

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Conservation Act Boosted

The United States' Endangered Species Conservation Act, which took effect in June, has been praised by the International Fur Trade Federation, so much so that the Federation would like member countries to pass laws patterned after it. Fur trade associations throughout the world belong to the organization.

In a letter to member organizations, the Federation recommended that they urge their governments "to institute legislation to control the import, export and handling of those species of animals, and their skins etc. which have been scientifically proved to be in danger of extinction; such legislation to be on the lines of U.S.A. Federal Law."

The Endangered Species Conservation Act is administered by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Chalk Up Another Victim for DDT

The latest of the growing list of birds whose reproduction has been harmed by DDT is the white-faced ibis. The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife has documented losses of the bird in Utah from both thin-shelled and soft-shelled eggs laid by the birds. Researchers determined that DDT was the culprit.

A Northerner Goes South

Harvey Willoughby, fish hatchery chief in the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, has received reports of successful transplants of northern pike as far south as Arkansas. The original range of this species extended only as far south as central Missouri. Fishery managers have long believed that this sport fish's range could be extended. Successful plants in Missouri, Virginia, and Arkansas are confirming that belief. "Trial plants by States in other Ozark and Appalachian lakes should enable us to get a better picture of the adaptability of this fish," Willoughby says.

Ospreys Will Like This

At the urging of the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, the U.S. Coast Guard has changed its policy regarding removal of osprey nests from navigational markers along the lower Potomac River. Only empty nests and those which obstruct navigational lights will be removed. Any change in osprey reproductive success, which is currently being studied by the Bureau, should be noticeable because a fair percentage of the birds use the navigational markers as nest sites in this area.

Bighorn Sheep for Texas

One of the ways Texas is using Federal aid-to-wildlife money is in restoring bighorn sheep. Texas has acquired about 75,000 acres of bighorn range and has had success breeding young in pens. The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, which administers the Federal aid funds, reported that "after years of planning, study, and work, the Parks and Wildlife Department stands ready to begin releases of desert bighorn sheep to the wild. If success continues to smile on this project, the State may one day reopen a controlled harvest on these eagerly sought trophy animals."

"By the Grace of God, Forgive Us . . ."

The Cabeza Prieta Game Range in southwestern Arizona, a wildlife refuge of the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, lies in a country that is among the cruelest on earth. About two inches of rain fall in a good year, so when the storage tank rain gage, which holds about a quart of water, was stolen at Saguara Gap this past summer, an explanation seemed in order.

The thieves did explain, in a note left behind in Spanish:

"By the grace of God, forgive us . . .

"We are two Mexicans who wanted to cross the desert so we could work in the U.S. and we ran out of water and we saw much hardship and we had to turn back to Mexico because we could not travel any longer and in order to stay alive we took the liberty of carrying with us the object which you stored here and excuse us but we have to save ourselves. Gracias."