

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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TO : Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and
Wildlife - Washington, D. C.

DATE: August 15, 1961

FROM : Acting Regional Supervisor, Branch of Wildlife Refuges -
Minneapolis, Minnesota

SUBJECT: Amendment No. 1 - Public Hunting and Fishing Plan - Tewaukon Refuge

Dr. Bue, Commissioner, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, has advised this office that they are tentatively planning to schedule a late pheasant season in portions of southeastern North Dakota during November or early December. This will be a second season in this area to be held sometime after the close of the earlier opening for other portions of the State. While they have not determined the exact season dates, nor do they have specific approval at this time for such a season, they feel that this season will be necessary because of the extremely high pheasant population in the southeast portion of the State which may be subject to heavy losses should abnormal snowfall and winter temperatures occur. In connection with this proposed season, they have asked whether portions of the Tewaukon Refuge may be open to pheasant hunting?

Because of the present high pheasant population on the refuge and immediate vicinity, we believe that it would be a good wildlife management practice to permit harvest of a portion of the refuge pheasant population providing such could be done at a time when there would be no conflict with waterfowl management objectives.

We have, therefore, asked Refuge Manager Monnie to prepare an amendment to the Tewaukon Hunting and Fishing Plan, copy of which is attached, to permit hunting of resident game species as outlined. We would appreciate having the existing refuge regulations amended to permit pheasant hunting on Tewaukon this coming fall should the State be successful in establishing a late season. As mentioned above, we do not know the exact dates of the proposed season at this time.

Harvey K. Nelson
Harvey K. Nelson

Attachment

TEWAUKON PUBLIC HUNTING AND FISHING PLAN

Amendment No. 1

Hunting of Resident Game Species

Upland game:

The ring-necked pheasant is the only species recommended for harvest. These birds become most numerous on the refuge during the fall and winter periods. The highest population recorded was 3,000 during the winter of 1958. The average wintering population is about 1,500. Present indications are that the 1961 fall and winter population may exceed the 1958-59 level.

Tewaukon is located in the heart of the prime pheasant range of southeast North Dakota. Populations in this part of the State have made a remarkable recovery. During the past few years they reached all time highs for this general area in North Dakota. Mild winters with only limited snowfall during the past three years have been conducive to a population increase in this area.

The high population present on the refuge during winter periods is in a precarious situation. The abundance of food and cover present would not be available to these birds during winters of normal snowfall. An exceedingly high winter die-off could occur any winter, which would subject our Bureau to extreme criticism.

A high pheasant population is not entirely compatible with the waterfowl management program. Standing cornfields are heavily used by pheasants during the long winter period, thus reducing the available food present for spring waterfowl migrants. Spring food on the refuge is important and necessary to reduce depredations on spring planted wheat on surrounding private fields.

For these reasons pheasant hunting in accordance with the following restrictions is recommended:

Public hunting of upland game birds should be scheduled so as not to conflict with waterfowl populations present on the area during the fall migration. Public hunting on the refuge should be allowed in years when the State declares a late pheasant season, generally after November 15, for this general portion of the state and as long as a harvestable population is present on the refuge. Upland game hunting should not be conducted concurrently with big game hunting.

The proposed open area will be the same as for big game hunting as shown on map number one at the end of the Public Hunting and Fishing Plan. This restriction will be necessary until additional lands are placed under Federal ownership.

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