

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release April 18, 1978

Levitt 202/343-5634

NEW WILDLIFE AGREEMENT BETWEEN INTERIOR AND DEFENSE

U.S. military installations across the country will receive additional help in the management of fish and wildlife resources under a revised Memorandum of Understanding signed recently by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Defense.

The agreement presently covers almost 200 military installations and 19 million acres which contain the most desirable fish and wildlife habitat in the 25.4 million acres of land controlled by the Defense Department. Military installations were previously covered under a 1960 Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies. The former agreement was not as detailed as the present agreement as to responsibilities of the two Departments. It is expected that additional military installations will sign cooperative agreements with State fish and wildlife departments and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in implementing the new Memorandum of Understanding and the Sikes Act.

The Cooperative Agreements are authorized under the Sikes Act, which provides for programs of planning, development, maintenance, and coordination of fish and wildlife restoration, rehabilitation, and public recreation on military installations. Such programs are implemented in accordance with a cooperative plan mutually agreed upon by Defense, the State conservation department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The new Memorandum of Understanding calls for the Service to develop management plans for fish and wildlife, conduct surveys of fish and wildlife resources, provide technical assistance for the protection and restoration of fish and wildlife populations, and provide guidance and assistance to the Defense Department in observance of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and other Federal wildlife laws as they apply to military installations.

The Defense Department now has fish and wildlife management plans developed for each military installation where suitable habitat exists and where management of wildlife resources is consistent with the mission of the installation. The management practices will provide for sound management of all species and all compatible land use plans. Hunting and fishing may be permitted on installations when such programs do not conflict with good management practices and do not violate safety or security restrictions.