



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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Agreement Reached on Landmark Legislation for the Refuge System



Good catch

A fisherman reels in a bass at Mattamuskeet NWR. Compatible fishing and other wildlife-related recreation would be considered "priority uses" of the refuge system under the compromise legislation. Photo by F. Eugene Hester.

Negotiating for the administration, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt reached agreement with congressional leaders on landmark legislation that will for the first time ever clearly define the mission and public use policy of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

H.R. 1420, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, formally establishes wildlife conservation as the central mission of the refuge system while recognizing certain wildlife-related recreational activity as priority uses. The House passed the bill in early June by a vote of 407-1.

If passed by Congress and signed into law by the President, the bill is expected to quell a long-standing debate on refuge land management that has intensified over the last two decades as the system has expanded rapidly and the number of visitors has grown to nearly 30 million people per year.

Secretary Babbitt hailed the bill's "strong and singular conservation mission" for the system in a letter to Rep. Don Young of Alaska, chairman of the House Committee on Resources.

Young and Babbitt formed a working group in March to hammer out a compromise after Babbitt strongly opposed an earlier version of the bill at a hearing before the committee. That bill would have elevated recreational uses to "purposes" of the system.

The group included Young, Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, Rep. Jim Saxton of New Jersey, and Rep. George Miller of California, and representatives of the Service, the National Audubon Society, Wildlife Management Institute, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Wildlife Legislative Fund of America.

"I sincerely hope that this bipartisan approach to problem-solving can be a model for resolving other natural resource issues which may otherwise divide us," Secretary Babbitt wrote Young.

As spelled out in the new legislation, the mission of the refuge system is "to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

Some of the provisions in the bill mirror those found in President Clinton's 1996 Executive Order on the refuge system. These include provisions defining the system's mission, priority public uses, and a requirement that the biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of the system be maintained.

The legislation retains refuge managers' authority to use their best professional judgment to determine whether public uses of a refuge are compatible with conservation and should be permitted. It also retains the Service's current regulatory definition of "compatible use."

The bill defines the "priority uses" of the system as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

In addition, the new legislation includes provisions requiring all new public uses and any renewal of existing uses to comply with a public involvement process spelled out in the bill. It also mandates public involvement in the development of refuge management plans. The plans must identify the purposes of each refuge, data on wildlife populations, archaeological and cultural values, suitable visitor facilities, any problems that affect wildlife and actions to remedy them, and opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

"This legislation represents an historic moment for the Service by reinforcing the refuge system's longstanding commitment to wildlife conservation," said Acting Director John Rogers. "And this conservation mission goes hand-in-hand with the outdoor pursuits refuge visitors enjoy. When we do our job well conserving the wildlife, plenty of opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation result."

Janet Tennyson, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

Cover Photo:

Good neighbors saving wildlife

Ambassador Raul Granilla Ocampo of Argentina and Acting Director John Rogers greet Terry, a 2-year-old Swainson's hawk, and her caretaker, Craig Koppie of the Chesapeake Bay Field Office. Terry was the star of a recent event recognizing a joint U.S.-Argentinean effort to protect Swainson's hawks on their South American wintering grounds. Photo by Tami Heilemann.

On the Horizon

Key upcoming issues affecting the Service and its mission

National Wildlife Refuge System

On June 4, the House passed by a 407-1 vote H.R. 1420, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. Interior Secretary Babbitt led negotiations to develop this legislation after he testified in opposition to an earlier refuge bill introduced in March (see related article). If the bill passes Congress, it will be the first "Organic Act" for the refuge system in its nearly 100-year history. The prognosis looks extremely good!

Endangered Species Act reauthorization

The Senate Environment Committee has identified ESA reauthorization as a top priority. Several bills and amendments related to the ESA have been introduced so far this session. A few would have exempted flood control projects from the ESA; however, no final action has occurred. The prognosis is guarded but improving.

Sport Fish Restoration Account reauthorization

Authorization for transfers of funding from the Highway Trust Fund to the Sport Fish Restoration Account will expire in October. The Sport Fish Restoration Account provides monies for the Service's Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, Clean Vessel Act Grant Program, grants under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and boating safety and other grants to states. This one appears certain with some debate on those bedeviling details.

"No Surprises Policy"

The Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service formally proposed the "No Surprises" policy as a regulation in May, opening a 60-day public comment period. The policy assures that the federal government will not require landowners who are complying in good faith with the terms of a Habitat Conservation Plan under the Endangered Species Act to provide additional land or financial compensation for species covered under a properly functioning plan. Both agencies began implementing the

"No Surprises" policy in 1994. Since then more than 200 HCPs have been established. The policy "signifies that a deal is a deal and that there will be no surprises down the road," said Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

Migratory Bird Convention Amendments

The Senate is expected to consider ratification of amendments to the Migratory Bird Convention with Canada to improve the management of birds that migrate between the two countries and to provide fairness in the regulation of waterfowl harvests to Alaska's indigenous people and Canada's Aboriginal peoples. In barring migratory bird hunting between March 10 and September 1, the original treaty did not adequately take into account traditional harvests of migratory birds by northern people during the spring and summer months. These harvests have gone on for centuries and continue to this day, despite the treaty prohibitions. In many cases, the birds are a vital food source for northern people. Less than a 50-50 chance is the prognosis here.

Superfund Reauthorization

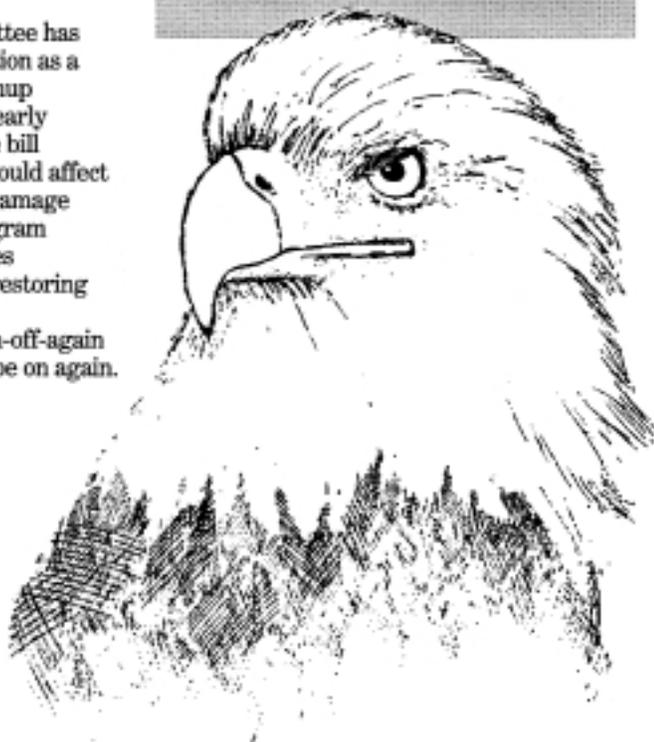
The Senate Environment Committee has identified Superfund reauthorization as a top priority. The Superfund Cleanup Acceleration Act was introduced early this session, with a hearing on the bill held in March. Reauthorization would affect the Service's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program through which the Service receives compensation from polluters for restoring degraded resources. Superfund reauthorization has been on-again-off-again for years now, and now seems to be on again.

Call On Your Legal Eagles

Want to find out what's happening and the official administration position on a certain piece of legislation? Need advice on how best to respond to a Congressional inquiry? The most effective way to provide information to members of Congress?

For guidance and assistance in the Congressional arena, the Service's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs offers unique expertise. Some of the office's main functions are analyzing draft legislation, tracking legislation, drafting testimony for Service and Department officials, preparing information for hearings, and responding to Congressional inquiries. To contact the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, call 202/208 5403.

Also, Regional External Affairs offices are currently in the process of establishing Congressional Affairs Specialist positions (one in each region), with some posts already filled.



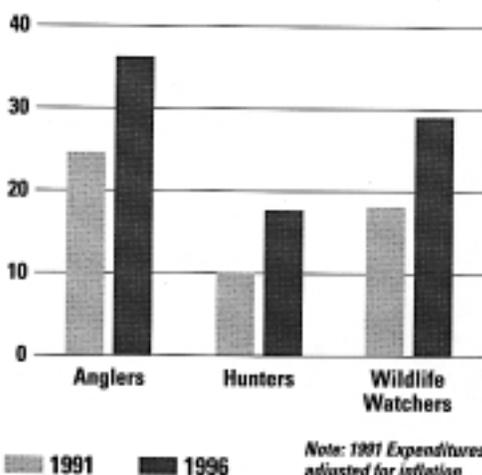
Billions and Billions Spent: Wildlife-Related Recreation Continues to Be National Economic Force

Hunting, fishing, bird watching and other wildlife-related recreation continued to be a powerful economic engine in 1996, with participants spending \$96.9 billion and supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs, according to preliminary data from the Service's 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

This represents more than a 59 percent increase in expenditures since 1991, when the Service last conducted the nationwide survey, and accounts for about 1 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, which measures the size of the economy. By comparison, Americans spent \$81 billion on new automobiles last year.

"The survey confirms again that it is impossible to separate the well-being of our nation's wildlife and wildlife habitat from the health of our economy," said Acting Director John Rogers. "Our fish and wildlife are not just a priceless treasure we hand down from one generation to another, they are the source of jobs and growth for both the national and local economy from coast to coast."

1991 and 1996 Comparison of Expenditures



The survey, which is conducted for the Service by the U.S. Census Bureau, showed that the number of hunters and anglers 16 years and older stayed relatively constant over the past five years. There were 35.2 million anglers in 1996 compared with 35.6 million in 1991. Likewise, there were 14 million hunters compared with 14.1 million in 1991. Overall, the number of hunters and anglers fell slightly to 39.7 million from 40 million in 1991.

Total expenditures by hunters and anglers rose 69 percent during the five-year period to \$67.9 billion. Spending by anglers rose 47 percent to \$36.2 billion from \$24.6 billion in 1991, while hunters spent \$17.7 billion, up 75 percent from \$10.1 billion in 1991.

Meanwhile, the number of bird watchers, wildlife photographers and other nonconsumptive participants 16 years and older dropped 17 percent over the five-year period to 63 million from 76 million in 1991. Even so, their expenditures rose 39 percent to \$29 billion.

Twenty-four million Americans took trips to observe, photograph, or feed wildlife in 1996, while 61 million enjoyed nonconsumptive wildlife-related recreation around their homes.

In all, more than 17 percent of the population 16 and older fished during 1996, 7 percent hunted, and 31 percent participated in nonconsumptive wildlife-related recreation, the study showed.

"Millions of Americans have made hunting, fishing, birdwatching and other wildlife-related recreation an important part of their life," Rogers said. "We have a national love affair with wild places and wild creatures."

As part of the survey, the Census Bureau initially screened 80,000 households. From this, the bureau chose 28,000 sportsmen and 14,400 nonconsumptive participants 16 years and older for detailed surveys throughout the year.

More complete preliminary data will be available this summer followed by a final national report in November. State-by-state reports will be released from November through March 1998.

Sweet Treats

Region 1 regional office employees fired up their ovens and celebrated the 94th birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System with a "Bake That Refuge" contest in March. Contestants baked cakes representing Region 1 refuges. Many of the 13 entries were imaginatively decorated with vegetation, fish and wildlife representative of the chosen refuge. Judges selected Helene Vandeburg's Baskett Slough NWR as the winner. Following the awarding of prizes, employees were, of course, invited to eat the cakes. Below, Cindy Barry cuts a slice out of the Ruby Lakes NWR entry as Gwen Johnson, Vaughn Ruppert and Glenda Franich (l-r) look on. In the foreground is an entry representing Remote Islands NWR. Photo by Susan Saul.



Floods Cause Havoc on Great Plains Refuges

Heavy winter storms followed by spring snow melt swelled rivers throughout the northern plains, making national headlines, forcing thousands of people from their homes, and causing millions of dollars in damage to refuges in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Montana, and Minnesota.

At North Dakota's Tewaukon NWR, for example, dikes were breached by the rising flood waters and a 20-foot section of the main road leading into the refuge was washed away, causing \$1.5 million in damage. This came in the wake of \$400,000 worth of destruction left when the winter's heavy snowfall collapsed the roof of the large storage building.

The same story was repeated at many other refuges. Damages in Region 6 alone totaled more than \$14.4 million, and the Service is seeking emergency funding from Congress to pay for the repairs.

"The extent of the water damage from the flooding of the lakes and rivers is devastating—beyond the scope of one's imagination," said Ralph Morgenweck, R6 Regional Director. "This event has severely affected both humans and wildlife and we are working closely with Congress to obtain the funding necessary to repair the refuges."

At Lake Alice NWR in North Dakota, more than 10,000 of the refuge's 11,000 acres were under water, said Jim Alfonso, deputy project leader at the Devils Lake Wetlands Management District complex. Damage to fences, dikes, roads and other facilities is extensive and all the refuge's upland habitat will have to be reseeded. "Fewer ducks will be able to nest this year because of the loss of habitat," Alfonso said.

Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

Service Employee Helps Rescue Flood Victims



Under water

Flood waters encroach on the headquarters building at Lake Alice NWR in North Dakota. Almost the entire refuge was under water this spring. USFWS photo.

"You hate to see the human suffering, but you like the feeling you're helping people." That's how George Maze, assistant manager of the Service's Wetland Management District in Kulm, North Dakota, described his 10-day assignment fighting the Red River Valley flood that displaced tens of thousands of residents in April.

Maze used a Service airboat, normally employed for waterfowl surveys and disease cleanups, to help evacuate residents as the flood waters surged. In many cases, the airboat was the only way to navigate the ice-clogged rivers.

"The airboat could go where propeller-driven boats couldn't," he explained. "One guy had chopped ice for four hours, trying unsuccessfully to create a path for a boat to get in and make an evacuation. I arrived with the airboat, and went right over the top of the ice."

While on flood duty, Maze and his boat assisted more than 100 people, either bringing supplies needed to fight the rising waters or transporting families that had lost the battle.

"I really felt sorry for the people who had to leave homes they had lived in all their lives," he said. "They didn't know if the homes would be there when they got back. These people were under a lot of stress."

One elderly couple Maze rescued stubbornly stayed with their home until officials finally convinced them to leave as the waters were about to crest over their sandbag dike. The woman was frightened by boats.

"She was crying uncontrollably when they finally talked her into leaving, and she crawled over the sandbag dike and into the boat," he said. "When we went past the house a couple of days later, it had four or five feet of water on the main floor."

"Helping those people was very rewarding, but I hope it was an opportunity that never comes again. The loss and misery in that area were incredible."

Ken Torkelson, Refuges and Wildlife Bismarck, North Dakota

International Migratory Bird Day Marks Anniversary of *Silent Spring*

Thirty-five years ago, former Service biologist Rachel Carson rocked the world with her dire warnings about pesticides and birds in her landmark book, *Silent Spring*. Much has improved since—the nation's air and water are cleaner and harmful chemicals like DDT have been banned in the United States.

Unfortunately the problem is far from being solved. We still lose an estimated 67 million birds to pesticide each year in this country alone, many in the backyards of average Americans who misapply chemicals without knowing it. The problem may be far worse south of the border where many chemicals banned in the United States are still used.

Educating the public about the problem of pesticides and what the average homeowner can do to help was the theme of the 5th Annual International Migratory Bird Day on May 10th. Major events at the Argentinean Embassy in Washington and Orioles Park in Baltimore highlighted a week of birding festivals and other activities at refuges, parks and other sites around the country (see articles in this issue).

Using the slogan "Join the Flock . . . Be Part of the Solution," the Service distributed information on the problem of pesticides and steps homeowners can take to reduce the impact on birds, such as hoeing instead of spraying, using compost as fertilizer, and rotating vegetables in gardens.

"Average citizens can play an important role in stopping the decline of some bird populations," said Acting Director John Rogers. "Something as simple as learning the appropriate time and way to apply pesticides to your lawn or garden can make a big difference."

*Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Baltimore Orioles Celebrate Namesake, Other Birds at IMBD Event



Play ball!
1996-97 Federal Duck Stamp artist Wilhelm Goebel hurled the first pitch of the May 10 Baltimore Orioles baseball game to start a major International Migratory Bird Day celebration at Camden Yards. Photo by Tami Heilemann.

The Baltimore Orioles joined the Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Orvis Co. of Manchester, Vermont, in a major celebration of International Migratory Bird Day before nearly 48,000 fans at the team's elegant Camden Yards baseball park.

Secretary Babbitt greeted the fans by video on the stadium's giant scoreboard and Duck Stamp Artist Wilhelm Goebel tossed out the first pitch. Fans also received commemorative bird cards, patterned after baseball trading cards, featuring species of orioles that visit Maryland each year.

The event went so well that the Orioles have invited the Service to make it an annual affair. The day was "one of the best community-based programs we have ever done," said Lou Kosouris, special assistant to Team Owner Peter Angelos. "We want to do it again and make it bigger and better."

The activities featured on-field introductions of John Griffin, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Dan Beard, vice president of the National

Audubon Society; John Resseger, a Virginia store owner who represented Orvis; Alex Echols, deputy director of the Foundation; and Spence Conley, R5 assistant regional director for external affairs, who arranged the special event with Orioles management.

"The event set a precedent for the kind of partnership we hope to create in the future to focus public attention on the plight of migratory birds," said Paul Schmidt, chief of the Service's Migratory Bird Management Office. "And, of course, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Orioles for their willingness to let us share the day with them."

Key players in the execution of the day's program were Peter Stangel of the Foundation, who came up with the bird card idea and arranged part of the financing for it; Dan Petit, a biologist in the Migratory Bird Office, who had a lead role in organizing the event; Kathi Bangert, an outreach supervisor in the Service's Chesapeake Bay Field Office; and Jim McCann, of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Sixteen volunteers from the Service assisted in the distribution of the bird cards, posters and flyers.

Everyone was treated to an exciting game, too, one that went 11 innings with the Orioles on the short end of a 3-2 score with the Seattle Mariners.

Swainson's Hawk: A Celebration of International Migratory Bird Conservation

Acting Director John Rogers and Ambassador Raul Granillo Ocampo of Argentina saluted international cooperation in the conservation of migratory birds at a May ceremony in Washington celebrating a successful joint effort to protect Swainson's hawks on their South American wintering grounds.

In recent years, the number of Swainson's hawks breeding in some areas of North America plummeted but no one could determine why because no one knew exactly where the birds wintered. During the past three years, wildlife biologists in the United States employed modern technology in the form of small satellite transmitters and fitted a number of birds with miniature radio equipment. They followed the hawks' flight and located the species' wintering grounds in the Pampas region of Argentina, an area in the middle of the country.

Researchers discovered thousands of Swainson's hawks dying from the misuse of the pesticide monocrotophos to control grasshopper devastation in Argentinean alfalfa fields. The birds were literally falling from the trees as they roosted during the night. During the winter of 1995-1996, wildlife biologists estimated 20,000 hawks were killed by ingesting grasshoppers, one of the birds' favorite foods.

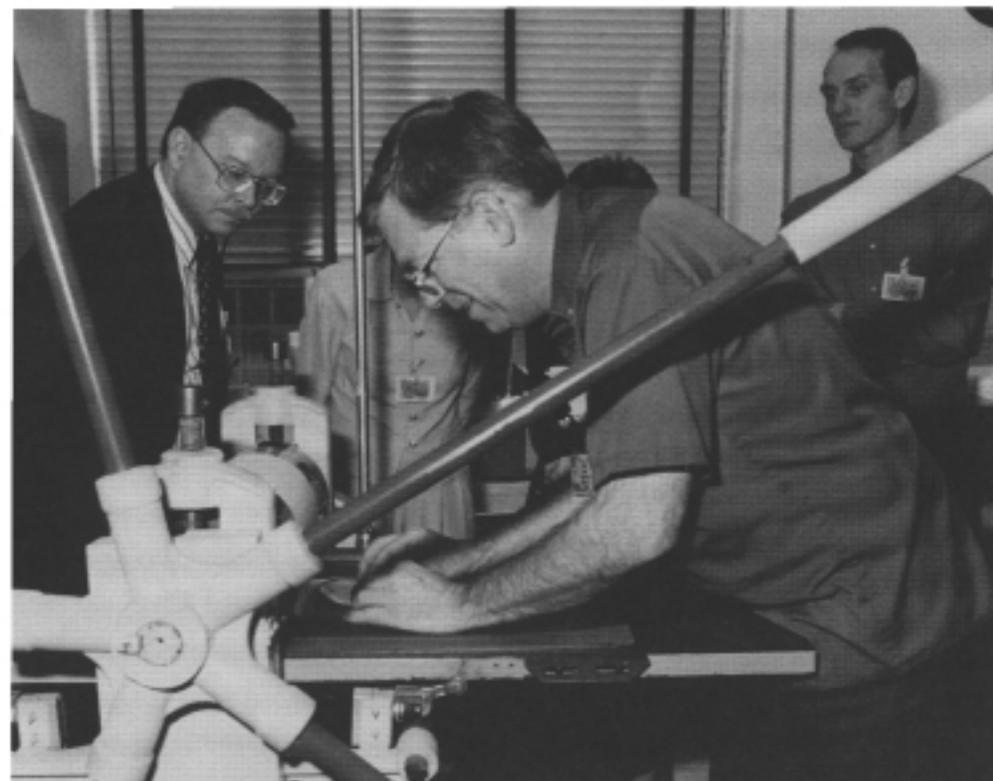
Recognizing that quick action was necessary to stem this loss, the Service facilitated a partnership made up of several Argentinean wildlife agencies, the academic community, private sector groups such as the American Bird Conservancy, and other concerned organizations, including the prominent chemical manufacturer Ciba-Geigy, a producer of monocrotophos.

The partners launched an intense effort to educate farmers and provide them with alternatives to monocrotophos, which is not registered for use on either grasshoppers or alfalfa. As the result of this cooperation, only 24 hawk deaths were reported this winter.

Through its Office of International Affairs, the Service provided Argentinean counterparts nearly \$150,000 to help fund activities such as the education campaign, the monitoring of die-offs through surveys, and training in the detection of pesticides.

"This cooperative effort gives great hope for the future, not only for Swainson's hawks but for the hundreds of birds that migrate between our continents," Rogers said at the ceremony at the Argentinean embassy. "We have proven that we can take quick action to conserve these birds; and we have established a model for future cooperation."

*Patricia Fisher, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*



The making of a Duck Stamp

Michael Bean of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, center, carefully adds color to an engraved plate of the 1997-98 Federal Duck Stamp as Acting Service Deputy Director Jay Gerst (left) and Robert Hautman, the artist who created the design, look on. The 1997-98 Duck Stamp, which features a single Canada goose in a wetlands setting, will be available for purchase on July 1. BEP photo.

Department Helps End Standoff Over Vital California Wetlands

The Interior Department recently helped broker an end to a 25-year stalemate over the fate of the Bolsa Chica wetlands, an undeveloped coastal wetland area in Southern California that provides habitat critical to the survival of many fish and migratory bird populations.

Under a complex agreement with a host of federal and state agencies and private interests, the California State Lands Commission will acquire 880 acres of the wetlands, which are located near Huntington Beach in Orange County. The Service may end up managing the land.

The area, one of the largest remaining wetland areas in Southern California, has been under pressure from development and oil production since the 1940s, and the focus of long-standing struggles between development and conservation interests.

The Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles will purchase and restore the wetlands at a cost of up to \$79 million. Koll Real Estate Group, the landowner, will receive \$25 million, and the state will spend about \$45 million for wetland restoration activities including a tidal inlet channel.

The Service plans to conduct an ecological risk assessment to determine what is required to clean up oil contamination. The oil companies will fund and conduct the clean up, and the Service will act as lead agency in National Environmental Policy Act compliance and subsequent restoration. Biologists estimate that after a half-century of oil production from 400 wells at Bolsa Chica, clean up costs will range from \$10 million to \$15 million.

The Service or the state will then manage the site using a long-term endowment to pay for operational maintenance. The area supports more than 250 species of migratory birds, including several endangered and threatened species—brown pelican, California least tern and light-footed clapper rail.

*Don Steffek, Chief
Division of Environmental Contaminants,
Portland, Oregon*

Grant Provides A Place at the Beach for People, Turtles Alike



More room to move

Five species of sea turtles, including loggerheads like this one, will have more room to nest on Volusia County, Florida, beaches since the Service awarded a \$500,000 grant to the county to create more off-beach parking while increasing habitat for these endangered turtles. USFWS photo.

New parking spaces for beach goers will leave more room for nesting sea turtles in Volusia County, Florida, thanks to a \$500,000 Service grant to the State of Florida announced in March by Secretary Babbitt.

The grant is part of a pilot program to help states acquire lands that support habitat conservation plans, or HCPs, under the Endangered Species Act. These voluntary plans allow land development and use to continue while ensuring the long-term conservation of listed species.

Historically, Volusia County's wide, hard-packed beaches have been used for driving and even racing, activities that often harmed turtles and disrupted their nesting. As part of an HCP signed last year, the county barred vehicles from nine miles of beach in the heaviest turtle nesting area.

Beach goers criticized the county for not increasing off-beach parking spaces adjacent to closed areas, claiming the county unfairly restricted beach access. The grant, authorized by Section 6 of the Act, allows the county to buy land to develop alternate off-beach parking areas.

Southeast Regional Director Noreen K. Clough said that by helping purchase land to develop alternative parking areas, the Service is, in effect, purchasing beach habitat used by five species of sea turtles for nesting.

"Each alternative parking space created will remove a car from the beach, cumulatively reducing impacts of vehicular driving and parking, making habitat far better for sea turtles," she said.

*Diana Hawkins, Public Affairs
Atlanta, Georgia*

Service to Reintroduce Mexican Gray Wolves to Arizona and New Mexico

The Mexican wolf, the rarest and most genetically distinct subspecies of the gray wolf in North America, will be reintroduced to a portion of its historic range in Arizona and New Mexico sometime in 1998.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt signed a Record of Decision in March formally approving a Service recommendation to go forward with the reintroduction. The decision was co-signed by Raymond J. Fatz, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman.

Within a year three family groups, consisting of an adult pair and their offspring, will be released on public lands in the Apache National Forest in eastern Arizona. The wolves will be allowed to disperse into the forest and the adjoining Gila National Forest in New Mexico, which provide nearly 7,000 square miles of habitat for the species.

If wolves move beyond the recovery area boundary onto private or tribal lands, they will be removed unless the land owners or managers want them to remain. Additional family groups will be released each year over the next three to five years until reaching a recovery goal of a self-sustaining population of 100 wolves in the wild.

The recommendation, contained in a Final Environmental Impact Statement issued in late December, includes a provision to designate the released wolves as a nonessential experimental population under the Endangered Species Act. Such a designation allows federal, state and tribal resource managers more flexibility in managing the introduced animals. Wolves that prey on livestock will be removed by wildlife managers. Livestock owners or managers will be allowed to kill wolves seen attacking livestock on private land.

The decision follows an extensive period of review and public comment. A public scoping process began in 1991, followed by a draft environmental impact statement issued in June 1995. The Service held 14 public meetings, three formal public hearings and received nearly 18,000 comments from other agencies, organizations, and citizens. These comments were analyzed, summarized and responded to in the final environmental impact statement.

Mexican wolves once roamed the mountains of the Southwest and their range extended from Mexico City to southern Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The last recorded killing of Mexican wolves in the United States occurred in 1970 in Texas and New Mexico. The last verified sighting of a live Mexican wolf was in 1980 in Chihuahua, Mexico. Many factors led to the wolf's decline, but aggressive predator control programs of the federal government beginning in 1915 succeeded in eliminating most Mexican wolves by the 1930s.

The Service's recovery objective for the Mexican gray wolf is to re-establish a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 wild wolves across more than 5,000 square miles of historic range over the next 7 to 10 years. The Service and cooperating agencies will monitor, evaluate and manage the wolves, including moving those that leave the recovery areas or cause significant conflict, such as harming livestock.

In preparation for the reintroduction, 10 Mexican gray wolves from zoos and wildlife sanctuaries in eight states and the Republic of Mexico were moved to a new holding and breeding facility at the Sevilleta NWR late last year.

Males and females were paired in pens at the site in hopes they will mate this spring and thrive in what is as close to a wild setting as these wolves have ever seen. There are currently 25 captive breeding sites in the United States and 5 in Mexico managing a total of 148 Mexican wolves.

The 220,000-acre refuge near Socorro, New Mexico, was chosen for this facility because of its remoteness from people and for habitat that is similar to the species' historic range, which included foothills and mountains from central Mexico to southeastern Arizona, southern New Mexico, and southwestern Texas.



Outreach Critical to Solving Snow Geese Problem



Population explosion

Snow goose populations have multiplied rapidly in recent years, prompting the Service to join with Canadian biologists to discuss possible solutions to the problem. USFWS photo.

More often than not, wildlife conservation focuses on boosting the populations of species that are in decline. Unfortunately, one of the stickiest conservation problems currently faced by the Service deals with a species that is too abundant for its own good.

Snow geese populations have exploded in recent years to the point where the birds are literally consuming the arctic nesting habitat they share with many other migratory species. If something is not done soon, populations of these species may suddenly crash for lack of a place to nest.

The problem for the Service is that possible means for controlling these populations could generate opposition similar to the outcry that occurred last year at Monomoy NWR when biologists sought to reduce the gull populations to conserve the endangered piping plover.

"Much of the public doesn't understand the concept that wildlife needs to be managed," said Paul Schmidt, chief of the Migratory Bird Management Office.

To bolster outreach efforts, the Service is co-sponsoring, along with the Canadian Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, a tour of the damaged nesting habitat for decision makers and news media this summer. The list of invitees includes leaders of conservation groups such as Defenders of Wildlife, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Audubon Society. Acting Director John Rogers, Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife Bob Streeter, and representatives of the Canadian Wildlife Service also will participate.

Possible solutions suggested by the Arctic Goose Habitat Working Group, comprised of U.S. and Canadian biologists, include loosening regulations on baiting, electronic calls, and concealment during spring "snow goose only" seasons; expanding late season hunting before March 10; and negotiating a revision to the Migratory Bird Convention with Canada to allow appropriate hunting of migratory birds between March 10 and September 1.

"Our hope is that if we show this influential group the full extent of the problem, they will support finding a solution," Schmidt said.

*Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*



Service Heroes Rescue Sailor, Navy Tug

Alaska Maritime NWR biologist Jeff Williams and refuge maintenance worker Steve Bell went beyond the call of duty in March to rescue a mortally wounded Navy sailor and then the crew of a foundering Navy tug boat that had been sent to search for the sailor.

Sailor Robert Rossman, 24, and four friends were hiking on Adak, a remote Aleutian island, when he fell off the mountain, sliding hundreds of feet through snow and exposed rock. His companions found him and dug a trench in the snow to shelter him from the wind. They covered him, then hiked back to their naval base to get help.

Unfortunately, the naval base on the island was preparing to close. Unequipped and unable to find Rossman because of base closure preparations, the Navy asked for Williams' help. He led eight sailors on a five-hour search to locate the injured man. They finally found him suffering extreme hypothermia, a broken collar bone, a broken nose, massive head injuries and a broken eye socket.

Williams helped stabilize Rossman and helped load him onto a Coast Guard helicopter for transport to a hospital in Anchorage. Unfortunately, Rossman died several days later from his injuries.

The big picture

Region 7 Vegetation Ecologist Stephen Talbot (l) and George Constantino, associate manager for Refuges and Wildlife in Alaska, study a color infrared circumpolar projection map of the Arctic. Vegetation mappers from eight Arctic nations including Germany and Denmark spent three days in Anchorage drawing the new maps, which include topics such as Arctic alpine vegetation and flora and vegetation of the individual nations in the Arctic region. The maps will help biologists better understand Arctic flora and address climactic and ecological problems of the region, as well as to anticipate other global climate changes. Photo by Connie M.J. Barclay.

Group Tours Europe's Rhine for Answers to America's Mississippi



To the rescue

Steve Bell, left, and Jeff Williams of Alaska Maritime NWR used their 25-foot fiberglass Boston Whaler to pull off a daring rescue at sea in the frigid Aleutian Islands of Alaska. USFWS photo.

Meanwhile, as Williams was leading his team over Razorback Mountain, the Navy sent a search party on a large tug boat. A skiff launched by the tug overturned in the surf, sending crewmen into the freezing water. They washed ashore on the beach. At the same time, the tug lost power and drifted perilously close to the rocks.

The crew radioed Bell, who, joined by Williams, used a Service Boston Whaler to pull the Navy tug away from the rocks, rescue the sailors and ferry them back to base.

Connie M.J. Barclay, Public Affairs
Anchorage, Alaska

The Mississippi River and Europe's Rhine River are an ocean apart, but the two rivers share a common role as vital waterways on their respective continents. They also share common ecological problems.

Navigation is a huge economic factor on both rivers. Dams, dikes, dredging and other navigation improvements have led to widespread alteration of fish and wildlife habitat. Flood control levees separate the waterways from their floodplains, intensifying floods when they occur. Water quality has declined, especially from non-point source pollution, and both rivers have developed ominous "dead zones" at their mouths.

In light of this, 16 American scientists and engineers from a variety of federal, state and private groups, including Rick Nelson, supervisor of the Rock Island, Illinois, Ecological Services field office, recently took a tour of the Rhine as part of an exchange program hosted by the World Wildlife Fund. WWF is taking a leadership role in European river conservation.

"We have a tremendous opportunity to learn from what the Europeans have done on the Rhine," Nelson said. "The Rhine has been degraded for hundreds of years and the problems are deep-seated and difficult to solve. On the Mississippi, we still have the time to make choices that promote both economic development and ecosystem restoration—we can still avoid the choices that will cause the decline of the river's ecosystem."

The Rhine's problems are more severe than the Mississippi's. The river, once home to 75 fish species, now has only 15 to 25 species and no salmon. Most stretches of the Mississippi, by comparison, have more than 130 species.

Europe also is struggling to control severe river bed degradation caused by dams and other water projects. Each year Germany dumps 30 million tons of gravel into the river to prevent degradation, and France and Germany are spending heavily to regain 220 million cubic meters of flood storage in a floodplain that has been intensely developed.

There is still time for America to avoid these severe problems on the Mississippi, Nelson said. But just as many nations must cooperate in Europe, states and the federal government must cooperate in America. This sometimes can be a problem. For example, different interpretations of federal standards by various states leads to inconsistencies in achieving water quality goals.

"The trip confirmed that we are basically doing the right things in our approach to conservation on the Mississippi," Nelson said. "But probably more important, it confirmed what we've been communicating for years to U.S. development interests—that it is far easier and less expensive to prevent environmental problems and degradation in the short run than to fix them in the long run."

Rachel F. Levin, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC



Rhine Time

Service biologist Rick Nelson, left, inspects a Rhine delta flood control dam in Holland with Mark Ackelson of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. Photo by Dan McGuinness.

Companies, Service Join to Help Birds Avoid Power Line Deaths



High wire accident

A sandhill crane hangs from a power line near Tulsa International Airport in Oklahoma. Photo by James Lewis.

Power lines are a perennial threat to birds, especially larger species such as cranes, storks and waterfowl which often cannot see the lines and die after mid-flight collisions. With millions of miles of power lines in the United States, the number of bird deaths nationwide is significant.

Also, thousands of birds, primarily hawks, owls, eagles and vultures that perch, roost, or build nests on poles, are electrocuted each year at electric facilities.

In 1989, the Service joined in a partnership with power companies across the country to form the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee. The committee conducted extensive tests over three years near Monte Vista NWR in southern Colorado, where abundant power lines support the pumping of ground water for irrigation and where nine endangered whooping cranes had been killed or injured after colliding with lines.

Two techniques to improve the visibility of power lines proved effective, reducing bird mortality by 40 percent to 60 percent in test areas. Placing several bright yellow fiberglass hanging plates on power lines between poles helped birds see the lines in time to avoid collisions. (Studies have shown that birds can see and react to bright yellow more quickly than other colors.)

In addition, yellow polyvinyl chloride plastic dampers, wrapped around lines to keep them from galloping in high winds, worked well, as did markers developed in Europe that serve as line dampers and present large silhouette-like plates. For large, less maneuverable birds, these markers can be a lifesaver.

The key to reducing electrocutions, researchers found, is to keep birds from making simultaneous contact with hot wires and grounded hardware. This means providing a five-foot minimum separation between conductors and grounded hardware or, alternatively, insulating the hardware or conductors.

The committee sponsored an international workshop on the problems that attracted more than 100 engineers and biologists. It also produced several informational bulletins and a training video.

In cooperation with the Service's National Conservation Training Center, the committee also conducted a two-day training course entitled "Reducing Bird Collisions and Electrocutions."

Copies of the publications on mitigating bird collisions are available by contacting the Edison Electric Institute at 800/333 5453. Copies of the raptor protection bulletin are available from Jim Fitzpatrick, Raptor Research Foundation, at 612/437 4359.

James Lewis, Ecological Services, Albuquerque, New Mexico



USFWS photo

Partnership Brings Indiana Marsh Back to Life

Historically, waterfowl and other wildlife flourished in the 500,000-acre Grand Kankakee Marsh in northwest Indiana, one of the continent's largest wetlands and one of the most significant natural areas in Indiana.

In the late 19th century, however, settlers channelized the adjacent Kankakee River, shortening the river to a third of its natural length and draining nearly the entire marsh. The diverse wildlife vanished with it.

Today the great marsh is slowly coming back to life thanks to the Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project, a partnership involving the Service's Bloomington, Indiana, Ecological Services field office, other federal and state agencies, businesses and conservation organizations.

The 10-year restoration project began two years ago as part of the Upper Mississippi River/Lower Great Lakes Joint Venture under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The goal ultimately is to restore 26,500 acres of the marsh.

During the first two-year phase, the partners acquired and restored more than 4,400 acres of wetlands and associated uplands, surpassing expectations, and last November, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council awarded the project a \$1 million grant to help fund a second phase to restore 4,000 additional acres. The project's partners have pledged an additional \$2.7 million in land, cash and in-kind services.

Project partners are focusing on restoring wetlands, planting native grasses in upland areas and enhancing prairie areas with controlled burning.

As a result, the wildlife are returning. The project area is now home to more than 220 state threatened and endangered species, six federally-listed species and more than 100,000 waterfowl, and it provides a spring and fall migration stopover for nearly the entire North American population of greater sandhill cranes.

The project also benefits people: The restored Grand Kankakee Marsh will greatly enhance water quality, reduce flooding of surrounding private land, recharge groundwater and encourage plant growth. In addition, the marsh will provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to local residents.

In addition to restoring the marsh, the Service is proposing to protect 30,000 acres along the Kankakee River in northwestern Indiana and northeastern Illinois by creating the Grand Kankakee Marsh NWR.

The refuge would consist of a series of small parcels of land linking habitat throughout the Kankakee River watershed. Lands currently being restored under the Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project may also be included in the proposed refuge.

Public meetings will be held throughout June to gather comments for an environmental assessment to be prepared later in the summer.

*Georgia Parham, Ecological Services,
Bloomington, Indiana*



Landing zone

A welcome sight greets sandhill cranes and other migrating waterfowl as they cross northwest Indiana-Kankakee Marsh, once one of the continent's largest wetlands, is coming back to life. This 80-acre site was the first property acquired by the Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project, and is owned and managed by the Northwest Indiana chapter of Waterfowl USA USFWS photo.

"Trojan Horse" Tactic Nets Suspected Wildlife Poachers

When Greek warriors conquered Troy, they did it by stealth, using a Trojan horse filled with soldiers to infiltrate enemy territory. A modern version of that tactic was used by law enforcement personnel to catch suspected poachers in Missouri—but this time, recreational vehicles replaced the famous wooden horse.

The raid came in April at a public campground at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where a loose-knit group of suspected poachers had gathered for turkey season. Two RVs full of military police entered the campground, and before any suspicions were raised, enforcement personnel had surrounded the area. Within one minute, military police secured the campground, allowing Service special agents and State law enforcement agents to search for illegal wildlife and interview subjects.

Undercover work by special agents from the Service set the stage for the raid. Acting on tips from Fort Leonard Wood's game warden, several Service agents infiltrated the group, whose members reportedly hunted out of season, exceeded legal bag limits and used illegal and unsafe hunting methods to kill deer, wild turkey, and doves.

Much of the suspected illegal hunting took place at Fort Leonard Wood in highly populated areas, such as housing districts, or in areas used for military training exercises. Suspected poachers allegedly shot deer from roadways, and in one instance, from the Fort's car wash. Sounds of gunfire from poachers were often mistakenly attributed to Army training exercises.

Information from approximately 20 individuals interviewed following the raid was provided to the U.S. Attorney and to state prosecutors for further action. Violators could face charges under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Lacey Act, and a variety of state wildlife laws.

*Georgia Parham, Ecological Services,
Bloomington, Indiana*

Fish & Wildlife... In Brief

Noreen Clough Retires

R4 Regional Director Noreen Clough, the first woman to serve as a Service regional director, retired at the beginning of July, ending a career that began in 1978. Clough became R4 regional director in 1995. Before that she had served in a variety of posts including Acting Deputy Director-External Affairs, Acting R2 Regional Director, and Deputy Assistant Director for Fisheries. She was recently named 1997 Woman of the Year by the American Sportfishing Association for her leadership in developing the region's fisheries and aquatic resources.

Hotchkiss NFH to Provide Disease-Free Trout to Colorado Streams

The Service will stock trout from Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery in some of Colorado's prize fishing locales, including the South Platte, Gunnison, and Colorado rivers where native populations have been decimated by the whirling disease parasite. Testing performed in March by the Service's Bozeman Fish Health Lab confirmed that the hatchery is free of the parasite. Colorado will pay the Service \$80,000 to defray the cost of supplying 1.2 million rainbow trout. The Colorado Division of Wildlife's ability to stock fish that are whirling disease-free has been greatly curtailed due to lack of whirling disease-free facilities.

FAA Agrees to Change Flight Pattern, Protect Eagles

The Federal Aviation Administration has agreed to require all airplanes taking off from Denver's International Airport during the winter months to avoid flying over the primary bald eagle winter roost site at Rocky Mountain Arsenal. This will require planes changing course to the southwest to delay turning for approximately 1½ miles until they are past the site, except in weather emergencies. The FAA issued the directive as an interim step while formal consultations with the Service continue. "By making this minor change in the flight path, it is hoped that eagles will return to their original roosting site that they have used historically," said Ralph Morgenweck, R6 regional director.

Law Enforcement Shuts Down Reptile Smuggling Scheme

Service law enforcement agents were instrumental in gaining the conviction of an Illinois man who used the U.S. Mail to smuggle large numbers of rare and protected reptiles into the United States from Spain. James Zaworski, 31, of Marion, Illinois, pleaded guilty earlier this year to one felony count of conspiracy to smuggle wildlife into the country and to trade in protected species in interstate commerce. He faces 5 years incarceration and/or a \$250,000 fine.

Service Law Enforcement inspectors at Kennedy Airport in New York began their investigation of Zaworski when they found a parcel from Spain addressed to him containing 13 Lilford's wall lizards, a small blue lizard that inhabits the Balearic Islands off the Spanish coast. The lizards are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Agents followed the package to its destination in southern Illinois where they obtained a search warrant for Zaworski's residence. They found records and documents chronicling 10 years of smuggling reptiles to and from Spain, France, and South Africa and seized a number of reptiles, including box turtles collected illegally at a national wildlife refuge.

Zaworski also sent venomous snakes through the mail in violation of U.S. Postal laws.

Release of Prairie Chickens Labeled a Major Success

Service biologists labeled last summer's release of 69 Attwater's prairie chickens at Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR in Texas a major success after an unexpectedly high number survived the first six months. Twenty-six birds, or 38 percent, survived, more than double the rate of an earlier pilot release project. Releases of captive-reared grouse have not been very successful in the past and the success of this release provided valuable information on ways to acclimate the birds. Refuge Manager Terry Rossignol said birds left in acclimation pens for longer periods had a much higher survival rate when released.

Tattoo Parlor Operator Convicted of Six Felonies

A federal jury convicted the operator of a chain of tattoo parlors in Massachusetts of six felony charges for hunting without a valid license in Alaska and then transporting the illegally taken game across state lines. Lawrence Romano, 50, of Mount Washington, Massachusetts, was fined \$30,000 and barred from hunting for two years. Agents searching Romano's home seized a live black bear he had caged in his backyard, a live endangered copperhead snake from his basement, and six big game mounts.

Region 5 ARD-EA Named 1996 Conservation Communicator of the Year in Northeast

Spence Conley, ARD for External Affairs in Region 5, has been named 1996 Conservation Communicator of the Year by the Northeast Conservation Information and Education Association. The award, which cited Conley "for his lifetime achievements and leadership in the Northeast," was presented during the recent Northeast Wildlife Conference held in Framingham, Mass. The conference annually brings together wildlife and natural resource managers and communicators from both state and federal agencies in the 13-state Northeast Region.

New Duck Stamp Format in the Works for 1998

Waterfowl hunters and stamp collectors will have a choice to make when they buy their 1998-99 Federal Duck Stamps: to lick or not to lick? The Service and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing are developing a self-adhesive, single-issue Duck Stamp and plan to sell it alongside the traditional gummed stamp beginning in July 1998. Both stamps will be available during a three-year trial period as the Service gauges the reaction of hunters, collectors and merchants.

In the future, Duck Stamps may be available for purchase 24 hours a day; the Service and the BEP are looking into dispensing Duck Stamps from automatic teller machines in the same manner as regular postage stamps.

Service Forensic Researchers Help Get Poisonous Herbal Medicines Off the Market

Scientists at the Service's National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Lab in Ashland, Oregon, helped to get nine potentially deadly Chinese herbal medicine balls off the market in Hong Kong and keep the poisonous mixtures out of the United States. The Service had suspected the balls contained ground up rhinoceros horns. Lab researchers determined that the herbal-ball preparations, hand-rolled mixtures of herbs and honey used to treat fever, rheumatism and other illnesses, also contained potentially fatal levels of mercury and arsenic. The lab tested herbal-ball preparations that had been smuggled into the country and seized by the Service for suspected endangered species violations. The Hong Kong government verified the Service's findings and banned the nine herbal-ball preparations from the market in that commonwealth.



Deadly mixture

The Service's Forensics Lab determined that these Chinese medicine balls, which contained illegal endangered species parts, were made with dangerously high levels of mercury and arsenic. Photo by Steve Hillebrand.

Whirling Disease Video Available

"Whirling Out of Control?—Some Reflections on Salmonid Whirling Disease," a new video jointly produced by the Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, highlights some of the 1996 field research activities to explore causes and treatments of whirling disease in western trout fisheries. The limited-distribution program is intended for fishery managers, serious anglers and others concerned about the potential impacts of the disease on wild trout populations and recreational fisheries. Limited free quantities remain available from the National Conservation Training Center's Division of Education Outreach (phone: 304/876 7231).

Parrot Smuggler Pays Record Fines

Adolph "Buzz" Pare pled guilty in April to two Lacey Act violations in connection with alleged illegal importation of African grey parrots. He will pay fines and restitution totaling \$300,000, the largest sum ever paid in a federal wildlife smuggling case; in addition, he could be sentenced to up to five years in prison and ordered to pay up to \$250,000 in additional fines when he is sentenced in July. Pare, who runs a business called Gators of Miami, Inc., was charged with conspiring to illegally smuggle African grey parrots into the U.S. and with filing false importation documents. Between 1988 and 1991, Pare allegedly conspired to smuggle some 4,000 Congo African grey parrots illegally taken from their wild habitat in Zaire, where commercial trade in grey parrots has been banned. The parrots were shipped from Zaire to Senegal, and exported to the U.S. using false CITES export documents stating that they originated in Guinea or the Ivory Coast, where the Congo African grey parrot does not occur in the wild. Congo African grey parrots, which are a protected species under Appendix II of CITES, can retail in the U.S. for \$600 to \$1,000 each.

Here Come the Beetles . . .

Service field stations and state wildlife agencies are lining up to place their orders for beetles imported from Europe to control purple loosestrife, a nuisance plant that overruns wetlands, replaces native plants, and degrades food, shelter and nesting sites for wildlife. Thanks in part to some \$300,000 in Federal Aid grants over the past two years, biologists at Cornell University have been studying and breeding insects that feed solely on purple loosestrife. More than a decade of research has led to the introduction into North America of four species of loosestrife-chomping European insects, with the latest shipment scheduled to arrive this summer. Cornell researchers tested the European beetles to ensure that they would not eat other plant species and found that the insects would starve themselves rather than eat anything other than loosestrife. To date about 25,000 loosestrife-eating insects have been released on Service lands in Region 3 states, and this year another 1 million are expected to be released throughout North America.

The Conservation Fund Captures National Wetlands Conservation Award

The Service presented its annual National Wetlands Conservation Award to The Conservation Fund for its efforts leading to the creation of Big Branch Marsh NWR in Louisiana. The Fund acquired, and then donated to the Service, 10,200 acres in a valuable wetland ecosystem threatened by encroaching urban development along Lake Ponchartrain, near New Orleans. Big Branch Marsh NWR provides habitat for migratory wading birds, shorebirds and other wildlife.

Husband-and-wife team Jackie Niemi and Micheal Davis received the individual award for raising \$94,000 to acquire 77 acres of Beaver Creek Marsh on the central Oregon coast, which is now being managed by The Nature Conservancy. Niemi and Davis stepped in to purchase the marsh, which provides habitat for a variety of waterfowl as well as native anadromous fish such as coho salmon, after the Service decided that it could not make the acquisition.

A Friend in High Places

And the winner is...

Young artists from California, Michigan and North Dakota took top honors in the Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest last month. Scott Russell, 17, of Mt. Shasta, California, won first prize with his acrylic painting of Canada geese (pictured).

Second place went to Erik Peterson, 16, of Dearborn, Michigan, for his acrylic painting of buffleheads. Sam Coleman, 19, of Bismark, North Dakota, placed third. Scott will receive a \$2,500 scholarship and all three top winners will be flown to Washington with their art teachers and a parent to be honored at the Federal Duck Stamp Contest in October.

Every state, as well as the District of Columbia, participated in this year's Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Acting Director John Rogers praised the Junior Duck Stamp Program, calling it a "wonderful opportunity for young people to develop a lifelong interest in bird conservation."



The Service's mission to conserve America's fish and wildlife resources has received a welcome boost this year from the direct involvement and interest of Secretary Babbitt. We can all remember Interior secretaries who had little interest in or knowledge of what the Service does. Secretary Babbitt understands not only what we do but also how important it is to this country. He has made an unprecedented commitment of his time and persuasive abilities to support the Service.

There probably is no clearer example of this commitment than the recent battle over refuge legislation. The bill that was originally introduced in Congress would have made hunting, fishing, bird watching, and other recreational activities "purposes" of the system. Secretary Babbitt believes so strongly that wildlife conservation should be the one and only purpose of the system that he personally testified against the bill before the House Resources Committee. Then he not only called for but also personally attended and directed meetings with conservation groups, members of Congress and their staff to develop compromise legislation. The result is a bill (H.R. 1420) that reaffirms conservation as paramount to all else on the refuge system.

Likewise, Secretary Babbitt has taken a deep, personal interest in the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act. He has been directly overseeing and guiding work on the administration's position and negotiations with Senate committee staff.

As a result of this participation, we are more hopeful than ever that Congress will pass a strong reauthorization that will continue to conserve endangered species and their habitat for future generations.

Secretary Babbitt also has been supportive of our efforts in the field. For instance, he recently traveled to Okefenokee NWR to personally express opposition to any effort by DuPont Corporation to mine titanium deposits next to the refuge. He can cite chapter and verse on red-cockaded woodpecker conservation, courtesy of several sessions in the field with Service biologist Ralph Costa. On a recent Florida trip, he asked for a tour of Key Deer NWR and spent a day with refuge manager Barry Stieglitz. On more than one occasion, he has appeared at Directorate meetings, displaying a keen interest in the Service, our mission and most importantly, our people. This is the kind of enthusiasm and hands-on support rarely seen from his predecessors.

As Interior Secretary and a former two-time governor of Arizona, Secretary Babbitt is a real force on the national scene. We should all feel thankful, proud and invigorated by his willingness to use his office and his prestige in support of the Service and our conservation mandate.

John Rogers



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Executive Editor: Phil Million
Editor: Hugh Vickery
Associate Editor: Rachel F. Levin

Submit articles and photographs to:

Hugh Vickery
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Room 3447
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
202/208 1456
Fax: 202/208 5850
E-mail: hugh_vickery@mail.fws.gov

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