



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

NEW WILDLIFE REFUGE ESTABLISHED ON SITE OF SOUTHERN PLANTATION

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes announced today the establishment of the Wilson National Wildlife Refuge in Effingham County, Georgia, a few miles from the city of Savannah.

Administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the 1,588-acre area on the site of the old Wilson Plantation was donated to the Federal Government as a wildlife sanctuary by Dr. Frank C. Wilson, and is named in honor of his father Stephen Alfred Wilson.

According to present plans, the Wilson Refuge will be used as a sanctuary for migratory waterfowl and as an experimental area for studies of the food habits and characteristics of quail and other upland game species in Georgia.

In the center of the picturesque refuge stand reminders of the 1860's, when Dr. Wilson's father quartered the large staff of employees working on the then 6,000-acre plantation. A commissary building, homes, stables, and work houses still remain, little the worse for disuse and lack of paint since the plantation was abandoned some 20 years ago. Huge pine trees are found on the entire tract, although in August 1940, a severe hurricane played havoc with the timber stands.

A former national rifle champion and big-game hunter, Dr. Wilson is a conservationist who felt that a game sanctuary was needed in his section of Georgia. Realizing that scientific game management was necessary to develop the area to its maximum use as a wildlife habitat and desiring to benefit the wildlife in the surrounding section, he offered the tract to the Federal Government with the understanding that it will always be administered as a sanctuary.

The original plantation was established about 1866 by Dr. Wilson's father. Upon his death, most of the land was sold and the remainder parceled among the heirs. A few years ago, Dr. Wilson bought up the present 1,588-acre tract which had been the nucleus of the original plantation.

"I wanted this area to be devoted to the best interest of wildlife," declared Dr. Wilson, "and I knew that the Federal Government could do a good job of it. That's why I donated the area."

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