

R E P O R T  
of  
W. EARLE BRADBURY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
to  
THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

DAMAGE

We have operated for nearly one year under the new law which prohibited payment for crop damage and automobile damage caused by protected wild animals, and it is the belief of the writer of this report that the new law is proving very satisfactory. Judging from the reports by the wardens, and from personal observation, crop damage is very definitely less this year than in previous years, and automobile damages are not so great as they were when this Department was paying for such damage. The repellent cost is, and will continue to be, large, but we hope that with the distribution of these repellents, we will be able to control the situation and conditions will be such that any bill introduced in the next Legislature that would force this Department to pay crop damage again will be defeated.

GAME FARM

During the season of 1951 a total of 23,169 pheasants was released from the State Game Farm, in the following counties:

Androscoggin	1183
Aroostook	12
Cumberland	4562
Franklin	103
Hancock	2504
Kennebec	2212
Knox	540
Lincoln	682
Oxford	834
Penobscot	1784
Piscataquis	100
Sagadahoc	767
Somerset	1200
Waldo	1136
Washington	1820
York	<u>3730</u>
TOTAL	23169

The cost of this program for the fiscal year 1951-1952 was \$35,444.07. The reason that the cost was more than in previous years is mainly because of the increased cost of grain, also

GAME FARM (Continued)

because there were many birds carried through the winter for spring release upon the recommendation of the Conservation Committee. This Committee believed that better results would be obtained if the birds were handled in this manner. This may possibly be true, but the cost of wintering the birds is great and there is a possibility that because of this increased cost such a program is not justified.

For the season of 1952 our aim was to hatch and rear as many birds as possible at the least possible cost. With this thought in mind, we contacted various clubs and individuals to see if they were interested in doing some work to help out in this pheasant program. It was decided that if these people would take birds for rearing, the Game Farm would hatch the eggs and rear the birds to six weeks of age, and then they would be turned over to interested persons to be held until they were at least twelve weeks of age, at which time they would be released, under the supervision of some member of this Department.

The response to this program was very gratifying, as it was something new, and these clubs and these individuals had to build new yards or pens at considerable expense. In addition, the cost of grain is so high that it would tend to discourage such projects, but the reaction of these people has been good. Many are planning on carrying on another year. Birds were reared under this program by counties, as follows:

Aroostook	900
Androscoggin	380
Cumberland	384
Franklin	68
Kennebec	875
Knox	20
Lincoln	800
Oxford	40
Penobscot	200
Sagadahoc	492
Somerset	650
Waldo	32
York	551
TOTAL	5392

In addition to these birds which were given to the public, we also distributed 5,000 eggs to people all over the State and there have been some good results from this distribution.

GAME FARM (Continued)

In addition to these birds, there have been released year-old birds during the spring of 1952, the following by counties:

Aroostook	220
Androscoggin	101
Cumberland	427
Franklin	20
Hancock	380
Kennebec	268
Knox	120
Lincoln	90
Oxford	70
Penobscot	183
Sagadahoc	80
Somerset	100
Waldo	20
Washington	220
York	40
TOTAL	<u>2339</u>

Many of these birds raised broods of young, and encouraging reports have been received from places throughout the State. Reports have been particularly good from Millinocket and Aroostook County sections.

The interest in hunting these birds is evidently increasing, as the results of the game kill questionnaire show that 3,000 more persons hunted them than had hunted in the previous year, and that a total of 20,370 pheasants was killed by fewer than 19,000 hunters. This questionnaire mentioned reported that some over 20,000 hunted waterfowl, and approximately 19,000 hunted for pheasants.

Birds raised to the proper age and condition for release at the Game Farm this year will be allotted to the counties approximately as follows:

Androscoggin	700
Aroostook	250
Cumberland	2500
Hancock	1400
Kennebec	1400
Knox	300
Lincoln	400
Oxford	400
Penobscot	1000
Sagadahoc	400
Somerset	600
Waldo	650
Washington	1000
York	1500
TOTAL	<u>12500</u>

GAME FARM (Continued)

Some of these birds have already been released. There is a possibility that there will be some variation in this allocation, but it will not be great.

The writer of this report is greatly encouraged and pleased with the interest being shown by some of the biologists of the Game Division, and their assistance in choosing proper sites for releases has been very valuable. Some of these men are particularly well trained to be of great assistance to us in all phases of this pheasant program.

Our present system of operating the machines at the Farm is, by the use of lights, to get the birds in production as early in the year as possible, and to have nothing but mature birds by the first of October. This has been very satisfactory and should be continued. Our force of men at the Farm has done outstanding work under the able direction of Superintendent John Bentley. The Farm itself, and the birds and animals on display have proven of increased interest to the public, until at present it is not uncommon to have from 200 to 500 visitors daily.