



Unfortunately, the added emphasis was still not enough and drainage of valuable waterfowl nesting areas continued. Early action was needed and Congress then authorized a 7-year, \$105 million purchase and lease-loan program against future Duck Stamp receipts. A total of \$32½ million has been appropriated under this authorization.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife plans to use this money to preserve approximately 1,750,000 acres of waterfowl breeding habitat, mostly in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. To stretch the funds as far as possible, a plan was developed to purchase four or five of the more permanent water areas in each township and to pay for easements on semi-permanent satellite wetlands around the nucleus areas. These easements provide payments to landowners in return for an agreement not to drain or otherwise alter specific water areas.

This method provides both widespread duck nesting habitat in the spring when water is more plentiful and more permanent water areas to tide the birds over during drier periods when duck broods are maturing.

One of the major problems in wetlands acquisition has been the concern over removal of land from local tax rolls. This problem is being relieved by subsequent Federal legislation, but in the interim, the Bureau has kept the program rolling by shifting the emphasis to easements. The results have been outstanding, the Bureau says.

In 1963, only 83 acres were placed under easement in Minnesota. This figure rose to 2,198 acres in 1964 and then jumped to 7,479 in 1965. Progress in North Dakota has been even more dramatic. Whereas only 3,479 acres were placed under easement during 1962, agreements covering over 112,000 acres in that State have been assigned so far in 1965.

The easement program has made great strides in the past year, but many conservationists believe the hour is late. The objective now is to save the best remaining wetlands through Federal and State acquisition programs.

To carry out the Federal part of the wetlands preservation work, the Bureau plans to continue acceleration of its easement program. The fee purchase of nucleus areas is also expected to speed up now that there is a new formula for higher payments to counties where wetlands are acquired.

A major part of America's wetlands has been lost, but the Bureau says the new program, supplemented by similar State efforts--and greater public appreciation of wetland values--can save enough wetlands to perpetuate the Nation's waterfowl resources.

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