



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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TURNER RECEIVES DUCKS UNLIMITED AWARD

WASHINGTON, DC John Turner, Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has received an award from Ducks Unlimited for his leadership in protecting wetlands. At the recent North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference held in Washington, DC, Ducks Unlimited, Inc. presented a Wetlands Conservation Achievement Award to Turner "in appreciation for his outstanding contribution to wetlands conservation." Ducks Unlimited (DU) is a national waterfowl and wetlands conservation organization headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee.

In presenting the 1993 award, Matthew Connolly, DU Executive Vice President, said, "Under Director Turner's leadership, this country has witnessed unprecedented progress in conserving and restoring wetland resources."

During Turner's tenure at the agency, the Nation has added 60 new national wildlife refuges and some 850,000 acres of habitat to the refuge system with a high priority to protect wetlands. In addition, under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, hundreds of local and state partners have come together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve over

(more)

1 million additional acres in Canada and the United States. Enhanced efforts to protect and restore coastal wetlands have resulted in nine new cooperative Bay and Estuary programs. In addition, a coastal grant program has been started with states and local groups to restore these productive ecosystems.

Under the new Partners for Wildlife Program, Turner has put a special emphasis on working cooperatively with private landowners.

Now over 9,000 farmers and ranchers have joined with the Fish and Wildlife Service to restore over 175,000 acres of degraded wetlands around the country.

In 1990, Turner was elected Chairman of the Standing Committee of the 65-nation Convention for Wetlands of International Importance. With this global cooperative effort, known as RAMSAR, the United States has provided funding and technical assistance to developing nations to help them use wetland resources in a more sustainable manner.

In accepting the award, Turner said, "I am very proud of our efforts to conserve wetlands. The progress is due to a renewed approach of working in a positive, voluntary manner with thousands of other partners across the country." He pointed out that although waterfowl conservation is often the focus of wetland protection efforts, these programs also benefit a broad diversity of other wildlife species. In addition, they enhance the environment in terms of better water quality, improved flood control, recharging ground water supplies, and improved agricultural practices.