



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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**FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION AWARDS PRESENTED
BY THE NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN COMMITTEE**

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today announced the recipients of the newly established **International Canvasback Award**, recognizing three individuals for their work on behalf of wetlands and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The awards went to Senator George Mitchell (D-Maine); Gary T. Myers, Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency; and Dr. James H. Patterson, Director of International and Government Relations for Ducks Unlimited Canada and former Director of the Plan for the Canadian Wildlife Service. The honors were presented at a special ceremony held in conjunction with the 58th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Washington, DC.

The awards represent the highest honor bestowed by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee, which is composed of six U.S. and six Canadian members appointed by the Directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The committee provides international leadership for the Plan, a 1986 agreement to restore waterfowl populations through conservation and protection of wetland habitats.

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Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell was recognized for his sponsorship of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, companion legislation to the Plan. The Act encourages partnerships by providing matching grants to public and private organizations for wetlands conservation throughout the continent. In the three years since the Act was funded, \$81 million has been approved to protect, restore, or enhance some 2 million acres of wetlands on the North American continent. Partners have contributed another \$161 million to nearly double these grants, now at work on 220 projects in 10 provinces in Canada and 40 states in the U.S. and Mexico.

Having served on the Environment and Public Works Committee since 1980, Senator Mitchell is also active in issues involving clean air, toxic cleanup under Superfund, nuclear power plant safety, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and resource recovery and recycling. He is a member of the Senate's National Ocean Policy Study Group and led the effort for re-enactment of the Clean Water Act over a Presidential veto in 1987.

Gary T. Myers, Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, is credited with spearheading U.S. support for implementation of the Plan in Canada through creative funding and matching of partnership contributions. In 1987, to stimulate action and interest in the Plan, he initiated a drive to raise \$1 million from state fish and wildlife agencies toward a "First Step" project in the prairie pothole breeding grounds of Canada. The \$1 million was matched by Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and then matched again in Canada for a total of \$8 million. The matching concept was continued in subsequent years and was incorporated into the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to secure a solid funding source for the future.

A native of Colorado, Myers attended the U.S. Naval Academy and received a bachelor's and master's degree in wildlife management from Colorado State University. He began his career with the Colorado Division of Wildlife in 1963 and moved to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency in 1974 where he has been Executive Director since 1978. He received the Tennessee Conservationist of the Year Award in 1976, 1984, and 1989, and the Commendation Award in 1986 from the Tennessee Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

Dr. James H. Patterson, now Director of International and Government Relations with Ducks Unlimited Canada, led the development of the Canadian position on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as Director of the Migratory Birds

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Branch of the Canadian Wildlife Service. He served as head of the Canadian delegation that negotiated the Plan with the United States. Later, as Director for North American Waterfowl Management Plan implementation with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Patterson developed the management and administrative structures for the Plan, secured funding from public and private sectors in Canada and the U.S., and saw the establishment of four joint ventures.

He holds three degrees from Carleton University and began his career as a research scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service in Edmonton in 1972. Dr. Patterson is a member of the Canadian Wetlands Council, a national body responsible for wetland conservation throughout Canada. He has served as President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Washington, DC, and since 1987 as President of the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, Slimbridge, England.

Each received an original wood carving of a canvasback hen and two ducklings amidst wetland vegetation by noted artist William Veasey of Elkton, Maryland. A favorite of waterfowlers and nature enthusiasts alike, the canvasback is found throughout the continent and has been widely used as a symbol of the Plan.

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Note to Editors: Photos available from 202-208-5612.