

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release June 7, 1973

Carroll 202/343-5634

## OKLAHOMA'S SALT PLAINS REFUGE HELD UNSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS

A study made by the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service indicates that its Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Oklahoma is not suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. A public meeting to discuss the results of the study will be held in Cherokee, Okla., on June 30.

Virtually all of the existing 32,000-acre refuge will be flooded or diked by the Great Salt Plains Dam and Reservoir flood control project of the Corps of Engineers.

"Numerous and widespread evidences of man," the wilderness study summary concludes, "leave no segment of the refuge suitable for recommendation into the National Wilderness Preservation System."

Salt Plains NWR, one of five Federal refuges in Oklahoma, is 150 miles north of Oklahoma City, just below the Kansas border on Salt Fork of the Arkansas River. The refuge provides resting and wintering habitat for migratory birds, especially ducks, geese, eagles, and shorebirds.

A map and other information about the wilderness study is available from the Refuge Manager, Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Box 49, Jet, Okla., 73749, or the Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Oral or written statements may be submitted at the hearing or written comments sent to the regional director by July 30, 1973, when the hearing record will be closed.

The June 30 hearing begins at 9 a.m. in the Alfalfa Electric Cooperative Auditorium in Cherokee.

x x x