

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DRAFT MANUAL FOR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM NOW CIRCULATING FOR COMMENTS

Public comments are now being taken on the new draft operations manual for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System.

The new "Draft Refuge Manual" compiles management policies and operating procedures for the more than 400 National Wildlife Refuges which encompass approximately 89 million acres of land.

Although written to serve as a manager's handbook, the draft should be of interest to the general public because many of the activities the Service conducts on refuges affect the ways in which the public enjoys fish and wildlife and makes use of refuge lands.

More than 250 refuge system employees labored over the past 18 months to compile the new draft manual, which updates an earlier operations manual written in 1957. The manual addresses all facets of refuge management, from general topics such as land acquisition and refuge master planning, to specific, day-to-day operational procedures, such as waterfowl management, pest control, hunting and fishing, pollution control, grazing, and environmental education.

A "Notice of Availability" for the Service's "Draft Refuge Manual" was published in the January 26, 1981, Federal Register. This notice lists all of the individual chapters in the draft volume.

Review copies of the entire draft manual are available for the convenience of the public at all of the Fish and Wildlife Service's regional and area offices and at all National Wildlife Refuges.

Persons interested in reviewing certain chapters of the draft manual can also consult the Federal Register and then request, in writing, those chapters by name and number, from the Refuge Manual Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (RF), Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. Photocopies of the requested chapters will then be sent. A list of available chapters may also be obtained from the Refuge Manual Coordinator.

Comments, directed to the same address, must be received by April 27, 1981.

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