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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION TO BE OBSERVED

Preparations for observing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program are under way, the Department of the Interior has announced. The program will be centered around September 2, 1962, the anniversary date of the signing of the law in 1937.

Probably better known by many as the Pittman-Robertson Act after its sponsors, the late Senator Key Pittman of Nevada and Senator (then Representative) A. Willis Robertson of Virginia, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act is considered by conservationists as one of the most constructive measures of its type ever adopted.

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration provides that proceeds from the 11 percent manufacturers' excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition go into a special fund for distribution to the States to finance wildlife restoration projects. The idea for this program began back in the "dust bowl" days of the 1930's when the prairie marshes and wetlands that are the nesting area for most of the Nation's waterfowl were literally "blowing away." This critical situation of waterfowl spotlighted the need to preserve and manage habitat for all kinds of wildlife. The State fish and game departments, financed almost entirely from the sales of hunting and fishing licenses, were unable to cope with the increasing problems of wildlife losses.

The need for additional funds to carry out State restoration programs resulted in the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act which was signed September 2, 1937, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and became effective July 1, 1938. Administration for this program was placed in the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Biological Survey, where it remained until June 30, 1940. At that time the Bureau of Biological Survey and the U. S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Fisheries were merged under the U. S. Department of the Interior to form the Fish and Wildlife Service, the agency which now administers the program through its Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Utah submitted the first approved Federal Aid project which covered the development of its Ogden Bay Waterfowl Area.

Under the terms of the Act, the projects are carried out by and the costs borne initially by the State fish and game departments. Reimbursement from Federal Funds is made for the Federal pro-rata share, which cannot exceed 75 percent of The cost of each project. All property acquired belongs to the States.

During the period July 1, 1938 through June 30, 1961, nearly \$219 million of Federal Aid funds were apportioned to the States and Territories for wildlife restoration purposes. Under the program, 2,373,754 acres of land have been purchased by 47 States for wildlife management and public hunting areas.

A similar program for restoration of fish has been carried on through the 1950 Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Act.

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