



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR OFFICIAL OUTLINES POLICY OF ACQUISITION OF WATERFOWL AREAS

A blueprint for the acquisition and management of waterfowl areas in the future was presented to the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners today by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler.

The association is holding its annual meeting in Philadelphia.

Secretary Leffler also pointed out the necessity for States to adjust their management plans to meet critical waterfowl conditions which arise from time to time, and he urged that ways be developed to preserve the waterfowl values of wetlands held in private ownership.

Recent legislation increased the price of the duck stamp from \$2 to \$3, earmarked all of the funds except the costs of printing and selling the stamps for land acquisition and provided that up to 40 percent of any refuge could be opened to waterfowl hunting. Previously only 25 percent of a refuge acquired by duck stamp funds could be opened to such hunting.

Assistant Secretary Leffler declared that the funds would be used to save key wetlands essential to the management and maintenance of waterfowl population "in each of the four Flyways at not less than the peak levels of recent years"; that acquisition would be guided by Flyway management plans cooperatively developed; and that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Flyways would "jointly make a new reading" every year and adjust plans as necessary.

He was specific in his statement that the first interest of the Fish and Wildlife Service was in the migratory waterfowl and that the option of opening up to) percent of a refuge would be used as a tool of management rather than just as an opportunity to provide more hunting area. He explained that if a species which needed special protection used a given refuge for food and rest such refuge would not be opened to the hunter. Conversely, if a species using the refuge was in good supply and if other conditions warranted it, the refuge could be opened to the nimrod.

The Assistant Secretary declared that "States too have the responsibility to manipulate their areas in conformance with the needs of the different species of waterfowl involved". He concluded his address with the admonition that "for some time to come we will just be acquiring areas and will not be in position to immediately develop them".

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