

## **National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act**

**Agencies:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Citation:** [16 U.S.C. §§ 668dd et seq.](#)

**Enacted as:** the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, on October 15, 1966

### **Summary:**

The [National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act \(Act\)](#) serves as the "organic act" for the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Act, as amended, consolidated the various categories of lands, administered by the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), into a single National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Act establishes a unifying mission for the Refuge System, a process for determining compatible uses of refuges, and a requirement for preparing comprehensive conservation plans. The Act states, first and foremost, that the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System be focused singularly on wildlife conservation.

In addition, the Refuge Administration Act identifies six priority wildlife-dependent recreation uses, clarifies the Secretary's authority to accept donations of money for land acquisition and place restrictions on the transfer, exchange, or other disposal of lands within the Refuge System.

Most importantly, the Act reinforces and expands the "compatibility standard" of the [Refuge Recreation Act](#). The Refuge Administration Act authorizes the Secretary to "permit the use of any area within the System for any purpose including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, public recreation and accommodations, and access whenever he determines that such uses are compatible with the major purposes for which such areas were established."

**Source:** <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/policiesandbudget/mandates.html#adminact>

**Information last updated:** September 20, 2012