



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MID-STATE PROJECT WILL HELP FISH AND WILDLIFE

A report by the Fish and Wildlife Service shows that the water development plan for the proposed Nebraska Mid-State Project would have substantial benefits for fish and wildlife resources and for public recreation, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler said today.

In the river basin studies report, the Service presents a fish and wildlife development plan which would provide the maximum benefits to fish and wildlife conservation through the multiple-purpose project of the Nebraska Mid-State Reclamation District, Mr. Leffler said. The principal feature is the development of a Federal Refuge and State-managed public hunting area along the Platte River and State-managed waterfowl areas on three of the 22 proposed reservoirs in the big project.

The Platte River is a key concentration point for waterfowl of the Central Flyway, the report declares. The area involved by the project is used by several hundred thousand ducks and geese and more than a quarter of a million sandhill cranes each year. It also includes the traditional feeding ground used by the rare whooping crane while en route to and from the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. In addition, the project is expected to provide for a slight increase in the number of deer in the area and a significant gain in fur animals.

The report points out that the proposed reservoirs are expected to provide good fishing in a part of Nebraska now critically in need of more angling waters.

It is anticipated that if the project is developed the details of the fish and wildlife plan will be worked out by the Secretary of the Interior and the Nebraska Mid-State Reclamation District during the period when the detailed studies of the project are under way.

This report evaluating the fish and wildlife resources involved in the project was made by the Fish and Wildlife Service under authority of the Coordination Act of 1946 and at the request of the Board of Directors of the Nebraska Mid-State Reclamation District.

The project would consist of a series of reservoirs together with necessary pumping facilities, canals, drains and related works for the storage and delivery of water and the generation and transmission of hydroelectric power. Total cost is estimated to be \$65 million.

Legislation for financing the construction of the project has been before the Congress since 1953. In March 1957 Congressman A. L. Miller, of Kimball, Nebraska, introduced H.R. 5835 to provide for Federal cooperation with the Nebraska Mid-State Reclamation District in building this project. H.R. 5835 includes provision for the construction, which will be handled locally, to be financed by a Federal loan and grant. No action had been taken on the bill before Congress adjourned on August 30.

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