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PORTION OF SACRAMENTO REFUGE IN CALIFORNIA MAY BE OPENED TO WATERFOWL HUNTING

A proposal to open part of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge in California to public waterfowl hunting this fall was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall.

The proposal, being published in the Federal Register, would open about 4,000 acres to such hunting. The entire refuge, located in Glenn and Colusa Counties, has 10,776 acres.

Secretary Udall said the contemplated action is another step in the Department's program to develop the recreational potential of National Wildlife Refuges where such use is compatible with the management objectives of each area.

He said that during the past four years the wintering waterfowl survey has reported approximately five million birds annually in California. The opening of the proposed public hunting area in the Sacramento Refuge would result in an expected annual kill of 12,000 to 15,000 birds and would not jeopardize the resource, he added.

Secretary Udall noted that an increasingly large acreage of private lands is posted against hunting each year, making it more difficult for the unattached waterfowl hunter to find a suitable location to enjoy his sport. He said opening a portion of the Sacramento Refuge would provide additional hunting opportunity for the public.

Hunting would be permitted in the refuge area only on Wednesdays, weekends, and holidays, thus allowing waterfowl to utilize the entire refuge for more than half the time during the open season.

The hunting season on the refuge would be similar to that of areas in California affected by the Lea Act. Under the Act, hunting in such areas is permitted only after it has been determined that the major portion of the crops in the vicinity has been harvested and that there is little possibility of crop damage by waterfowl.

Public comment on the proposal regarding the Sacramento Refuge may be sent to the Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C., 20240, during a 30-day period beginning with publication of the announcement in the Federal Register.

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