

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3292

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 20, 2000

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and
Public Works

AN ACT

To provide for the establishment of the Cat Island National
Wildlife Refuge in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Cat Island National
3 Wildlife Refuge Establishment Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds that—

6 (1) as the southernmost unleveed portion of the
7 Mississippi River, Cat Island, Louisiana, is one of
8 the last remaining tracts in the lower Mississippi
9 Valley that is still influenced by the natural dynam-
10 ics of the river;

11 (2) Cat Island supports one of the highest den-
12 sities of virgin bald cypress trees in the entire Mis-
13 sissippi River Valley, including the Nation’s cham-
14 pion cypress tree which is 17 feet wide and has a
15 circumference of 53 feet;

16 (3) Cat Island is important habitat for several
17 declining species of forest songbirds and supports
18 thousands of wintering waterfowl;

19 (4) Cat Island supports high populations of
20 deer, turkey, and furbearers, such as mink and bob-
21 cats;

22 (5) conservation and enhancement of this area
23 through inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge
24 System would help meet the habitat conservation
25 goals of the North American Waterfowl Management
26 Plan;

1 (6) these forested wetlands represent one of the
2 most valuable and productive wildlife habitat types
3 in the United States, and have extremely high rec-
4 reational value for hunters, anglers, birdwatchers,
5 nature photographers, and others; and

6 (7) the Cat Island area is deserving of inclusion
7 in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

8 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

9 For purposes of this Act—

10 (1) the term “Refuge” means the Cat Island
11 National Wildlife Refuge; and

12 (2) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
13 of the Interior.

14 **SEC. 4. PURPOSES.**

15 The purposes for which the Refuge is established and
16 shall be managed are—

17 (1) to conserve, restore, and manage habitats
18 as necessary to contribute to the migratory bird pop-
19 ulation goals and habitat objective as established
20 through the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture;

21 (2) to conserve, restore, and manage the signifi-
22 cant aquatic resource values associated with the
23 area’s forested wetlands and to achieve the habitat
24 objectives of the “Mississippi River Aquatic Re-
25 sources Management Plan”;

1 (3) to conserve, enhance, and restore the his-
2 toric native bottomland community characteristics of
3 the lower Mississippi alluvial valley and its associ-
4 ated fish, wildlife, and plant species;

5 (4) to conserve, enhance, and restore habitat to
6 maintain and assist in the recovery of endangered,
7 and threatened plants and animals;

8 (5) to provide opportunities for priority public
9 wildlife dependent uses for compatible hunting, fish-
10 ing, trapping, wildlife observation and photography,
11 and environmental education and interpretation; and

12 (6) to encourage the use of volunteers and fa-
13 cilitate partnerships among the United States Fish
14 and Wildlife Service, local communities, conservation
15 organizations, and other non-Federal entities to pro-
16 mote public awareness of the resources of the Ref-
17 uge and the National Wildlife Refuge System and
18 public participation in the conservation of those re-
19 sources.

20 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGE.**

21 (a) ACQUISITION BOUNDARY.—The Secretary is au-
22 thorized to establish the Cat Island National Wildlife Ref-
23 uge, consisting of approximately 36,500 acres of land and
24 water, as depicted upon a map entitled “Cat Island Na-
25 tional Wildlife Refuge—Proposed”, dated February 8,

1 2000, and available for inspection in appropriate offices
2 of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

3 (b) BOUNDARY REVISIONS.—The Secretary may
4 make such minor revisions of the boundary designated
5 under this section as may be appropriate to carry out the
6 purposes of the Refuge or to facilitate the acquisition of
7 property within the Refuge.

8 (c) ACQUISITION.—The Secretary is authorized to ac-
9 quire the lands and waters, or interests therein, within the
10 acquisition boundary described in subsection (a) of this
11 section.

12 (d) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish
13 the Refuge by publication of a notice to that effect in the
14 Federal Register and publications of local circulation
15 whenever sufficient property has been acquired to con-
16 stitute an area that can be efficiently managed as a Na-
17 tional Wildlife Refuge.

18 **SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION.**

19 The Secretary shall administer all lands, waters, and
20 interests therein acquired under this Act in accordance
21 with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration
22 Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.). The Secretary may use
23 such additional statutory authority as may be available for
24 the conservation of fish and wildlife, and the provision of
25 fish- and wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities as the

1 Secretary considers appropriate to carry out the purposes
2 of this Act.

3 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 There are authorized to be appropriated to the De-
5 partment of the Interior—

6 (1) such funds as may be necessary for the ac-
7 quisition of lands and waters designated in section
8 5(c); and

9 (2) such funds as may be necessary for the de-
10 velopment, operation, and maintenance of the Ref-
11 uge.

Passed the House of Representatives June 19, 2000.

Attest: JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk.