



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Regional Release Only
July 2, 1982

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NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

"Duck Stamp" Contest Opens. The Federal Government's 1982 "Duck Stamp" contest opened July 1 to select the design for the 1983-84 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. Prospective entrants may request copies of the contest rules and entry forms from the "Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Contest," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Deadline for all entries is October 1 with contest judging to be held on November 4 at the Interior Department in Washington, D.C. (preceded by a preliminary round of screening on November 3 if the number of entries warrants).

Beginning this year, entrants must pay an entry fee of \$20 at the time their designs are submitted (check or money order only).

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Marine Mammal Report. The recently compiled annual report of the Marine Mammal Protection Act provides an interesting look at the status of polar bears, walruses, sea otters, manatees, and dugongs, with a mention of the endangered monk seals as well.

The 27-page report, covering all of 1981, emphasizes cooperative research and management efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State wildlife departments, and international agencies.

Typical of findings of the report was the discovery of changing feeding habits among Alaska's walruses on the northern Bering Sea coast. Studies of stomach contents of animals taken by Eskimos for subsistence revealed that these great herds were eating a wider variety of prey than they were 6 years ago. Such trends are significant to wildlife managers since a pronounced diversion from preferred to less-preferred foods usually indicates habitat deterioration.

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The Service is continuing to fund studies into the causes of mortality among California sea otters and Florida manatees. Biologists are also monitoring the harvest of polar bears by coastal natives.

Although seals, along with sea lions, porpoises, and whales are the management responsibility of the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service, monk seals are included in this report since they make extensive use of Interior's Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

In addition, the report discusses marine mammal funding and an explanation of newly modified provisions of the act which promote the transfer of management responsibilities to qualified States.

Single copies of the report may be obtained from the Publications Unit, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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