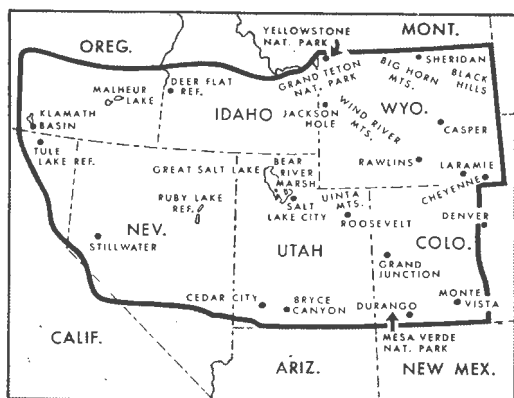


GREAT BASIN, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.—Although confusion continues as to whether this past season was principally winter, spring, or breeding season, it was a combination of all three. The winter part was the warmest and driest in many years. There were many winter records of birds that should not have been here. The snow pack in the mountains, over most of the Region, is minimal with prospects for summer breeding water-fowl very poor. Malheur, in eastern Oregon, looks forward to another dismal season with only 20 per cent of normal snow pack in the mountains unless the heavens really let loose this spring. This is the fifth year of drought for Malheur. But to show how local the weather can be, Ruby Lakes, in the Great Basin in eastern Nevada, had 2.25 in. moisture in



the first days of February. This is a lot of precipitation in that area and the water prospects for the Lakes is at least average.

In general, many observers from widely different areas were of the opinion that there were fewer birds than usual this winter: Torrington, Wyo.; Cheyenne, Wyo. (*Mrs. RDH*); Salt Lake City (*GK*); and Parowan in southern Utah (*SM*).

Swans—There were 18 Trumpeter Swans wintering in the area centered around Ruby Lakes (*DEL*). There were 21 Trumpeters at Malheur, including 3 cygnets from last year (*EK*). There were 31 wintering on Flat Creek in the Nat'l Elk Refuge, Jackson Hole, western Wyoming (*RLM*). These figures show a continued steady increase of this species outside the Red Lakes area.

Bear River Marshes, at the north end of Great Salt Lake, had the highest number of Whistling Swans ever reported there, March 22—21,220 (*LJS*).

Ducks and Geese—Bear River Marshes did not entirely freeze up this winter; the spring migration was better and earlier than usual. The peak number of ducks came on March 22 with 275,685. The Pintail was first with 83,350 (1/3 better than last year); Canvasback with 40,750 (better than double last year); Green-winged Teal, 37,210; Mallard, 34,650; Lesser Scaup, 30,570; Redhead, 19,875; Ruddy, 17,315; Gadwall, 15,220; Am. Widgeon, 13,600. All of these figures are vastly better than 1962 and 1961, but are not back to those of 1960, except the Canvasback, which is increasing (4 times the 1960 level, *LJS*).

Malheur had an earlier spring than usual with a peak of 129,000 Snow Geese (45,000 over recent years). The duck peak was on March 7 with 82,000 on the Refuge and 97,000 on adjacent areas for a total of 179,000. The Pintail was the principal duck with 156,000. Last year's peak for all ducks was 101,000. Swans by-passed Malheur again for Bear River (*EK*).

The Mallards increased at Deer Flat Refuge, in western Idaho near Boise, where there were 700,000 ducks, Dec. 16-22, of which 670,000 were Mallards. This is twice last year's number, but not up to standard, which is 3/4 of a million (*GC*). The southern Idaho outlook for stream flow water this season is poor because "the snowfall during the winter has

been the lightest ever recorded in Idaho." The reservoirs are well filled and there will be no shortage this summer. Canada Geese were nesting in the Snake River Refuge by the second week of March (*GC*).

The Klamath Basin has the same story as the other Great Basin Refuges; snow pack 23 per cent of normal, but a high storage level in the lakes at the moment fortunately—warm winter, early spring. The first week of December saw the highest peak of waterfowl—408,300—but the spring peak of geese was 148,030, March 26, two weeks later than last year. Peak numbers of ducks were: Pintail, 131,550, Dec. 8; Mallard, 126,550, Dec. 3; Am. Widgeon, 125,950, Dec. 15; Shoveler, 55,170, Dec. 15; Gadwall, 26,280, Dec. 31; Am. Coot, 18,100, Dec. 15; Canvasback, 10,000, Dec. 15; lesser numbers of other ducks. This is an improvement over last year (*EO'N*).

Monte Vista Refuge, central southern Colorado, had a slight decrease in Mallards from last year with a top of 44,500, Dec. 23. Although this refuge continues to grow, the numbers of other ducks are not yet large (*CRB*).

There were few rarities reported. There was a crippled female Oldsquaw at Tule, Klamath Basin, Dec. 8 (*EO'N*). A Blue Goose was seen, April 4, at Malheur (*EK*). A Barrow's Goldeneye was collected at Bear River, March 27, and found to have lead poisoning (*LJS*). Although rare at Bear River, in the relatively nearby mountainous country of Grand Teton-Yellowstone it is a common breeding bird. A European Widgeon and 6 Hooded Mergansers were at Lower Klamath, Feb. 24 (*TC, Jr.*).

Eagles—More Golden Eagles were reported in some places this year than last. There were 13 at Bear River, March 6, a high count this year; and there were 29 Balds on the same date (*LJS*). On Dec. 26-28 there were 20 Golden Eagles at Malheur, instead of the 12 last year. There are now 3 known active nests (*EK*). In January in the Klamath Basin there were 48 Bald and 3 Golden Eagles on Lower Klamath and Tule Lake, compared with 37 and 15 last year (*EO'N*). On Jan. 18 there were 2 Bald and 3 Golden Eagles at Zion Park, southern Utah (*RHW*). In southern Idaho the maximum count of Bald Eagles on the Snake River near Rexberg was 20 (9 mature) on Feb. 16 (*DGB*). The Snake River is a great wintering ground of the Bald Eagle but is not well reported. The North Platte River in central Wyoming had 7 adult and 11 immature Bald Eagles on Jan. 13 (*OKS*). Three Bald Eagles wintered at Parowan (*SM*). There were 4 Bald Eagles at Salt Lake City, Jan. 20 (*GK*). The central Wyoming flyway for Golden Eagles was very poor in December—hardly a flight (*OKS*).

The governor of Wyoming received permission from the Secretary of the Interior—under the new law—to shoot Golden Eagles molesting livestock in certain central and eastern counties. If the letter of the law is observed we have nothing to fear—however, it probably won't be. These counties contain the greatest number of breeding Golden Eagles, in all probability, in North America. From facts bolstered by information from local ranchers this action was totally unnecessary and senseless. The governor did

this in spite of the protests of a large number of citizens, and this editor takes it as a personal insult.

Hawks—A Pigeon Hawk was reported at Hotchkiss, mesa country of western Colorado, Jan. 7 (*Mrs. JJC*); another at Klamath Marsh, Oreg., Dec. 9 (*JGC*). On Jan. 7 Kashin had Pigeon, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Goshawk at Salt Lake City. More accipitrine hawks than usual were present this winter at Parowan (*SM*).

Shorebirds—A *Ruff* was reported at Lower Klamath, Calif., Dec. 19 (*RGMcC, et al.*)—the fourth record for California. Most of Lower Klamath is in California; the rest is in Oregon. There were 2 other records for California in 1962. However, this is the first inland record. Perhaps more inland people should watch for this bird.

Gulls—A *Glaucous Gull* was seen at Bear River Marshes on Feb. 14. This is a rare bird in that area (*LJS*).

Owls—Malheur reports an increase in rodents and the owls are doing well. A nest rigged up for Great Horned Owls at headquarters has been occupied for 3 years. There are 8 known active nests in the area, 5 of which are man-made. This is a very high rate of occupancy—from 8 erected nests (*EK*). The Great Horned Owl is not only highly beneficial in the West, but is also a highly successful species.

Swallows—There were 6 Violet-green Swallows at Lower Klamath, Feb. 24, a result, no doubt of our warm winter (*TC, Jr.*).

Wrens—Early in December several Winter Wrens were seen in Zion Canyon, southern Utah (*RHW*). A House Wren south of Torrington on March 30 was very early (*GS*).

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