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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT ATLANTIC COAST INSTALLATIONS SUFFER \$3½ MILLION STORM DAMAGE

The devastating storm that struck the Middle Atlantic State coastal areas beginning March 6, 1962, caused losses to Department of the Interior installations estimated at more than \$3½ million, the Department reported today.

Virtual loss of two National Wildlife Refuges in Virginia and North Carolina and serious damage to nine other refuges resulted. Loss was assessed at approximately \$2 million. Some damage also was suffered by the Department's fishery laboratory at Franklin City, Va. Restoration of all areas is underway.

Damage to National Park Service beaches and facilities at Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area in North Carolina has been estimated at \$1,500,000 and perhaps much more. It has been impossible to make a complete survey of Hatteras Island. Barrier dunes, laboriously stabilized by the Service under a continuing program over the past two or three decades to protect the beach and highway, have been largely destroyed. Roadways have been covered with sand, undermined, or washed out.

The campgrounds and marina at Oregon Inlet in the Hatteras area were destroyed. Just north of Buxton, on Hatteras Island, an inlet 500 to 600 feet wide and 12 feet deep has been cut. Lesser inlets have also been cut through the island, but are expected to fill with sand.

To provide sanitary and drinking water for the influx of day-use visitors and fishermen by the end of March, the National Park Service will use available funds to restore comfort stations and local water systems in the Park.

Fish and Wildlife Service officials said that the sport and commercial varieties of fin fish did not suffer serious loss from the storm. Concern has been felt regarding shellfish resources because of extensive silting expected, but no definite damage has yet been reported to the Department of the Interior by the shellfish industry.

The destruction of sand dunes and other barriers ruined many fresh-water areas which for years have provided resting and feeding grounds for migratory waterfowl, Fish and Wildlife Service representatives said. Repercussions of this damage cannot be measured at this time. Refuge personnel have counted at least 70 ponies on the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, indicating that while there may have been some losses, the famous herd is still generally intact.

Preliminary surveys indicate extensive damage to coastal refuges from Brigantine in New Jersey to the Blackbeard Island Refuge in Georgia. The Chincoteague Refuge in Virginia and the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina were the hardest hit.

The damage at the Chincoteague Refuge included the loss of sub-headquarters buildings, the leveling of approximately 21 miles of protective dunes, and severe salt-water damage to refuge vehicles and tractors. Great quantities of sand were deposited in the refuge's fresh-water impoundments. The transition from fresh to salt water is expected to do serious damage to aquatic vegetation upon which waterfowl using the refuge normally feed.

Damage to the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on North Carolina's Outer Banks consisted of almost complete destruction of 12 miles of protective sand dunes, threatened destruction to three headquarters buildings that are practically in the ocean due to shore erosion, the loss of 12 miles of fencing covered by sand or carried away, and heavy damage to fresh-water impoundments used by ducks and geese during the winter months.

Available wildlife funds have already been programmed for emergency cleanup and repair work on the Chincoteague and Pea Island Refuges. In addition, plans are underway for the major rehabilitation of all areas. Of particular concern is the reestablishment of sand dunes necessary for protection of wildlife resources and, in the case of the Chincoteague Refuge, so vital to the protection of the town of Chincoteague itself.

Other National Wildlife Refuges besides Chincoteague and Pea Island that were damaged by the storm include: Brigantine, in New Jersey, where five miles of levee were breached or damaged; Bombay Hook, in Delaware, with erosion and washouts in the levees; Blackwater, in Maryland, with damage to levees and ponds; Back Bay, in Virginia, where sand dune erosion was extensive along five miles of ocean front; Mattamuskeet and Swanquarter National Wildlife Refuges, in North Carolina--high water damage to revetment and roads; Cape Romain, in South Carolina, erosion and damage to protective sand dunes; Savannah Refuge, in Georgia, erosion of fresh-water pond dikes; and Blackbeard Island, also in Georgia, erosion and damage to protective sand dunes.

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