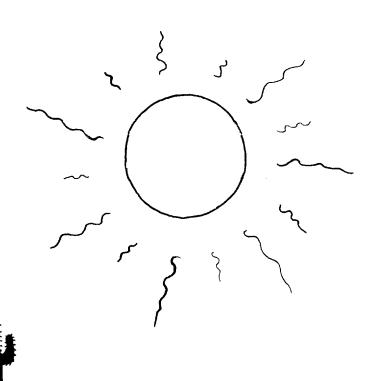
SALTON SEA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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WATERFOWL DEVELOP MENT AREAS

NARRATIVE REPORT

SOMMER 1950



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE BRAWLEY, CALIFORNIA

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Salton Sea Mational Wildlife Refuge & Waterfowl Development Areas

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MARRATIVE REPORT

May, June, July, August, 1950

XXXXXXXXXX

United States Department of The Interior Fish & Wildlife Service Brawley, California

REGULAR PERSONNEL

Edward J. O'Meill Refuge Manager
Lloyd R. RamelliRefuge Manager (On Detail)
James H. Hall
Fill T. Wesley
Clyde W. Stewart Tractor Operator
Alfred W. McFarland Tractor Opera tor
Carl W. FordTractor Operator
Joseph L. Merrill Tractor Operator

TEMPORARY PERSONNEL

John BarrosLaborer
Jose Barros
Sylvester Barres
Welvin Ford
Morris E. HimLaborer
Jerryl W. Sexton
Gregorio Paez " Clerk temporarily)
Bon Ferrel
John HuntLaborer
Raymond Gash
Louis Hensley
Maurice McCullough
William Aguayo
Eugene KinterLaborer
Ceaser Moore
Luis SoteloLaborer
Phillip SilvaLaborer
Hilliam LynchLaborer
Leon LesickaLaborer
William HoffLaborer

HARRATIVE REPORT

1. GENERAL CONDITIONS

A. Weather Conditions, Etc.

Mild weather, too cool and ideal for good hay growth is what the early days of the period meant to growers as a tremendous acreage of alfalfa started to produce the Valley's top ranking crop. Many acres fell short of expected tonnages until after June 10th when a steady rise in the mercury set harvesters a stir.

Meen temperatures for the month of June, over a 35-year span, has averaged 82.5 degrees.

July, filled with surprises, started off with thermometers registering 117 degrees in the north end of the Valley on the let. The same day, for variation, the mercury dropped to 65 degrees. During the month temperatures varied from mild to scorohing---the average maximum reading was 103.5 degrees.

Rain came to the Valley during the period. At Imperial, California .05 of an inch fell on July 5 and .17 on July 8. Humidity figures averaged 37 per cent. July 8 as a cloudburst which centered over the desert a few miles west of refuge headquarters. The half-inch downpour was short lived and devistating where it hit, topping drains and canals to block Highway 99 with deep mud. Drains 12 to 15 feet deep and 30 feet wide everflowed. From the Imperial Irrigation District comes the report that the storm caused more than \$15,000 damage to irrigation facilities.

Old man weather had more to offer---toward the last of the month a cloudburst struck El Centro, flooding stores and doing considerable damage as high winds and water temporarily paralézed the city.

August saw some "unseasonable" weather too, as rain, humidity, and hordes of crickets came to the general area. Humidity reached a stickey 97 per cent with an accompanying temperature of 108 degrees one day.

As usual there was days of windy, dusty conditions. Worst winds came on June 6 and 7 rendering tractor operations impossible.

Tabulated below is the weather data as compiled by the El Centro Mawal Air Base station.

MONTH	MAXIMUN	RINIMA	PRECIPITATION
May	105	50	0
June	119	62	o
July	123	72	4.42"
August	118	68	0
TOTAL			

Earthquakes were big news in Imperial Valley during the period. Four were recorded July 27, seven on July 28, two more on the 29th and one July 31. The shock of July 29 was of the groatest intensity and resulted in verying amounts of damage to uptown arcade structures, hotels, roads and the like. Haystacks everywhere shock and many toppled. In one locality the earth disturtances interrupted underlying water tables which resulted in numerous water "springs" or "sand boils" in open fields.

On the refuge one operator noticed that his tractor trembled and shook like a small tree with the heaving, quivering earth. A small linch crack running along the banks of New River was the only visual effects of the quakes on the refuge areas.

Center of the earthquakes was the Calipatria, California area where scarcely a building remained undamaged. Meny however were only slightly disturbed.

Long time residents recall periodic recentances of quakes and the relative commonplace of tremors in past years. A review of the records available showed that similar quakes occured here in 1920, '31 and '40 -----almost a 10 year jinx;

The quakes all may have originated along the San Andreas fault which runs through Imperial Valley into Mexicalli Valley below the border. Hardest shakes were resorted to have recked the erea with an east-west motion of number I intensity. At this writing light tremors continue to reflect pent up pressure deep below the surface of the Valley.

B. Water Conditions

We change has been made in the course of New River in Unit I nor of the Alamo in Unit II. Backwaters of New River continue to flood and improve the existing wildlife habitat. No small amount of aquatic food was developing in these fresh water areas.

C. Fires

No fires occured on the refuge areas during the period.

II WILDLIFE

A.Migratory Birds

1. Population And Behavior

The migratory waterfowl picture over the period duplicated somewhat the trend of previous reports for the same season.

Ducks were arriving in fair numbers, as indicated on the NR Forms, the last days of the period with perhaps slightly later than usual arrival dates.

Tree Ducks, Baldpates and Cinnamon Teal were somewhat higher in numbers than one year ago.

Waterfowl nests as usual were not common. Several Fulvous Tree Ducks brought forth broods of two and three chicks. One pair succeeded in rearing 12 young.

Cinnamon Teal, Pintails and Ruddy Ducks all brought off broods during June and July. These broods are mentioned just for the records ----we doubt that the national waterfowl population is much affected by the number of ducks hatched off at Salton Sea each summer.

2. Marsh And Water Birds

White Pelicans returned to nest at Salton Sea despite the steped up human activity at the nearby Atomic Energy Commission station which now occupies the largest of the islands on Salton Sea.

Some 200 nesting pelicans and a lesser number of terms were banded on the islands June Shith.

Pelicans abandoned the AEC's island, known to us as Still Island, and were using another island against the west shore of Salton Sea which is barely surrounded by shallow water. This would indicate a definite tolerance to the nesting ground infringance and a great desire on the part of the colony to exist.

The Wood Ibis arrived about June 25 when 300 were observed in the Valley near the north portion of Unit I.

3. Shorebirds, Gulls and Terns

In early June Black-necked Stilts were hatching on the development areas and along the south shore of Salton Sea.

Western Willets, Avocets and Long-billed Curlews were all present June 21th when a party of refuge personnel made the long trek across the desert to the nesting islands.

A few Ring-billed Gulls remained at Salton Sea throughout the period but no indication of nesting was noted or heard of.

Plovers and Black Terms returned before the period was over in accordance with former records. The Black Term departure and return is not pronounced as many others, there being only a matter of days between spring and fall movements.

While at the islands in Salton Sea one of the men found an old abandoned duck decoy which was cast out into open water. Almost immediately the pugnaceous little Gull-billed Terns took up the attack and from mid-air persistently dove at and pecked the lifeless decoy for almost fifteen minutes until it came to rest on the shores of one island supposedly martially wounded by these little dive-bombers of the colony.

4. Food and Cover

The small patch of Spiny Naiad discovered a year ago along the west boundary of Unit I has spread over most of the water area in that locality. Widgeon Grass too showed the best gains in any year yet.

As Spiny Naiad attracted coots and Teal. Pintail and Tree Ducks began to arrive the last days of the period. Wild Millet was the main diet. Tract 8 in Unit I is supporting a gratifying population of ducks at this writing.

The over all Valley populations may be some lower than previous years for the same period but the refuge figures are slightly higher than previous years. An estimate of ducks using the Valley at this time would perhaps place the figure at about β ,000. Our guess is that the vast majority of the population is using the refuge food plots.

Plackbirds too have utilized the millets to no small degree since the crop has become more mature. We find little indication that they are harrassing neighboring farmers where sorghums are being reised.

B. UPLAND GAME BIRDS

1. Population and Behavior

Ho notable change in status of resident populations.

Only a handfull of hen birds were released on Unit II early in the period by the State Fish & Game. Permission wasnot requested this season as has been the practice in past years.

During June an outbreak of botulism occured among hetchery-reared pheasants at the State's game farm near Calipatria, California. The disease reportedly wiped out some 4600 birds before Dr. E. R. Quortrup, San Diego County Vetrinarian was consulted and the matter cleared up.

2. Food and Cover

Ho change in status save for increased acreages as shown on progress maps.

C. BIG GAME AVIMALS

No big game animals on this area.

D. FUR ANIMALS, PREDATORS, RODERTS AND OTHER ANIMALS

where is little information to report under this heading for the period. Hunters and dogs continue to persue the recoon and seem now to be making definite inroads into the population.

A lone coyote was seen a number of times near headquarters---the first in several years since the Service and State trappers reportedly carried out a rather extensive poisoning campaign.

B. PISH

No notable change in status.

III REFUGE DEVELOPMENTS AND MAINTENANCE

A. Phisical Developments

Following acquisition, by lease, the area in Section 12, Unit I, (Tracts 27, 28, 29), was surveyed and contours run. It is planned to surround this entire area with a levee of heavier construction. Much of the work is now completed and lower, smaller contours will make up the interior portion of the area. By the close of the period two bulldosers working steadily had completed more than 1 mile of levee and 6 miles of heavy contours which will be capable of supporting flash floods from the nearby canals and drains. All isnot surveys and bulldosing however, this project has taken many precious hours of time in negotiating with Irrigation District engineers and Board members for clearance, water delivery and perhaps eventually the unlimited use of all waste waters entering the area below the -250 foot contour.

The task of constructing the levee along Salton Sea has been indeed an exciting piece of work for all concerned with heavy tractors treading lightly on spongy, clay soils which sink several inches for a radius 50 feet around an engine. As tractor withdraws each trip a tough, rubbery layer of clay raises up as before. Every hundred feet of levee brought slightly different textures of soil; some too wet to work, others slick with alkali, but dry under the surface. Here and there eratwhile fissures in the soil mantle have emitted "sand beils" which bubble subsurface silty sand and salt water for hours, sometimes days.

At subheadquarters the residence house cooler ducts have been installed, water lines, gas lines, septic tank and water reservoir dug and formed. All preliminary plumbing and electrical wireing is finished. The interior sheeting is nearing completion and painting will follow soon.

The service building at subheadquarters has been started with footings dug, poured and sewage line provided.

The two large Eo. 12 designation signs were stained and lettering completed. Together with 3 small unit designation signs the lot are being varnished and letters treated with reflection beads for extra effectiveness at night time.

More than 200 new 4 x 4 posts and boundary signs have been erected around most of Unit 2.

pate Palms which did not survive the initial planting of two years ago were replaced during the period to support general appearances of headquarters and provide at least a perching place for meagre population of resident passerine birds. Who knows, perhaps someday dates may be written up under Economic Use items since, this summer two trees actually bore a few dates!

During July and August a dozen 30 inch checks were installed in a newly constructed half-mile of ditch servicing Tracts 18 and 19, Unit I. The men spent many tiring hours under intense summer heat completing this project to provide land for additional crops in that area.

B. Cultivated Crops, Etc.

On May 11 alfalfa hay harvest was started on Unit I and II under Special Use Permit No. SAL-4. A later harvest under Special Use Fermit No. SAL-5 completed the new crops growth before hot weather arrived. The crops were allowed to mature and develop seed. Fermits were issued for seed harvest and at this writting a total of about 40,000 pounds of seed was harvested by the first permittee.

Tracts 7 and 14 of Unit II proved to be too alkaline and steep graded to produce a satisfactory erop of alfalfa and work has been started on deep tillage and releveling of these lands in the hopes that they can be later leached.

In mid-June the Service succeeded in negotiating a contract with the Imperial Irrigation District for free leach water with which to improve alkaline soils in Tracts 24 and 25 of Unit I, and 1 and 2 of Unit II. At the close of the period this 90 day contract was still in effect as more than 250 acres under-goes the process of improvement. This acreage has been held submerged in shallow water since the start of the process dissolving surface salts and driving them downward into the lower stratas of soil.

A light infestation of Yellow Dodder Weed showed up in the Tract 4, Unit II alfilfa seed srop during the period necessitating frequent control work and close vigilance until the growth stage of the nexious weed had passed.

The leveling project in Tract 2 of Unit I by TD-18 and carryall scraper was continued during the period as time permitted. In the leveling process sandy soils are being distributed over the hard clay soils which will tend to greatly improve the condition of this tract.

Along with the lands leased in Unit 2 it is now evident that we have inherited a magnificent growth of Hitler Weed (Bassia h.)...(See photo of residence house--foreground), which, due to it's summer growth habit has flourished in the barley fields after the crops matured and were left for wintering waterfowl. So dense were the weeds, following early summer showers, that 8 men armed with mattacks were unable to clear 30 acres of weed-infested barley in a weeks time.

It is now believed desirable to plow under all the weeds and seed possible after utilization of the barley by ducks, reise a crop of elever which can be plowed under as the weeds begin to grow in early spring, thus eliminating much of the seed crop and last years growth. It may become necessary to raise Sudan Grass and Milo Maize to provide food for next winters population of ducks.

Aereages of crops, their location, etc are shown on the accompanying progress maps.

C. Collections

Alfalfa seed harvest, underway during the period isnot completed but at this time is is estimated that perhaps 30,000 pounds of alfalfa seed will be the Service's share of the harvest.

IV PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. Recreational Uses

No recreational facilities exist on the refuge. The public continues to seek fishing places along the refuge boundary near New River in Unit I.

1. Visitors

A few farmers, interested parties and bird enthusiasts came to the refuge during the period.

G. Official Visitors

Hame		Date(s)	Orginization	Purpose		
Dr. W.S.Bourne Ray Fleetwood	Party	5/15-21	U.S.F&W-Wash.D.C Bosque Refu	Habitat insp.		

Name	Date(s)	Organisation	Purpose
L.R. Jacoby	5/19-83	Regional Office	Unit II survey
ਜ. Anderson	5/19-24	" R.ORefuges	Inspection
me. Anderson	€/5 A 89,30	Calif.F&G, Refuge Mgr	. Tour Refuge
G.H. Hart	6/14,27,7/14	" ", Biologiet	# -Pheasants
H. T. Herper	7/1	" ", Gme . Mgr . Pene	ь, и и и
A. W. Bldor	8/28)	the sept fight. Asen	b " "
聞.M. Worehester	n)Parby	я п н	# 11
哥. Lattimer	H)	tt sj ti	11 H

D. Violations

To violations during the period.

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Date subm	itted 1950
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	Edward J. O'Neill
	Edward J. O'Neill Refuge Menager
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WA TERFOUT

Months of May

Refuge Balton Sen Refuge

(1)	(2)		(8)		(7)			(5)	(9)
Species	First	Seen	Peak Concentration	sntration	Last Seen	en	Young P	Produced	Total
							Broods	Estimated	Estimated
Common Name	Number	Date	Number	Date	Number	Date	Seen	Total	for Period
I. Swans: Whistling swan									
II. Geese:									
Canada goose Cackling goose									.•
Brant White-fronted goose	. 60								
-									
III. Ducks				· <u>-</u>	·- ··				
	Pervious Period	Perlad	87	679					02
Black du ck Gad wa ll			ŧ .				:		
Baldpate	'\$		S.	8/19			···	-	1000
Pintail	•		126	679			ev	e.	200
Green-winged teal Blue-winzed teal		*	1100	*					1500
Cinnamon teal	•	*	1000	5,6					9
Shoveller	*	*	800	2%			•		2006
Wood duck Redhead	٠	•	ţ	7					1
Ring-necked duck		:	0	AT /0					R
Canvas-back	•	*	2	6/20			,		8
Scaup	•		0009	5/3					1000
Golden-eye Buffle-head				i					
Ruddy duck	•	*	2	8			-4	2	8
	*	•	3	3/8			-4	23	2
IV. Goots	•		8	67/8					8
						···			
(July 1946)				(over)					Form NR-1

Total Production:

	R
esse.	Ducks

1	3	
	period	
	during	
	usage	
	waterfowl	
	otal	

Peak waterfowl numbers

TI TI TIE and Salton Son

TATE

Areas used by concentrations

Principal nesting areas this season

Salton See Befuge

Reported by_

INSTRUCTIONS

In addition to the birds listed on form, other species occurring on refuge during the reporting period should be added in appropriate spaces. Special attention should be given to those species of local and National significance. Species:

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- The first refuge record for the species during the season concerned in the reporting This column does not apply to resident species. period, and the number seen, First Seen:
- The greatest number of the species present in a limited interval of time. Peak Concentra-3
- The last refuge pected for the species during the season concerned in the reporting period. Last Seens 3
- Brood counts should be made on two or more areas aggregating Estimated number of young produced based on observations and actual counts on repre-10% of the breeding habitat. Estimates having no basis in fact should be omitted. sentative breeding areas. (5) Young Produced:
- Estimated total number of the species using the refuge during the period. This figure may or may not be more than that used for peak concentrations, depending upon the nature of the migrational movement.

Total:

9

receive careful attention since these data are necessarily based on an analysis of the rest of the form. It is desirable that the Summaries Only columns applicable to the reporting period should be used. Note:

(Nov. 1945) Form NR-1A 3-1751

Months of the 194 MIGRATORY BIRDS

Refuge selves ses

(other than waterfowl)

Estimated Total Number 9 under State of the డ**ట్లి బ్ర**బ్జి బ్రబ్జిక్ క్లా Young Total Production Number | Total # Colonies Nests (2) Date Last Seen 4 Number Date Peak Numbers (3 Number w220888 RE Date Seen (2) Number First 8 I. Water and Marsh Birds II. Shorebirds, Gulls and Black-erormed Hight Meron Ditto-faced Closey Ibis Leng-billed Deviteher 5 Black tilled Curley Common Name rilees's Phalarys Black-mosked Stilt Breater Tellgalege Clerida Gallinale The billion Graba Sing-billed Graba Species Brevster's Egret Loast Sandpiper nortens Egret least Elttern Thite Policen Laughtag Gall Br.Blue Merun Caspian Term Clapper Rail Least Rerea Terns: Black Fern For The Dormerat. **Sectors**

	(1)	(6)	(٤)	(4)	(8)
III. Doves a Mournin White-w White-w Golden Duck ha Horned Magpie Raven Crow	Polito Plover Doves and Pigeons: Mourning dove White-winged dove Predaceous Birds: Golden eagle Duck hawk Horned owl Magpie Raven Crow	§	X	 	
				Reported by	_
(1)	Species:	Use the correct names as found in the A.O.U. Checklorder. Avoid general terms as "seagull", "tern", e form, other species occurring on refuge during the priate spaces. Special attention should be given to significance. Groups: I. Water and Marsh Birds (Clim Shorebirds, Gulls and Te III. Doves and Pigeons (Colum IV. Predaceous Birds (Falcon)	INSTRUCTIONS found in the A.O.U. Checklist, 1933 rms as "seagull", "tern", etc. In a rring on refuge during the reporting attention should be given to those a I. Water and Marsh Birds (Gaviiforme I. Shorebirds, Gulls and Terns (Char I. Doves and Pigeons (Columbiformes) I. Doves and Pigeons (Falconiformes)	Checklist, 1931 Edition, an ern", etc. In addition to tag the reporting period shou given to those species of losing (Gavilformes to Ciconii and Terns (Charadriiformes) (Columbiformes)	clist, 1931 Edition, and list group in A.O.U. etc. In addition to the birds listed on reporting period should be added in approto those species of local and National Gaviiformes to Ciconiiformes and Gruiiformes) unbiformes) unbiformes)
(2)	First Seen:	The first refuge record for	the species for	the season concerned	rasserriormes) ned.
(3)	Peak Numbers:	The greatest number of the s	species present in	a limited interval	val of time.
(4)	Last Seen:	The last refuge record for t	the species during	the season	concerned.
(5)	Production:	Estimated number of young pr	produced based on o	on observations and	actual counts.
(9)	Total:	Estimated total number of the	species using	the refuge during	during the period concerned.

REFUGE GRAIN REPORT

1948	<u> </u>	SURP.								
	(7)	FEED	H	•						
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ž	(9)	ON HAND END OF PERIOD	908	}	ÇV.			•		
Months of		TOTAL			8					
2	(5)	SEEDED FED			•					
		ŀ			8		·			
		TRANS-		•						
	(4)	TOTAL	8		8					
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	(2)	BEGINNING OF PERIOD	Ş	3	લ					
Refuge Salton Sec.	(1)	VARIETY	,	Marley	wile millet					

(8) Indicate shipping or collection points....... Westmerland, Call Cornil

(9) Grain is stored at Beatquarters ... as term for feet for the contract of the contrac

(10) Remarks....

NR-8a REFUGE GRAIN REPORT

This report should cover all grain on hand, received, or disposed of, during the period covered by this narrative report.

The second secon

Beans--60 lbs., Millet--50 lbs., Cowpeas--60 lbs., and Mixed--50 lbs. In computing volume Report all grain in bushels. For the purpose of this report the following approximate Corn (shelled) --- 55 lbs., Corn (ear)-70 lbs., Wheat-60 lbs., Barley-50 lbs., Rye-55 lbs., Oats-30 lbs., Soy of granaries, multiply the cubic contents (cu. ft.) by 0.8 bushels. weights of grain shall be considered equivalent to a bushel:

- List each type of grain separately: Corn, wheat, proso millet, etc. Include only domestic grains; aquatic and other seeds will be listed on NR-9. (1)
- Report all grain received during period from all sources, such as transfer, sharecropping, or harvest from food patches. (3)
- (4) A total of Columns 2 and 3.
- (6) Column 4 less Column 5.
- This is a proposed breakdown by varieties of grain listed in Column 6. (2)
- (8) Nearest railroad station for shipping and receiving.
- (9) Where stored on refuge: "Headquarters grainary", etc.
- Indicate here the source of grain shipped in, destination of grain transferred, data on condition of grain, unusual uses proposed. (10)

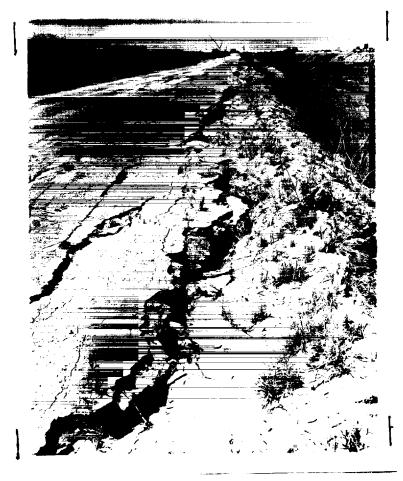


Two members of the U.S. Army Task Force Furnace II check marker along the west edge of Imperial Valley near Plaster City. The mem of this force already had proof of the temperatures though as they tested numerous items and military equipment under a blazing desert sun. Ground temperatures this July ranged up to 156.20 degrees.--U.S.Army Photo.



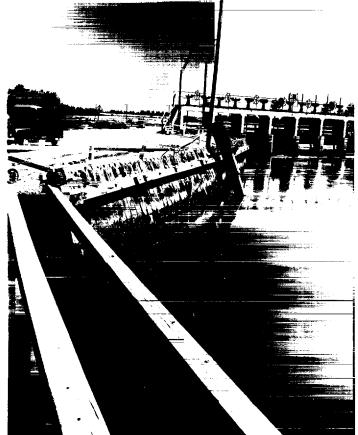
"Earthquakes were big news in Imperial Valley..." At left is typical damage to building arcades at Calipatria, California, center of damage area.

Earthquake disturbances left eracks which spiderwebbed roads and canal banks in the morth central portion of the Valley.



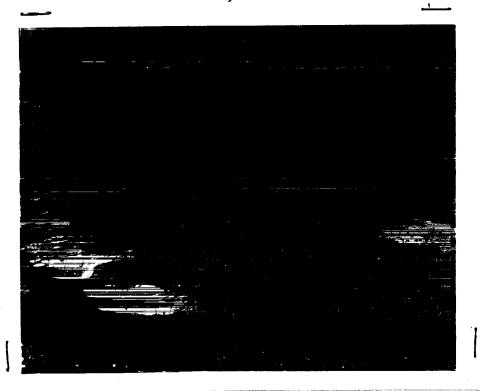
(Photos by Lois Bowden)

The Valley's North End Dam structure received a brisk shaking by quakes which
damaged approach
buttresses, settled
and shifted the earth
until the hydrograph
instrument leaned
over. Cracks up to
six inches wide opened
in the earth nearby.





At left is wide crack which ran alongside the Old Calipatria Highway more than one-half mile.



Disturbances of the earth's surface by quakes brought sandy water to the surface over a rather extensive area as shown in this field of downed alfalfa on the W. Lee Johnson place along the Vail Canal.

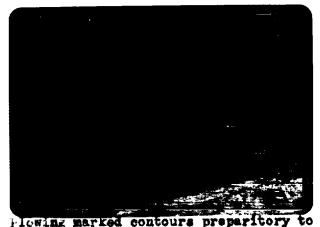
At right, "sand boils" filled this canal with sandy silt brought up from below the surface along the New River.



(Photos by Lois Bowden)



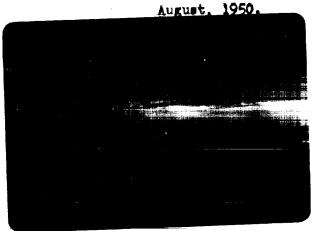
White pelicans returned to nest again at Salton Sea dispite the acciderated human activities and disturbances...."



Plowing marked contours preparitory to bulldozer work on levee. Tract 27, Unit I. (Oper. C.Stewart, D-6 w/disc plow, Aug. 1950)



Leves construction Tract 27, Unit I



Tract 24 Unit I contours and water impoundment for leaching and soil improvement purposes.

July, 1950



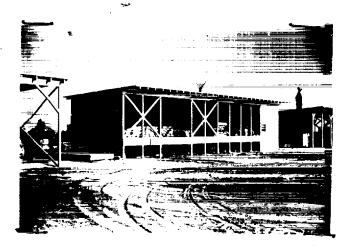
Tract 18, Unit I Salton Sea Refuge as leveled for new alfalfa crop to replace abandoned tracts in Unit II. August, 1950



windrowers in process of cutting and swething alfalfa for seed grop. Tract 4 Unit II. August, 1950



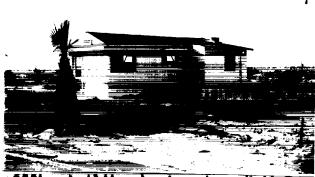
One-man Holland baler in operation Tract 4 Unit II following combine harvesters. Services share of chaff, one-half, will be spread over alkali spots to reduce further surface corrosion and get erop established. August, 1950.



Grain storage shed with irrigation supplies, aborage section. Week slab at left...sutometive shelter, right. Headquerters, July, 1950.

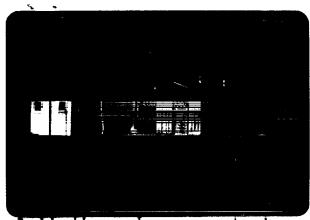


Overhead fuel storage tanks and oil house which was originally D-7 Caterpillar tractor crate. Head-quarters Unit I, July, 1950.

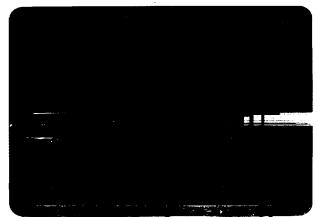


Office building, headquarters, Unit I July, 1950.

(Photos by L.R.Remelli)



Combination restroom-generator house and 24 x 40 foot Butler-Built Aluminum Service Building. Headquarters, Unit I, July, 1950.



Residence house under construction.
Structure consists of used, salvaged lumber obtained from Corps of Engineers, U.3.Army,
Los Angeles. Subheadquarters, Unit II, July,
1950.

