

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2462

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

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 25, 2000

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. BREAUX) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and  
Public Works

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## A BILL

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,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds that—

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

1           (2) Cat Island supports some of the highest  
2 densities of virgin bald cypress trees in the Mis-  
3 sissippi River Valley, including the champion cypress  
4 tree of the United States, which is 17 feet wide and  
5 has a circumference of 53 feet;

6           (3) Cat Island is important habitat for several  
7 declining species of forest songbirds and supports  
8 thousands of wintering waterfowl;

9           (4) Cat Island supports high populations of  
10 deer, turkey, and furbearing mammals, such as mink  
11 and bobcats;

12           (5) forested wetland on Cat Island—

13                 (A) represents 1 of the most valuable and  
14 productive wildlife habitats in the United  
15 States; and

16                 (B) has high recreational value for hunt-  
17 ers, fishermen, birdwatchers, nature photog-  
18 raphers, and others; and

19           (6) protection and enhancement of the re-  
20 sources of Cat Island through the inclusion of Cat  
21 Island in the National Wildlife Refuge System would  
22 help meet the habitat protection goals of the North  
23 American Waterfowl Management Plan, signed by  
24 the Minister of the Environment of Canada and the  
25 Secretary in May 1986.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) REFUGE.—The term “Refuge” means the  
4 Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge established by  
5 section 3(a).

6 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
7 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-  
8 rector of the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-  
9 ice.

10 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND ACQUISITION OF REFUGE.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a unit of the  
12 National Wildlife Refuge System to be known as the “Cat  
13 Island National Wildlife Refuge” in West Feliciana Par-  
14 ish, Louisiana.

15 (b) INCLUSIONS.—The Refuge shall consist of the  
16 land and waters (including any interest in the land or wa-  
17 ters) acquired by the Secretary for the Refuge under—

18 (1) subsection (d); or

19 (2) any other law.

20 (c) NOTICE OF ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary  
21 shall publish a notice of the establishment of the Refuge—

22 (1) in the Federal Register; and

23 (2) in publications of local circulation in the vi-  
24 cinity of the Refuge.

25 (d) ACQUISITION.—The Secretary shall seek to ac-  
26 quire for inclusion in the Refuge, by purchase, exchange,

1 or donation, approximately 36,500 acres of land and adja-  
2 cent waters (including interests in the land or adjacent  
3 waters) of Cat Island, Louisiana, as depicted on the map  
4 entitled “Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge, Proposed”,  
5 dated February 8, 2000, which shall be available for in-  
6 spection in the appropriate offices of the United States  
7 Fish and Wildlife Service.

8 **SEC. 4. PURPOSES OF REFUGE.**

9 The purposes of the Refuge are—

10 (1) to conserve, enhance, and restore the native  
11 bottomland community characteristics of the lower  
12 Mississippi alluvial valley (including associated fish,  
13 wildlife, and plant species);

14 (2) to conserve, enhance, and restore habitat to  
15 maintain and assist in the recovery of animals (such  
16 as the Louisiana black bear) and plants that are  
17 listed as endangered species or threatened species  
18 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16  
19 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

20 (3) to conserve, enhance, and restore habitats  
21 as necessary to contribute to the migratory bird pop-  
22 ulation goals and habitat objectives as established  
23 through the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture  
24 under the North American Wetlands Conservation  
25 Act (16 U.S.C. 4401 et seq.);

1           (4) to achieve the habitat objectives of the  
2 Lower Mississippi River Aquatic Resources Manage-  
3 ment Plan, prepared by the Lower Mississippi River  
4 Conservation Committee;

5           (5) to authorize the Secretary, through con-  
6 sultation with Federal, State, and local agencies and  
7 adjacent landowners, to assist in the restoration of  
8 forest habitat linkages between refuge land and  
9 other land to reverse past impacts associated with  
10 habitat fragmentation on wildlife and plant species;

11          (6) to provide compatible opportunities for  
12 hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photog-  
13 raphy, and environmental education and interpreta-  
14 tion; and

15          (7) to encourage the use of volunteers and to  
16 facilitate partnerships among the United States Fish  
17 and Wildlife Service, local communities, conservation  
18 organizations, and other non-Federal entities to pro-  
19 mote public awareness of the resources of the Cat  
20 Island National Wildlife Refuge and the National  
21 Wildlife Refuge System (including public participa-  
22 tion in the conservation of those resources).

1 **SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer all  
3 land and waters (including any interest in land or waters)  
4 acquired under section 3(d) in accordance with—

5 (1) the National Wildlife Refuge System Ad-  
6 ministration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.);

7 (2) Public Law 87–714 (commonly known as  
8 the “Refuge Recreation Act”) (16 U.S.C. 460k et  
9 seq.); and

10 (3) the purposes of the Refuge described in sec-  
11 tion 4.

12 (b) USE OF OTHER AUTHORITY.—The Secretary  
13 may use such additional statutory authority as is available  
14 to the Secretary to conduct projects and activities at the  
15 Refuge in accordance with this Act, including projects or  
16 activities to conserve or develop—

17 (1) wildlife and natural resources;

18 (2) water supplies;

19 (3) water control structures;

20 (4) outdoor recreational activity programs; and

21 (5) interpretive education programs.

22 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION.**

23 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-  
24 retary such sums as are necessary for—

25 (1) the acquisition of interests in land and wa-  
26 ters described in section 3(d)(1); and

- 1           (2) the development, operation, and mainte-
- 2           nance of the Refuge.

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