



National Wildlife Refuge System *Coastal and Ocean Refuges*

The National Wildlife Refuge System administers a national network of lands and waters for conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Our history of marine ecosystem conservation goes back to 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt first established the National Wildlife Refuge System. Our first refuges included coastal, insular, and marine ecosystems.

Overview. The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) includes 177 coastal and insular refuges, encompassing expansive estuarine systems above the Arctic Circle to remote coral reef atolls and tropical lagoons below the Equator. These refuges include over 20 million coastal acres and 30,000 coastal miles; 7 million ocean acres of which almost 3 million are in coral reef ecosystems. We are also co-trustees of the 87 million acre Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument in Hawaii. Refuge conservation initiatives support fishery, wildlife, plants and Federally-listed species, as well as public education and recreation. Refuge marine programs ensure the maintenance of biological integrity and environmental health of our lands and waters.

The NWRS conservation paradigm is summarized as “wildlife first”. All appropriate public uses on refuge lands and waters are subject to a compatibility analysis to determine which recreational uses (education, fishing, hunting, interpretation, wildlife viewing, photography, etc.) complement the establishment purposes of a refuge.

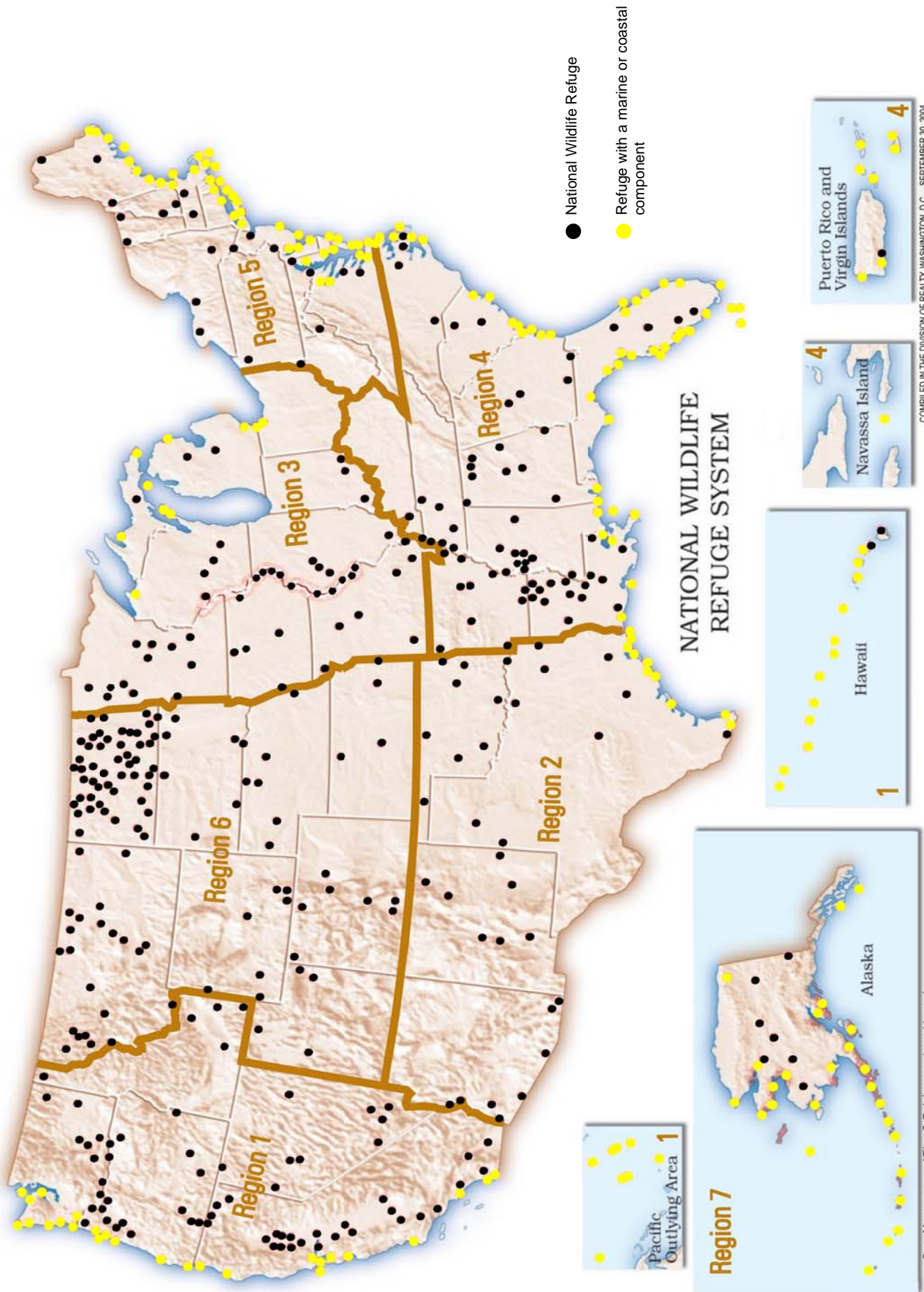
Projects include Federal, State, tribal, local, and private partnership efforts directed toward habitat enhancement, restoration, and reclamation; conservation area management as natural classrooms and laboratories; law enforcement; removal and control of exotic and invasive plant and animal species; removal of hazardous wastes; listed species reestablishment, reintroduction, and recovery to historic habitats; environmental, economic, and public health and safety risk and threat reduction; protected species’ monitoring and research; and education and outreach efforts.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mission: To work with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." The Service is the only federal agency with this responsibility. The Service manages the 95 million acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.





Base Map courtesy of Tibor G. Toth (www.tothgraphix.com)
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To learn more about America's Pacific refuges visit <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/wnwr/nwindex.html>