

Gladys Black, Pleasantville Iowa

Report from Red Rock Refuge, Marion County, Iowa

The Red Rock Wildlife Refuge developed by the Iowa Conservation Commission on the upper reaches of Red Rock Reservoir at a cost of a quarter million dollars is now being threatened by an association of local businessmen, mostly land developers, who want the water level of the Lake raised. This would effectively drown out the Refuge.

It is opposed by the U. S. Corps of Engineers on the grounds that it would endanger the cities downstream in high water years. (Red Rock Reservoir is a flood control reservoir not a recreation lake.) The Iowa Confederation of Environmental Organizations also oppose it. Fortunately the Register and Tribune newspapers are supporting the Corps of Engineers and the Conservation Commission. However two U. S. Congressmen are supporting the realty interests and the outcome is uncertain at the present time.

The argument advanced by the businessmen that more water is needed for motorboating is fallacious since there is already 8950 acres of water. It would however provide private marinas for the lots now on sale.

The greed and viciousness of this fight is appalling especially when I recall all the years prior to 1969 when we had no water in this rich agricultural prairie county.

So long ago from my grandfather's cottage on the Des Moines River (now within the Refuge) I could row only a short distance downstream before being stopped by a sand bar and shallow water - and not much farther upstream. There was of course too much water in flood times when I was forbidden the boat for safety reasons.

With sorrow I report that Lake Red Rock filled for the first time March 1969 is badly polluted by agricultural & other chemicals (persistent pesticides) Fish were declared too contaminated to eat by Nov. 1970. Also the Des Moines sewage is poured ~~into~~ thousands of tons, into the Des Moines River because their sewage disposal plant is too small to handle the ^{entire} load.

1971 Fall Migration

Gladys B Black
Pleasantville Iowa

Red Rock Refuge, Marion County, Iowa

Very little rainfall since fall of '70, just enough to produce a bumper corn crop but all the potholes in the inviolate portion of the Refuge had dried up - places especially attractive to waterfowl.

White Pelicans - None as compared with flocks of 70 - 24-12 during fall of 1970.

Double-crested Cormorants - peaked at 37 last week of Oct.

(The only large flock in the state was one of 300 seen at Lake Rathbun in late Sept. by Wesley Newcomb, U.S. game agent.)

Great Blue Herons - numbered well over 100 thru Sept, early Oct.

Yellow crowned Night Heron - 1's seen on Sept 12

Geese - numbers down as compared to 1969, + 1970

Canadas peaked at 1000, first 75 on Sept 17

Trouts + Blues - " " 6000, " 25 " " "

Ducks

Mallards - 31,000 moved in Nov 1
62,000 by Nov. 10

Wood Ducks - 300 by Sept. 1 - many reared in Refuge
1000 by Oct 14

Turkey Vultures - count is down compared to 1969-1970

3 big Roosts in the Refuge

West Roost - no accurate count

Red Rock Bluff Roost - peak 100+ on Sept 23

Elk Rock Bluff Roost - " 52 on Oct 11

Bald Eagles

Only 4 i. seen. (15 seen fall of 1969)

Sora Rails peaked at 30 on Aug. 28

Amer. Coots - thousands on Lake week of Oct 20

Semi-palmated Plover - 3 on Aug 28

Amer. Golden Plover - 1 injured, died Sept 25

Most Sandpipers in very short numbers

3 Amer. Avocets Sept 19-25 (observed by Woodward H. Brown, Mary & Ben Walters, William Criswell & I) avocets seldom reach us.

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|| Franklin's Gulls only 500 on 2 occasions, did not stay to feed over the fields as did the thousands in 1969 + 1970

Caspian Terns - 25 on Sept 25

|| Swallow count was way down compared to the thousands in 1969 - 1970 (all species)

Warbler migration poor except for Myrtle Warblers

|| Red winged Blackbirds - huge roost in marsh area of Refuge, est. 100,000

|| Brewer's Blackbirds (seldom reach here) 5 seen Sept 30

Baldpate - 30 + on Aug 28

|| Snow Buntings - a surprising 10-Oct 30, Nov 6

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Nov 30, 1971