



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ON INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is offering computer users cruising the information highway a wealth of data on the conservation and management of this Nation's fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.

The information available on the Service's Internet server is as diverse as the agency itself. The new World Wide Web server "home pages" contain summaries of virtually every aspect of the numerous activities and programs conducted by the Service.

Examples include a current listing of all endangered and threatened species, information concerning recreational activities on the more than 500 national wildlife refuges, and valuable tips for travelers concerning the do's and don'ts of buying wildlife products in a foreign country. Also available is information on fisheries management and conservation, detailed descriptions of various popular wildlife species, and information on hunter/angler-supported programs to enhance fish and wildlife conservation.

Service Director Mollie Beattie recently announced establishment of the newest Web server saying it is to provide a "front door" for the agency on the Internet and a link to virtually all other Internet servers maintained by the Service.

"Modern wildlife conservation and management increasingly depend on the effective sharing of information among all concerned," she said. "I am confident this effort can greatly enhance our collective conservation efforts by expanding the availability of information concerning wildlife and their habitats."

Accessing the World Wide Web server requires a computer program that can communicate with hypertext transfer protocol (http), such as Mosaic. "Http://www.fws.gov/" is the Internet address for the new server.

Information is also available to those with only Internet E-mail text transfer capabilities through a separate "dial-a-file" library server maintained by the Service. Send an E-mail message to "R9IRMLIB@mail.fws.gov" to access this server. On the

subject line (not the body of the message), type SEND HELP and you will be sent a user's guide including an index of topics in the library. To receive a specific document, on the subject line type the command SEND followed by the document name as listed in the index. No text is necessary in the body of the message.

A server established recently by the Service's National Wetlands Inventory office is just one example of how this new technology can bolster conservation activities. For the past 13 years, this office has been conducting an inventory of the Nation's wetlands and producing geospatial data on magnetic media. The material depicts the relationship of wetlands habitat to U.S. Geological Survey maps.

Last July, the office began offering the capability of downloading this information from an "anonymous FTP" server (address "enterprise.nwi.fws.gov") accessible through the Internet.

Since that time, more than 64,000 wetlands maps have been downloaded to users from some 25 countries around the world. The availability of this service has resulted in a significant savings to both the user and the Service. The maps normally cost a little more than \$9 apiece when mailed, so the public has realized a savings of nearly \$600,000 while the Service has reduced its administrative costs substantially.

As another example, the Service's National Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, has also experienced a number of successes through information sharing over the Internet. For example, a Service criminologist recently passed on information about a new forensic technique for identifying elephant ivory to a scientist in New Zealand. This tip ultimately led to solving a significant wildlife crime case in that country.