



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

For Release: November 18, 1993

Inez Connor 202-219-3861

**U.S. AND CANADA HONOR SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY  
AND SIX OTHERS FOR WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**

Mollie Beattie, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, today announced the recipients of the newly established **National Great Blue Heron Award**, recognizing four individuals, two corporations, and a conservation organization in the U.S. and Canada for their work on behalf of wetlands and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The awards went to Senator Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont, James D. Range of Rust International, and The Nature Conservancy in the U.S., and to Don Simkin, Andre Magny, TransCanada PipeLines Ltd., and Inco Limited in Canada. Each will receive a framed model of a great blue heron, hand-carved by "Cork" McGee of Chincoteague, Virginia.

The awards are the highest honor bestowed at the national level by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee, which is composed of six U.S. and six Canadian members appointed by the Directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The committee guides implementation of the Plan, a 1986 agreement between the two nations to restore

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waterfowl populations through conservation and protection of the wetland habitats on which they and other species depend.

Senator Leahy was honored for his leadership in crafting the conservation provisions of the 1990 Farm Bill, which "represent the single most significant public policy contribution to date toward meeting the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in the United States," according to the award citation. Senator Leahy was nominated by the National Association of Conservation Districts.

James D. Range, Vice President for Government Affairs for Rust International of Birmingham, Alabama, was recognized for the key role he played in launching the Plan, particularly the strategy for matching and leveraging public and private partnership dollars for use in Canada. He was also instrumental in securing passage of related legislation and served as chairman of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is now on the Board of Directors of Ducks Unlimited. He was nominated by Gary T. Myers, Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

The Nature Conservancy was recognized as a major contributor to the Plan, not only financially but also for its leadership role in "forging broader public/private partnerships promoting the importance of watershed, ecosystem, and landscape perspectives." It has helped protect some of the most sensitive and significant priority areas identified under the North American Plan such as the ACE Basin in South Carolina; Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge in California; Mad Island, Texas; Cache River, Illinois; and Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas. It was nominated by the Izaak Walton League.

"I am delighted to join in recognizing two such outstanding individuals and one of the leading conservation organizations in the world," said Director Beattie. "The North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are indeed fortunate to have their backing and support, which has made the Plan the largest and most successful wetlands conservation effort in history."