

STILLWATER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
Fallon, Nevada

HUNTING and FISHING PLAN

WILDLIFE

Introduction. The Stillwater Wildlife Management Area was established in 1948 as a joint operation to be administered by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the Nevada State Fish and Game Commission. The Area contains approximately 165,000 of public lands upon which the Bureau and the State obtained a 50-year lease which became effective November 26, 1948. The Area was leased from the acting custodian of the involved public lands, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, on a rent free basis in exchange for certain marsh and pasture developments to be accomplished by the Bureau and the State.

The primary objective of the Area is to serve jointly as a waterfowl refuge area and public waterfowl hunting area as provided under terms of a two-way operating agreement between the Bureau and the State. Due to the desert type terrain which characterizes all of the Area not served by surface water flows, the Area is of little importance to forms of wildlife other than waterfowl.

Waterfowl. The Area is currently operated as a production, migration, and wintering area for several forms of waterfowl.

Production. The Stillwater Wildlife Management Area has proven its value as a highly important waterfowl production area. During the first ten years of development and operation of the Area, production of ducks has increased from 2,900 to 22,600 annually. Important nesting ducks include the redhead, a species whose status has become precarious to the extent that special protective legislation has been enacted for its protection. Approximately 8,000 redheads are now being produced annually at Stillwater. Other important nesting ducks include cinnamon teal, mallards, pintails, and gadwall.

Considerable progress has been made in establishing a nesting flock of Canada geese. From a total of 9 geese produced in 1949-50, goose production increased to 140 in 1958.

Production of coots has risen from 1,500 in 1949 to reach a peak of 18,700 in 1958. Impressive numbers of other waterbirds nest on the Area each summer. These include the avocet, black-necked stilt, snowy egret, common egret, black-crowned and great blue herons, and western, eared, and pied-billed grebes. *White faced grebe (1958)*

Migration. A steady and substantial increase in the use of the Area by migrating waterfowl has occurred during the first ten years of Area operation. Waterfowl peaks during the first three years of the Area's operation did not exceed 50,000 ducks, 31,000 coots, 10,000 geese, and

1,000 whistling swans. By 1958-59 peak populations on the Management Area reached 198,000 ducks, 143,000 coots, 10,000 geese, and 13,000 swans. Important migrating species include cinnamon and green-winged teal, pintails, mallards, widgeon, redheads, and canvasbacks. Canada and snow geese are also important migrants. Table I presents a detailed summary of waterfowl use by species, September thru January.

TABLE I

USE DAYS BY SPECIES
September to January

Species	1955-'56	1956-'57	1957-'58	1958-'59	1959-'60
Mallard	294,300	856,845	616,000	1,532,200	842,700
Gadwall	212,900	283,795	652,376	864,400	611,900
Widgeon	183,010	346,830	1,212,890	2,604,400	733,100
Pintail	974,000	1,241,000	1,462,080	2,820,950	1,796,500
G-W Teal	1,252,500	644,335	3,143,020	3,746,450	3,210,500
Shoveler	840,600	300,625	1,004,220	2,426,850	1,853,300
Redhead	51,180	538,710	169,840	484,475	152,600
Canvasback	344,350	692,575	634,355	1,389,000	254,250
Ruddy	174,200	691,810	216,345	383,600	234,400
C. Goose	76,900	97,925	98,401	159,767	144,450
Snow Goose	208,000	298,743	107,720	448,700	101,150
W. Swan	108,500	534,996	374,688	417,540	180,540
Coot	2,613,100	3,187,000	3,418,935	9,209,100	3,177,850

(Minor species not listed)

Wintering. Most winters are mild to the extent that a complete and prolonged freeze-over does not occur. As a result the Area has been used increasingly as a wintering place by waterfowl. By 1958 wintering populations of 50,000 ducks, 1,500 geese, 7,000 coots, and 13,000 whistling swans were recorded on the Area. This represents a five-fold increase from the first few years of the Area's operation when total of all wintering waterfowl species did not exceed 15,000 birds.

Migratory Birds Other Than Waterfowl. A very few mourning doves are observed on the Area during migration periods. Nearby crop lands in the valley are sometimes heavily used by migrating doves. Common snipe sometimes occur in good numbers for brief periods of time during migration.

Big Game. A few mule deer occur on the Area. Rare sight records of deer in the Marsh Area have been made as the animals drift through from the nearby Stillwater Mountains. In recent years a small group of 10-15 deer appears to have become located in the timber and brush lands along the Lower Carson River.

Upland Game Birds. This desert type area has little potential for upland game birds. A few Valley quail and an occasional pheasant may be observed along the south edge of the Area as they drift out from nearby irrigated farm lands. An occasional small flock of quail may also be noted along the Lower Carson River. Total numbers of upland game birds on the Area are insignificant.

Role of the Area in the Pacific Flyway. It is apparent that the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area is making an important contribution to the production of waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway. Of special importance is the production of substantial numbers of critically scarce redheads.

The increasing importance of the Area as a feeding and resting place for migrating waterfowl is indicated by the substantial increases in waterfowl use now occurring. Among the primary puddle duck species which utilize the Area in significant numbers are green-winged teal, pintails, shovelers, widgeon, mallards, and gadwall. Redheads and canvasbacks are the primary diving ducks which occur on the Area. A peak of 26,000 canvasbacks was reached during the fall of 1958. Table I presents a detailed pattern of use for the various species of waterfowl over the past 5-year period.

It is evident that the Area is becoming increasingly important as an alternate migration stopover and wintering site for waterfowl, particularly ducks, which are being crowded from the coastal area by more restrictive land use there. This trend may logically be expected to continue as pressures in California and elsewhere continue to be exerted on existing waterfowl areas. It seems entirely possible that the Area may have even greater value in the future in sustaining waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway.

Habitat Inventory of the Area. During a period of intensive marsh development which commenced in 1949, the Area has been developed and expanded to approximately the full extent of its potential so far as overall aquatic habitat acreage and the potential water supply are concerned.

Deterioration of marsh habitat as a result of constant high water levels is evident in some units. Such deterioration is evidenced by cattail and hardstem bulrush dominance, accompanied by a high degree of carp infestation. This situation requires that more intensive development be accomplished within the existing marsh area to make possible the dewatering of areas of low waterfowl value. Such development would consist of cross dikes and water bypasses to provide for complete rotational dewatering of units. A desiccation program of this nature has proven effective in restoring waterfowl habitat values where water control facilities have permitted dewatering for a two-season period.

An intensive survey of the aquatic habitat within each unit of the primary marsh area was conducted during the summer of 1959. Data

obtained in this survey are summarized in Table II. The survey is to be conducted annually to inventory the amount and condition of waterfowl habitat. It will also serve to evaluate marsh management measures which need to be instituted to improve habitat quality.

TABLE II

AQUATIC HABITAT SURVEY 1959

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Acres of Open Water</u>	<u>Acres of Marsh</u>	<u>Total Acreage</u>	<u>Waterfowl Habitat Rating</u>
Stillwater Res.	1,707	132	1,839	Poor
Upper Foxtail	300	100	400	Poor
Foxtail Lake	890	220	1,110	Good
Dry Lake	509	54	563	Excellent
Cattail Lake	250	20	270	Fair
Division Pond	100		100	Fair
E. Alkali Flat (S)	700		700	Poor (Newly flooded)
Refuge Total	4,456	526	4,982	
Goose Lake	694	372	1,066	Fair
Tule Lake	1,244		1,244	Good
Nutgrass	1,000	2,100	3,100	Good
Swan Lake	1,225	360	1,585	Fair
Pintail Bay	1,470	45	1,515	Good
West Marsh	2,070	1,787	3,857	Poor
Public Shooting Total	7,703	4,664	12,367	

(Primary Marsh Only)

From the time development of the Area was commenced in 1949, water supply in the form of irrigation return flows and seasonal surpluses, has been generally good. Development has been pointed toward making beneficial use of waters surplus to the needs of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District to prevent such waters from wasting to the adjacent Carson Sink. The extent of the water supply to the Area has exceeded original expectations as to amount available at the time the project was conceived. To keep abreast of the abundant water supply, development has exceeded greatly the original concept of a total of 20,000 acres of waterfowl area.

Table III presents a waterfowl habitat acreage recapitulation with specification as to respective acreages now designated as refuge and public shooting area.

TABLE III

ACREAGE SUMMARY
(From 1955 Water Requirements Estimate)

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Open Water</u>	<u>Marsh</u>	<u>Total Aquatic</u>	<u>Saltgrass</u>	<u>Total Waterfowl Habitat</u>
<u>REFUGE</u>					
Stillwater Res.	1,707	132	1,839	46	1,885
Upper Foxtail and Foxtail Lake	1,001	556	1,557	136	1,693
Dry Lake	466	97	563	36	599
Oattail Lake	213	54	267	16	283
Division Pond	100		100	10	110
E. Alkali Flat (S)	700		700		700
Refuge Totals	4,187	839	5,026	244	5,270
<u>OPEN AREA</u>					
Goose Lake	694	372	1,066	88	1,154
Tule Lake	996	248	1,244	123	1,367
Nutgrass	1,005	2,100	3,105	190	3,295
Swan Lake	1,223	359	1,582	175	1,757
Pintail Bay	1,478	40	1,518	132	1,650
West Marsh	2,070	1,787	3,857	576	4,433
Indian Lakes	1,100		1,100	3,400	4,500
Pelican Island	3,080		3,080	1,335	4,415
Big Water	1,800		1,800		1,800
Sand Dunes	2,600		2,600		2,600
Waterspreading Areas Ole's, Arrowhead, Cottonwood, Paiute, Leter, Lower Carson			5,000		5,000
E. Alkali Flat (N)	1,500		1,500		1,500
Open Area Totals	17,546	4,906	27,452	6,019	33,471
GRAND TOTALS	21,733	5,745	32,478	6,263	38,741

Pattern of Waterfowl Use on the Area. The entire water and marsh acreage on the Area is utilized by waterfowl. The extent of use in an individual unit is directly proportional to the food producing capability of the unit. Excellent use is sometimes made of seasonally flooded and apparently barren areas such as the Big Water Unit where 20,000-25,000 ducks remained for over a month during the 1959 spring migration. Fresh water shrimp are important to ducks feeding in such areas where aquatic plants are almost nonexistent.

Waterfowl species show natural preferences for certain types of aquatic habitat. Diving ducks use the primary marsh area almost exclusively as the water units there are larger and deeper. Shallow water ducks are well distributed over the Area. Definite preference is shown for the shallow flooded Pelican Island Area when water is present there. In October, 1958, when a record fall migration peak of 191,000 ducks was recorded, 40% of the ducks were at Pelican Island.

Table IV offers a clear picture of waterfowl distribution on the various portions of the Area for the past four fall seasons.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF DUCK POPULATIONS
ON
PRIMARY USE AREAS
STILLWATER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Aerial Census Dates	Area	1956	1957	1958	1959
Sept. 4, 1956 Sept. 23, 1957 Sept. 19, 1958 Sept. 17, 1959	Refuge	27 %	7.5%	13 %	9 %
	Open Marsh Area	55	29.9	42	77
	Pelican Island	1	57.	16	11*
	Indian Lakes, etc.	14	3.5	2	1
	Ole's Pond Area	Not	Developed	0	0**
Oct. 1, 1956 Oct. 14, 1957 Oct. 9, 1958 Oct. 9, 1959	Refuge	16	36	16	12
	Open Marsh Area	58	38	33	68
	Pelican Island	21	24	26	5*
	Indian Lakes, etc.	5	0	2	10
	Ole's Pond Area	Not	Developed	3	0**
Oct. 24, 1956 Oct. 28, 1957 Oct. 30, 1958 Oct. 22, 1959	Refuge	40	40	26	36
	Open Marsh Area	31	38	23	52
	Pelican Island	23	20	41	2*
	Indian Lakes, etc.	0	0	2	5
	Ole's Pond Area	Not	Developed	5	0**
Nov. 13, 1956 Nov. 20, 1957 Nov. 28, 1958 Nov. 4, 1959	Refuge	60	23	32	39
	Open Marsh Area	28	38	28	56
	Pelican Island	12	36	31	1*
	Indian Lakes, etc.	No data	2	3	3
	Ole's Pond Area	Not	Developed	4	0**
Dec. 18, 1956 Dec. 8, 1958 Dec. 14, 1959	Refuge	45		41	19
	Open Marsh Area	41		14	65
	Pelican Island	14		31	6*
	Indian Lakes, etc.	No data		2	1
	Ole's Pond Area	Not	Developed	7	0**

* Short Water Supply

** No Water Supply

In general, waterfowl use of the individual units within the primary marsh area parallels closely the adjective descriptions of habitat condition specified in Table II, e.g., Dry Lake - Waterfowl food production - excellent; waterfowl use also excellent. West Marsh - waterfowl food production - poor; waterfowl use also poor.

WATERFOWL HUNTING

Justification. Maintenance of a public hunting area is a clearly established segment of the operational objectives for which the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area was established. Primary responsibility for administration of the public shooting program rests with the State Fish and Game Commission as specified in the Two-Way operating agreement between the Bureau and the State.

The intent of original agreements was that equal benefits should accrue for refuge and public shooting interests on the overall Area. For reasons too lengthy and involved to consider in this document, the operation has deviated widely from the original intent. Table III indicates the extent to which deviation has progressed. Refuge interests are served on only a relatively small portion of the Area.

Consideration of Refuge vs. Public Hunting Interests. It is not within the scope of authority of this plan to alter current operating procedures under which refuge and public shooting areas are designated. It is considered obligatory, however, to establish for the record certain facts as they relate to the joint State-Bureau operation.

At this time the State is pressuring for a formalization of current operating procedures by "scrapping" the existing agreements and subsequent amendments. Obviously the current operation has deviated widely from the original intent of "equal benefits for refuge and for public shooting". As a result of failure on the part of the Bureau to establish and maintain its mutual interest in administering the project, the State now controls approximately 80% of the waterfowl habitat. By a pending new agreement the State proposes to "scrap" all existing operating agreements in order to firm up the position it now has on the project.

Approximately 1-1/2 million dollars have been spent jointly on a 50-50 basis in the development and operation of the project during the past ten years. Not only does the State wish to obtain complete and lasting control of over 80% of the mutually developed area, it would also obligate the Bureau to continue to conduct maintenance and operational activities on the entire Area and pay 50% of the total operation cost.

Under the relatively light hunting pressure which now occurs at Stillwater, the acreage of waterfowl habitat appears to be adequate on the refuge. Much of the extensive public shooting area is hunted so lightly that it actually serves as "refuge". To assume that the area now set

aside specifically for refuge will always adequately serve refuge requirements is unrealistic. Increased hunting pressure and changing water and habitat conditions may radically alter the picture in the future.

Operational experience on the Area has indicated the necessity of periodic dewatering of marsh units for two seasons to eliminate undesirable plant competition. With only two productive units within the refuge (Table II) totaling 1,800 acres, food supply within the refuge would now be wholly inadequate if hunting pressure were such that ducks were forced to depend upon the refuge for a large portion of their food. This is normally the situation under heavy shooting pressure. The extent to which productive waterfowl habitat may be increased by management is not predictable at this time. The 1,700 acre Stillwater Point Reservoir within the Refuge cannot be seriously considered as a food producing area because of wide fluctuations in water level and excessive turbidity.

A brief consideration of the data set forth in Table III is in order. The specified total waterfowl habitat acreage now open to public shooting is 33,471 acres. This total includes some saltgrass acreage, since this plant occurs on seasonally wet areas which are used to a considerable extent by waterfowl. The 33,000+ figure is representative of the existing habitat during some eight of the first eleven years of the Area's operation. In drier years all or parts of the East Alkali Flat (north of Division Road), Big Water and Sand Dunes Units, totaling 5,900 acres, may be dry. Also in dry years some waterfowl habitat acreage might be partially dried up in the Pelican Island and other water-spreading areas. The 8,080-acre total within this category is entitled to water under the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District claim for pasture water and is assured of some water in all years and an adequate supply in good water years.

The matter of clarifying the Bureau's position in the joint operation is one which must be faced in the near future. To acquiesce to the State's desires in the matter of permanent division of the Area as previously discussed would perhaps represent a dereliction of responsibility on the part of the Bureau to safeguard the important international resource involved. There is perhaps a question as to whether Duck Stamp funds can be considered to be legally applied to a project featuring the obvious disparity between refuge and public shooting interests evident at Stillwater.

The Bureau is faced with making one of two choices. One - It may disregard the original intent of agreements under which the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area was conceived, agreements which are literally the Bureau's "Bill of Rights", and turn 80% or more of the waterfowl habitat on the Area over to the State for all time as presently proposed by the State. Or - It may insist that the concepts of existing agreements be followed to the letter, even though this is not now the case, assuring that the obligation of the Bureau to properly safe-

guard the waterfowl resource shall be fulfilled. It is considered that existing agreements properly establish the extent of the Bureau's interest and that such agreements would stand up in any court in the land. For the Bureau to continue in a compromising and defensive attitude in negotiating with the State in an attempt to bring operations on the Area into proper perspective seems entirely unwarranted.

It is suggested that the Bureau establish its right to administer one-half of the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area at this time. Determination of the proportion of the refuge area to be open to hunting will then rest with the Bureau. Failure to establish this right nullifies, in its entirety, the intent and purpose of this report, since the State has assumed full responsibility for the regulation of public use on virtually the entire Area.

Public Reaction to Hunting Recommendations. No changes are immediately proposed to existing hunting arrangements on the Area. A positive move on the part of the Bureau to establish its proper right to administer one-half the Area could be expected to create some opposition at the local level and also from the Nevada Fish and Game Commission. This opposition might be likened to the apprehension of a small child who resents the efforts of an adult to assist him to hold a candy sucker he has given the child. The child is unable to understand that the adult does not wish to take the candy away from him but merely wants to be sure that he doesn't lose the candy--or possibly suffer the ill effects of eating too much.

If the Bureau does not wish to invoke any displeasure by establishing a stronger administrative voice in the operation, it is recommended that the Area be divided as provided for in existing agreements. The State and the Bureau would then operate their individual portions of the Area independently.

Alternate Waterfowl Hunting Opportunity. The Stillwater Wildlife Management Area ranks as the No. 1 waterfowl area in Nevada. Much of Nevada is arid and mountainous, and most of the waterfowl hunting opportunity in the State is centered at Stillwater and other waterfowl areas in the west-central portion of the State.

The Canvasback Club adjacent to the Stillwater Area provides hunting for a good number of hunters. Waterfowl use and hunting opportunity on the Greenhead Club located approximately 12 miles south of the Area are excellent. Hunter use on the Greenhead Club compares favorably with that which occurs at Stillwater. The Club has 275 stockholders plus approximately 100 annual memberships. Considerable hunting opportunity exists also on numerous canals, seep ponds, and reservoirs in the Valley. The State operated public hunting areas at Fernley, 25 miles west of Fallon and at Mason Valley, 50 miles to the southwest also provide considerable waterfowl hunting. The large Humboldt Sink area 25 miles to the north also offers good waterfowl hunting opportunity.

Human Population Information. With a total of only one-fourth million people in the entire State "people problems" are relatively few in Nevada. Approximately one-half of the hunting use at Stillwater originates from the Reno-Sparks area 65 miles west of Fallon. Combined population of these two towns is believed to be near 75,000 at present. Other towns within easy driving distance are Hawthorne, 65 miles to the south with a population of approximately 3,000; Lovelock, 65 miles to the northeast, also with a population of approximately 3,000; Carson City, the "smallest capital in the U.S.", 65 miles to the southwest with a population of 7,000; Fernley, 25 miles to the west, with a population of approximately 1,000. Fallon and the balance of Churchill County boast a population of around 7,000. There are no other towns of consequence within 100 miles.

Increasing numbers of hunters are coming to the Area from California. With the completion of improved free-way type highways the drive from Sacramento and the Bay Area to Stillwater now requires only 4-6 hours. Greatly increased hunting interest may be expected at Stillwater from Californians as club shooting privileges become relatively more scarce and more expensive, and as Californians learn of the hunting opportunity which exists at Stillwater.

Hunting Pressure. It has been earlier indicated that hunting pressure on the rather vast waterfowl habitat area open to public hunting is generally light. Occasionally several hundred hunters may use the Area on a single weekend such as opening day.

The extent of hunter use in the primary marsh area has been fairly well established by a combined system of weekend checking and automatic road counters. Peak hunter use occurred in 1954 when approximately 10,000 hunter days of use occurred on the primary marsh area. During the 1958-59 season, use on the primary marsh area was 6,500 hunter days-- additional use occurring in the Pelican Island, Indian Lakes, and Ole's Pond country brought the total up to 10,000 hunter use days. During the season just past, 1959-60, use of the Marsh dropped to 4,500 hunter days with a corresponding drop in hunting on the remainder of the Area with total hunter use estimated at 6,500 hunter use days.

Waterfowl Use Summary. Tables I and V indicate the extent of waterfowl use which has occurred on the Area in the past five years. Table I indicates the total days use by each of the species important on the Area. Table V indicates the pattern of total waterfowl use during the waterfowl hunting season and during the two week periods before and after the season.

Waterfowl Hunting Recommendations. Foregoing sections have adequately considered the existing limitations of the Bureau with respect to regulating hunting upon the Area. It is recommended that effort be directed toward improving the position of the Bureau with respect to participating in the regulation of public hunting.

TABLE V

WATERFOWL USE DAYS BY WEEKLY PERIODS

(Two Weeks Prior Through Two Weeks After Hunting Season)

<u>Period</u>	<u>Waterfowl Use Days</u>	
	<u>Ducks, Geese, Swans</u>	<u>Coots</u>
<u>Hunting Season</u>		
<u>Oct. 15, 1955, to Jan. 2, 1956</u>		
October 2-8, 1955	361,200	280,000
October 9-15, 1955	550,228	299,600
October 16-22, 1955	458,192	37,800
October 23-29, 1955	375,900	42,000
Oct. 30-Nov. 5, 1955	378,420	48,300
November 6-12, 1955	333,620	50,400
November 13-19, 1955	299,320	49,000
November 20-26, 1955	193,270	7,000
Nov. 27-December 3, 1955	139,510	5,600
December 4-10, 1955	144,235	7,000
December 11-17, 1955	127,540	7,000
December 18-24, 1955	126,840	7,000
December 25-31, 1955	126,770	7,000
January 1-7, 1956	132,069	9,800
January 8-14, 1956	131,075	7,000
<u>Hunting Season</u>		
<u>Oct. 13, 1956 to Dec. 31, 1956</u>		
Sept. 30-October 6, 1956	325,675	469,000
October 7-13, 1956	345,275	350,000
October 14-20, 1956	383,775	175,000
October 21-27, 1956	564,536	93,100
Oct. 28-Nov. 3, 1956	533,624	70,000
November 4-10, 1956	598,500	56,000
November 11-17, 1956	597,310	48,300
November 18-24, 1956	563,640	49,000
Nov. 25-Dec. 1, 1956	336,140	35,000
December 2-8, 1956	295,540	14,000
December 9-15, 1956	195,965	11,550
December 16-22, 1956	173,285	10,500
December 23-29, 1956	154,770	8,750
Dec. 30, 1956-Jan. 5, 1957	150,885	8,400
January 6-12, 1957	129,675	7,000

TABLE V, Page 2

<u>Period</u>	<u>Waterfowl Use Days</u>	
	<u>Ducks, Geese, Swans</u>	<u>Coots</u>
<u>Hunting Season</u>		
<u>Oct. 15, 1957, to Jan. 7, 1958</u>		
September 22-28, 1957	544,600	455,000
September 29-Oct. 5, 1957	707,700	350,000
October 6-12, 1957	939,400	280,000
October 13-19, 1957	1,198,610	300,300
October 20-26, 1957	1,131,900	210,000
Oct. 27-Nov. 2, 1957	1,134,973	143,500
November 3-9, 1957	1,068,305	105,000
November 10-16, 1957	468,650	35,000
November 17-23, 1957	397,110	33,180
November 24-30, 1957	367,850	14,000
December 1-7, 1957	321,580	7,000
December 8-14, 1957	140,140	5,600
December 15-21, 1957	131,800	3,500
December 22-28, 1957	146,580	2,100
Dec. 29, 1957-Jan. 4, 1958	186,844	2,135
January 5-11, 1958	186,844	2,135
January 12-18, 1958	186,844	2,135
<u>Hunting Season</u>		
<u>Oct. 10, 1958, to Jan. 14, 1959</u>		
Sept. 28-Oct. 4, 1958	1,148,700	980,000
October 5-11, 1958	1,150,149	1,003,100
October 12-18, 1958	1,275,015	980,000
October 19-25, 1958	1,247,225	840,000
Oct. 26-Nov. 1, 1958	1,291,402	525,000
November 2-8, 1958	1,293,600	280,000
November 9-15, 1958	1,066,800	175,000
November 16-22, 1958	688,100	140,000
November 23-29, 1958	890,400	91,000
Nov. 30-Dec. 6, 1958	835,975	63,000
December 7-13, 1958	744,975	56,000
December 14-20, 1958	681,100	56,000
December 21-27, 1958	693,000	49,000
Dec. 28, 1958-Jan. 3, 1959	453,950	70,000
January 4-10, 1959	492,450	70,000
January 11-17, 1959	526,470	98,000
January 18-24, 1959	509,425	98,000

TABLE V, Page 3

<u>Period</u>	<u>Waterfowl Use Days</u>	
	<u>Ducks, Geese, Swans</u>	<u>Coots</u>
Hunting Season <u>Oct. 9, 1959, to Jan. 8, 1960</u>		
Sept. 27-Oct. 3, 1959	620,200	350,000
October 4-10, 1959	695,800	115,500
October 11-17, 1959	689,500	112,000
October 18-24, 1959	567,665	52,500
October 25-31, 1959	552,895	52,500
November 1-7, 1959	771,400	52,500
November 8-14, 1959	790,300	47,600
November 15-21, 1959	703,500	45,500
November 22-28, 1959	632,450	42,000
Nov. 29-Dec. 5, 1959	635,250	42,000
December 6-12, 1959	485,100	28,000
December 13-19, 1959	246,750	14,000
December 20-26, 1959	245,350	14,000
Dec. 27, 1959-Jan. 2, 1960	221,200	14,000
January 3-9, 1960	57,050	14,000
January 10-16, 1960	60,900	1,050
January 17-23, 1960	60,200	1,050

WATERFOWL USE RECAPITULATION

<u>Period</u>	<u>Ducks, Geese, Swans</u>	<u>Coots</u>
1955-1956		
September-December, 1955	4,258,232	2,578,700
January, 1956	<u>368,634</u>	<u>118,300</u>
Total	4,626,866	2,697,000
1956-1957		
September-December, 1956	6,681,984	3,155,850
January, 1957	<u>538,135</u>	<u>30,150</u>
Total	7,220,119	3,186,000
1957-1958		
September-December, 1957	9,491,442	3,398,845
January, 1958	<u>910,917</u>	<u>22,720</u>
Total	10,402,359	3,421,565
1958-1959		
September-December, 1958	15,402,471	8,815,100
January, 1959	<u>2,535,430</u>	<u>434,000</u>
Total	17,937,901	9,249,100

TABLE V, Page 4

WATERFOWL USE RECAPITULATION (Continued)

<u>Period</u>	<u>Ducks, Geese, Swans</u>	<u>Coots</u>
1959-1960		
September-December, 1959	10,234,560	3,173,100
January, 1960	<u>323,325</u>	<u>4,750</u>
Total	10,557,885	3,177,850

HUNTING of RESIDENT GAME SPECIES

Existing agreements between the State and the Bureau provide that hunting of all types may be conducted during appropriate State seasons on all lands operated by the State as a Public Hunting Area. This applies to upland and big game as well as to waterfowl. It has been mentioned that the former are virtually nonexistent on the Area.

Virtually no lands maintained in strictly refuge status lie adjacent to privately owned farm lands which might support a few quail or pheasants. As a result, quail, pheasants, and cottontails are rare on the refuge. In conclusion, there is no interest in hunting of upland game on the refuge. The same situation applies to deer since only one or two deer are seen during a year on the refuge.

No hunting of upland or big game is recommended on the refuge.

FISHING

General. The cooperative operation at Stillwater limits authority of the Bureau to rule on fishing except on the area designated as refuge at this time.

Within the refuge area little fishing opportunity exists at the present time. Most of the units are shallow, limiting their attractiveness to fish, particularly during hot weather. Frequent winter drawdown of marsh units within the refuge is performed to facilitate carp eradication. This activity further limits the possibility of a fishery becoming established in the refuge. Some bullheads, along with carp, will continue to occur in the Stillwater Point Reservoir within the refuge.

In the portion of the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area now administered by the State a good fishery exists in the Large West Marsh area. Although cattail encroachment and carp infestation have largely destroyed waterfowl values in this Unit, this comparatively deep unit continues to provide reasonably good fishing. Interest is concentrated in large-

mouthed black bass, and good catches of bullheads are also made. Bluegills and a few white catfish make up most of the balance of the catch.

Carp and bullheads, especially the former, are distributed over virtually all Area waters. Excessive shallowness of the water tends to limit the distribution of even these species, particularly during the heat of summer.

It is not considered possible for fishing activity to adversely effect waterfowl on the refuge in the foreseeable future. This results from the virtual absence of game fish on the refuge and the proposed program of water management and carp eradication efforts which will continue to severely limit all forms of fish life within refuge marsh units below Stillwater Point Reservoir.

A rather small but regular contingent of fishermen utilize the Stillwater Point Reservoir outlet and the reservoir itself in the vicinity of the outlet for carp and bullhead fishing. This activity has no adverse effect on waterfowl.

Fishing Pressure. A gradual increase in fishing interest has occurred. Approximately 4,000 fisherman use days occurred on the Area in 1959. This represents a rather substantial fishery for a sparsely populated area.

Alternate Fishing Opportunity. Bass fishing opportunity is limited in this arid state. Nearest alternate bass fishing sites of good quality are Lake Mead and the Ruby Marshes--both over 300 miles distant. Lahontan Reservoir and the Carson River below Lahontan offer fair fishing opportunity for warm water species and some trout. Some trout fishing is available in streams within 75-200 miles of Fallon--mostly on a "put and take" basis. Walker and Pyramid Lakes, both 60 miles from Fallon, offer good trout fishing during winter, but do not produce fish in summer.

Refuge Fishing Recommendations. In the interest of serving the limited demand for fishing at Stillwater Point Reservoir and its outlet, it is recommended that refuge waters be legally open to fishing except during the waterfowl hunting season. During hunting season it is recommended that all refuge waters be closed to fishing to prevent disturbance of waterfowl.

General Regulations Pertaining to Hunting and Fishing. The nature of the Stillwater operation dictates that applicable State regulations shall apply for the regulation of hunting and fishing activity. The State is now in the process of formulating a set of regulations which shall apply to areas it administers.

Headquarters of the Sierra District of the Nevada Fish and Game Commission is located at Fallon. State personnel are available to conduct regulatory programs and to obtain bag and creel check data.

Specific Regulations Pertaining to the "Refuge" Area. The area now designated as "refuge" has been described in regulations set forth in the Federal Register to formally close the area to hunting. No change is proposed in the refuge area already legally described at this time.

Mount Diablo Base and Meridian

Township 19 North, Range 31 East

Secs. 2 and 3, all;
 Sec. 4, NE 1/4, E 1/2 NW 1/4, NE 1/4 SW 1/4, S 1/2 SW 1/4, SE 1/4;
 Sec. 7, all south of County Highway and Stillwater Slough;
 Sec. 8, S 1/2 SE 1/4;
 Secs. 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33, all.

Township 20 North, Range 31 East

Sec. 13, S 1/2;
 Sec. 14, S 1/2;
 Sec. 22, E 1/2;
 Secs. 23, 24, 25, and 26, all;
 Sec. 27, NE 1/4, NE 1/4 NW 1/4, S 1/2 NW 1/4, and S 1/2;
 Sec. 28, E 1/2 SE 1/4;
 Sec. 33, NE 1/4, SE 1/4 NW 1/4, and S 1/2;
 Secs. 34, 35, and 36, all.

Township 20 North, Range 32 East

Sec. 16, S 1/2;
 Sec. 17, S 1/2;
 Sec. 18, S 1/2;
 Secs. 19, 20, 21, 29, and 30, all.

It is recommended that the described area be closed to all hunting at all times and open to fishing except during the waterfowl hunting season.

Submitted by,

George L. Wiseman

George L. Wiseman
 Refuge Manager

March 11, 1960

FALLON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Attached to the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area in the Pelican Island Area is a satellite refuge which could be more aptly referred to as a "stepchild".

Part of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge was incorporated into the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area at the time the latter area was established in 1948. The balance of the Fallon Refuge area extends out into the barren Carson Sink. Administration is complicated by a checkerboard pattern of ownership wherein alternate sections of land are controlled by the Bureau and the County. No section markers or boundaries have been established to make possible a differentiation between refuge and county lands.

The County has granted the Nevada Fish and Game Commission a 99-year lease on its alternate sections. In practice, no hunting closure has ever been in effect on lands of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge.

Due to the nature of the habitat only 2-3 sections of refuge land are attractive to waterfowl. These sections have become vegetated with saltgrass, nutgrass (*Scirpus paludosus*) and knotgrass (*Paspalum distichum*) as the freshening flows of the Carson River spread out to form an alluvial fan before wasting to the Carson Sink. With harnessing of the upstream river flows, water reaches Fallon Refuge lands only during periods of heavy flow--generally during winter when upstream water supplies are good.

Legal description of Fallon National Refuge lands not incorporated into the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area is as follows:

Mount Diablo Meridian

Township 22 North, Range 30 East, Secs. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 30, 32, and 34.

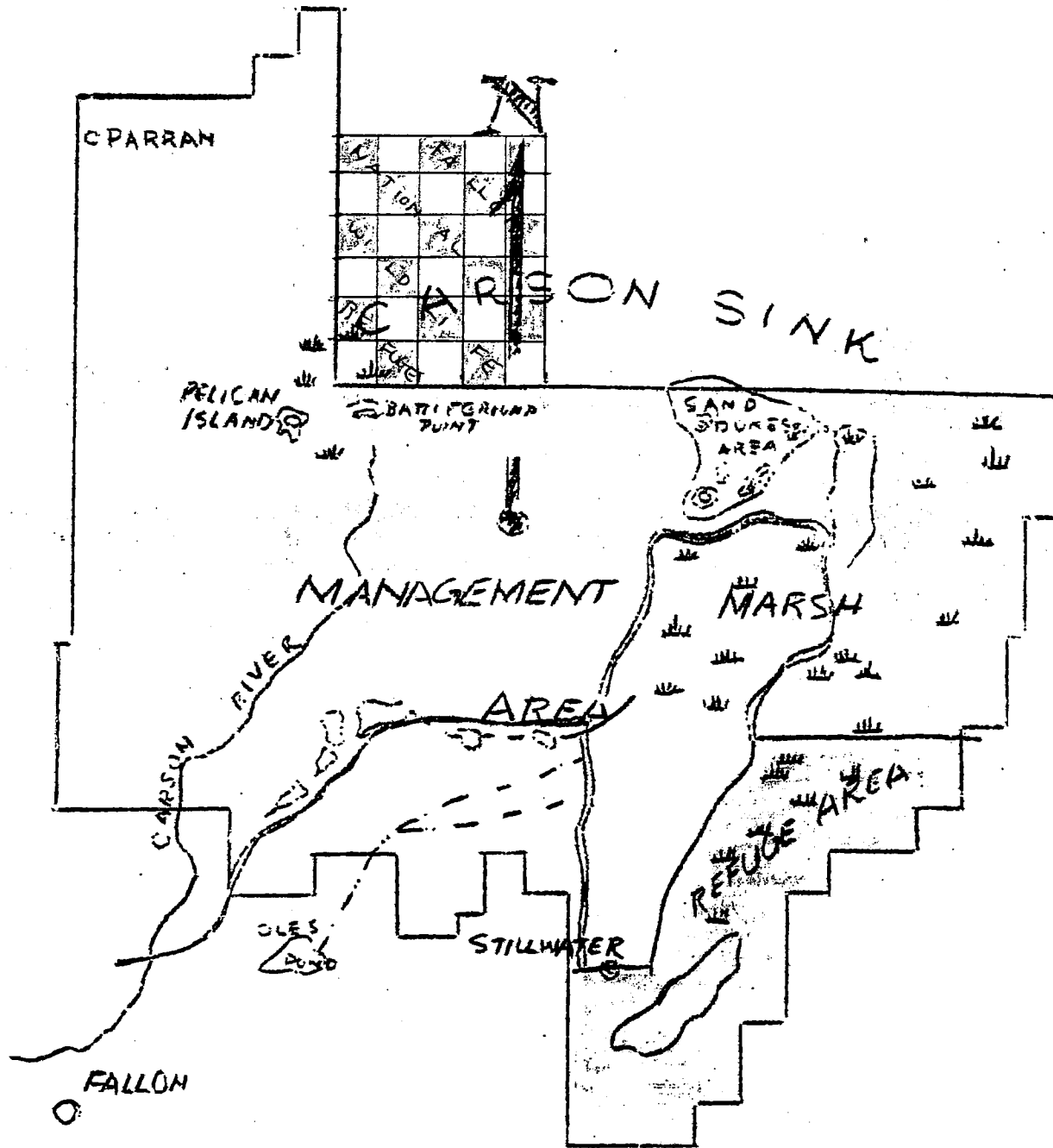
It is recommended that Fallon Refuge lands remain in status quo pending completion of negotiations with the Nevada Fish and Game Commission relative to a division of interests in the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area. Another factor which has a profound bearing upon the Fallon Refuge is the pending Washoe Project which might conceivably limit water supply to the extent of destroying the value of the Refuge in virtually all years.

Submitted by,

George L. Wiseman
George L. Wiseman
Refuge Manager

March 11, 1960

STILLWATER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



REFUGE - RED

PUBLIC HUNTING - WHITE