

Status of Water Fowl in Northwestern States

The Lake region of southern Oregon was formerly the greatest nesting and feeding area for water fowl in the West. There are three large separate areas east of the Cascade Mountains and lying partly in Oregon and partly in California.

*Compare
Conn. & R. 9*

The first large area east of the Cascade Range is the Klamath, consisting of the Upper Klamath marsh, Upper Klamath Lake, and Lower Klamath Lake. The next area is Warner Valley about seventy-five miles to the East. Both of these areas run north and south. The Klamath area is drained by the Klamath River emptying into the Pacific Ocean. There is no outlet to the Warner Valley marshes, or Abert or ~~Sixxex~~ Summer Lakes to the north.

A third large area is the Malheur and Harney Lake basins in Harney Valley in southeastern Oregon.

The value of these areas was very great in past years as breeding grounds for ducks and geese. Mallards, pin-tails, gadwalls, ruddy ducks, cinnamon teal, red-heads, were common breeders. Malheur Lake was undoubtedly the greatest breeding ground within the border of the U. S. proper for Canada geese.

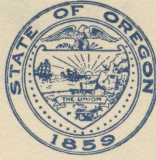
A direct cause that led to the total destruction of some of these areas, and the partial destruction of others, as breeding and feeding areas for waterfowl and which in turn led to greatly decreased numbers of waterfowl on the Pacific Coast were the definite promotion schemes of the western states, and the federal government, to encourage homesteaders and settlers to come out from the Middle-West and East and take up a farm without cost.

Many years ago after all the best farming land in the West had been homesteaded, ~~and~~ only areas that were partially rocky dry sagebrush land, or land bordering the alkaline lake areas that

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unproductive were left. The government established land offices in various places bordering the practically useless public domain that was left.

The western states were naturally anxious to have settlers for the purpose of building up the country from an agricultural and stock raising standpoint. The public domain was producing no taxes to the state and county governments. A homesteader that was willing to come out from the middle West, build a cabin and live on a claim of 340 acres for a certain number of years, ^{was} ~~given~~ ^{a deed} ~~title~~ to the land by the federal government. The land was then subject to state and county taxes.

The land offices established by the government were headed by political appointees who were looking for jobs. They helped spread the information through the country that farmers could get free land by coming west.

The state governments became active. Organizations like chambers of commerce in small and large towns advertised in the East and middle West for settlers to come with their families and take advantage of the government offers for free farms. Promoting organizations grew up for the purpose of helping settlers to locate. The cooperation of the railroads was secured and the railroads employed agents to encourage people to move West because it built up their business. States established dry farm experiment stations to show the settlers that they could prosper by clearing sagebrush and rock.

It was the most diabolical scheme which dove-tailed together to deceive a large number of ignorant and hard-working country people that has ever been perpetrated in this country.

I do not mean that the early settlers who came west when

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good land was available were cheated. It was after all the good land was settled upon and deeded away that the vast tail-end of the ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ public domain, useless for agriculture, was dealt out to a deceived public. When men spent their last savings to take up these dry, alkaline, rocky homesteads, they were compelled to stick it out and suffer.

To get down to actual cases, the whole eastern Oregon country is dotted with deserted, half wrecked cabins of homesteaders, and many have stuck it out in the hope that some day they could get a little return. You find the wrecks of deserted school houses that were built from taxpayers' money.

Many of these dry-land homesteaders were compelled to haul water six, eight, or ten miles for drinking and farm purposes. They had to live at times on sage hens, antelope, and any other game available to keep from starving. *same*

The homesteaders that settled adjacent to areas like Lower Klamath and Malheur Lakes, took up land that was partially alkaline in character. The water supply was very limited from an irrigation standpoint. Where formally it fed these wide alkaline settling basins, there was always the struggle to obtain some water rights and when spread out in the attempt to irrigate, the evaporation was very great and water levels were lowered.

The condition was such that not a single settler could make a decent living. The homesteaders and their families suffered without a chance to improve conditions. The various species of water-fowl that formerly existed because of these vast alkali marshes suffered and in many places were completely destroyed.

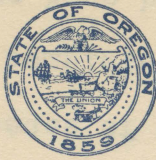
So, for many years we have had a condition most difficult to right. People still living on these lands in the hope that some-

*Some of the
water
was
used*

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thing may happen have a right to be relieved and encouraged to settle
productive
in some other area where they can make a living. These vast alkaline
marsh areas should be returned to the waterfowl. The state and fed-
eral governments owe this readjustment because a wrong was formerly
committed for which they are directly responsible.

*States or Fed. Gov. demand farmers
- a noble waterfront*

*disturb for wild fowl
at partridge the feathers*

*Don't let Surfer & Labor
Left B.B. houses at
Farm Fowls settled
on hard alkali lakes*

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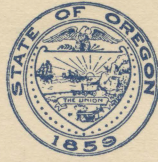
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