



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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300-YARD STRIP AROUND MARTIN REFUGE IN CHESAPEAKE MAY BE CLOSED TO HUNTERS

Plans for establishing a 300-yard "no-hunting" strip around Martin National Wildlife Refuge in Somerset County, Maryland, are being considered in the Department of the Interior. Maryland law will not permit establishment of duck-hunting blinds beyond the 300-yard line.

The Refuge is a resting and feeding area for migratory waterfowl as well as a wintering area for many species. It is primarily of value for diving ducks--redheads and canvasbacks which have been in a precarious condition for the past two years. Future development of the Refuge will include feeding areas designed to increase its attractiveness for Canada geese.

Notice of intention to close the area will be published in the Federal Register. A 30-day period for public discussion is provided in the official notice. Final decision and action will follow that waiting period.

The closing is recommended by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service, because "establishment of off-shore blinds on the tidal waters adjoining the acquired refuge lands and the resultant heavy hunting greatly reduces the value of the refuge for diving ducks". Closure of the area "to correct such undesirable conditions is in the interest of sound waterfowl management," Bureau officials say.

The Martin National Wildlife Refuge comprises 3,875 acres of land which has been acquired by the Bureau. The Refuge was established by the acquisition of 2,570 acres on December 20, 1955, a gift from the late Glenn L. Martin. Subsequently, additional lands were purchased. The Refuge is on Smith Island in the Lower Chesapeake Bay, south of Kedges Strait and east of Tangier Sound. It is about five miles north of the Maryland-Virginia boundary.

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