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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS PROGRAM FOR 1956 TO BE MAINTAINED AT HIGH LEVEL

With close to \$55,000,000 available in appropriated and special funds, programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the next 12 months will continue at the same high level as in the past fiscal year, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

"The Department's work in helping protect and expand the priceless fish and wildlife resources of our country is more important than ever with the number of hunters and fishermen increasing by leaps and bounds each year," Secretary McKay said. "We intend to carry it forward with the utmost vigor."

Funds appropriated directly by the Congress for use in fiscal 1956 amount to \$12,675,500. This is an increase of \$1,222,500 over the 1955 amount.

Appropriated funds, however, constitute only about one-fourth of the total available to the Service. About three-fourths of the Service's appropriations come from special funds such as the revenue from duck stamps, taxes on fishing tackle, and arms and ammunition, and other sources. The amount of such special funds available to the Service increases as more sportsmen enter the field.

"The Service received \$1,000,000 for continuation of construction on the Devil's Kitchen Dam at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois. Congress stipulated, however, that these funds are to be transferred to the Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army, which agency will have full responsibility for construction of the project. The Service will use \$210,000 in 1956 to continue construction of two new hatcheries at Millen, Ga., and North Attleboro, Mass., and to erect new buildings at the Pittsford, Vt., Welaka, Fla., and Springville, Utah, stations.

A substantial increase in the output of hatchery-reared fish for stocking inland lakes and streams is expected to result from additional funds amounting to \$305,000 which were appropriated to the Service in fiscal year 1956 for its fish propagation and distribution work.

At the present time the Service operates 89 fish-cultural stations in 42 States. In calendar year 1954, these hatcheries produced and distributed 208,000,000 fish, weighing 1,393,000 pounds.

For 1956, funds to provide for the maintenance of hatcheries, equipment, and fish screens were increased by \$155,000. This will permit a more adequate program of maintenance at hatchery installations and the necessary replacement of equipment.

An additional \$150,000, to step up fish production, was added to the operating allotments of 28 hatcheries for which Congress provided funds for improvement and expansion of facilities in the past five years. These hatcheries are located in areas where the demand for fish for stocking purposes has greatly exceeded the present production of these units. The increase of \$150,000 will permit the expanded facilities at these units to be utilized to 92 percent of capacity. Also the Service will resume in 1956 its important mussel propagation program which was temporarily discontinued.

An increase of \$60,000 has been granted by Congress for wildlife research in support of agriculture. The major portion, \$34,000, is for a study of the basic conditions that control rodent, rabbit, and predator numbers on the grazing ranges of western public lands. This study will be directed and coordinated by a research team being established at the Service's Denver Research Laboratory. Of the remainder, \$10,000 is to be used for a study to improve mammal control methods; \$6,000 for bird depredation work in connection with the reseeding of southern pine lands, including the problem of depredation of field crops; and \$10,000 for the Service to cooperate with the State of Colorado in developing methods for the control of pocket gophers. These studies will be carried out in close cooperation with State and other Federal agencies.

In Alaska, where the commercial fisheries provide the chief source of wealth and employment, and a major source of tax revenue, the Service's salmon conservation program in 1956 will continue at the same level as in the past two years. Better coordination of field activities and improvement of law enforcement and management programs can be expected as a result of the recent reorganization of the field staff.

"For fur-seal work on the Pribilof Islands expenditures during 1956 will total about \$1,231,000. During this period, contractors will complete construction of houses, school, and hospital buildings, warehouses, and other facilities for the native Aleut population of the Islands at a total cost for the program of \$1,500,000."

Congressional funds of \$337,000 provide an increase of \$74,000 for studies in connection with water resource developments to determine means for lessening any adverse effect on the fish and wildlife resources. Moreover, the funds provided are subject to less limitation on use than in previous years, since they provide for the financing of a "hard-core" staff for river basins investigations for the first time.

During fiscal year 1956 the Service's Office of River Basin Studies will undertake a number of important studies under the Coordination Act of 1946. The principal investigation, utilizing the increase, will be a survey of the Middle Snake River Basin in Idaho where five larger power companies in the Pacific Northwest have pooled their resources to file an application with the Federal Power Commission for construction of a dam in the Clearwater River Drainage and two dams on the Snake River a short distance upstream from the mouth of the Salmon River. Other dams are planned in the Halls Canyon Reach. Since very large fish and big game values are involved in these proposed projects, the Service will make a complete investigation of the entire Snake River from Lewiston to Swan Falls. Field offices will be established at Boise and at several other localities in Idaho in 1956 to facilitate field work.

The largest single study of an individual Bureau of Reclamation project will be the investigation related to the Garrison Diversion Unit of the Missouri River Basin Project. This unit, involving the proposed irrigation of 960,000 acres in the heart of the finest waterfowl producing area in the United States, with four reservoirs and more than 600 miles of main canals, will have a tremendous effect on waterfowl resources of the country. Funds for this study will be provided by transfer from the Bureau of Reclamation appropriation.

The largest single project study utilizing Corps of Engineers funds will be in connection with the huge Mississippi River and Tributaries Project which has been authorized for a number of years. Many units of this flood control project not yet constructed are expected to have major effects on important fish and wildlife resources of the alluvial valley of the Mississippi.

Another major study during 1956 will be in connection with the extensive Central and Southern Florida project of the Corps of Engineers, authorized by the Congress in 1954. A project of this magnitude can be expected to have widespread effects on fish and wildlife resources, including coastal fisheries. Units of the project will be studied and constructed by the Corps over a number of years. The size and importance of this project led the Fish and Wildlife Service to establish a new field office at Vero Beach, Fla., in 1955 to conduct necessary studies. In 1956 this office will be expanded and the studies will be accelerated.

"Work of controlling predatory animals and injurious rodents will continue at about the same high level as 1955, with expenditures of about \$920,000 anticipated."

Greater emphasis, however, will be placed on the control of rats and mice around grain storages to prevent loss and contamination of cereal grains utilized for human food. Public interest in this activity has increased greatly as a result of the recently reactivated Grain Sanitation Program sponsored jointly by Federal and State agencies and the grain-handling industry.

In addition to the \$3 million which the Service will have for an expanded fishery program during the second year of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, a direct appropriation of \$1,108,000 will be available for research and marketing programs to aid the commercial fishing industry.

"About \$353,000 will be expended during fiscal year 1956 in the exploration of new fishing grounds to determine the character, extent, and availability of the deep water resources."

Exploration of the North Pacific for off-shore salmon populations and exploratory surveys in the Gulf of Mexico for additional information on the tuna and shrimp resources will highlight the 1956 program. During 1955 Service exploration in the Gulf of Mexico turned up a remarkable discovery of a subsurface population of tuna.

Fishery technological research is intended to promote the most efficient utilization of marine products and is designed primarily to assist industry in improving methods of handling, processing, and marketing these products. With funds of \$282,000, main emphasis in 1956 will be placed on quality control through development of voluntary standards of grade and condition for fishery products. Standards are already being developed for fish sticks and frozen haddock fillets. The fishing industry has recently displayed considerable interest in the development of adequate standards and grades. Most of this work will be centered at the

Service's Boston, Mass., and College Park, Md., fishery laboratories. The effects of freezing and cold storage on fish in order to improve the product which reaches the consumer is the subject of extensive research.

The increasing importance of international trade in fishery products and the larger imports of these products into the United States from foreign countries is resulting in considerable attention being given to the collection and analysis of import and export data for the guidance of the fishing industry. Other economic studies of domestic marketing situations will be made to aid the industry and Government in maintaining the orderly output of fishery products. For fishery economic studies, \$43,000 will be available in 1956.

Statistical coverage of the fishing industry as a basic part of the program will provide management and research personnel with valuable data on employment, production trends, stocks in cold storage, and other needed production and marketing facts. Funds for this work amount to \$150,000.

The Service's seven Market News offices, located at important fish producing and consuming areas in the United States, will continue the issuance of daily reports on supply, demand, market, and prices. Funds for this purpose amount to \$280,000.

The Service received direct appropriations of \$2,489,000 in 1956 for fishery biological research. This amount is divided among the following activities; coastal and offshore fishery research, \$1,655,000; commercial fishery research, \$213,600; inland fishery research, \$590,400; and \$30,000 for designing fish protective devices.

In addition to the direct appropriations, many of these activities will benefit from Saltonstall-Kennedy and other funds.

The direct appropriation includes \$350,000 for research on the Great Lakes fisheries, with particular emphasis on the development of economical methods for controlling sea lampreys and the operation and maintenance of experimental and interim sea lamprey control devices in streams tributary to Lakes Michigan and Superior. The funds so provided will keep up the United States' share of research and control until an International Commission for the Great Lakes can be established as provided in the Treaty signed September 10, 1954, and ratified by the President, with the consent of the Senate, on June 1, 1955.

From direct appropriations, the national wildlife refuge program receives \$876,000, with \$40,000 of this being earmarked for necessary repair and rehabilitation work on the industrial unit at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois. Additional funds for the refuge program, available from the sale of duck stamps, surplus refuge products, and other sources, will make approximately \$5,003,400 available in 1956.

The administration of the various fish and game laws in the United States and Alaska which the Service is charged with enforcing will have \$3,589,100 in 1956 from all sources. This includes the administration of the Alaska fisheries and the Alaska game laws, enforcement activities under the Migratory Bird Treaty and Lacey Acts, enforcement of the Black Bass, Bald Eagle, Sockeye Salmon, and Northern Pacific Halibut Acts, administration of the Whaling Treaty Act and the Northwest Fisheries Convention Act. In connection with enforcement of the haddock provisions under the Northwest Fisheries Convention Act, Congress provided an extra \$8,500 to

the Service for the employment of an experienced fishery law enforcement officer who will be headquartered at Gloucester, Mass.

Funds available for the Service's Federal Aid in Wildlife and Fish Restoration programs under the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts are expected to be somewhat in excess of last year's, with around \$11 million anticipated for wildlife and about \$5 million for sport fish work. These funds are of vital importance in the restoration and better management of the fish and wildlife resources in the 48 States.

Implementation of recommendations made by a Survey Team designed to increase efficiency and produce greater results with available funds will be continued in fiscal year 1956 with an increased appropriation of \$35,000.

The Team's recommendations, approved by the Secretary on July 2, 1954, emphasized the need to decentralize authority from Washington to regional offices so as to promote closer cooperation with the States. These new funds will provide assistance to regional directors so they may assume additional delegations of authority.

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