

## **Fish and Wildlife Act**

**Agencies:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (National Marine Fisheries Service)

**Citation:** [16 U.S.C. §§ 742a et seq.](#)

**Enacted as:** the “Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956”, on August 8, 1956

### **Summary:**

The [Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 \(Act\)](#), as frequently amended, establishes a comprehensive National fish, shellfish, and wildlife resources policy. The Act also addresses the commercial fishing industry, the rights of citizens to fish for pleasure, enjoyment, and betterment, and the need to maintain and increase public opportunities for recreational use of fish and wildlife resources.

Section 7(a) (16 U.S.C. § 742f) of the Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to: 1) develop measures for “maximum sustainable production of fish”; 2) make economic studies of the industry and recommend measures to insure stability of the domestic fisheries; 3) undertake promotional and informational activities to stimulate consumption of fishery products; 4) take steps “required for the development, advancement, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources” through research, acquisition of land and water or interests therein, development of existing facilities, and other means.

The Act authorizes the acceptances of gifts and the services of volunteers for programs and projects that benefit the mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). In addition, the Secretary of the Interior may enter into cooperative agreements for programs and projects to benefit specific units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Act confirmed the position of the Commissioner of FWS and the creation of the FWS in the U.S. Department of the Interior. Further, the Act established a Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and a Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

**Source:** <http://www.fws.gov/laws/lawsdigest/FWACT.HTML>

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