. flocks of up to 150 were seen (OR); also flocks of up to 50 Cedar Waxwings. Bohemians and Cedar Waxwings regularly occur at the same time during the winter at Salt Lake City (JLK).

Grosbeaks—All reporters this winter had Evening Grosbeaks and in more abundant numbers than usual.

Sparrows—Two Harris' Sparrows were reported wintering at Grand Junction (Mrs. FSC). Another was seen at Honey Lake, Jan. 26 (TC, Jr.). The bird was reported from there last winter, and perhaps is not as rare at the western edge of the Great Basin as had been believed.

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