



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Waterfowl Conservation and Management on Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

➤ “Many Hunters came home with empty bags. Others were more fortunate...The season was disastrous enough, however, to convince the true sportsmen among the duck hunters that something was seriously amiss.”

➤ ➤ (Nature Magazine, April 1935)





U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System primary authorities and responsibilities
- Waterfowl Management on Refuges in Louisiana



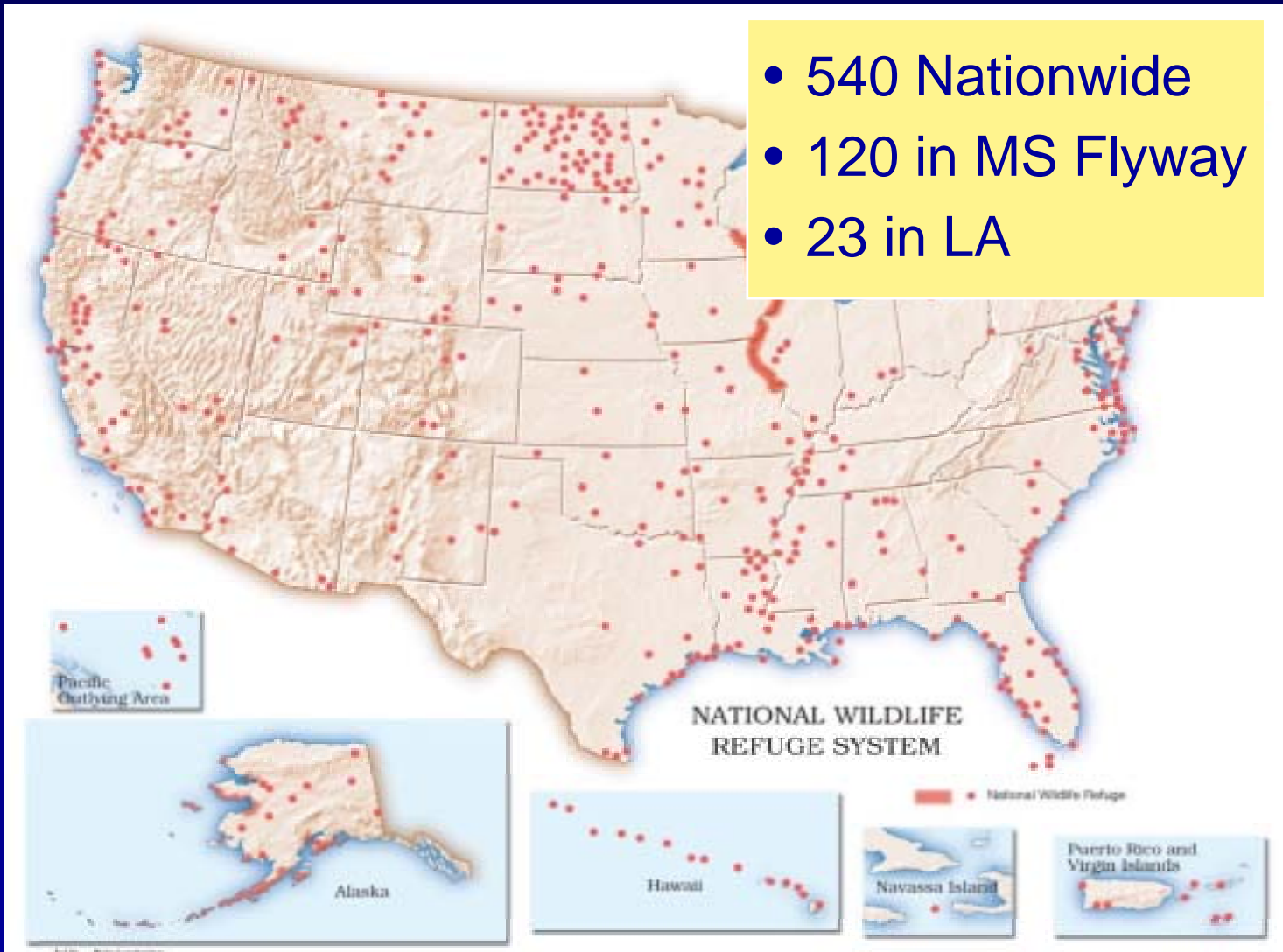


Service Programs Contributing to Waterfowl Conservation

- Migratory Birds and State Programs
- Ecological Services
- Law Enforcement



National Wildlife Refuge System





Refuges Established

• Wetlands in the late 70's and waterfowl habitat in the 1980's with the start up of North American Waterfowl Management Plan

• Today, in addition to the above, protecting a diversity of habitats which can support a wide variety of wildlife species





Refuge Establishment Authorities

- Executive Order
- Migratory Bird Conservation Act 1929
- Refuge Administration Act 1966
- Emergency Wetlands Act of 1986
- Others...





Refuge Purposes

Cameron Prairie
National Wildlife
Refuge (LA) est.
1988

“...for use as an inviolate
sanctuary, or for any
other management
purposes, for migratory
birds.” (Migratory Bird
Conservation Act)



Delta NWR (LA) est. 1935

“...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife...”





Refuge Management Authorities

- Establishment Authority
- Migratory Bird Conservation Act 1929
- Refuge Recreation Act
- Refuge Improvement Act of 1997





Refuge Improvement Act



- “Wildlife First”
Mission Statement
- Priority public uses
of refuges
- Management as a
system
- Compatibility of uses



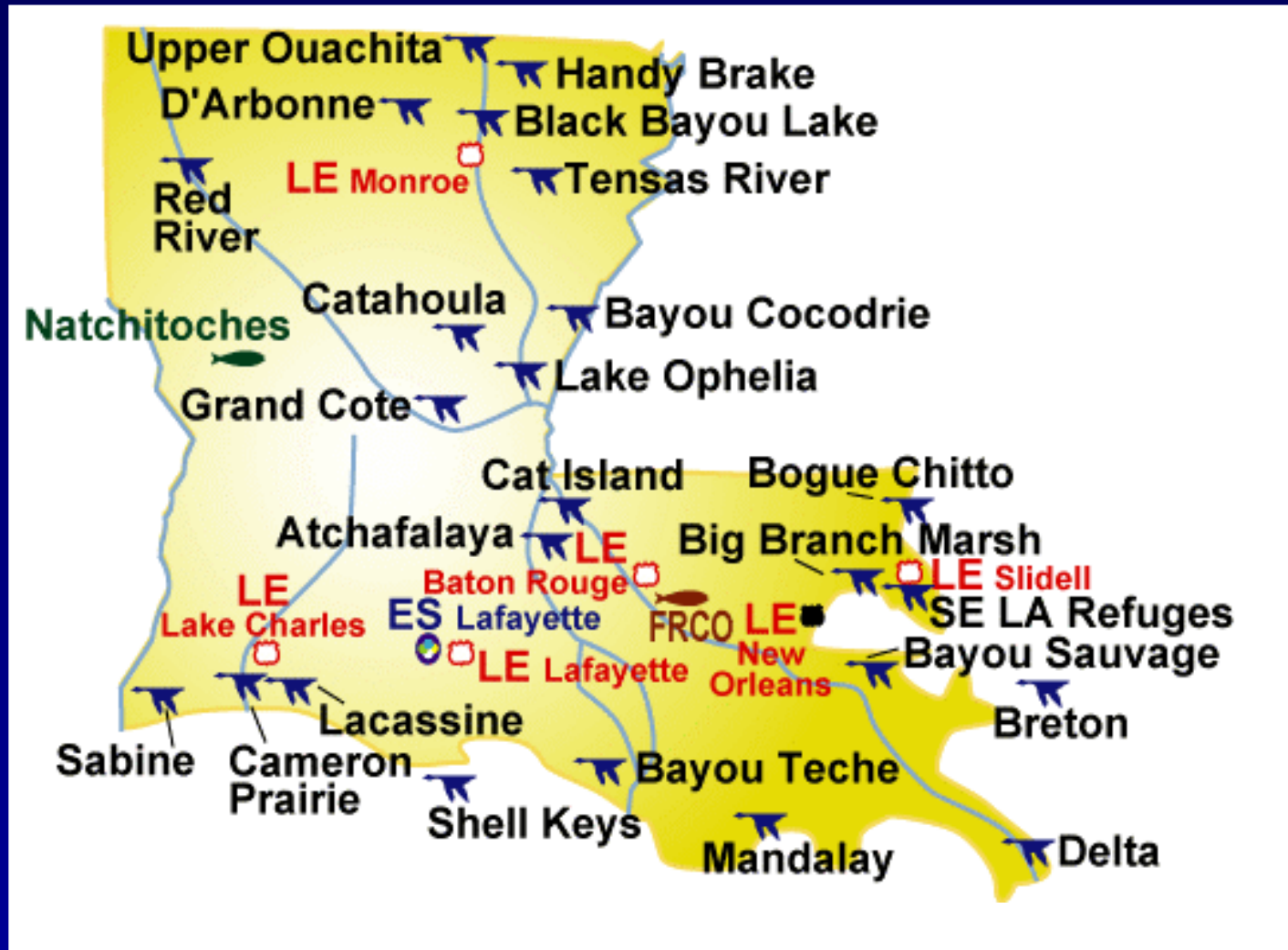
Priority Public Uses

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Photography
- Wildlife Observation
- Education





Louisiana Refuges





Louisiana Refuges

- 23 Refuges
- 540,000 acres
- Critical area in the country for wetlands and wintering waterfowl
- Refuge Habitats include Bottomland Hardwoods to Barrier Islands and coastal marshes
- Approx. 1.4 million visitors & \$60 million in annual economic benefits



Refuge Management

- Waterfowl Populations
- Hunting
- Sanctuaries
- Croplands
- Habitat Restoration
 - Reforestation
 - Wetland Restoration



Refuge Waterfowl Populations



- Mid Winter Annual Surveys (Jan. 2003 Refuges supported 512,000 ducks and geese)
- Banding
- Enhancing nesting and brood habitat
- Monitor for Disease



Refuge Waterfowl Hunting

- 270,000 acres open to waterfowl hunting





Refuge Waterfowl Hunting

Annual Review with State for hunt seasons

- Sabine NWR - added 10,000 acres in 2000
- Lacassine NWR – added 5,000 acres in 2001
- Bayou Cocodrie NWR - 8,000 acres added in last two years

Currently 18 of 23 refuges open to hunting

Grand Cote opens this Fall





Refuge Sanctuaries

- Need for Sanctuaries
 - Legislation
 - Biological Basis
 - Pair Bonding
 - Preening
 - Fat Storage
 - Special Considerations



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Refuge-wide Sanctuaries

Bayou Sauvage NWR

23,000 acres located
within city limits of New
Orleans



Breton NWR

5,000-acre barrier island





Refuge Sanctuaries

- As of 2003, approx. 257,000 acres in Sanctuaries
- In the past 5 years, 23,000 acres of Sanctuaries opened to hunting
- Surveys show at Delta NWR, wintering duck populations evenly occupy hunt & sanctuary areas



Refuge Cropland Management

- Unharvested Crops in Sanctuaries



- Louisiana Refuges
 - 1,300 acres
- Mississippi Refuges
 - 2,300 acres
- Tennessee Refuges
 - 2,849
- Kentucky Refuges
 - 0 acres
- Alabama Refuges
 - 850 acres
- Arkansas Refuges
 - 2,485





Refuge Cropland Management

- Region 3 Refuges
(Wisconsin, Iowa,
Illinois, Indiana
Minnesota, Ohio,
Michigan, & Missouri)
unharvested crops in
sanctuaries
--2,000 acres



Cropland in the MS Flyway

Upper Flyway Region

(MN, WI, MI, IA, IL, IN,
OH, MO)

- 48 million acre - corn
- 47 million acres - soybeans
- 3.9 million acres - winter wheat
- 200 thousand acres - rice

(2000-2002 USDA National
Agricultural Statistic Survey)

Lower Flyway Region

(KY, AR, TN, LA, MS,
AL)

- 3 million acres - corn
- 2.7 million acres - winter wheat
- 2.3 million acres - rice



Refuge Habitat Restoration

- Bottomland Hardwood Reforestation
- Hydrology Restoration
- Wetland Restoration
- Last 10 years, over 60,000 acres reforested
- Greater acreage of moist-soil
- Over 3,500 acres of coastal wetlands restored





Refuge Planning

Comprehensive Conservation Planning (CCP)

- Comprehensive biological and management analysis
- 2000 and 2 year process
- 15-year plan for future



Importance of Hunters for Waterfowl Conservation

- Purchase Federal & State Duck Stamps
- Support Habitat Restoration Efforts
- Public involvement on refuge planning
- Spread the conservation message



Trails on Refuges

Hiking, Biking,
Canoeing Trails

Interpretive panels and
brochures provided



Outreach/Visitor Services

- Interpretive tours are conducted by refuge staff and volunteers

Tours can include:

- Canoeing
- Biking
- Hiking
- Photography
- Nature interpretation/bird watching





U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Louisiana Refuges

Management of Wildlife
and Habitat



