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20 AREAS IN NORTH DAKOTA MADE REFUGES FOR WILDLIFE

President Roosevelt has signed Executive orders establishing 20 new national wildlife refuges in North Dakota, the U. S. Biological Survey announces. Dated June 15, the orders automatically set aside 35,495 acres for the development of wildlife, principally migratory waterfowl. On the same day, 11,135 acres were added to the Long Lake Refuge in the same State.

The following refuges were established: Ardoch Lake, Brumba, Cottonwood Lake, Hiddenwood Lake, Hobart Lake, Lake Elsie, Lake George, Lake Ilo, Lake Nettie, Lake Patricia, Lake Susie, Lake Zahl, Lambs Lake, Legion Lake, Maple River, Pioneer Lake, Pleasant Lake, Rock Lake, Shell Lake, and Sibley Lake.

All the new sanctuaries are classed as "easement" refuges, denoting that the landowners have allowed the Federal Government gratuitous use of the areas for indefinite periods. Including the new lands, the Biological Survey now administers 13,623,239 acres on 257 national wildlife refuges in the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

Easement refuges are concentrated in North Dakota, the Survey says, because the State has many valuable breeding grounds for migratory birds. Many of the areas are equally important as resting sites for waterfowl going to and from the breeding grounds in Canada. Since this phase of the migratory-waterfowl program was inaugurated in 1935, 81 easement refuges have been set aside — 71 in North Dakota, 8 in Montana, and 2 in South Dakota.

This type of refuge is also valuable as a water-conservation project or a recreational area, the Survey asserts. Development work on the easement refuges has been done with W.P.A. funds and labor.

Also cooperating with the Biological Survey is the N.Y.A., which furnishes young men who act as observers studying wildlife conditions and perform considerable maintenance work on these refuges.

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EDITOR: Further information on refuges follows:

"The easement refuges are of great value for flood control, stock watering, and public recreation, as well as wildlife," says the Biological Survey.

Development of the easement program in North Dakota is well on its way to completion. The results are apparent in the increased use of these refuges by waterfowl. In the spring of 1938, for example, a notable increase was seen in the number of birds using the areas. In one marsh on the Long Lake Refuge, near Dunn Center, N. Dak., it is estimated that there were more than 10,000 nests of Franklin's gulls.

This great concentration of nesting birds was doubly important — wildlife conservation was benefited because nesting is an important factor in the restoration of the species, and the farmer was benefited because these birds feed their young almost entirely on grasshoppers. The quantity of insects destroyed by this colony was enormous, and their destruction a great boon to the farmer.

Other benefits accrue to the farmer, the Survey states. Previously, North Dakota was a vast expanse of dry land after the spring run-off had taken place. With the development of easement refuges, this condition was corrected. With W.P.A. funds and labor, the Survey constructed water-impoundment structures

capable of catching the run-off and keeping a permanent water supply.

In the winter of 1937-38, the major water-impoundment structures were completed on all projects in North Dakota. In the following spring, the areas for the first time were capable of catching the run-off. Before the close of the year, 35 of the 71 impoundments in the State had reached spillway elevations, others were half to three-fourths full, and all had enough water to take care of the young birds hatched within or near the easement refuge boundaries.

Water impoundments not only provide resting and breeding centers for migratory waterfowl and other forms of wildlife but serve the local farmers as stock-watering areas. W.P.A. workers constructed fenced lanes so that the stock can be driven to the water without trampling cover plantings or disturbing the wildlife.

That the public realizes the value of this type of sanctuary as a wildlife, conservation, and recreational area, the Survey says, is evident from the cooperative attitude of landowners, sportsmen, and businessmen, and from the fact that State and local authorities lend their full support, facilities, and equipment for the development of these areas. The recreational use of this type of refuge has gained rapidly as a result of the creation of ponds and lakes and the establishment of small picnic and other areas where people may enjoy the out-of-doors and see something of the wildlife protected by the Biological Survey.

The newly created ponds and lakes are stocked with fish by the State Conservation Commission, and North Dakotans now enjoy fishing on areas that previously had no permanent water supply and dried up after the spring run-off.

Local authorities are building picnic grounds and bath houses. Swimming and boating in the deeper portions of the lakes are popular sports with the residents. On one Sunday, more than 1,200 people picnicked on the Lake Ilo Refuge, near Dunn Center.