

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE DIRECTOR SPENCER SMITH TO BE
REASSIGNED TO COORDINATOR POSITION IN DENVER; WIFE'S HEALTH CITED

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton today announced the reassignment, for family health reasons, of Director Spencer H. Smith of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Smith will become western field coordinator for the agency, a new position located in Denver.

In his new position, Smith will coordinate all Service programs west of the Mississippi. The area encompasses three Service regions and portions of two others, plus Alaska.

"Under Mr. Smith's directorship, great progress has been made in the enhancement and protection of the Nation's wildlife resources," Secretary Morton said. "We need his capabilities and experience in the Service. I am pleased that he requested assignment to this important post in view of the need for Mrs. Smith to live in a higher and less moist climate," the Secretary said.

Assistant Secretary Nathaniel Reed, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife and parks, commented: "We will sorely miss Spencer Smith's national leadership, but we understand the personal reasons that make this move desirable. He has provided the leadership in bringing about a better defined management focus for the Service's overall program."

Reed said that Smith will serve in a policy and staff coordinating capacity aimed toward a fully coordinated ecological program of fish and

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wildlife conservation across regional lines and between the Service and other Federal agencies, State fish and game departments, and private interests and organizations.

Smith, who is 50, became acting director of the Service in December 1970 and director in April 1972. On four 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 in 1949 as an aquatic biologist with the Service. The same year he left to become chief of fisheries research for Mississippi's Game and Fish Commission, returning to the Service 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 same year, Smith was made a special assistant to the director, and in 1969 became a special assistant to the assistant secretary.

Smith, who was born in Liberty, Texas, received his B.S. degree from Oregon State College in fishery biology.

His wife is the former Mildred Morgan, also from Texas. They have one son, Lawrence Howard.