



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

*office file  
8/4/54*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release August 4, 1954

PUBLIC USE OF FEDERAL WILDLIFE REFUGES SHOWS INCREASE

A record for the public use of national wildlife refuges was set during calendar year 1953 when 4,686,909 people visited the 272 areas administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Acting Secretary of the Interior Ralph A. Tudor said today.

This represents a 10 percent increase over the 1952 record of 4,260,789 persons seeking recreation on the refuge areas.

More than one-third, or 1,433,445, of the visitors in 1953 used the refuges for fishing. (Public hunting accounted for the most noticeable increase, with 347,988 visitor-days tabulated for such use, an increase of 87,648 over 1952.) Picnicking, swimming, and nature study opportunities were the principal objectives of the other visitors.

Refuges which attracted the most visitors were the Wichita Mountains, in Oklahoma, with 742,047; Crab Orchard, in southern Illinois, 714,240; Upper Mississippi, extending along that river in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa, 340,005; Wheeler, in Alabama, 291,000; Tennessee, in Tennessee, 225,000; Tule Lake, in California, 165,423; Havasu, along the Colorado River in Arizona and California, 160,000; and Horicon, in Wisconsin, 132,798.

As an important part of its overall program, the Fish and Wildlife Service administers 272 national wildlife refuges in the continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Alaska. These refuges are managed on a multiple-use basis, insofar as this can be accomplished without defeating the primary purpose for which each was established.

In the broadest sense, these refuges make their greatest contribution to the Nation's recreation in the production and protection of wildlife, particularly migratory waterfowl, in order to insure the perpetuation of the sport of wildfowling for several million hunters. The more tangible contributions the refuges make to recreation are the facilities available for fishing, camping, boating, picnicking, nature study, and related use.

On virtually all refuges, except during periods of waterfowl concentration, fishing is permitted in accordance with State laws and regulations. On a few refuges, which are large enough to accommodate limited hunting, the Service, in cooperation with State Conservation Departments has permitted public shooting on small portions of the areas.

Recreational facilities have been established, developed, and maintained on various refuge areas. On areas which lend themselves to recreational uses without involved development and construction, the facilities are provided by the Service. On others, the recreational facilities are developed and operated either in cooperation with local governmental or civic groups or by commercial concessioners.

x x x