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NEW REFUGE FOR BIRDS APPROVED BY COMMISSION

For establishment of a new migratory-bird refuge in the Sacramento Valley of California and for consolidations of lands on four refuges now under administration, the Federal Migratory Bird Conservation Commission today (December 8) authorized the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, to acquire 11,406 acres, by purchase or by lease.

The tract approved for the new refuge, to be known as the Sacramento Migratory Bird Refuge, includes 5,609 acres in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, about 70 miles north of Sacramento. The new sanctuary will be an important addition to the chain of refuges in the West, as it is 175 miles south of the Tule Lake Migratory Bird Refuge, 200 miles west of the Fallon Wild Life Refuge, and 650 miles north of the Salton Sea Migratory Bird Refuge.

At one time the Sacramento Valley was an extensive marsh area that served as one of the most important nesting grounds on the Pacific Coast and also was a resting and feeding area for countless numbers of waterfowl during their migrations. Later, intensive agricultural development destroyed the area's attractiveness to wild fowl except in certain places where water is impounded during the hunting season. The refuge tract will now be improved from the standpoint of its usefulness to birds, and the inviolate sanctuary will offer them an opportunity to rest and feed in safety.

The principal waterfowl found on the proposed Sacramento Refuge are geese, including Canada, Ross's, lesser snow, Hutchins's, white-fronted, and cackling geese. Ducks also congregate there in large flocks during their migrations-- principally pintails, green-winged and cinnamon teals, mallards, widgeons, and shovelers, though some redheads and canvasbacks also frequent the place. Shorebirds are represented on the tract by killdeers, black-necked stilts, Wilson's snipe (jack-snipe), avocets, and Wilson's phalaropes.

The commission's authorizations for new additions to migratory-bird refuges already established were made to round out, and to facilitate the administration of areas now owned by the Federal Government. About 2,000 acres on the Crescent Lake Refuge, Nebr., were thus approved for lease and for purchase, and a series of relatively small tracts that aggregate about 2,500 acres on the Long Lake Refuge, N. Dak., were approved for purchase. Agreements were also approved for the lease of 1,300 acres of State-owned lands that are intermingled with tracts previously acquired for the Bamforth Lake and Hutton Lake Refuges in Wyoming.

Including the lands newly approved for acquisition, the commission has authorized lease or purchase of 151,387 acres since the Federal migratory-bird refuge program was initiated in 1930. In addition, 274,229 acres have been set aside by Executive order and Presidential proclamation, making a total of 425,616 acres established or in the process of establishment as inviolate Federal sanctuaries for migratory birds. These refuges are in 12 States-- California, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, and New York. The average cost per acre for all lands approved for purchase under the act is \$4.92.

The members of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission attending the meeting were Secretary of Agriculture Hyde, chairman; Secretary of the Interior Wilbur, Senator Peter Norbeck of South Dakota, Representative August H. Andresen of Minnesota, and Representative Sam D. McReynolds of Tennessee. Nathan Moran, member of the advisory committee on game refuges and public shooting grounds of California, represented the California State fish and game commission.