

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION APPROVES ADDITIONS TO FOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission has approved additions to four national wildlife refuges operated by the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton announced today.

The additions are 1,534 acres for Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Idaho, 1,034 acres for Salton Sea NWR in California, 45 acres for Chassahowitzka NWR in Florida, and 517 acres for Wolf Island NWR in Georgia.

Grays Lake, a unique marsh area, used by waterfowl for nesting and migratory rest, is possibly the most important nesting area in North America for the greater sandhill crane. The 12,000-acre refuge also is a nesting area for the Great Basin Canada goose, currently in short supply.

Salton Sea Refuge provides habitat for 200,000 ducks and geese during winter's peak population. Additional lands approved by the Commission will enable the refuge to develop grain and browse crops to sustain these birds while lessening depredations on nearby agricultural lands.

Chassahowitzka, located on Florida's Gulf Coast, sustains large populations of waterfowl and wading, shore and predatory birds. The area also harbors alligators, manatees, raccoons, mink, and other mammals. Its almost 30,000 acres consist primarily of fresh, brackish, and salt marsh.

Wolf Island is in the Atlantic about 50 miles south of Savannah. The present addition will complete acquisition of the 5,126-acre refuge which was established in 1930. The island contains valuable tidal marshes which are vital estuarine areas for wildlife and fisheries resources.

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission passes on proposed land acquisitions from funds collected through the sale of duck stamps and advances authorized by the Congress against future duck stamp sales. Its members are Secretary Morton (chairman), Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, Senator Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma, Senator Lee Metcalf of Montana, Representative Silvio Conte of Massachusetts, and Representative John Dingell of Michigan.

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