



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ENTRANCE FEES PROPOSED FOR SELECTED NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

In accordance with the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, entrance fees could be charged this year for the first time at some National Wildlife Refuges under a proposed rulemaking by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposal appeared in the May 11, 1987, Federal Register and is open to a 30 day public comment period.

Unlike other Federal land units where entrance fees are charged, National Wildlife Refuges were prohibited legislatively from the practice until Congressional passage of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The measure calls for proceeds to remain with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fund refuge operations and future land acquisition efforts. The Act also contains measures aimed at stemming the Nation's continuing loss of wetland habitat vital to a diversity of fish and wildlife species.

In announcing fee plans today, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Frank Dunkle said: "Money raised through these entrance fees would go toward refuge operations and the addition of new areas to the Nation's refuge system. These funds would provide an important means of bolstering deposits in the Migratory Bird Conservation Account--the Service's primary account for acquisition of vital wetland habitat."

As part of the Act, Congress authorized a procedure whereby 30 percent of the daily fees collected would be used for refuge operation and maintenance. The remaining 70 percent would be deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Account. Projected revenues when the program is fully operational are estimated to be approximately \$8.3 million in FY 1988.

Nominal entry fees would vary by refuge. Under the proposal, there would be no charge for children under 16 years of age, and admission fees may be waived or reduced for school and other groups visiting the refuge for the purpose of environmental education or similar activities.

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In lieu of an entry fee, a valid, current Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, more commonly known as the Duck Stamp, could 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 \$10.00 beginning July 1. Proceeds from the sale of these stamps also are deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Account.

Other passes that would admit visitors to refuges include the Golden Eagle Passport (\$25.00 per year), and the free, life-time Golden Age Passport available to visitors who are 62 years of age or older, or the Golden Access Passport for those who are blind or disabled. Golden Passports also admit accompanying passengers and are valid at National Parks and Forests. They can be obtained at some National Wildlife Refuges and most National Parks and Forests.

Comments concerning the proposal must be received by June 10, 1987, and should be directed to: Assistant Director-Refuges and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Room 3248, 18th and C Streets NW, Washington, DC 20240.

The following table reflects the various refuges where entrance fees are being considered and the appropriate regional Public Affairs Office to contact for additional information:

Regional Office:	Refuge	State
Region 1 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Lloyd 500 Building, Suite 1692 500 N.E. Multnomah Street Portland, Oregon 97232 Com: 503/231-6121	Dungeness NWR Kilauea Point NWR McKay Creek NWR	Washington Hawaii Oregon
Region 2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife 500 Gold Avenue, S.W. Albuquerque, New Mexico Com: 505/766-3940	Aransas NWR Bosque del Apache NWR Sequoyah NWR	Texas New Mexico Oklahoma
Region 3 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Federal Building, Fort Snelling Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111 Com: 612/725-3520	DeSoto NWR Muscatatuck NWR Ottawa NWR Seney NWR Sherburne NWR	Iowa Indiana Ohio Michigan Minnesota

(more)

Region 4
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Richard B. Russell Fed. Bldg.
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 303031
Com: 404/331-3594

Hobe Sound NWR
Loxahatchee NWR
St. Marks NWR

Florida
Florida
Florida

Region 5
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
1 Gateway Center, Suite 700
Newton Corner, Mass. 02168
Com: 617/965-5100

Chincoteague NWR
Forsythe/Brigantine NWR
Montezuma NWR
Parker River NWR

Virginia
New Jersey
New York
Massachusetts

Region 6
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
134 Union Boulevard
Denver, Colorado 80228
Com: 303/236-7904

National Bison
Range NWR

Montana