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LEAFLETS PORTRAY STORY OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife refuge, the sanctuary which Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay is stubbornly defending against attempted inroads by the Army, is one of the areas described in the new series of illustrated leaflets being issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Wichita Mountains reserve, most popular of the 264 refuges which the Department of the Interior administers, attracted 852,316 visitors in 1954. It is rich in the history of the old West, the stamping grounds of many tribes of the Plains Indians, hideout of some of the notorious bandits of the Southwest and for many years the dwelling place of Quanah Parker, the last of the Comanche war chiefs. At present it is the home of the largest Federal herd of longhorn cattle and the range of more than a thousand head of buffalo and of great numbers of deer, elk and other wild animals of the western country.

It is also the scene of a high controversy between those who would use more than ten thousand of its acres for enlarging the artillery range of nearby Ft. Sill and those who would keep it in the status it has had since it was first created in the days before Oklahoma became a State.

Secretary McKay's announced intention of preserving Wichita for refuge purposes is strictly in line with announcements made early in 1954 when, discussing a newly adopted real estate policy for the wildlife program he said, "The Department of the Interior, under my administration, considers the protection and development of our fish and wildlife resources to be as essential as irrigation, flood control and navigation in river development projects.

The Department, in line with that statement, has established eight new refuges since 1953 and is in the process of establishing three more. It has acquired a total of 79,946 acres of additional land through purchase, lease or transfer of Federally owned land. Wildlife refuges have been established in Colorado and Kansas for the first time. Additions to the wildlife program have been made in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, North Dakota, Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Michigan, Maine, and New York. These acquisitions have been made possible largely by increased appropriations and because of larger expenditures of duck stamp revenue for land procurement.

The 264 refuges are located in continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The boundaries of each refuge are marked by the well known National Wildlife Refuge emblem, the "sign of the flying goose". These refuges, although primarily designed and operated as sanctuaries for wildlife of various kinds, are open in designated areas to the public. In most of the refuges other recreational advantages are open to the public for long periods each year.

It so happens that on the Wichita Refuge, hunting is not allowed and firearms of any kind are prohibited.

It is to acquaint the public with the purposes, character and advantages of these areas that the series is being issued. Each leaflet is well illustrated. Leaflet No. 1 is general in nature and carries a map of the United States showing the location of 73 of the refuges. Other leaflets contain maps of the area described. Besides interesting descriptions of what to look for while visiting the refuge each leaflet gives considerable information relative to the public use of the area, when and if hunting and fishing is allowed, what accommodations can be found and how to reach the area.

Some of the refuges other than Wichita, treated in the series are:

Cape Romain--20 miles northeast of Charleston, South Carolina, on the Atlantic Coast. Bulls Island, a 5,000 acre wooded island, is one of the key points of the refuge, accessible only by water. A concession-operated lodge provides accommodations for 12 to 15 persons. The area abounds in waterfowl of various kinds, shorebirds and many other species of waterbirds. For a few days in the spring giant sea turtles deposit their eggs in the dunes along the sandy beaches.

Pea Island--on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. It is a few miles north of Cape Hatteras and just south of Roanoke Island which was the scene of Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony. Pea Island is an important wintering area for birds of the Atlantic flyway.

Okefenokee Swamp--in southeast Georgia near the Florida border. This 329,000-acre refuge is an area of primitive America. It abounds in wildlife of many kinds and is especially noted for its cranes, ibises, and alligators. As in other refuges, parts of it are open to the public.

Horicon--in east-central Wisconsin. This is another important waterfowl area, with as many as 40,000 Canada geese stopping there at one time on their way north and south. The name comes from the Mohican language and means "clear water". Besides an abundance of bird life there may be found foxes, raccoons, opossums and other animals.

Seney--on the Upper Michigan peninsula. This refuge is in the famous Manistique swamp. It has become a nesting ground for the Canada goose. Inducing the big birds from the north to nest in this area is regarded as a notable accomplishment in wildlife management.

These leaflets are available by purchase from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. The initial issue entitled "Visiting National Wildlife Refuges", costs ten cents. The other leaflets are five cents each.

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