



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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VISITOR-USE OF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES CONTINUES TO INCREASE

Recreational opportunities on national wildlife refuges attracted more than 8½ million visitors during 1957 and set a new record for public-use, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler announced today.

The 8,668,580 visitors in 1957 represented an increase of 1,113,246, or 14.6 percent, over 1956's record of 7,555,334 visitor-days' use.

The Assistant Secretary pointed out that recreation on refuges is limited to designated areas where such activities can be accommodated without interfering with the primary function of the refuges in propagating and protecting wildlife resources.

Sport fishing attracted almost one-third, or 2,908,435 persons, with this sport being particularly popular on refuges along the Tennessee, Colorado, and Mississippi Rivers. Fishing derbies for youngsters were sponsored on several refuges.

Wildlife observations, picnicking, swimming, and photography accounted for more than 62 percent of all refuge uses, amounting to 5,371,150 visitor-days. As an example, some 15,000 persons visited the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin on last October 20 to view a concentration of 35,000 Canada geese.

Some type of hunting, including archery, accounted for 388,995 visitor-days, or 4½ percent. On the 58,000-acre Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in central Wisconsin nearly 13,000 bow-hunters took 867 deer during the 12 weeks' hunt. No firearms were permitted.

Three refuge areas registered in excess of, or close to, a million visitors. The Upper Mississippi River Wild Life and Fish Refuge, which extends for 284 miles along the river from Wabasha, Minnesota, to Rock Island, Illinois, entertained 2½ million visitors. The 44,000-acre Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois attracted 1,360,500 visitors, while the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Oklahoma had 906,256.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, administers a system of about 270 national wildlife refuges in the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. They are managed on a coordinated-use basis, insofar as this can be accomplished without defeating the primary objective for which each was established, thus making possible a vast amount of recreational activity in areas where recreational facilities are at a minimum.

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