



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

For Release January 17, 1990

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO PREPARE COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director John Turner today announced the agency is preparing a combined new plan and environmental impact statement (EIS) for future management of the National Wildlife Refuge System through the year 2003.

The document titled "Refuges 2003--A Plan for the Future" will address virtually all major refuge management issues and set recommended courses of action for the more than 450 National Wildlife Refuges encompassing over 90 million acres nationwide.

Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Constance Harriman said, "This comprehensive work will provide vital management guidelines for the continued protection and conservation of the fish and wildlife populations on our Nation's national wildlife refuges. It will guide us through the next decade and well into the 21st century."

These areas represent a diversity of wildlife habitat types with an emphasis on wetlands, and support a similar diversity of wildlife species for which they are managed. The year 2003 was selected because it marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of America's first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island, Florida, by President Theodore Roosevelt.

A earlier draft EIS on management of national wildlife refuges was released for public review and comment in December 1988. The Service received nearly 30,000 responses addressing a broad range of significant concerns. Based on careful consideration of the many substantive comments received, the Service has elected to withdraw that draft EIS and prepare this new, more comprehensive document.

Public involvement will be a key aspect in the formulation of "Refuges 2003." There will be numerous opportunities for public participation through public meetings, briefings, and workshops to be held in a number of cities throughout the country. The initial draft is expected to be available for public review in July 1991.