

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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## WILDLIFE SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON HABITAT, KLEPPE DECLARES

LOUISVILLE, Ky.--The campaign to save American wildlife is about to enter a decisive stage against the prime enemy, loss of wildlife habitat, Secretary of the Interior Thomas S. Kleppe told the National Wildlife Federation today.

"If this battle is not won, then the wildlife laws, the research work, the management of refuges, and the enforcement of the laws will be diminished in effectiveness," Kleppe said at the organization's national conference in Louisville, Ky.

He cited careless land development as a major offender in diminution of habitat, and listed poor land use planning, drainage of valuable wetland areas, and some massive engineering projects which, he said, "can only be described as unthinking as far as preserving wildlife values are concerned."

Pledging to be "an energetic voice" in the interests of saving fish and wildlife resources, Kleppe said he would "cast a vote of responsibility toward our wildlife."

He praised public participation in environmental decision-making, and compared the public at large with a jury charged with rendering the ultimate decisions on wildlife survival.

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