

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

news release

For Release April 27, 1972

Carroll 343-5634

SPENCER H. SMITH BECOMES DIRECTOR OF FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton today announced that Spencer H. Smith, 49, will become director of the Fish and Wildlife Service on April 27. He has been acting in that capacity since December 1970.

Smith, who was born in Liberty, Texas, joined the Service in 1949, a year after he received his B.S. degree from Oregon State College in fishery biology. In 1968 he was made a special assistant to the director, and in 1969 became a special assistant to Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

"Our new director is a professional conservationist and has had a long record of achievement," Secretary Morton said. "I am particularly proud of his dynamic leadership this past year, while he served as acting director, in establishing revised program objectives and reordering the priorities of the Bureau. I have challenged him to make the Fish and Wildlife Service the biological arm of the Federal Government for wildlife resources."

Secretary Morton said "Mr. Smith has the resourcefulness and capability of developing a hard-nosed, dedicated and progressive professional team. They will be at the forefront of fish and wildlife habitat preservation and enhancement and wildlife management giving full attention to environmental considerations.

"The position of director of the Fish and Wildlife Service is one of the most responsible in my Department and I am confident that Mr. Smith will serve with distinction."

On three occasions since 1963 Smith has received awards for outstanding service. In addition to his government work, he is a longtime member of the Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society.

Smith's professional career began as an aquatic biologist with the Service. In July 1949 he left to become chief of fisheries research for Mississippi's Game and Fish Commission, returning in 1955 as a research biologist at the Vicksburg, Miss., River Basin Studies Office.

Smith was appointed assistant supervisor for River Basin Studies in the Atlanta regional office in 1957 and three years later became regional head of this program area.

In 1967 Smith was appointed assistant regional director in the Service's southeast region, where he served until his appointment in October 1968 as assistant director for cooperative services, a position that brought him to the Service's Washington office.

The new director is married to the former Mildred Morgan, also from Texas, and they have one son, Lawrence Howard.

x x x