

Anderson Afield

Drought lowers duck population, spurs cures

By JOHN M. ANDERSON

Never have so many waterfowl managers known so much about so few ducks as is the case today. They know, for example, that the number of mallards bagged by hunters in 1987 was 3,231,400. But last fall, because of shorter hunting seasons, lowered daily bag limits, and fewer ducks in the fall flight, the total kill dropped by 42 percent, down to 1,866,000.

That being the case, you might expect the number of mallards that survived and returned to nest this spring would be up by about 42 percent. Alas! Such is not the case. The number of mallards attempting to nest in April, 1989, was seven percent below that of 1988. Obviously, saving ducks from the gun this year does not automatically mean more ducks in the oven next year. How come? did Mrs. Mallard decide she wasn't going to lay her usual number of eggs?

The waterfowl manager can tell you that her urge to reproduce and that of her glossy green-headed mate was a strong as ever. Then how many of her eggs eventually produced flying young? Oh, oh! The reproductive rate among mallards and most other species of ducks, looks as though some savings and loan institution had been running the show.

For every 100 adult mallards that left the breeding grounds last fall, only 89 juveniles tagged along. In 1987, there were 122 youngsters making their first trip south along with every 100 adults. Obviously, in the prairies of northern U.S. and southern Canada, which we call the "big duck factory", something was wrong.

And the waterfowl manager knows what the trouble was. In a year of average to above average rainfall, the number of ponds on the prairies of the U.S. and Canada runs around five million. In 1988, due to the severe drought, the number was down to less than Waterfowl Management Plan as never before. They are also putting pressure on congressmen and senators to stop using your tax dollars to drain more wetlands.

This drought, like all others, will end one of these days. When it does, much of the lost habitat will be restored and so will the duck populations.

The restoration of marshes from North Dakota to Louisiana has at last become a national concern.

three million. Waterfowl must nest close to water if the duckling are to have a place to eat and sleep. So a shortage of suitable habitat means a shortage of flat-faced fowl in the fall.

This year the number of ponds increased slightly because the drought across the prairies was not quite as severe as in 1988. Does this mean production of young ducks will show a corresponding slight increase? Unfortunately, no. In addition to water, it takes ducks to produce more ducks. And the number of breeding pairs this spring was about eight percent below 1988.

In spite of the huge surplus of wheat and corn, the U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to subsidize these crops, which provides incentive to prairie farmers to plow up to the very edge of each pond. In years of normal rainfall, there is a ring of grasses and rushes growing in the moist soil around the pond's edge. In dry years, this ring of nesting cover is plowed under and planted to wheat or corn. In the following year, even though the pond may be full of water, there is little or no cover in which a duck can hide her nest. Naturally, this means the foxes, raccoons and skunks will have no trouble finding eggs for breakfast.

So, this year the hunter can look forward to about the same number of ducks in the fall flight as last. The hunting restrictions in force last year will show little if any change.

There is, however, a most interesting and bright side to this grim picture. The restoration of marshes on both the breeding grounds and wintering grounds, and the migratory corridors in between, will cost money. Instead of being discouraged, American and Canadian duck hunters are supporting the restoration efforts of Ducks Unlimited and the North American Admittedly, the drought has been bad for the ducks and the duck hunters. But it has caught the attention of the taxpayer and his congressmen. Until now, your tax dollar has been used to destroy your own environment while you were not looking. Ducks and people are in the same boat.

John M. "Frosty" Anderson was Director of the Wildlife Department of the National Audubon Society from 1966 until his retirement in 1987.



Tree lovers, savers

The local chapter of the Audubon Society gathered last Saturday at the Penn State Campus Arboretum to clean-up. Pictured from left, Charles Spacek, conservation chairman; Jan Lohmann, publicity chairman, Dallas, and John Jakoby, president. The tree is a triptemmaria. (Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

Penn State Arboretum gets summer cleaning

Students, faculty and community volunteers put on their gardening gloves Saturday, August 5, to clean up the campus Arboretum at Penn State Wilkes-Barre at Lehman.

Revitalizing the Arboretum has become one of the major projects this summer at the campus of Penn State Wilkes-Barre which used to belong to the Conyngham family. Fifteen acres of land adjacent to Hayfield House was set aside by the owners in the 1930's to preserve some of the world's unique trees and bushes. Saturday's clean-up involved removing much dead wood, pruning dead branches from trees, and thinning out some heavily overgrown areas.

"Remember, in reclaiming and further enhancing the arboretum, we are providing a very unique resource to the larger Wyoming Valley community. Families, school groups, and clubs will be able to use it. One has to drive some distance (to the Philadelphia area for instance) in order to find what we will have here in the end. Not even the main campus at State College has an arboretum," said Professor Steve Alston in his note sent to the volunteers.

Dr. J. Robert Nuss, Professor of Ornamental Horticulture at Penn State University Park, came to the campus in April to identify the major specimens, after which nameplates containing both common and scientific names were printed to place on the corresponding trees and on stakes next to bushes. Dr. Nuss returned in July to advise on which plants should be removed or pruned so that the remaining ones could flourish.

Approximately 60 varieties of native and introduced trees are found in the arboretum and campus including both deciduous and evergreen types. Among the specimens present are varieties of Japanese Yew and and Falsecypress that were relatively rare in the 1930's. Also noticeable are European Larch which is a needed tree that loses its needles each year and several Gingkos which have

interesting fan-shaped leaves. Many different native trees can also be found in the arboretum and campus.

After the decisions were made regarding which plants were to be saved, removed, or pruned, the overall task of clean-up began. Because of the extensive nature of the clean-up program, many volunteers were needed to remove deadwood and thin out overgrown areas. Several community organizations were also involved as volunteers: Open Space and Recreation Committee of the Back Mountain Citizens Council, co-chaired by Liz Lloyd and Luci Callahan; the Greater Wyoming Valley Chapter of the National Audubon Society, John Jakoby, President and PSU alumnus, and Charles Spacek, naturalist.

"New paths have been marked and cut so that wood chips can be spread to create walking trails. Once the Arboretum is revitalized, it will provide an improved source of education and enjoyment not only for students of Penn State Wilkes-Barre but also for community and for school districts and organizations in the area," Dr. Alston said.

Luzerne County landfill committee seeks sites

Officials of the Luzerne County Landfill Siting Committee announced recently that as part of their siting process, areas within Luzerne County which owners feel should be considered for a County-owned Landfill facility should be forwarded to the attention of the Luzerne County Planning Director, Mr. Adrian Merolli, Mr. Rich Allan, Chairman of the Committee, noted that "the committee is now at the stage of its work in considering areas of Luzerne County which may be suitable for the disposal of solid waste. The committee has approved a siting procedure and process which outlines the criteria by which areas within Luzerne County have been excluded for consideration as a result of a fatal flaw analysis. We welcome the opportunity of considering sites which owners feel meet the criteria for siting. Only sites of 150 acres or more will be

considered. Anyone wishing to submit a site for consideration should request a copy of the siting criteria and then forward the information regarding a suggested site to the attention of Mr. Adrian Merolli, Luzerne County Planning Commission, Courthouse Annex, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18711.

Over the next two to three months, the Committee will continue its analysis of areas within Luzerne County, that have positive features and qualities in regard to landfill siting and which may prove suitable for the location of such a facility. The recommended site(s) will be further studied and analyzed by a consultant engineering firm on a more in depth, scientific, site specific basis.

It is expected that recommendations will be made to the Board of County Commissioners of Luzerne County sometime before the end of calendar year 1989.

Heat can be deadly to pets

Leaving your pet in a parked car can be a deadly mistake. On hot days, you are a friend to your pet, if you leave it at home. On a warm day, the temperature in a parked car can reach 160 degrees in just a few minutes, even if the windows are partially open.

With only hot air to breathe, a pet can quickly suffer brain damage or die from heatstroke. Signs of heat stress include heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid pulse, dizzi-

ness, vomiting, deep red or a purple tongue.

If your pet gets overheated, his body temperature must be lowered immediately. Get him in the shade and apply cool but not cold water all over his body. Apply ice packs or cold towels only to his head, neck and chest. Let him drink small amounts of cool water or lick ice cubes or ice cream.

Take a pet to the veterinarian right away, it could save his life.

Letters invited

The Dallas Post encourages readers to share their opinions with the community by writing a letter to the editor. All letters for publication must be signed and include a telephone number so that we may verify authenticity. We will not publish anonymous letters. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612. Letters received by Noon on Monday may be included in that week's issue.

Opinion

Ethics Institute tackles some tough questions

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

A new and exciting organization has boldly stepped forth to help lead Northeastern Pennsylvania into the 21st Century. The Ethics Institute of Northeast Pennsylvania, a dream of Sister Siena Finley of College Misericordia, is now in existence and has sponsored two Ethics Seminars and has plans for the sponsorship of at least two more in 1989. Sister Siena serves as its Executive Director, and a Board of Directors of community leaders meets once a month to advise on policy for the Institute, and to help plan the types of seminars and activities sponsored by it. The Institute's first project was a seminar on Ethics and Business and featured local business persons along with a facilitator who provided national information on the topic.

The second seminar was on the topic of Medical Ethics and Termination of Nutrition and Hydration. This topic discussed the ethical concerns of withholding or withdrawing nutrition and hydration in a medical setting. The seminar attracted over 100 persons and provided an opportunity for comments by specialists in the health care profession in addition to the views of an outstanding academic leader in the field of ethical conflicts in medicine.

With ethics being center stage at the national level as President Bush requests an Ethics Commission to make recommendations for new legislation and regulations relative to ethics and government and as legislation about ethics winds its way through the legislative halls of Harrisburg, it is timely that such an Institute be organized in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Many controversial issues surround the topic of ethics, and the Institute intends to bring as much information as possible to the attention of the public through seminars and other communication techniques.

Steps have been taken to secure a grant from the Pennsylvania State Legislature in order to carry out many of the goals spelled out in the Institute's by-laws. Among these

goals are the following:

Mission
The overall mission of the Ethics Institute of Northeast Pennsylvania is to contribute to the understanding of contemporary ethical issues in areas including, but not limited to, business, education, government, health care, and social services.

Objective
The Ethics Institute of Northeast Pennsylvania will provide a forum to discuss and explore major ethical issues in our society.

This objective will be accomplished primarily through lecture and workshop series, conferences, an ethics resource center, and continuing education programs.

Issues to be addressed include the following:

- Ethical decision making
- Relationships between government and business
- Ethics and healthcare
- Ethics and education
- Ethics and politics
- Ethics and social services
- Ethics and technology
- The corporation and social priorities
- Value systems
- Business and public policy.

Plans are underway for a major national conference on ethics to be held in Northeastern Pennsylvania in November, 1989. The topic for this event is The Crisis in Health Care. Speaker of national prominence and local specialists will participate. A government and ethics workshop will be held on September 14, 1989 at the Woodlands in Wilkes-Barre. As more attention is placed upon ethics in many disciplines, institutes of this nature have begun to spring up in various parts of the country. Northeastern Pennsylvania is fortunate in having had the leadership of Sister Siena and College Misericordia in organizing the Institute and helping to place the topic of ethics on the regional agenda.

For those who would like more information concerning the Ethics Institute, contact can be made with Sister Siena Finley, Executive Director, Ethics Institute of Northeast Pennsylvania, c/o College Misericordia, Dallas, Pa. 18612.

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