

Sand Lake Waterfowl Refuge  
Columbia, South Dakota  
April 4, 1938

Sand Lake  
Census

Mr. Burt Grosham  
Winnipeg Free Press  
Winnipeg, Canada

Dear Mr. Grosham:

As reported to you by telegram the first of the Blue and Snow Geese arrived here at Sand Lake Waterfowl Refuge on March 17. So far our greatest number has been about 50,000 on March 31. On the first of April only about 25,000 could be found but several reports were received that many thousands were feeding northwest of the Refuge south-east of Frederick, South Dakota.

Leo B. Childers wrote from Watertown on March 28 that at least 200,000 of these birds were present in the vicinity of Watertown. He traced their route from Oahe, Sloan and Witting, Iowa, as directly over Sioux City, west of Sioux Falls, and next resting in the vicinity of Madison, South Dakota. Then northward slightly west of Arlington and concentrating around Watertown where they still remain. They have been especially numerous on Lake Poinsett, south of Watertown.

Feeding conditions here are ideal. The geese are working the stubble fields in all directions from the Sand Lake Refuge, but returning to rest on Sandell Lake within the Refuge. Sandell Lake is shallow and the birds cover it but night time standing in the foot-deep water.

On Sunday, April 3, an open-house was held on the Fifth Anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp here at Sand Lake. At least 500 people were out and the geese sat near the road by the thousands. This proved to be one of the high spots of the day.

Childers believes the main flight has not yet reached here. Our first birds weren't even present this time a year ago. Cool weather of the past week has refrozen lakes in the Washey vicinity. At present these two geese appear to be in about equal numbers.

In 1937 we had these geese remaining in moderate numbers until May 16. On that date a flock resting in our newly impounded marsh contained 161 Blue Geese and 161 Snow Geese. If this is any indication of their choice we may have some of these birds here for the next week and a half.

Some time I would appreciate knowing if your reports indicate the general route as being non-stop from the Gulf to northwestern Missouri or southwestern Iowa in the vicinity of Squaw Creek Refuge, the mouth of the Platte and the Mishakotua forks in Iowa. Then to Missouri Valley north of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Then to the Osage region, south of Sioux City. Possibly then to the Madison, Waterton and Sand Lake Regions in South Dakota. While here the birds are frequently spread out between here and Waukey. The next stop appears to be the Jameson area in the vicinity of the Arrow-wood Refuge. Do the birds stop there between Jameson and Waukey at Stump and Devils Lake? Is Waukey the last northward stop before the birds hop to Southampton and the nesting region? At what dates do they generally begin to leave for the north and when is the main flight?

This is turning the tricks on you asking for information but so frequently we still see the statements that they make no stops enroute north.

Very truly yours,

Phillip A. DeWent  
Refuge Manager

PAD:rb

cc: Regional Office