

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

WILDLIFE FEATURE

For Release Sunday, September 27, 1970

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SPORTSMEN PAY THE BILLS FOR MANY FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

Nearly half a billion dollars have been allocated to the States in the past 30 years under two Federal aid programs for fish and wildlife research and development. The money has come from excise taxes on guns, ammunition, and tackle and is presently appropriated at a rate of about \$50 million annually.

The Treasury Department collects the money, then turns it over to the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife for allocation to States following a formula based on the area of the State and the number of paid fishing and hunting license holders.

The hunting equipment tax began with the 1937 Pittman-Robertson Act (P-R), and since its enactment, more than \$350 million has been collected. The fishing tackle tax was provided for by the 1950 Dingell-Johnson Act (D-J); it has resulted in the collection of more than \$100 million.

States submit projects for approval by BSWF, which then provides 75 percent of the cost from the P-R or D-J funds.

Much of the game money has gone for acquiring lands for public hunting, live trapping game for restocking in suitable ranges, habitat improvement, fencing, building roads and trails, managing hunts, and game research. Research projects have included surveys and censuses, animal behavior, and other biological studies that improve the management of wildlife for the benefit of sportsmen and the general public.

The aid to fisheries has helped management by financing studies which could not otherwise be undertaken. It has also improved capabilities of State fishery agencies by providing funds to hire technically trained people and buy badly needed equipment.

- Some States have concentrated on research; others have built public fishing lakes and acquired access to waterways across private land.

Last year, through habitat purchases and improvements, P-R money made possible 50 million additional hunting trips; fishery aid supported about 65 million additional angling visits. In addition, Federal aid projects provided millions of additional visits for wildlife watching, hiking, and picnicking.

One example of how Federal aid funds are helping is in the restoration of wild turkeys in States that had not hunted them for 20 years or more. Now the birds are being hunted in many localities because of successful live trapping and stocking of wild birds.

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