



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release JANUARY 7, 1957

SECRETARY SEATON MOVES TO STRENGTHEN FISH AND WILDLIFE LEGISLATION

Initial steps to amend the Coordination Act, including provisions which would authorize the acquisition of lands at Federal water development projects for fish and wildlife purposes, were taken today by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton.

The Coordination Act, Secretary Seaton points out, is a piece of legislation of vital importance to the Nation's fish and wildlife resources, since it gives these resources an opportunity to develop hand in hand with agricultural and industrial progress. The present Act was framed in 1946. Proposals submitted to Secretary Seaton for review would strengthen this Act to the point of recognizing the conservation of fish and wildlife resources among the primary purposes of these developments.

Since State fish and game departments also have vital concern in the provisions and operation of the Coordination Act, Secretary Seaton's first move was to request Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife Ross L. Leffler to submit these suggestions to each of the State Governors for their consideration.

Preparation of the amendments in the Department of the Interior and their transmittal to the State Governments for review and comment is responsive to a request made to Secretary Seaton by the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners. This association, the principal organization of State fish and game directors, made such a request in a resolution adopted at the association's annual convention in Toronto last September.

Secretary Seaton said: "I am pleased to comply with this request from the State fish and game directors. They seek and deserve an opportunity to express their views on this important legislation. We are complying with the request because it is entirely in accord with the policy of this Department to recognize the State Governments as active partners with the Federal Government in the conservation and development of natural resources."

Besides authorizing the acquisition of land on Federal projects for fish and wildlife purposes, the proposed amendments would also authorize Federal construction agencies to incorporate in water-project plans measures for the enhancement and betterment of fish and wildlife resources.

Other changes which the proposals submitted to the Secretary would make include:

Make the wildlife conservation procedures of the Act clearly applicable to locally sponsored projects where the Federal Government's role is to provide technical and financial assistance.

Make it clear that the Act applies to both drainage and navigation projects.

Provide for the acceptance of donations of land and contributions of funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

Make it clear that the Act applies to projects authorized prior to the enactment of the amendments but not yet initiated.

Secretary Seaton points out that these proposals are entirely consistent with provisions of the act authorizing the far-flung Colorado River Storage Project, which gives the Secretary of the Interior the right not only to provide against losses of fish and wildlife values, but also to improve conditions for both fish and wildlife and to acquire land for those purposes.

The Secretary pointed to other recent legislation which has authorized the enhancement of wildlife resources in specific projects. He also noted that the President's Advisory Committee on Water Policy urged greater consideration for the conservation of fish and wildlife resources in water development projects.

x x x



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

FWS ADDS NEARLY 165,000 ACRES FOR WILDLIFE IN FOUR YEARS

When Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton last week formally designated the 24,623-acre wildlife area on Garrison Reservoir, North Dakota, as the Snake Creek National Wildlife Refuge, additions in acreage to the national wildlife refuge system since January 1953 officially rose to a total of nearly 165,000 acres.

Fish and Wildlife Service records show that from January 1, 1953, until June 30, 1956, a total of 162,398 acres had been acquired for wildlife purposes by purchases, lease, donation or public land order. This includes the Snake Creek acreage.

In recent weeks, Secretary Seaton has added 1,000 acres more by public land orders. A total of 105,924 acres represents lands added to those administered for wildlife solely by the Fish and Wildlife Service and 56,474 acres represents land additions to those wildlife areas managed cooperatively by the Service and individual States. The new areas not only add substantial acreages but also are strategically situated to meet specific wildlife needs.

The Snake Creek Refuge with its 24,623 acres is the largest single addition; Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida is second with 16,978 acres and Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas is third with 10,864.

Agreement upon the Snake Creek area, which is on a Corps of Engineers flood control and water diversion project, was reached last May 25, with the Corps giving the Service the wildlife management responsibility and agreeing to control the fluctuations of the water, as far as possible, to levels conducive to good waterfowl management. It is being developed as a major part of a plan to create nesting and feeding areas for the Canada goose in the Missouri River valley.

Secretary Seaton's formalizing order also approved that part of the agreement which permits North Dakota to manage the northern portion of this area, or about 11,000 acres.

Chassahowitzka Refuge was secured from the State of Florida. The acquisition of this 16,798 acres made the existing refuge of 11,798 acres an effective unit in the Atlantic Flyway refuge system for waterfowl.

The Kirwin Refuge is on a reclamation project in a critical part of the flyway; it was made possible through the cooperation of the Bureau of Reclamation.

Of special importance to lovers of wildlife is the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, a 6,735-acre tract created by donated land, leases and public land made available by administrative order. Its purpose is to provide a haven for the almost extinct diminutive deer native to the Florida Keys.

In the State of Washington, 6,167 acres were added to the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge and the 2,849-acre McNary National Wildlife Refuge was created. Smaller areas were also acquired there.

The 3,541-acre Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan, which is adjacent to an area being developed by the State, is destined to be a "holding and distribution" area for waterfowl. Here hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese will be induced--by feeding and resting areas--to remain until after the crops to the south have been harvested.

Areas added to the wildlife system by action of Secretary Seaton include a 637 addition to Sanibel Refuge in Florida, a 23.5-acre addition to McKay Creek in Oregon, and a 320-acre tract made available to the Idaho Fish and Game Department.

A complete list of the additions secured between January 1, 1953, and June 30, 1956, for both Fish and Wildlife Service management and for State cooperative projects with the figures showing the acreage follows:

Fish and Wildlife Service Units

Arkansas--Big Lake, 170.
California--Sutter, 790.
Colorado--Monte Vista, 4,165.
Florida--Anclote, 36; Chassahowitzka, 16, 798; Great White Heron, 91; Loxahatchee, 3,236; National Key Deer, 6,735; Pinellas, 187; St. Marks, 26; Sanibel, 3.
Georgia--Piedmont, 1,037.
Idaho--Deer Flat, 419; Snake River, 21.
Kansas--Kirwin, 10,864; Quivira, 1,441.
Kentucky--Reelfoot, 163.
Maine--Moosehorn, 31.
Maryland--Chincoteague, 323, Martin, 2,482.
Massachusetts--Parker River, 2.
Michigan--Seney, 1,696; Shiawassee, 3,541.
Minnesota--Rice Lake, 517; Upper Mississippi, 60.
Mississippi--Noxubee, 2,861.
Missouri--Mingo, 32.

Montana--Fort Peck, 166; Red Rock Lakes, 1.
New Jersey--Brigantine, 580.
New Mexico--Bitter Lake, 80.
New York--Elizabeth Morton, 187.
North Dakota--Long Lake, 217; Lostwood--640; Lower Souris, 3; Snake Creek,
24,430 (re-survey 24,623); Tewaukon, 1,828.
Oklahoma--Salt Plains, 80.
Oregon--Cold Springs, 349; Malheur, 4,842.
South Carolina--Santee, 535; Savannah, 4.
Texas--Laguna Atascosa, 2,416.
Vermont--Mississquoi, 833.
Virginia--Chincoteague, 25; Presquile, 1,329.
Washington--Columbia, 6,167; Marrowstone, 16; McNary, 2,849; Turnbull, 337;
Willapa, 160.
Wisconsin--Upper Mississippi, 123.

State Cooperative Units:

Arizona--Gila River, 6,896.
Arkansas--St. Francis, 3,990.
California--Topaz Lake, 200.
Colorado--Hot Sulphur, 1,115; Mack Mesa, 38; South Platte, 120.
Idaho--North Lake, 2,392.
Illinois--Mississippi River, 7,855.
Iowa--Green Island, 2,653.
Minnesota--Mississippi River, 3,575.
Missouri--Clarksville, 575; Elsberry, 1,353; Mississippi River, 370; West
Quincy, 286.
Montana--Bull Mountain, 1,599; Dodson, 120; Fox Lake, 160; Judith River, 234.
Nebraska--Statewide, 743.
North Dakota--Lake Patricia, 794.
Oregon--North Fork, 3,085; Ochoco, 40.
Utah--Rock Island, 2; Topaz Lake, 4,142.
Washington--Colockum, 3,695; Lenore, 6,201; Phalon, 10; Sherman Creek, 560;
Sunnyside, 320.
Wyoming--East Fork; 3,192; Sheridan County, 160.

During the same four-year period the Service disposed of 80,407 acres which had been administered by it and 2,609 acres of State cooperative lands which had outlived their usefulness. This makes an over-all net gain in national wildlife refuge acreage of approximately 80,000 acres.

The bulk of the Service land which was released was in one area--the Fort Keogh unit in Montana with its 56,954 acres. This was originally secured when the Biological Survey, one of the parent agencies of the Fish and Wildlife Service, was in the Department of Agriculture. Wildlife resources had secondary rights to animal husbandry uses on the area.

Eventually these wildlife values diminished to a point at which there was no longer a valid reason for attempting to maintain wildlife management practices on

the area. Title to this property remains in the United States Government, however, with administration by the Department of Agriculture.

The Chinsegut Refuge in Florida was also acquired when the Survey was in the Department of Agriculture and was the only agency which could accept donated lands. The area was used both for wildlife and for animal husbandry purposes. Wildlife value receded and when the Department of Agriculture offered to protect the remaining wildlife values the Service accepted the offer and withdrew.

Painted Woods, 2,181 acres, and Legion Lake, 1,038 acres, both in North Dakota, were easement areas which outlived their usefulness. In the case of the 2,675 acres released on the Santee National Wildlife Refuge, South Carolina exercised a clause in its long-term lease to re-establish control of this area.

Lenore Lake in Washington, a 6,201-acre refuge was turned over to the State of Washington for wildlife management purposes because other places in Washington administered by the Service filled a better national wildlife need.

A complete list of areas relinquished since January 1, 1953 shows:

Fish and Wildlife Units

Alabama--Wheeler, 202.
California--Salton Sea, 3,795.
Florida--Chinsegut, 2,033; St. Marks, 32.
Georgia--Piedmont, 705.
Idaho--Deer Flat, 10.
Massachusetts--Monomoy, 25.
Montana--Fort Keogh, 56,954; Red Rock Lakes, 238.
New York--Fort Tyler, 14.
North Dakota--Clearwater, 144; Lake Patricia, 794; Legion Lake, 1,038;
Painted Woods, 2,181; Prairie Lake, 320; Tewaukon, 1,383.
Oregon--Malheur, 155; Thief Valley, 1,495.
South Carolina--Santee, 2,675.
Texas--Laguna Atascosa, 464.
Washington--Lenore Lake, 6,201.
Wisconsin--Upper Mississippi, 7.
Alaska--Nunivak, 6.

State Cooperative Units

Arkansas--Randolph County, 280
Missouri--Mississippi River, 1,680.
Washington--Squaw Creek, 649.

x x x