



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ENTRANCE FEES TO BE CHARGED AT SELECTED NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Final procedures for establishing entrance fees at units of the National Wildlife Refuge System were published in the August 12 Federal Register by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Proceeds from the entrance fees will be used to fund refuge operations and future wetland acquisition efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Of the more than 400 units in the system, 19 have been identified as suitable for entrance fee collection at this time. Most of the 19 refuges will begin charging entrance fees this fall. Individual refuges will notify the public in the local areas before implementing the fee programs. The amounts of the daily entrance fees will vary from refuge to refuge, but generally will range from \$2 to \$5.

There will be no charge for children under 16 years of age, and fees may be reduced or waived for school or other groups visiting the refuge for environmental education or similar activities.

In announcing the action, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks William Horn said, "These reasonable entrance fees will provide important additional funding for this Nation's system of wildlife refuges and enable the Service to better protect and manage America's wildlife habitat. Funds collected from visitors will assist in improving our refuges and acquiring vital wetland acreage for waterfowl and other wildlife."

Authorization for entrance fees at selected refuges is contained in the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986.

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As part of the enabling legislation, Congress authorized a procedure whereby 30 percent of the daily fees collected will be used for refuge operation and management, and the remaining 70 percent will be deposited in the Service's Migratory Bird Conservation Account which funds wetlands acquisitions around the country.

"We are losing our marshes at the rate of nearly 500,000 acres a year, and this is dealing a wicked blow to waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife," Horn said. "The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act was passed to help stem these losses and the funds gained through entrance fees will be a helpful addition to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund."

It is important to note that, in lieu of an entry fee, a valid, current Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, better known as the "Duck Stamp," can be used as a year-round pass by the purchaser and those accompanying him or her in a single, private vehicle. Duck Stamps can be purchased at most Post Offices and a number of national wildlife refuges for \$10. All proceeds from the sale of these stamps are deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Account.

Other passes that will admit visitors to refuges include the Golden Eagle Passport (available for \$25 per year), the free, life-time Golden Age Passport for those 62 years of age or older, and the free Golden Access Passport available to those who are blind or otherwise disabled. The Golden Passports also admit accompanying passengers and are valid at national parks and national forests. They can be obtained at some national wildlife refuges and most national park and national forest headquarters.

The attached table lists the various refuges which will implement entrance fee programs and the appropriate regional public affairs offices to contact for additional information.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES IMPLEMENTING ENTRANCE FEE PROGRAMS

REGIONAL OFFICE

REFUGE

STATE

REGION 1

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Lloyd 500 Building, Suite 1692
500 NE. Multnomah Street
Portland, Oregon 97232
Telephone: 503-231-6121

Dungeness NWR
Kilauea Point NWR

Washington
Hawaii

REGION 2

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
500 Gold Avenue SW.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103
Telephone: 505-766-3940

Aransas NWR
Bosque del Apache NWR
Sequoyah NWR

Texas
New Mexico
Oklahoma

REGION 3

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111
Telephone: 612-725-3520

DeSoto NWR
Muscatatuck NWR
Ottawa NWR
Seney NWR
Sherburne NWR

Iowa
Indiana
Ohio
Michigan
Minnesota

REGION 4

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Richard B. Russell Federal Building
75 Spring Street SW.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: 404-331-3594

Hobe Sound NWR
Loxahatchee NWR
St. Marks NWR
J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR

Florida
Florida
Florida
Florida

REGION 5

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
One Gateway Center, Suite 700
Newton Corner, Massachusetts 02168
Telephone: 617-965-5100, ext. 206

Chincoteague NWR
Forsythe/Brigantine NWR
Montezuma NWR
Parker River NWR

Virginia
New Jersey
New York
Massachusetts

REGION 6

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228
Telephone: 303-236-7904

National Bison Range

Montana