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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release NOVEMBER 6, 1956

FISH AND WILDLIFE REORGANIZATION BECOMES EFFECTIVE

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton today announced that reorganization of the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service, as provided by Public Law 1024 enacted this year, became effective as of the close of business on November 5, 1956.

In making the announcement, Secretary Seaton said that appointments have not been made to the two new top-level positions created by the reorganization-- Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, and Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife. Appointments to both positions are to be made by the President. They are subject to Senate confirmation.

Two separate bureaus are established under the reorganization as components of the new United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. Details with respect to internal organization and functions will be announced shortly.

Secretary Seaton designated John L. Farley as Acting Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and Arnie J. Suomela as Acting Director, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. Farley has been Director and Suomela has been Associate Director of the old Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife will be responsible for matters relating primarily to migratory birds, game management, wildlife refuges, sport fisheries, sea mammals (except whales, seals and sea-lions), and related matters. The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries will be responsible for matters relating primarily to commercial fisheries, whales, seals and sea-lions, and related matters.

Until the new Assistant Secretary and Commissioner are appointed, the two Acting Directors will report directly to the Secretary of the Interior. All funds, records, personnel and other properties of the Fish and Wildlife Service have been transferred to the new United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and employees and officers were directed to continue to discharge their duties as before the transfer.

The present reorganization is the first major action of this nature to be undertaken since 1940, when the Bureau of Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries were combined to form the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior. A year earlier the two bureaus had been transferred to Interior from the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce, respectively.

The new post of Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife is the first such position to be created since May 24, 1950, when four Assistant Secretaries were authorized by the Congress to direct the Department's functions in Public Land Management, Water and Power Development, Mineral Resources, and Administration.

The old Fish and Wildlife Service has been under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Public Land Management.

The reorganization was described by Secretary Seaton as an important assurance to sportsmen that "the Federal Government is increasing its management efforts" to insure adequate fish and wildlife resources for recreational purposes. At the same time, he continued, it will help enable the commercial fishing industry attain its proper place in the national economy.

"The greater recognition of fish and wildlife conservation which will result will benefit the entire Nation," the Secretary concluded.

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