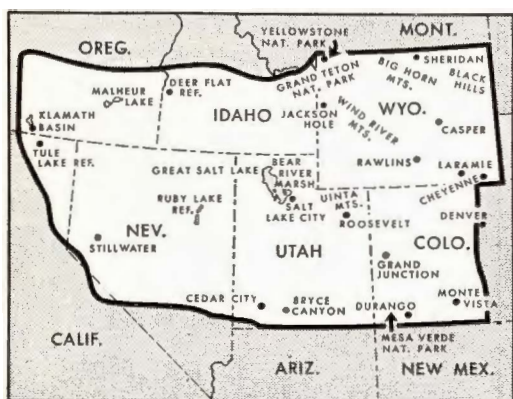


GREAT BASIN, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.—After a very wet year our winter was warmer and drier than usual. For instance,



the Blitzen watershed snowpack was 75 percent of normal on March 1; the Silvies watershed, 50 percent. These together account for almost all the water that will run into the great sump called the Malheur Refuge in eastern Oregon. After the spring rains there may be some modification of these figures, but in general these are the figures for 1966. Owing to last year's moisture, however, Malheur will still have a good year. The water situation will be similar at all the great refuges in the Great Basin: Stillwater, western Nevada; Klamath Basin, California-Oregon line; Ruby Lakes, eastern Nevada; Bear River Marshes on the Great Salt Lake. Throughout the West, the water content is carefully measured and run-off closely calculated.

Most observers thought our winter relatively dull with fewer unusual birds and smaller numbers. There were no great invasions of boreal species. There were numbers of lingering summer visitors, owing to the mild winter, such as Audubon's Warbler at Cheyenne, Wyo. at 6000 feet, Jan. 11 (MH). A warm March brought back migrants earlier than usual—Tree Swallows at Farmington Bay, Great Salt Lake, March 13 (GK).

Swans—Malheur had 15,000 Whistling Swans on March 17, the highest concentration there since 1955. It probably represents 50 percent of the Pacific flyway

population (HFD). At Stillwater, Nev., there were 8200 at the peak of the winter concentration on Jan. 15, a new high count (LHW). The peak of the Whistlers at Tule Lake in the Klamath Basin was 7180 on Feb. 20 (EJO'N).

Ducks and Geese—The warm weather interfered with waterfowl movements and the spring peak of ducks at Stillwater was only 97,000 compared with last year's 172,000 (LHW). Twice as many ducks (101,450) wintered in the Klamath Basin, because of the warm winter (EJO'N). The peak concentrations at Tule Lake were: 197,300 Pintail, Feb. 27; 182,050 Snow Geese on the same date; 181,920 White-fronted Geese; and 83,300 Ruddy Ducks. All but the Pintail show increases over last year. Other ducks, such as Shoveler and Mallard, were less common than last year (EJO'N).

The spring migration at Malheur was in full swing on March 17, only a few days after the ice went off the lake. There were 200,000 ducks: 125,000, Pintail; 35,000, Am. Widgeon—a very high figure. There were also 75,000 Snow Geese (HFD).

Bear River Marshes, north end of Great Salt Lake, had a poor waterfowl migration this spring with 55,446 on March 18—considerably lower than last year (FG). Deer Flat Refuge, Idaho—the great Mallard refuge—had only 378,450 birds at the peak date, Dec. 19-25, which is below recent years. Of this number, 86 percent were Mallards (RVP).

The Minidoka Refuge, Snake River, Idaho, had a peak of 80,300 ducks in early December. Again the Mallard is the most common wintering duck, followed by Pintail, Canvasback, Common Golden-eye (LDN). Monte Vista, Colo. had 14,500 Mallards for the winter. A Ross' Goose spent the winter, along with a White-fronted and a Snow (CRB); the first two are very rare in this area.

Rare Ducks—Twenty-five Wood Ducks were present at Deer Flat Refuge at the end of March. This represents a steady increase of this bird (RVP). An Oldsquaw was again seen at the Standard Oil Lagoon near Casper, Wyo., March 27. This species has been only casual inland (OKS). Three European Widgeon were seen in February at Tule Lake (EJO'N). Another 10 birds, of which 2 were banded, were present in eastern Oregon (HFD). The European Widgeon seems established in small numbers in that area.

Hawks and Eagles—Twenty-five Bald Eagles wintered at Malheur—an increase over recent years (HFD). Other hawks have decreased markedly over several years. For instance, the Rough-legged Hawk has decreased from over 100 to 15 this year at Christmastime (HFD). This bird is also much down in numbers at Logan, Utah (DMF). Eight Bald Eagles wintered at the Minidoka Refuge, Idaho (LDN). One hundred and four Bald Eagles were present last January in the Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuges (EJO'N), which is an increase. The 19 Golden Eagles in the same area is the only good concentration reported. Good concentrations of Bald Eagles were reported from the Colorado River (JMD) and the North Platte River (OKS). It seems

that the Bald Eagle is at least holding its own or increasing a little in this area. In the meantime, the organized sheep industry is increasing its attacks on the Golden Eagle. This is utterly senseless. It is based on the false premise that eagles take live lambs. There is no reliable evidence that this happens, but quite the contrary. The Golden Eagle eats carrion; there are always many dead lambs on a sheep ranch because of the weather, poor range, etc. The Golden Eagle is in trouble.

A Peregrine Falcon was seen at Grand Junction, Colo., Jan. 28 (LE). There were 2 (including one immature) at Grantsville, south of Great Salt Lake, Jan. 30 (GK). Another was seen at Parowan, Utah, March 1 (SM).

Owls—There are several reports of Pygmy Owls. There were two sightings of these in February at Hotchkiss on the western slope of Colorado (TC). Another was seen in Rocky Mountain Nat'l Park, Colo., Dec. 22 (MM). A Pygmy Owl came to a feeder and captured a Starling in Durango, Colo., Feb. 11 (OR). This owl is no bigger than the Starling; another was seen at the Parowan cemetery, Jan. 1 (SM). This owl has been seen in cemeteries so often that it should be called "the cemetery owl." The Salt Lake City cemetery has now had lights installed and this has spoiled the owling (GK). A Long-eared Owl was seen at Arches Nat'l Monument, Dec. 28; a first record for this part of Utah (DLC)—probably reflecting the lack of good observers.

Flycatchers—An Eastern Phoebe was collected at Springdale, Utah, Dec. 17 (RHW)—the second record for the state.

Thrushes—Many dead Robins were found in orchard areas near Hotchkiss, Colo. This was attributed to dormant sprays (TC).

Waxwings—Cedar Waxwings were noted mixed with Bohemians in several areas this winter. At Minidoka, Idaho, 5 percent of the flocks were Cedars (LDN). A mixed flock of about 100 were seen on the western slope at Hotchkiss, March 2 (TC). A flock of straight Cedars was seen at Parowan on Feb. 19-26 (SM).

Redpolls—These birds were common this winter as far south as central Colorado. Nine were seen in Park County, March 19 (RG).

Sparrows—Two White-throats were seen near Moab, Utah, Dec. 30 (LD), and Jan. 26 (DLC). This bird has not been previously reported from this part of Utah, owing to lack of observers.

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