



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Immediate Release, SEPTEMBER 6, 1946.

Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug announced today that he had completed studies and had instructed the Fish and Wildlife Service to cease active operation as a wildlife refuge of approximately one-half of the Parker River Waterfowl Refuge in eastern Massachusetts.

The Secretary said that he was acting in accordance with the wishes of President Truman, who in his message disapproving H.R. 4362, an act to "abolish the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Essex County, Massachusetts", requested that a further study be made to see if additional lands might be eliminated "without impairment of the fundamental purposes of the Refuge".

"I have reluctantly concluded," Secretary Krug said, "that certain segments of the Refuge may be abandoned, if an area is retained which will meet the most urgent needs of our hard pressed waterfowl. I have therefore informed the Fish and Wildlife Service that immediate action should be taken to cease active administration of the units known as Crane Pond, Downfall, and Mill Creek.

"The three Coastal units, which include Plum Island and the adjacent tidal flats, will be retained. But I want it understood that in retaining the Plum Island tidal area, the Department will not interfere with the local administration of clamming within the refuge."

In addition, Secretary Krug said that the Department will not oppose legislation reducing the boundaries of the refuge to the Plum Island, Mud Creek, and Pine Island Divisions, and which would allow for the re-sale to the former owners

of the remaining land. He pointed out, however, that proceeds from the sale of lands which the Department has now agreed to abandon would have to be returned to the Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Stamp Fund, the source of funds used in the original purchase by the Government.

The elimination of three of the units of the original refuge is in accord with a compromise proposal sponsored by the Massachusetts Conservation Council and many individuals and sportsmen's clubs of the State. The compromise proposals followed the considerable controversy over the establishment of the refuge which has been carried on for many months.

"The Parker River Refuge question has been given serious study by the Department, both by myself and by my predecessor, Secretary Ickes. The area which will now continue to be managed as a refuge is the minimum which can be operated with any resultant benefit to the waterfowl which use the Atlantic Flyway. This refuge forms an important chain in the natural breeding, resting, and wintering refuges and is of importance to the conservation program for the entire northern and central Atlantic Coast.

"I believe that in time, when the echoes of the present controversy have passed away, the people of eastern Massachusetts will find the Parker River Refuge an asset to their State and will come to realize this refuge, as small as it will be, will be of much more than local importance. The Department has sought a friendly solution to this controversy which would be consonant with its obligations, under law and treaty, to foster and protect migratory waterfowl.