



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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**PUBLIC COMMENT INVITED ON COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT
PLANNING FOR THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM**

A document outlining the step-by-step process for developing comprehensive management plans for all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System is available for public review and comment, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The material is to become part of the planning chapter for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual. It provides guidance for the full range of planning needs and for developing a clear statement of the desired future conditions of each unit in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The system currently includes 504 refuges, 180 waterfowl production areas, and 50 coordination areas encompassing 91.7 million acres. The units vary in size from a half-acre to 19 million acres and are located in all 50 states and the territories.

Major objectives of comprehensive management planning, as outlined in the document, are to provide long-term continuity in management of individual refuge units that reflects policies and goals of the refuge system and the purposes for which each unit was established. It will help ensure that all units contribute to the conservation of biological diversity and the ecosystem in which they are located.

The planning process also will help determine the compatibility of uses on refuge lands, identify refuge objectives and management strategies for achieving them, and provide a basis for monitoring progress and evaluating implementation. It provides a systematic decision-making process by identifying opportunities, issues, and concerns, and developing and considering a range of management alternatives.

Copies of the comprehensive management planning chapter may be obtained for review from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (attn: Pete Jerome), 1849 C Street NW., MS 670 ARLSQ, Washington, DC 20240; 703-358-2043. Comments will be accepted at the same address through February 17, 1995.