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Duck, goose and pheasant records from Ogallala game dressing station, 1943-1946

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DUCK, GOOSE AND PHEASANT RECORDS
FROM OGALLALA GAME DRESSING STATION, 1943-1946

By John H. Wampole

Duck Hunter Success

For several seasons records of the number of ducks brought in to be dressed have been kept at an Ogallala dressing station. Records have been tabulated and summarized in an effort to measure the hunter success. Since no record of hunter-days or hunter-trips is obtainable, this report is based upon seasonal totals, daily averages, and numbers per bag. Table III (page 27) shows the number of bags, seasonal totals and average numbers of birds per bag. Table IV shows the take by months and Table V shows the averages per day for the three months of each season.

The Seasonal Take

Referring to Table III, the 1944 and 1945 seasons are comparable since the number of days in each seasons record are almost equal. During the 1944 season 675 bags of ducks totalling 5,842 were brought in compared to 823 bags of 5,488 ducks for 1945. The number of birds per day (see Table V) were 78 in 1944 and 71.27 for 1945. The average number of birds per daily bag was 8.65 for 1944 and 6.67 for 1945 as shown in the last column of Table III. On the bases of totals and averages, 1944 may be considered as a better season than 1945.

The take for 1943 can be compared with the other seasonal takes on the bases of daily average and the average number of birds per bag. The number of bags and the total number of birds for the season were low, partly because the station was newly established, and several other stations were operating. The average number of birds per bag was 7.23 in 1943, second highest of the four seasons. The average daily take (27.16) was the lowest.

The seasonal take for 1946 was highest in number of bags but lowest in the average number of birds per bag (Table III). The average take per day was greatest during the 1946 season as shown in Table V. One explanation of this may be that more hunters were out in 1946 than previously, and that a large percentage of them were inexperienced duck hunters. Opinion among hunters contacted tends to

bear out that explanation and, also, account for the low number of birds per bag. Another factor, poor "duck weather" or fewer "duck days", was considered by some hunters to have accounted for fewer ducks per bag.

Seasonal Variation In The Take

In breaking down the records by months (Tables IV and V) it can be seen that the numbers brought in per day, per month, and per bag were greatest in November, 1943, 1944 and 1945. For 1946 the numbers per month and per day were greatest in October, while the number per bag varied little throughout the season. Common hunter opinions indicate that mild weather made the northern flight later than usual in 1946. Thousands of ducks were to be seen on Lake McConaughey and over the nearby country on November 15.

A breakdown of the take by weeks* shows that for 1943 there were three weeks that were practically equal in regard to daily take and the number per bag. These were:

<u>Period</u>	<u>Daily Take</u>	<u>Birds per Bag</u>
October 29 - November 4	39.16	8.70
November 12 - 18	42.20	8.11
November 19 - 25	43.75	7.95

A considerable drop in daily numbers followed the November 19 - 25 period.

The best daily average for 1944 was 191.7 during the November 11 -17 period, while the best average number per bag was 10.35 during the November 4 - 10 period. In other words, the first half of November was the good duck hunting period of the 1944 season.

In 1945 the two high weekly periods were November 3 - 9 with 140 birds per day and November 10 - 16 with 110 birds per day. The high numbers per bag occurred during the three week period of October 27 - November 16 with seven birds per bag. This number was bettered by almost one (7.65) during the December 8 - 14 period and equalled the following period, December 15 - 21. Considering all available figures, the November 3 - 9 week, when 139 bags totalling 980 birds for an average of 7.05 per bag were brought in, would be considered the best week of the season,

Two weekly periods show up a little better than the others during the 1946 season. The first, October 26 - November 1, with 151 bags totalling 812 birds for

*The weekly periods for the four seasons include one Saturday and Sunday.

an average of 5.38, was not quite as high as the fourth week, November 16 - 22, when 165 bags of ducks were brought in averaging 5.62 for a total of 928. One bird less per bag was the average for the remainder of the season.

Summary and Conclusions

1. Records of the dressing station at Ogallala were tabulated and summarized to compare the 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946 seasons as to hunter success.
2. On the bases of seasonal take, average daily take, and average number of birds per bag, the 1944 season was highest in all except the average daily take, exceeded in this respect by the 1946 season.
3. November appeared to be the best month in all four seasons. The first half of the month exceeded the second half in 1944 and 1945 in take per day and birds per daily bag. The daily take was greater for the first half of November of 1943 and 1946, but the birds per bag were less.
4. The average number of birds per bag were 7.23, 8.65, 6.67, and 5.07 for 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946, respectively.
5. Field observations and common opinion among hunters indicate that a greater total number of hunters in 1946 accounted for the high daily take and low number of birds per bag of the 1946 season as compared to the other seasons.
6. Hunter opinion indicates that the northern flight was later than usual in 1946, and that, although ducks were plentiful, weather conditions were unfavorable for successful duck hunting.
7. A system of record keeping that would permit the data to be calculated more definitely on the basis of birds per hunter-day or hunter-trip is desirable.

Table III The Seasonal Take of Ducks Brought to the Ogallala Dressing Station During Four Hunting Seasons, 1943-1946, inclusive.

Season	Number of Days Recorded	Number of Bags	Number of Ducks	Average Number of Ducks Per Bag
1943	45	169	1222	7.23
1944	75	675	5842	8.65
1945	77	823	5488	6.67
1946	45	843	4278	5.07

Table IV The Take by Months at the Ogallala Station

	October				November				December			
	Days	Bags	Ducks	Average*	Days	Bags	Ducks	Average*	Days	Bags	Ducks	Average*
1943	13	42	278	6.62	20	99	764	7.72	12	28	180	6.43
1944	16	77	535	6.95	28	345	3205	9.29	31**	253**	2102**	8.31**
1945	19	130	795	6.12	30	431	2922	6.78	28	262	1777	6.76
1946	6	133	717	5.35	30	630	3202	5.08	9	80	359	4.49

*Average is number of ducks per bag

**Figures for December, 1944 include those for one bag brought in January 1, 1945

Table V Average Numbers of Ducks Brought in per Day to the Ogallala Dressing Station

Month	1943 Ducks per Day	1944 Ducks per Day	1945 Ducks per Day	1946 Ducks per Day
October	21.38	33.44	41.84	119.50
November	38.20	114.46	97.40	106.70
December	15.00	100.07	63.25	39.90
Season	27.16	78.00	71.27	98.99

Geese Handled

The following tabulation indicates the comparative success of the goose hunters based on the average size of the bag and the total kill for the seasons.

Period	1943			1944			1945			1946		
	Number of Bags	Number Geese	Ave.	Number of Bags	Number Geese	Ave.	Number of Bags	Number Geese	Ave.	Number of Bags	Number Geese	Ave.
October	3	3	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1.
November	5	7	1.4	18	25	1.4	60	82	1.37	35	46	1.3
December	4	4	1	4	6	1.5	21	34	1.6	2	2	1.
Season	12	14	1.17	22	31	1.45	83	118	1.4	38	49	1.3

It can be seen that November was the best month and that the 1945 season surpassed the other seasons in total numbers bagged. The averages reflect what the daily records show, that most of the hunters took only one or two birds per trip. One hunter took four birds, one took five, and a few took three.

Pheasant Records

Table VI shows the daily, monthly, and seasonal take of pheasants brought to the Ogallala dressing station. The average number of birds per bag is calculated. This average varied little from three birds per day during the four seasons.

On the basis of number of birds per bag and per day the 1943 season appears to have been slightly better than the others. The bag average is lowest for the 1946 season which shows the second highest average number of birds per day. The lowest average take per day occurred during sixty-three days of the 1944 season. Fewer hunters may be the explanation for this.

Comparing months, it appears that during October of each season the highest average bag was taken and the most birds brought in on the average. Lowest records are for December except during the nine days of the 1946 season when the daily and bag averages for November and December were practically equal.

A comparison of pheasant and duck records for this area indicates better pheasant hunting in October and better duck hunting from then on. Waterfowl hunting