

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

news release

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## ANDRUS SEES REORGANIZATION OF U.S. AGENCIES AS AIDING COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE

Reorganization of U.S. natural resources management agencies should enhance joint efforts between the United States and Canada to protect the wildlife and environment along the international boundary, Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus said today.

"It is my belief that the reorganization of U.S. agencies responsible for natural resources management will make coordination and cooperation with Canada much easier and more productive for both governments," Andrus said in keynoting the 43rd annual meeting of the National Wildlife Federation at Toronto, Canada.

The Secretary said that President Carter is proposing a Department of Natural Resources "in scale with the scope of its undertaking, a department with sufficient mettle to meet its continuing task: the truly enormous job of listening carefully and acting wisely."

"The proposal does not intend bigness for the sake of bigness, nor consolidation for the sake of consolidation," Andrus said. "It intends increased responsiveness and increased capacity for sound resource management, but decreased complexity and decreased red tape."

The proposed Department of Natural Resources is to be composed of all agencies currently in the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service transferred from the Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration transferred from the Commerce Department.

Andrus also emphasized the need to provide adequate protection for areas in Alaska and in Canada where the Porcupine River caribou herd migrates. U.S. and Canadian officials are working on a convention to protect the herd.

"These caribou travel a thousand miles in their annual migration," Andrus said. "It is a trek of necessity, a meandering route that has been their path of survival for centuries. Eskimos say that 'no one knows the way of the wind and the caribou,' and we certainly don't pretend to. We do know, though, that if the herd is dispersed or broken up by economic exploration and development of the area, that it may never regroup again. We do know that these are not creatures that can be constrained within neat, arbitrary lines. We do know that to designate for them anything less than their full range would be to consign them to an artificial and lethal corral."

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