

# News Release



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## **James W. Kurth Named U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chief for the National Wildlife Refuge System**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe today announced the selection of James (Jim) Kurth as the agency's Chief for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Kurth, a 32-year veteran of the Refuge System, has served as the Service's Deputy Chief for the Refuge System since 1999.

As Chief, Kurth will lead the Agency in the management of the world's premier system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's fish, wildlife and plants. The 108-year-old Refuge System comprises more than 150 million acres and 555 units in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

"Jim is the ideal person for this position," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "His depth of experience with the National Wildlife Refuge System and demonstrated strong leadership are just what the Fish and Wildlife Service needs as we begin implementation of the *Conserving the Future* document – our renewed vision for the growth and management of the Refuge System during the next decade and beyond."

Kurth previously managed the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northern Alaska – the largest refuge in the United States, spanning 20 million acres. He began his Refuge System career in 1979 and has held posts at Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi, Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, Seney National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island.

Kurth earned a degree in wildlife management from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

The National Wildlife Refuge System began in 1903 with President Teddy Roosevelt's establishment of 3-acre Pelican Island in Florida as a protected area for waterbirds. Hundreds of national wildlife refuges located along the four major "flyways" serve as vital stepping stones for migratory waterfowl and other birds, while others are

safe havens for endangered species. All of them are part of America's rich natural heritage where plants, fish, mammals, amphibians, and other wildlife live and thrive.

For more information on the National Wildlife Refuge System, call 1-800-344-WILD; visit the Fish and Wildlife Service's homepage at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) and click on National Wildlife Refuge System; or visit a national wildlife refuge.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/usfws](http://www.facebook.com/usfws), follow our tweets at [www.twitter.com/usfwshq](http://www.twitter.com/usfwshq), watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.*

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