Conservation
Pledge

I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully to defend from waste the natural resources of my country—its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife.

Published Bi-Monthly in the interest of conservation of Louisiana's natural resources by the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, P. O. Box 649, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804.
PASS-A-LOUTRE
DELTA DUCKS

Ted Joanen

Duck hunters on Pass-a-Loutre Public Shooting Area, located on the lower delta marshes of the Mississippi River, experienced excellent hunting during the 1967-68 waterfowl season. On 22 morning hunts, with sportsmen participating from throughout the state, 5,123 birds were bagged. Sportsmen also experienced one of the mildest duck seasons weatherwise in many a year. Average monthly temperatures for November and December recorded by the Boothville Weather Station were 62.9 and 60.1 respectively. The marshes were in excellent condition with an abundance of natural foods and served to winter many thousands of waterfowl, also favorable weather provided better hunting conditions.

Since its initiation in 1954 the Pase-a-Loutre Hunting program has played host to many thousands of duck hunters throughout the state. This tract of land was set up by an act of the 1921 Louisiana Legislature as a public shooting area and is located at the extreme end of the Mississippi Flyway in Plaquemine Parish. During the past waterfowl season the Refuge Division of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission operated nine public camps and provided transportation from Venice to the hunting area and return. All was made ready for the first group of hunters who arrived on November the 17th. Eleven hunts were conducted throughout the season, each hunt lasting two days plus an additional day for traveling. Shooting was allowed on four mornings each week, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. This prevented over shooting the area and maintained a huntable concentration of birds throughout the entire duck season.

Interest in duck hunting at Pass-a-Loutre has steadily increased year after year with over 1,939 applications received this year. Applications came from all parts of the state including Monroe, Shreveport, and Alexandria, although the majority of these applications came from the New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Hammond and Covington areas. Applications were received from Mississippi although first choice was given to Louisiana hunters. A total of 792 permits were issued with 697 hunters making the trip.

The total kill for waterfowl by hunters participating in the public camp hunting program for the 1967-68 waterfowl season is presented in Table 1. Gadwall ranked first in the bag with 1,527 birds killed. This made up 33 per cent of the total ducks killed. Pintail was second with 827 birds taken, and baldpate was third with 754 birds killed. Lesser scaup ranked fourth with 406 birds tallied. The scaup moved inland about mid-season and at that time appeared in the hunters bag not only as bonus ducks but in some cases made up the entire bag limits.

The average daily kill per hunter effort (3.2) equaled that of the record breaking season of 1966-67. This could be attributed to several factors. First with the early season opening hunters could take advantage of the high tides caused by the prevailing southern winds. This made hunting easier as all parts of marshes were easily accessible to the hunters. Also, the hunters as a general rule who are not familiar with the area were better able to select their hunting blinds.

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1968
Information on wind velocity and direction taken from the weather station at Boothville, Louisiana for the entire 1967-68 waterfowl season indicates the prevailing winds on the lower delta were from a southerly direction and occasionally shifting to north and northwest. Tides remained well above normal as long as the winds were from a southerly direction. North and northwest winds were after accompanied by rain as this cold front moved into the area. As long as this frontal system remained the weather was clear and tides were well below normal, although heavy cloud cover was sometimes associated with this type of system.

Hunter success could be directly related to the weather conditions existing at that time on the lower delta, as this area is severely affected by tidal flow. Hunter success was highest with the south to southeasterly winds. Also, on the first day of a weather change, to a northerly direction hunter success was high. Each day this northerly wind persisted, tides were below normal and hunter success decreased.

Fog is typical on the lower delta in the early morning hours and late afternoon, but would dissipate shortly after daylight. Although on one hunt this condition lasted two days and greatly reduced the waterfowl kill and hampered boat travel. Hunt number 7 was delayed one day due to the severe fog on the river. The boats left Venice Saturday morning rather than Friday at noon.

The second reason for the heavy duck kill was that the marshes of the lower delta were in excellent condition due to the high river stage of last spring. Although the production of delta duck potato was not equaled to that of the 1966-67 crop, the aquatic production was excellent. As a result of this several hundred thousand waterfowl wintered on the Pass-a-Loutre this year. Waterfowl inventories conducted throughout the season indicates the peak wintering population of 165,000 duck and 40,000 blue and snow geese. This peak occurred in November and dropped to 76,000 ducks and 10,000 geese in December (Table 2).

In addition to the public camp hunting area the remaining portions of Pass-a-Loutre are open to hunters who have their own equipment. This open area consists of some 40,000 acres of the more remote sections of Pass-a-Loutre. Free permits are issued for the use of this area and hunting success equals that of the public camp hunting section. This area includes the marsh west of South Pass, north of Pass-a-Loutre and east of a line from Jackson Bayou on Pass-a-Loutre, along the north and east shore of Blind Bay and across Southeast Pass following the west shoreline of Red Fish Bay. Permits for each hunter using this area may be obtained by writing to the Refuge Division office in N.O.

Pass-a-Loutre hunters experienced one of the finest duck seasons in many years. Weather conditions were ideal for the most part and shooting was excellent.

Marsh conditions during the summer of 1968 were ideal for the establishment of dense stands of aquatic plants in all of the ponds on Pass-a-Loutre, and the high river stages experienced during the spring and summer deposited silt on the mud flats which in turn encouraged the growth of delta duck potato and fresh water

Table 2

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*Waterfowl inventory flown by Clark Hoffauer, La. Wild Life and Fisheries Commission.
**Not censused.

Louisiana CONSERVATIONIST
three-square. It is anticipated that these conditions will again attract a large wintering population of waterfowl to Pass-a-Loutre for the 1968-69 waterfowl hunting season.

HOW TO APPLY
1. Make application direct to Larry McNease, Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, 400 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130.
2. You may apply in a group not to exceed eight (8) persons, naming each person in the application.
3. No person may submit more than one application for each week. A second choice for the other hunt that week should be indicated, if possible, in this application. If the name of any person is received in more than one application for the same week, it will be disqualified.
4. You must make application for the hunts desired as specified below.
5. Be sure to specify the dates you wish to hunt, and your mailing address.
6. All applications must be made THROUGH THE U. S. MAIL and postmarked during the application dates for the hunt as listed in the table below.
7. The two-day hunting trip fee is $5.00. No refunds can be made if you fail to meet the boat; permits can be transferred. Enclose check or money order in full amount for your party. If not selected, full refund will be made.
8. Facilities limited to men over 16; persons under 18 must be accompanied by parent or guardian.
9. Seventy-two hunters can be accommodated on each hunt. Camps will be assigned by Commission personnel in charge.
10. No rifles, private boats or motors are allowed. DON'T BRING ANY!
11. Duck, goose, and coot shooting only is permitted. Waterfowl retrievers may be used.

*Application
Period           Drawing           Hunting Dates
Nov. 25-Dec. 2   Dec. 5            Dec. 14 & 15; 17 & 18.
Dec. 16-Dec. 23  Dec. 30           Jan. 7 & 8; 11 & 12.

*Letters must be postmarked between these dates and received prior to drawing.

REVISED JULY 15, 1968

LOUISIANA FISH RECORDS

Fresh Water Records

BASS, LARGEMOUTH
11 11, Elvin Husser, Nov. 1958
11 7, Zeke Davis, March 1962
11 5, Robert Berry, March 1959
10 6, Rufus Williams, Aug. 1956
10 4, Nat Smith, 1958
10 1, J. E. Stewart, 1957
10 0, George Berger, Jan. 1960
9 14, Henry H. Harris, March 1964

BASS, SPOTTED (Kentucky)
4 3, Carroll Perkins
2 15, Dr. Lyle St. Amant, Aug. 1965
2 8, Lynn Knippers, May 1966
2 4, Max Summers, June 1965
1 13, J. W. McFatter, April 1964

BREAM
2 8, Grant M. Kelly, 1959
2 2, Otis Marshall, May 1966
2 1, Dave Murphy, April 1967
1 14, Fernin Grigsby, 1947
1 14, E. T. George, May 1967
1 11, Fred W. Elliott, April 1962
1 9, W. E. Morley, July 1953
1 8, Bob Scearece, Feb. 1954

CATFISH
46 0, E. F. Whitteborg, June 1966

CRAPPIE (sacala)
4 4, Welzie Garrett, April 1950
3 14, Pat Cullen, March 1960
3 13 1/2, Nellie Keller, Feb. 1964
3 3, E. Lawrence Klein, April 1953
2 14, Leander Frey, April 1953
2 12, Mabel Slaton, April 1964

Salt Water Records

COBIA
149 12, Garnett L. Caudell, May 1965
82 8, Harry Morris, May 1966
75 0, James G. McMurry, May 1967
73 0, Jack Dart, May 1954
68 0, Robert G. Hebert, May 1964
66 0, Joseph Boudreaux, July 1966
65 9, R. L. Watson, Jr., May 1967
65 0, Miss Pat Morvant, July 1962
64 4, Watson Merritt, July 1956
62 0, Joseph C. Cronan, July 1966
62 0, Lloyd J. Derise, July 1967

AMBERJACK
83 0, George Tucker, July 1950
75 12, F. C. Buchanan, June 1965
64 4, Mrs. Harold Harleaux, July 1965
63 0, Don Lyman, July 1958
62 0, Mrs. Edwin Loes, July 1958
55 0, Albert J. Waguespack, July 1965
54 8, Raymond Miramon, Aug. 1963
53 4, Albert Steen, July 1963
51 8, Frank Eckert, Aug. 1963
49 0, Myron Landry, July 1967

BARRACUDA
40 0, J. J. Jones, Sept. 1966
38 4, Nolan McCraine, July 1967
37 8, John Dofter, April 1965
37 8, Richard Glenn, July 1965
36 12, C. F. Carter, Jr., July 1959
36 8, Frank Heard, July 1958
35 0, Myron Landry, May 1967
34 8, Frank Van Sickle, April 1965
34 0, B. O. Hay, Aug. 1965

BONITO
24 9, Sterling Couch, July 1949
23 0, Charles Andres III, July 1949
20 0, Mrs. Lester Plaisance, July 1959