

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

America's National Wildlife Refuge System

Uniting for a New Century

America's Best Kept Secret

CELEBRATING A CENTURY *of* CONSERVATION

On March 14, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt had a vision—a vision of conserving America's wildlife for future generations. It began at Pelican Island, Florida, a three-acre parcel where, the President said,

herons, egrets, pelicans and other birds should be safe from poachers and commercial hunters.

Before leaving the White House, President

Roosevelt set aside 55 bird and animal sanctuaries across America. A century later, President Roosevelt's vision has blossomed into a national network of wildlife habitats—nearly 100 million acres protected on more than 535 refuges, and almost 3,000 small waterfowl breeding and nesting areas—where people can connect with wildlife amid the splendors of nature.



Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge | John and Karen Hollingsworth | USFWS

Hollingsworth | USFWS

An American Success Story

The National Wildlife Refuge System is dedicated entirely to the conservation of wildlife. Charged with protecting birds, fish, other animals, plants and the habitats they need to survive, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service unites in shared stewardship with state agencies, private organizations and individual volunteers to manage these wildlife habitats with care and the best expertise.

America's wildlife refuges are among the world's great environmental success stories. These protected havens provide habitat for more than 700 species of birds, more than 200 species of fish and nearly 500 other animal species. Among the hundreds of wild species that call wildlife refuges home are 250 threatened or endangered plants and animals, including our national symbol, the American bald eagle.

In addition, many wildlife refuges are built along the natural flyways used by millions of birds for their yearly migrations. These serve as a system of safe "stepping stones"—havens where the birds can stop, rest and feed as they make their way to a new seasonal home. A single protected area in the Rainwater Basin of Nebraska, for instance, is a rest stop for up to 3 million geese and 9 million ducks between February and April every year. Without these habitats, protected by their wildlife refuge status, these birds could not survive.

Accomplishments From the First Century

Oklahoma's Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1905 and was the first created specifically to protect big game. The plains buffalo, nearly eliminated by the early 1900s, now thrives on this 59,000-acre wildlife refuge, along with elk, white-tailed deer and a herd of long-horned cattle.

The Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge, created in 1924, runs 264 miles through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. The first wildlife refuge established specifically for waterfowl management, it harbors 10,000 migrating tundra swans and provides a home for 70 percent of the world's canvasback ducks every fall.

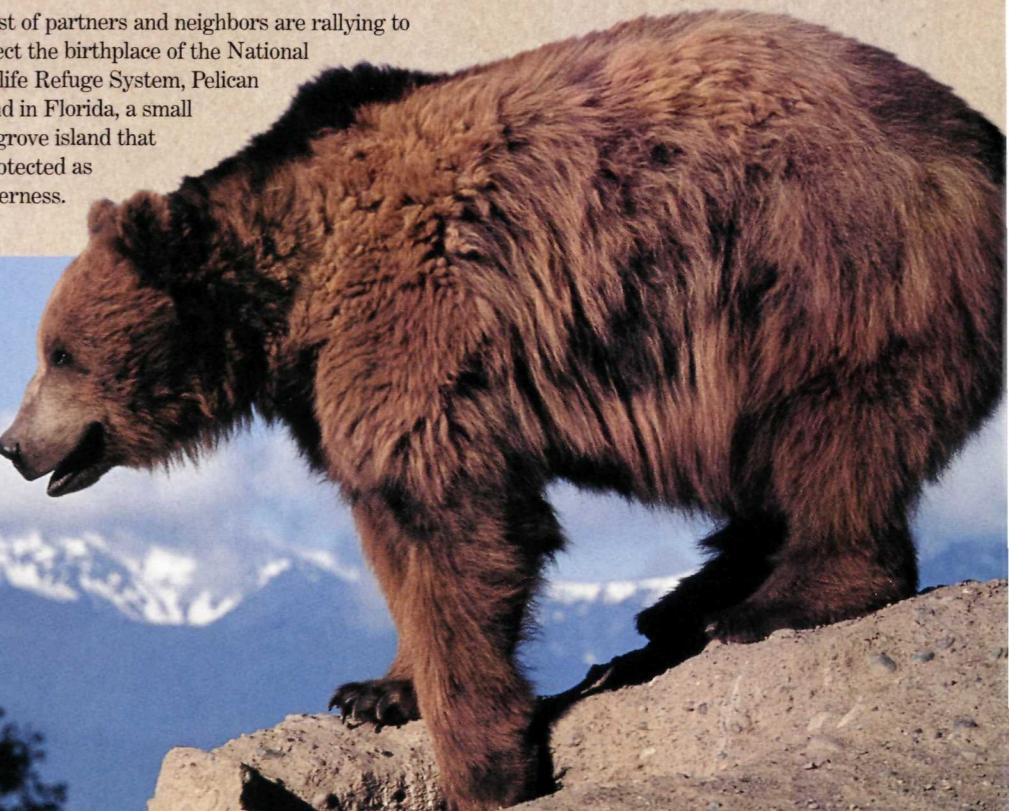
With a wingspan of seven feet, the magnificent whooping crane is one of the largest birds in North America. It is also one of the nation's most endangered species. The establishment of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas saved the stately whooper's only remaining wintering grounds in 1934, and has been vital to the crane's continued recovery ever since.

The American bald eagle suffered a dramatic decline over the last century, first from hunting and later from ingestion of pesticides. Over the last 30 years, bald eagles have made a steady recovery. Bald eagles thrive on scores of wildlife refuges across the country, some 60 were established mainly for this purpose.

The Kodiak brown bear is the largest in the world, weighing up to 1,500 pounds. Concern over reduced bear populations prompted sportsmen and other conservationists to petition for the protection of these enormous bears. There are only about 3,000 alive today, most on the Kodiak Island National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska where they feed on six species of salmon that spawn in the waters of this pristine sanctuary.

A host of partners and neighbors are rallying to protect the birthplace of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Pelican Island in Florida, a small mangrove island that is protected as Wilderness.

Volunteers helped stave off erosion of the island itself, and partners are working to restore wetlands across the lagoon from the tiny island—important habitat for birds and other plants and animals. Community leaders are helping to build boardwalks and observation towers so visitors can experience the amazing spectacle of birdlife on Pelican Island from across the lagoon that surrounds it. Both community pride and partner power are making Pelican Island a showcase site for the National Wildlife Refuge System, just in time for its 100th anniversary.



Grizzly Bear | Erwin and Peggy Bauer | USFWS

America's Best Kept Secrets Are Just Around the Corner

While ensuring the survival of wildlife whose natural homes are at risk, wildlife refuges welcome people, too. Each year, 40 million visitors enjoy wildlife refuges, and that number continues to grow. There are wildlife refuges in every state and at least one within an hour's drive of nearly every major American city. With more than 485 refuges open to the public, there is a wildlife refuge within everyone's reach.

People come in increasing numbers every year to relax, learn and explore America's rich natural heritage—and to be astounded by the beauty of wild places and the abundance of wildlife that thrives there.

- ◆ Because well-managed conservation programs ensure abundant and diverse wildlife populations, hunters and anglers are welcome on more than 300 wildlife refuges.
- ◆ Wildlife refuges are places where all Americans can escape from the hustle and stress of their daily routines and be inspired by the beauty and grandeur of America. They can reconnect with nature through photography, birdwatching, and other wildlife observation.

As more people recognize the importance of wildlife refuges, the level of community and volunteer support continues to flourish. Today, more than 30,000 volunteers give time to their local wildlife refuges each year, and more than 200 community partnerships have been formed to support and assist nearby wildlife refuges. An invaluable resource, these volunteers provide more than 10 times the workforce of refuge personnel.



Rock Sandpiper
David Menke | USFWS

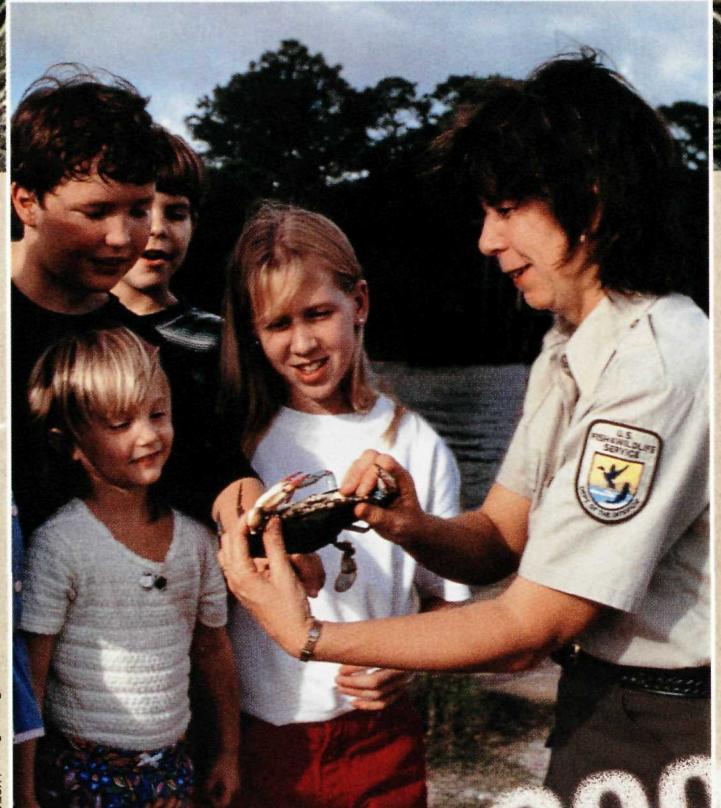


more online: volunteers.fws.gov

Go online to find out more about volunteer opportunities in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



American Alligator | Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge | Dan Griggs | USFWS



George Gentry | USFWS

1903-2003



American Bald Eagle | Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge | John and Karen Hollingsworth | USFWS

Investing for Tomorrow

A diverse constituency of sportsmen's and other conservation organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, community partners, volunteers and neighbors is uniting to help the National Wildlife Refuge System meet its full potential. As this magnificent collection of wild lands celebrates a century of conservation, it prepares to face the challenges and opportunities of the next. Now more than ever, the National Wildlife

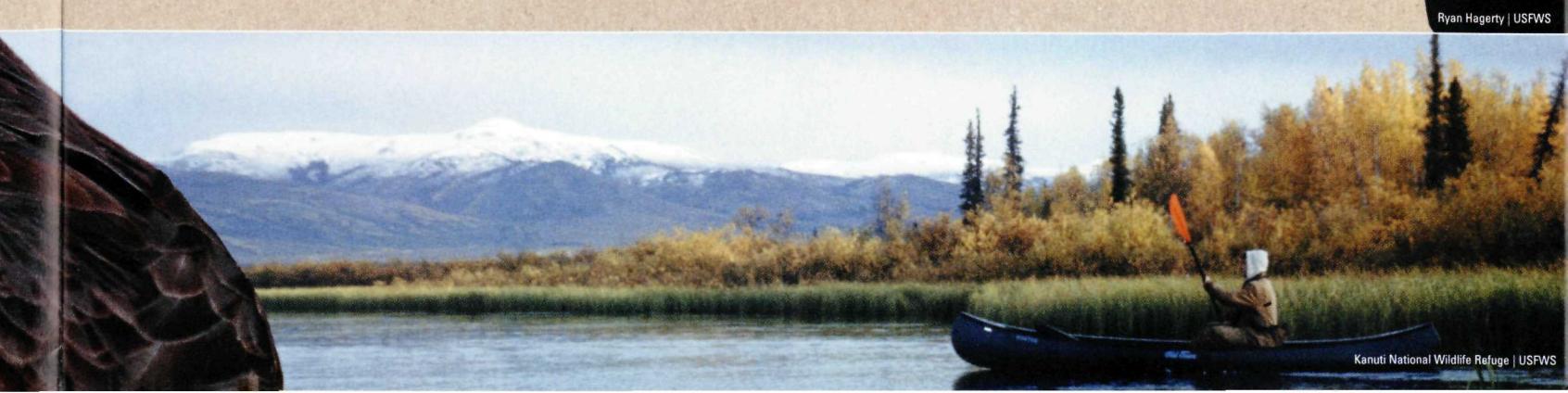
Refuge System is an integral part of America's public lands, and plays a critical role in natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation.

Our Centennial is more than a celebration; it also is a reminder that conserving America's natural heritage through the next century requires a commitment of American resources, both public and

private. Working together, we will celebrate a century of conservation by building a Centennial legacy, passing on a naturally diverse wildlife heritage to our children.



Ryan Hagerty | USFWS



Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge | USFWS

Poised for a New Century



Sockeye Salmon | Erwin and Peggy Bauer | USFWS

The threshold of the National Wildlife Refuge System's second century is a time to reflect on what we've learned and to apply those lessons to the challenges of the next 100 years. It also provides an opportunity to raise America's awareness of the National Wildlife Refuge System's mission and achievements—and remind Americans that wildlife refuges are special places to enjoy and pass on to future generations.

The last several years have been marked by tremendous progress, especially because of congressional support for key legislative measures and significant investments that support conservation and visitor services. We've also seen growth in conservation partnerships, support in communities surrounding wildlife refuges and volunteerism. Our efforts for the Centennial are designed to build on this progress.

National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act

In passing the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act of 2000, Congress paved the way for people to discover the beauty and values of their wildlife refuges. The law marks the occasion as an opportunity for unprecedented partnerships on behalf of wildlife refuges, providing a stronger base of support to launch a new century of conservation.

The Centennial law establishes a Centennial Commission (see below) made up of distinguished citizens and members of Congress to work with partners in advancing a series of special outreach activities leading up to and during the Centennial year. It charges the Centennial Commission with planning and hosting a national conference on the Refuge System to coincide with this historic milestone, and calls for a Presidential Proclamation designating 2003 "The Year of the National Wildlife Refuge."

The law recognizes that the National Wildlife Refuge System must better position itself to address the wildlife and habitat management challenges of the 21st century and provide better services to an increasing number of visitors. It also requires a long-term plan to address the Refuge System's most critical needs in managing these lands, maintaining buildings and equipment, constructing visitor facilities of all kinds and providing the best outdoor experiences for visitors to wildlife refuges.

CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Interior Secretary Gale Norton has appointed a Centennial Commission, made up of these distinguished members of Congress, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and leaders from the private sector:

◆ **Chair:** William Horn, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and former Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

◆ Ramona Seeligson Bass, Texas Wild and Fort Worth Zoo

◆ Michael Bean, Environmental Defense

◆ Peter Coors,
Coors Brewing Company

◆ Lynn Greenwalt, former Director,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

◆ Jack Hanna,
Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures

◆ Karl Malone, Utah Jazz,
National Basketball Association

◆ John L. Morris, Bass Pro Shops

◆ Kym Murphy,
Walt Disney Company

◆ Daniel Pedrotti, former President,
Boone and Crockett Club

U.S. Senate:

◆ John Breaux (D-LA)

◆ Thad Cochran (R-MS)

◆ Jim Jeffords (I-VT)

◆ Robert Smith (R-NH)

U.S. House of Representatives:

◆ John Dingell (D-MI)

◆ James Hansen (R-UT)

◆ Nick Rahall (D-WV)

◆ Curt Weldon (R-PA)

National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act

The biggest recent milestone in our progress came in 1997 with passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, which set the stage for ensuring that wildlife refuges continue to be managed for the benefit of both wildlife and the American people.



Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge | Martha Collins | USFWS

- ◆ Hunting and fishing;
- ◆ Wildlife observation and photography;
- ◆ Interpretation and environmental education.

The Act also calls for comprehensive conservation plans for individual wildlife refuges. These ensure each wildlife refuge's uses are compatible with its mission, and encourage greater involvement by partners and neighbors in wildlife refuge management decision-making programs.

Building on Progress

Under the Commission's direction, the Centennial Campaign will include public awareness programs, a national conference to unite the conservation community on behalf of America's wildlife refuges and innovative conservation partnership projects to boost volunteer and community involvement.

The Centennial anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System is a unique opportunity for the Fish and Wildlife Service, Congress, the conservation community and all partners who care about the future of wildlife to unify our complementary efforts on behalf of fish and wildlife and the American people.

The story of the National Wildlife Refuge System reflects a proud tradition of dedicated public service and remarkable ingenuity. Wildlife refuges are critical to the future of America's wildlife, and there is no better time than the Centennial anniversary to come together and invest in our shared stewardship of this spectacular network of wildlife lands.



Tupper Ansel Blake | USFWS

Partnerships for Conservation

For the Centennial occasion, the National Wildlife Refuge System is embarking on a broad, vigorous public outreach and education campaign in cooperation with public and private partners. Projects include the following:



National Wildlife Refuge System Conference

This national conference, to be hosted by the Centennial Commission in 2003, will bring together federal officials, members of Congress, conservation organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, community partners, volunteers and corporate America to both celebrate the first century of success and find innovative ways to join together to meet a new century of conservation challenges.



Protecting Pelican Island

Significant investments by a number of partners are funding land acquisition, habitat restoration and enhanced visitor facilities and programs to make our nation's first wildlife refuge a premier site for telling the story of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Smithsonian Institution Exhibit

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, is producing a major exhibit on the National Wildlife Refuge System's role in wildlife conservation over the last century, potentially incorporating mobile components for exhibition around the country.

Zoo Partnerships

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the National Zoological Park in Washington, DC, to create a special exhibition highlighting endangered species recovery and migratory bird conservation, with exportable elements for zoos nationwide through the American Zoo and Aquarium Association.



Conservation Education: Additional initiatives to increase conservation awareness among America's youth will be developed using the Internet, CD-ROM and interactive technology and distance-learning satellite broadcasting.

Commemorative Postage Stamp Series: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has formally proposed that the U.S. Postal Service develop a series of postage stamps on wildlife refuges to commemorate the Centennial.

Coordinated Special Events: Special events are now occurring at wildlife refuges across the country. The Centennial celebration will be incorporated into other major events, such as International Migratory Bird Day, National Fishing Week, Youth Waterfowl Day, National Hunting and Fishing Day, National Public Lands Day and the Federal and Junior Duck Stamp Contests.

Special Media Promotions: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is producing public service announcements for broad distribution and seeking feature coverage and other opportunities to educate the public through the media.

Volunteer Initiative: Working with partners like the AARP, the National Education Association, Boy and Girl Scouts, and 4-H, we will augment both our volunteer recruitment efforts and our support to the existing volunteer workforce.

Internet Partnerships: A new Internet site highlighting the National Wildlife Refuge System's accomplishments, and volunteer and recreational opportunities, will be the platform for new linkages with Internet providers and other outdoor organizations.

Visitor Services Initiative: To better serve refuge visitors and ensure quality outdoor experiences, we are improving our facilities, signage and orientation materials at wildlife refuges nationwide, as well as our Internet presence.

Centennial Commemorative Calendar: We are developing and will mass-produce with a corporate sponsor a commemorative 2003 calendar featuring photos taken on wildlife refuges by a variety of renowned photographers.

Commemorative Books: A number of partners are producing Centennial commemorative "coffee table" books and guidebooks on the National Wildlife Refuge System, to be published in 2003.

Federal Duck Stamp Contest: The Federal Duck Stamp Program's renowned art competition in 2002 will focus on the Centennial, and the winning art will appear on the 2003–2004 Duck Stamp, along with a message about the importance of the stamp to land acquisition for waterfowl refuges.



Habitat Restoration Initiative: We plan to work with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan program, a corporate sponsor, and other conservation partners on targeted restoration projects—such as migratory bird conservation, endangered species recovery and fisheries restoration—on or near select wildlife refuges nationwide.

more online: refuges.fws.gov

Special events will occur throughout 2002 and 2003. Visit us online to find the Centennial celebration nearest you.

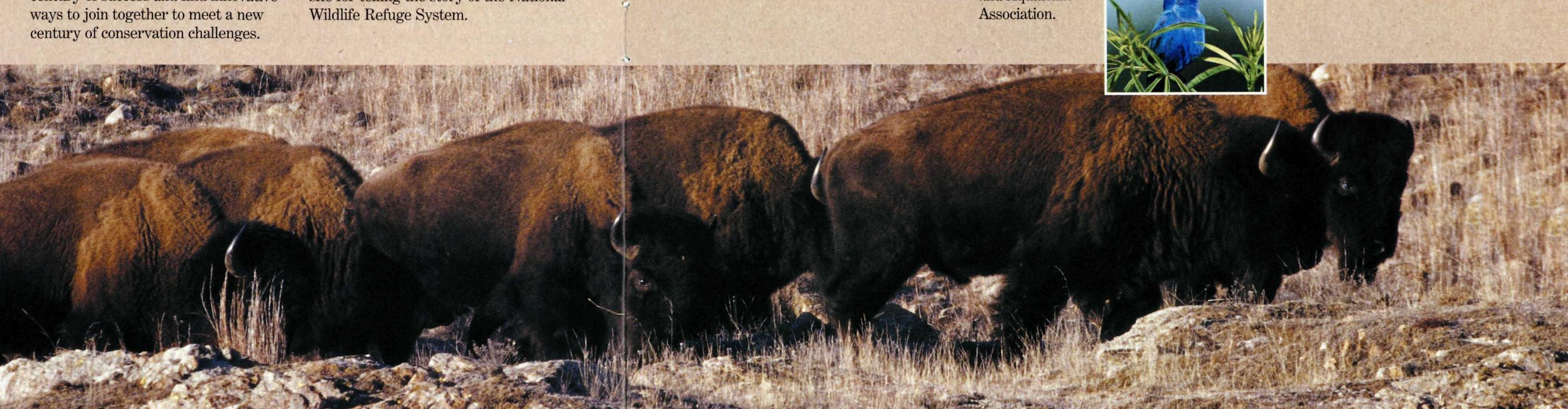
Conference: This national conference, to be hosted by the Centennial Commission in 2003, will bring together federal officials, members of Congress, conservation organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, community partners, volunteers and corporate America to both celebrate the first century of success and find innovative ways to join together to meet a new century of conservation challenges.

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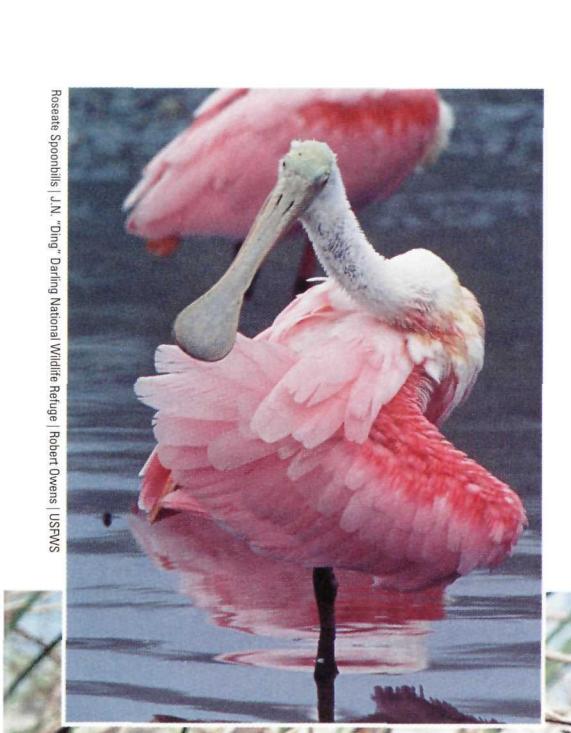
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Bison | Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge | John and Karen Hollingsworth | USFWS



Breeding Spoonbill | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Robert Owen | USFWS



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle | Erwin and Peggy Bauer | USFWS

Keeping Our Promise

The refuge system charted a course known as *Fulfilling the Promise*, focusing on enhancing wildlife and habitat, the leadership of the refuge system, and introducing wildlife refuges to the American people by sharing a passion deeply ingrained in our history.

◆ **Wildlife and Habitat:** The vision for the National Wildlife Refuge System is to make a place where wildlife comes first, a place where healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are vital concepts in refuge

AT-A-GLANCE:

management. We are committed to maintaining the refuge system as a leader in habitat management and a center for excellence where the best science and technology is used for wildlife conservation.

◆ **Leadership:** The refuge system has a proud heritage of leadership and extending this legacy will require leadership development programs to attract the best and the brightest employees, develop a premier team with immeasurable pride, and foster integrity within the refuge system.

◆ **People:** By communicating the value of our wildlife heritage, the refuge system will foster a continuing legacy of wildlife, welcome visitors, create opportunities for public stewardship, and make America's best kept secret a system to appreciate.

Centennial Legacy Plan

The National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act also enabled the development of a long-term plan to address the National Wildlife Refuge System's major operations, maintenance and construction needs nationwide. This blueprint, the Centennial Legacy Plan, will focus on prioritizing and addressing the National Wildlife Refuge System's most pressing needs.

The Centennial Legacy Plan will help wildlife refuges better manage and monitor wildlife, restore habitat, implement visitor programs, repair deteriorating facilities and construct new facilities such as welcome centers, boardwalks, fishing piers, hunting blinds and wildlife observation platforms.

Fulfilling the Promise for the Next Century

When President Theodore Roosevelt made Pelican Island a refuge for birds, he made a small promise that has grown into a great American success story. A century in the making, this story of safeguarding America's migratory birds, animals and important fisheries is an uplifting and continuing saga. In the past 100 years, America's National Wildlife Refuge System has saved hundreds of wild species. Today it covers nearly 100 million acres on more than 535 wildlife refuges. Entering a new century, Americans are being called upon to renew and fulfill the promise of wildlife conservation. As our world evolves, so too do the challenges to America's wild places. With the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act, the U.S. Congress helped chart an ambitious—and absolutely vital—course for the 21st century. With continued strong support from both public and private sources, we will stay the course and fulfill the promise.

Commitment, resources and the energy of dedicated Americans—these will enable the National Wildlife Refuge System to continue providing special places of refuge for wildlife and people alike. Fulfilling this mission will enable future generations to speak proudly of these successes, as they celebrate future centuries of conservation.



Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge | John and Karen Hollingsworth | USFWS

A Century of Congressional Support

1900 | The **Lacey Act** becomes the first federal law protecting wildlife by prohibiting interstate trade, sale, or transportation of illegally taken fish, plants, or wildlife.

1906 | The **Game and Bird Preserves Protection Act** provides the Bureau of Biological Survey with the regulatory authority to manage uses on reservations (refuges) in order to protect wildlife.

1918 | The **Migratory Bird Treaty Act** between the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) becomes the foundation for future legislation that will greatly expand the National Wildlife Refuge System.

1929 | The **Migratory Bird Conservation Act** provides the authority to purchase migratory bird habitat and establish the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

1934 | The **Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act**, also called the **Duck Stamp Act** requires waterfowl hunters over a certain age to possess a stamp, with the proceeds from the sale of said stamps to be used for the acquisition of wetland habitat.

1956 | The **Fish and Wildlife Act** establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and broadens the Fish and Wildlife Service's authority to acquire refuges.

1962 | The **Refuge Recreation Act** permits recreational activities on refuges where they do not conflict with refuges' primary purpose.

1964 | The **Land and Water Conservation Act** authorizes appropriations of Land and Water Conservation Funds derived from offshore oil leases to acquire wildlife habitat.

1964 | The **Wilderness Act** establishes guidelines for designating wilderness areas to protect unspoiled habitat within national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands.

1966 | The **National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act** requires that secondary uses of refuges must be consistent with the major purposes for which refuges are established.

1998 | The **Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998** recognizes the critical role of the 30,000 volunteers and 200 community partners in managing the National Wildlife Refuge System and provides means to bolster this support.

compatible with the wildlife refuge's purposes and the National Wildlife Refuge System mission.

1998 | The **Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century**—the country's major transportation law—for the first time includes provisions for the National Wildlife Refuge System's road maintenance and construction needs.

2000 | The **National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act of 2000** calls for a Presidential Proclamation naming 2003 as "The Year of the National Wildlife Refuge," charges the Secretary of the Interior with recruiting a

commission of distinguished citizens to rally public support and develop benchmarks for Congress to evaluate progress on addressing the National Wildlife Refuge System's priority operations, maintenance and construction needs nationwide.



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