



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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WATT EMPHASIZES FEDERAL/STATE COOPERATION AND CONTINUED STRONG PROTECTION IN FISH & WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

Stressing his support for State management of resident wildlife species, Secretary James Watt said that the Interior Department will actively seek State cooperation in achieving its wildlife conservation objectives.

"In those areas where Congress has given the Federal Government primary responsibility for protection of wildlife--such as migratory birds and endangered species--we will work to insure that those objectives are protected," Watt told the International Association of Game and Fish agencies annual conference in Albuquerque. "We offer our help to the states in reaching their wildlife goals and we will actively seek the assistance of the states in achieving federal objectives--and we challenge you to do so well that we are inspired to meet your standards".

He said efforts to bring about recovery of endangered species would be aggressively pursued and cited the whooping crane program as an example.

"The American people can be proud of the accomplishments made to bring North America's largest crane back from the brink of extinction" he said. "We certainly will continue this program".

Watt said he has given approval to comprehensive Fish and Wildlife plans submitted by Colorado, Kansas and Wyoming. This action will give the states more say over use of funds apportioned to them from Federal excise taxes collected on certain sporting goods for wildlife and fisheries restoration and improvement.

The Secretary said his Department also would work more closely with the states and with sportsmen on programs to improve hunting and fishing operations. He renewed his commitment to an aggressive program for the acquisition of wetland migratory bird habitat.

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