

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT EXPANDS ITS ALASKA FISH AND WILDLIFE OPERATIONS

The Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service is expanding its efforts in Alaska, Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced today,

This increased emphasis on fish and wildlife programs is in recognition of the State's wildlife and fisheries resources--largest in the Nation--and the need for effective State-Federal cooperation in their conservation, the Secretary said.

A major move in this direction, Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Charles H. Meacham said, is the establishment of an Area Office for the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in Anchorage effective July 1, 1970. The Area Office, Mr. Meacham said, will coordinate and direct the many activities being performed in Alaska by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife to protect and enhance the important sport fish and wildlife populations in America's largest State.

"Economic changes, population growth and natural resources development have created increasing problems which require additional effort by the Bureau in Alaska. A particular advantage in having an Alaska Area Office is the greater facility for direction and coordination of future Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife programs and planning with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game," Commissioner Meacham said. "The Bureau will now have in Alaska an office with decision-making capability to serve State agencies and the general public."

Another step to increase the effectiveness of Fish and Wildlife Service efforts in Alaska is the establishment by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries of a fisheries center at Kodiak, announced several months ago. This involves the expenditure of approximately \$100,000 to renovate and rehabilitate a Navy facility to house research and office personnel, Mr. Meacham stated. Located at the fisheries center will also be the Bureau's Alaska Associate Regional Director for Fisheries, who will supervise BCF research programs throughout the State.

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