

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release July 10, 1974

Kenney 202/343-5634

## ADDITIONS TO FOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES APPROVED BY MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The purchase of additions to four National Wildlife Refuges in Florida, Montana, New Jersey, and North Dakota, has been approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, Nathaniel P. Reed, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, announced today.

Three of the additions had been threatened by developments that would have destroyed their use as migratory bird feeding, resting, and nesting areas. A herringbone pattern of high-density, lagoon-type recreation housing was planned for the largest of the additions, a 3,855-acre tract of coastal and estuarine marsh near Barnegat National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey.

A similar commercial development was a threat to 1,238 acres of privately-owned mangrove islands within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge in the Florida Keys.

"We are fortunate indeed," Secretary Reed said, "that both of these tracts were saved from development and are to be made a part of the Nation's great system of National Wildlife Refuges. The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the preservation of wildlands, was able to purchase the lands outright. The Conservancy has since held the lands for resale at cost to the Federal Government pending the availability of Federal funds."

Development was also a potential for a 63-acre tract in the scenic Bitterroot Valley of Montana before it was approved for purchase as an addition to the Ravalli National Wildlife Refuge. The development of a subdivision there would have seriously impaired the wildlife values of the refuge.

The fourth addition, a 783-acre tract, lies within the Lake Alice National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota. It includes a mile of frontage on Lake Alice and its purchase will complete Federal ownership of the shoreline.

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission was set up in 1929 with the passage of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act to oversee and approve the acquisition of migratory bird habitat lands. The acquisitions have been mostly funded by receipts from the sale of duck stamps purchased by migratory waterfowl hunters. The sale of duck stamps now produces about \$11 million annually for wetlands preservation.

Members of the Commission are the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Transportation; Senators Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma and Lee Metcalf of Montana; and Representatives Silvio Conte of Massachusetts and John Dingell of Michigan.

X X X