

WATERFOWL HUNTING IN THE STRAITS OF GEORGIA
AS RELATED TO THE UNDERSEA PARK

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Canadian Wildlife Service

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Waterfowl Hunting in the Straits of Georgia as related to the Undersea Park

The Strait of Georgia has long been regarded as one of the prime waterfowl hunting areas in Canada. This is aptly illustrated by the number of hunters using the resource in this area. The total number of migratory game bird hunting permits issued in Canada in 1969 were 389,000, of these 32,900 were issued to residents of British Columbia. Further examination of these figures indicate that some 18,000 of the total number for British Columbia, were in fact entirely Lower Mainland hunters. This indicates that slightly more than half of all the waterfowl hunting in British Columbia is done in the Lower Mainland regions, with the bulk of the hunting occurring on the tidal flats of the Fraser River.

The estimated average kill for British Columbia is approximately 375,000 ducks and while some are taken in the interior in the season more than 70% are taken on the Lower Mainland and east coast of Vancouver Island.

The mallard makes up approximately 47% of the kill; green winged teal 19%; American widgeon 15% and pintail 9%. These figures may vary from year to year but it is safe to say that approximately 90% of birds taken on the Lower Mainland are made up of these species. These are prime waterfowl since all are puddle ducks which are eagerly sought after by the average hunter. It is even more striking that this selection should be available to the people on the Lower Mainland since these four species represent some of the 23 different species which occupy this area at one time or another.

The actual number of waterfowl using the estuary of the Fraser River and the Strait of Georgia during the fall migration is approximately 200,00 birds according to winter survey figures. This is a transient population and there is little doubt that judging by the number of birds in this particular flyway

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that a large percent of the Pacific population pass through this area, thus approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ million birds are accessible to the hunters in the Lower Mainland, particularly the Straits of Georgia.

These brief statements indicate that the Lower Mainland and the Straits of Georgia in particular, are probably one of the most important waterfowl hunting and staging areas on the Canadian Pacific coast.

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