



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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4,359 ACRES ADDED TO COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IN WASHINGTON

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton today announced the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge in the State of Washington is being enlarged by approximately 4,359 acres of public lands. The lands previously were reserved for reclamation purposes. The new withdrawal order transfer their administration from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The lands are located south and east of the Potholes Reservoir in the Lower Crab Creek drainage area, adjacent to the Columbia Basin Project in central Washington. The total area of the Wildlife Refuge, including the lands added by the new order, is about 24,545 acres.

The Columbia National Wildlife Refuge is an important link in the chain of migratory waterfowl refuges in the Pacific Flyway. In the next few years it is expected that 15,000 to 20,000 geese will use the refuge annually in their migrations. Parts of the unit will be open to public hunting under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. Management of the hunting will be in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Game, the Service said.

Most of the lands added to the Refuge are nonagricultural in character. The small percentage of land in the withdrawal suitable for agricultural purposes will be farmed to provide feed for waterfowl in order to prevent depredation of Columbia Basin Project farmlands, the Service explained.

The reservation of the lands for the Refuge continues the closure to all forms of entry and appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining but not the mineral leasing laws or sales under the Materials Act. A complete description of the reserved lands will be published in the Federal Register along with the complete text of the withdrawal order.

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