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Morning doves rise, Woodcocks in decline

Mourning dove populations have risen slightly since last year in the western two-thirds of the United States according to post spring field surveys by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced.

But a joint Canadian-U.S. breeding ground survey suggests that this spring woodcock populations east of the Appalachian Mountains show a slight decline when compared to last year's survey.

Mourning doves, one of the few native species which have increased since the arrival of the white man are densest from North Dakota through northern Texas, Southern Arizona, western California, central Colorado and a portion of Georgia and

the Carolinas also showed high numbers of this single most important game bird in terms of harvest in the United States. Low populations were noted along the Pacific mountain region and the Continental Divide throughout much of the northern Appalachian and Great Lakes states and in New England. The average autumn population nationwide is about 500 million birds, almost as numerous as blackbirds and starlings which peak at about the 600 million mark. Waterfowl—ducks and geese—usually number about 100 million birds during the fall migration.

Woodcock inhabit the eastern one-third of North America. Despite this year's slight decline in the East, the woodcock

population index west of the Appalachian Mountains increased by about six per cent. Wildlife biologists in Canada and the United States are unable to estimate the total woodcock population of North America because the breeding grounds extend far north into the treeless areas of Canada. Scientists estimate that these birds probably thrive right up to the tree line that abut the tundra. But there is also little way to get into that breeding area for survey purposes. Scientists must rely on surveys and the wing samples that hunters mail to the Service. From these two sources, they can reasonably understand what is happening to the woodcock population, and thus regulate hunting. Overall, there are probably fewer woodcock today than 50 years ago, but this is because of the fact that man now inhabits much more of this bird's natural range than he did before. Scientists base their woodcock decisions on the trends noted in the annual data collection.

These survey results are presented to the Annual Regulations Conference for Shore and Migratory Upland Game Bird held in Washington on June 22. The group is composed of Federal and State wildlife officials plus representatives of the conservation community. The survey results and the other evidence gathered for the conference are the major factors considered in setting the annual hunting regulations for these species of birds. The final hunting regulations will be issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service later this summer.

U.S. fish experts visit Russia

A four-man delegation of U.S. fisheries specialists is visiting the Soviet Union to observe Pacific salmon work in the Soviet Far East and to become acquainted with aquaculture work in the Lake Baikal area.

The delegation is headed by Lynn Hutchens, program coordinator of the Coastal Fisheries Program of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington.

In addition to Hutchens, the U.S. delegation of specialists includes Daniel Nelson, president of Sterling H. Nelson and Sons, a fish feed company in Murray, Utah; Dr. John Halver, senior scientist of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Seattle; and Gary L. Rumsey, director of the Tautog Laboratories of Fish Nutrition, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cortland, N.Y.

Their itinerary includes visits to salmon hatcheries and research sites in Krasnodar, Volgograd, Leningrad, Irkutsk, Ulan Ude, on Lake Baikal, and Vostochno Sakhalinsk on Sakhalin Island. This is the second group of Americans to visit Sakhalin, an island off the far northeastern coast of

the Soviet Union, north of Japan. Under the 1972 U.S.-USSR Environmental Protection Agreement, a team of American ornithologists, water specialists visited the island last summer.

This is a reciprocal visit under the General Exchange Agreement on Fisheries and Wildlife between the Soviet Union and the United States. Nov. 18 to Dec. 2, 1973, a five-man Soviet fisheries delegation headed by Dr. Nikolai A. Vanyav, Minister of the Fish Industry, visited the United States under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsorship.

HOME prexy stepping down

Charles Costa, of Southfield, has stepped down as president of the Housing Owners of Michigan Exchange (HOME), and taken a three-month leave of absence from its board of directors.

HOME's directors have accepted Costa's actions without opposition and with the understanding that he will not be a candidate for further office with the nonprofit corporation, according to an announcement made by HOME officials.

Costa said he was taking the steps to free himself to start another organization which would represent the owners of single family homes as contrasted to the owners of multiple rental properties.

Stanley van Riken, one of the founders of HOME, has been promoted from vice-president to president pending a board election Sept. 14.

Van Riken said HOME was aiming at a realignment which would increase its effectiveness in handling social and governmental factors affecting rental properties.

HOME's more than 600 landlord members will elect a new board of directors at an annual meeting set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14, in the auditorium of the Henry Ford Centennial Library, 16001 Michigan Boulevard.

Douglas Glazer, secretary of HOME, said an earlier date announced for the meeting had to be postponed to be sure all members were properly notified and could submit board candidates.

Glazer said added information and candidate forms could be obtained through HOME's headquarters at 19733 Seven Mile Detroit or by telephoning 531-3346.

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