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PUBLIC SHOOTING GROUNDS IN LOUISIANA  
IN LINE WITH POLICY OF FEDERAL BUREAU

Of the more than six million hunters of the United States, many will be benefited by the recent action of authorities in Louisiana in setting aside the Pass-a-l'Outre Public Shooting Grounds, a tract of 60,000 acres at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Here the sportsman of moderate means can enjoy all the opportunities for wild fowl shooting enjoyed by wealthy members of the exclusive clubs in that region. The action taken is in direct accord with recommendations made by the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture. Louisiana is one of the first States to adopt the broad policy of protecting its citizens against monopolization of the desirable hunting grounds by exclusive clubs.

In the Pass-a-l'Outre reservation there is one lagoon which it is proposed to set aside as a sanctuary where all wild fowl will find refuge from the gun of the hunter. The shooting grounds are dotted with duck ponds and make one of the finest duck-hunting preserves in the United States. It is located on practically newly created ground, built up in the last few years by the Mississippi with the sediment constantly carried down and deposited where the river pours into the Gulf of Mexico. Were it for sale the property could hardly be bought for much short of half a million dollars.

Day's Bag is 25 Ducks

The season for hunting wild fowl on the new shooting grounds will extend from November 1 to January 31 and the law permits each hunter to shoot 25 ducks each day. To prevent overcrowding, hunters will be required to register, and accommodations will be provided for an average of 100 hunters, more than it is probable will be there on any one day.

"An extension of such public-spirited and progressive conservation measures by other States," said Dr. E. W. Nelson, Chief of the Biological Survey, in commenting on the action of Louisiana, "will result in the retention of water areas in various parts of the country where our migratory wild fowl may have feeding grounds and places to breed, and where the public can continue to exercise the splendid health-giving sport of wild-fowl hunting during the open season. The New-Anthony bill recently introduced in Congress (S. 1452 and H.R. 5823) will if it becomes a law enable the Federal Government

to join with the States in establishing a great series of breeding places for wild fowl and public shooting grounds throughout the country, thus insuring the perpetuation of wild-fowl hunting.

"According to its terms, the New-Anthony bill proposes to accomplish two main objects: First, the purchase, or rental, and maintenance of marsh and water areas especially suitable for migratory wild fowl, which shall be used as free public shooting grounds in the open hunting season and safeguarded as breeding and resting places for these birds in the close season; and second, the administration of the migratory bird treaty act in order more adequately to maintain and increase the supply of migratory birds, including not only the ducks, geese, and others classed as game, but the great host of smaller species which are so vitally essential to the agricultural interests of the country through their unceasing war on injurious insects.

"The passage of the migratory bird treaty act constituted the first important step toward insuring the perpetuation of our wild fowl and our wild-fowl hunting. The second step is of almost equally vital importance if we are to hold what we have gained. This is the conservation and perpetuation of a sufficient number of small inland lakes, as well as inland and coastal swamp and marsh areas, to provide our migratory wild fowl necessary feeding, resting, and breeding places within the United States. Under proper conditions many lakes, ponds, swamps, and marsh areas will yield a distinctly larger return than would the same areas drained for agricultural purposes.

More than 6,000,000 Hunters.

"At the present time it is estimated that more than 6,000,000 people in the United States engage in hunting of one kind or another each year. The rapidly increasing drainage of marsh areas threatens the continuance of one of the most popular kinds of hunting, which will be perpetuated under the terms of the New-Anthony bill. With the growing congestion of population and the unrest which such massing produces, the need for maintaining and developing opportunities for out-of-door recreation places this bill in the front rank among legislative measures bearing on the public welfare. Throughout the United States a very large proportion of the men who spend a certain period each year in hunting are undoubtedly among our most desirable citizens. Through their out-of-door recreations they develop their resourcefulness and maintain a physical and mental health which is of the utmost value in relation to their civic usefulness.

"Under present conditions many of the most favorable marsh areas for wild-fowl shooting have been purchased and are being held by wealthy sportsmen as hunting clubs, thus curtailing opportunities for wild-fowl hunting by the general public. The growing absorption of such areas by hunting clubs has created much criticism on the part of those who, through lack of means, are unable to enjoy such privileges. The establishment of public shooting grounds such as have just been made by Louisiana, will give the general public equally good shooting privileges with those had by the clubs, and should completely obviate any cause for the antagonistic feeling now existing on the part of the public."