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MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGES FOR
MARSH AND AQUATIC BIRDS ONLY

Biological Survey Seeks to Correct
Misapprehensions Regarding Types
Of Areas to be Bought

The new migratory-bird refuges that are being established by the Federal Government are to consist for the most part of bodies of water and their immediate borders, suitable for the various game species, and will include a minimum of ordinary upland types of country. This statement is made by officials of the Biological Survey, of the United States Department of Agriculture, which will administer the new refuges to give support and further effect to the migratory-bird treaty between the United States and Great Britain (acting for Canada). The five families of game birds protected by the treaty are defined as waterfowl, cranes, rails, shorebirds, and wild pigeons.

The migratory-bird conservation act passed by Congress in 1929 is designed to protect migratory game birds through the establishment of refuges for them. These game species are for the most part inhabitants of bays and shores, lakes and marshes. In spite of this, many recommendations of upland localities have been made to the Biological Survey by landowners and others as suitable for examination and purchase for refuge sites.

The Biological Survey states emphatically that such tracts can not be purchased. With reference to the areas that are desired, in water, marsh, or in some cases swamp, the bureau explains that so far as practicable preference will be given to tracts of 20,000 acres or more in extent; though especially desirable smaller tracts will be considered.

Other things being equal, lands obtainable at the lowest prices will be given primary consideration. The purchase program will extend over a period of ten years and it must not be expected that a large number of refuges can be established immediately. The areas to be obtained under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act are for inviolate sanctuaries, and no lands are being acquired for public shooting grounds.

The five families of game birds for which the refuges are being established, as will be noted from the following groups, are almost wholly marsh and aquatic species. They comprise (a) the Anatidae, or waterfowl, including brant, wild ducks, geese, and swans; (b) the Gruidae, or cranes, including little brown, sandhill, and whooping cranes; (c) the Rallidae, or rails, including coots, gallinules, and sora and other rails; (d) the Limicolae, or shorebirds, including avocets, curlews, dowitchers, godwits, knots, oyster catchers, phalaropes, plovers, sandpipers, snipe, stilts, surf birds, turnstones, willet, woodcock, and yellowlegs; and (e) the Columbidae, or pigeons, including doves and wild pigeons.

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