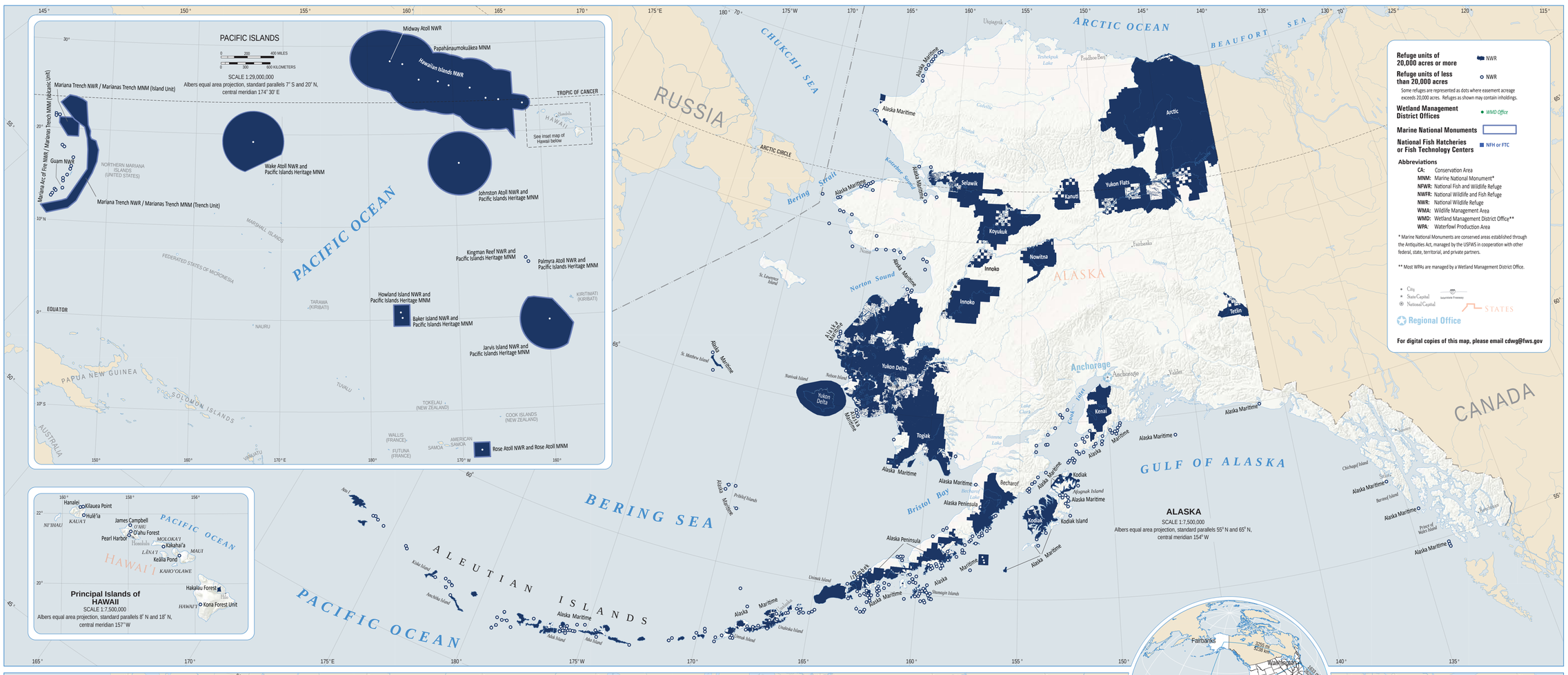
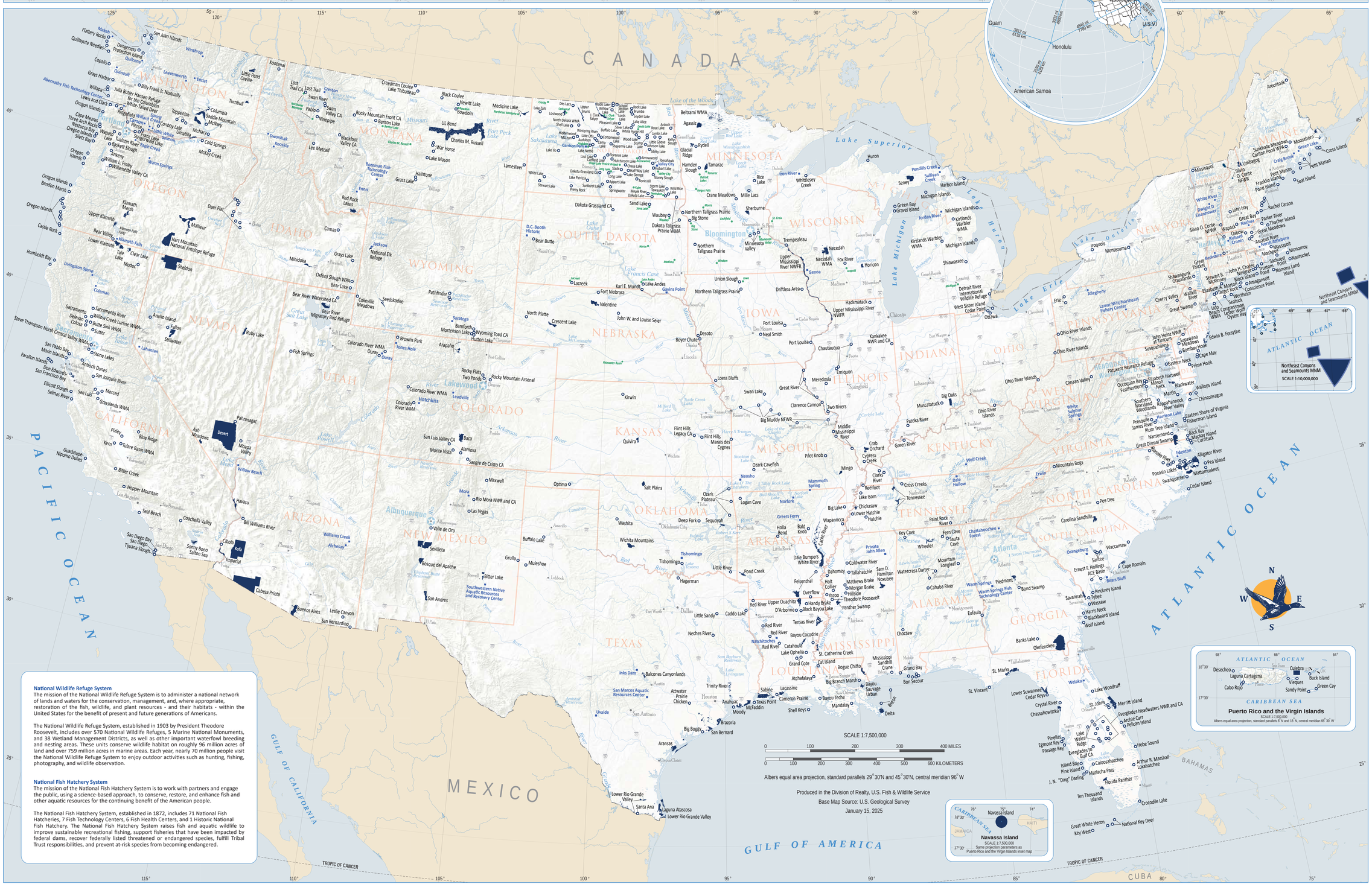
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Wildlife Refuge System and National Fish Hatchery System





National Wildlife Refuge System
The mission of the National Wildlife 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.

The National Wildlife Refuge System, established in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt, includes over 570 National Wildlife Refuges, 5 Marine National Monuments, and 38 Wetland Management Districts, as well as other important waterfowl breeding and nesting areas. These units conserve wildlife habitat on roughly 96 million acres of land and over 759 million acres in marine areas. Each year, nearly 70 million people visit the National Wildlife Refuge System to enjoy outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, photography, and wildlife observation.

National Fish Hatchery System
The mission of the National Fish Hatchery System is to work with partners and engage the public, using a science-based approach, to conserve, restore, and enhance fish and other aquatic resources for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The National Fish Hatchery System, established in 1872, includes 71 National Fish Hatcheries, 7 Fish Technology Centers, 6 Fish Health Centers, and 1 Historic National Fish Hatchery. The National Fish Hatchery System raises fish and aquatic wildlife to improve sustainable recreational fishing, support fisheries that have been impacted by federal dams, recover federally listed threatened or endangered species, fulfill Tribal Trust responsibilities, and prevent at-risk species from becoming endangered.