



Conservation Aids Waterfowl

AW 294

Ducks and geese that wing south along the major flyways each year depend largely on agricultural land for food, cover, and winter quarters.

In fact, the way American farmers manage their land and adjacent water areas may be one of the most important factors in insuring an abundant supply of waterfowl in the future.

This is because most of the waterfowl habitat in the United States is on private land. Although the greatest percentage of ducks and geese originate in the vast areas north of the United States, their migratory routes cover two-thirds of this nation and more than 90 percent of the Mississippi Valley and the eastern States.

Migrating flocks today depend on the succulent forage, shattered grain, and weed seed in cropland fields that have been carved out of the original prairies and forests.

They depend on the farm ponds, irrigation developments, and other water impoundments that dot the landscape where no water stood before.

The Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service helps farmers and ranchers establish waterfowl management areas on their land.

This on-site technical assistance is obtained through local soil and water conservation districts, now numbering more than 3,010 and covering 99 percent of the nation's farmland.

In addition, most regular soil conservation practices not only improve waterfowl habitat but also create a favorable environment in places where it did not exist originally.

As a result, the waterfowl is becoming more and more widely distributed where it can be enjoyed by growing numbers of hunters and nature enthusiasts.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Soil Conservation Service

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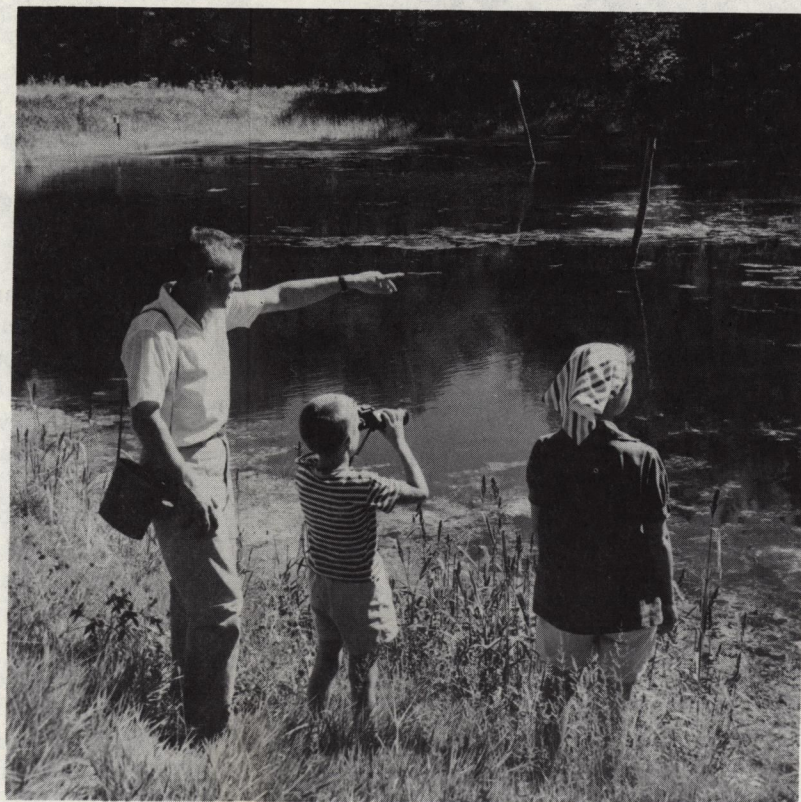
In New Jersey a game manager and Soil Conservation Service technician place an experimental duck nest in a farmer's pond to attract migrating waterfowl. NJ-40,457



A Nebraska farmer took advantage of a low, swampy area on his farm and developed it into a resting area for migrating ducks. SCS technicians who planned the area provided a means of regulating the water level to permit the spring planting of waterfowl food crops for Fall flooding. The steel pit blind is put to good use during hunting season. Neb-2062

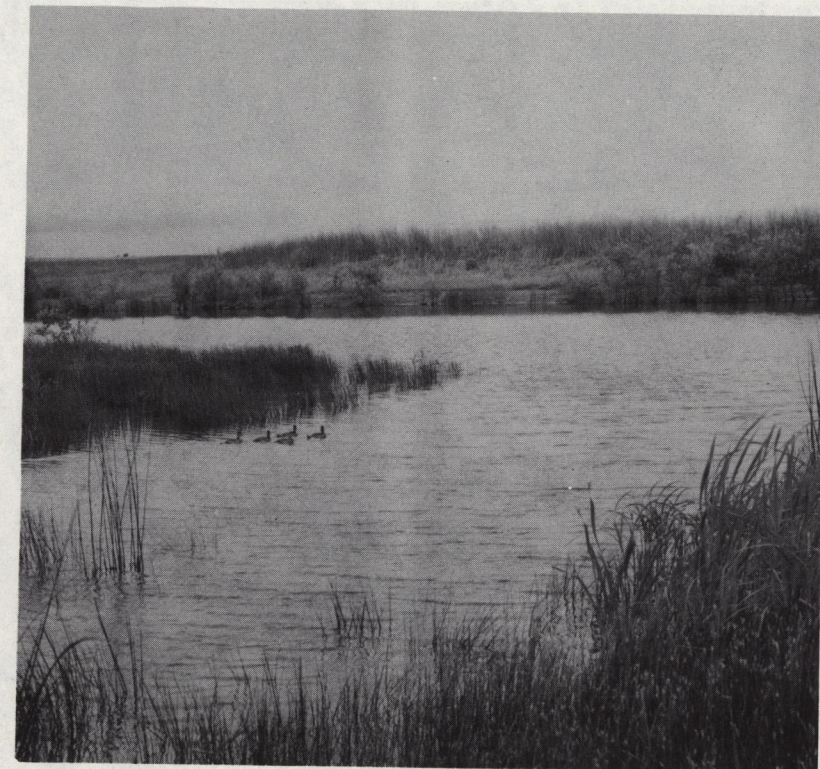


A heavy concentration of wild ducks, principally mallards, alight on a harvested Louisiana rice field. The ducks, protected during the hunting season, remain in fields throughout winter helping the farmer control red rice, and other troublesome weed seeds. LA-62,412-A



In addition to private landowners, SCS helps public wildlife sanctuaries apply soil and water conservation practices that improve waterfowl habitats. Bird watchers discover a resident of this sanctuary in Connecticut. Conn.-10,283

Corn and browntop millet make a good combination planting for duck feed. An SCS biologist checks the stand on a South Carolina field. The area will be flooded when the millet matures. SC-D18-21



A dugout and dam combination on native grassland in South Dakota provides water for livestock and an excellent habitat for ducks. The tall grass surrounding the impounded water offers cover for nesting sites. SD-562.





The pits blasted in this Minnesota wetland by recommended methods make it a more appealing habitat for waterfowl. Ducks prefer the privacy of their own patch of open, deep water for a brood habitat. Minn-1813

Technical information on how to attract ducks on farms and ranches in the Northern Plains can be found in Farmers' Bulletin 2234. Single copies are available free from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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