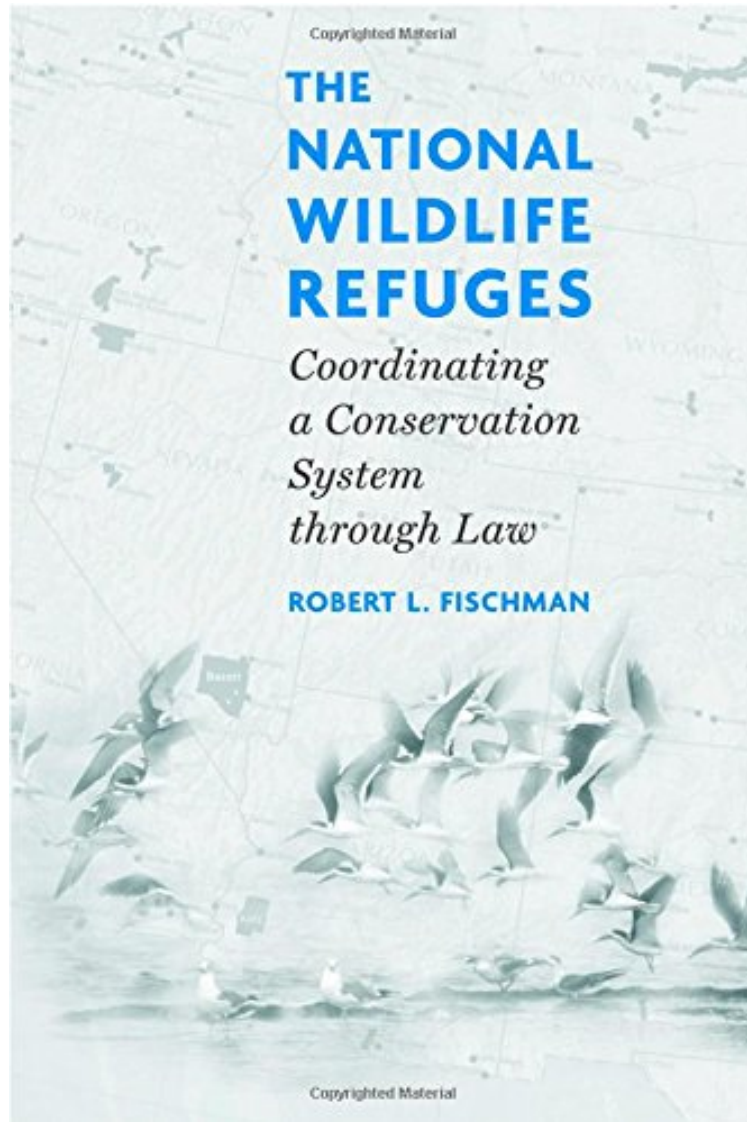


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# The National Wildlife Refuges: Coordinating A Conservation System Through Law

Robert L. Fischman

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**Robert L. Fischman : The National Wildlife Refuges: Coordinating A Conservation System Through Law**

before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The National Wildlife Refuges: Coordinating A Conservation System Through Law:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy John RiensWhat I was looking for.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Exactly what the title says it isBy Arthur DigbeeThis book covers exactly what the title

promises: it gives the reader a primarily law-based overview of the US National Wildlife Refuge System. It consists of three main parts: an overview of various wildlife issues in general, an in-depth discussion of 1997 Refuge Improvement Act, and applications of general principles to management issues in specific refuges. The central part of the book is the middle section on the 1997 Act. The third section on applications presented too-brief, capsule discussions of issues such as oil and gas exploration. It had the least connection to general issues and I found it less helpful than the first two parts. The emphasis on law is useful but it leaves out natural questions. First, how well is the law followed? Fischman touches on this issue in many places, and admits that land managers often do not prioritize values as their legal mandates would have them do. Second, where does the law come from? Again, Fischman touches on this issue but does not give it the serious attention that it deserves. Finally, how well does the institution work in terms of its ultimate goals? Are we protecting the species that the national wildlife refuges are supposed to protect? Fischman tends toward a more intermediate level of evaluation, in terms of how well the law works as law, taking congressional mandates and agency policy as given. As a result, Fischman sometimes treats law as a distinct realm, independent of the people who make it and the people and wildlife who are affected by it. He is not ignorant of the questions that I raise, and he does discuss them - - but I would have liked to see the emphasis of the book shifted much more in that direction. Fischman also doesn't give much attention to the non-refuge context for refuges. Many refuges, like many national recreation areas, are the result of some other agency's environmental desecration. Dams and other projects along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers are good examples, creating certain kinds of waterfowl and fish habitats at the expense of many other types. Wildlife is often given a high notional valuation in the economics of these projects when a dam creates habitat, but given a low valuation when the dam destroys habitat - - and typically dams do both. When it helps them build a dam, the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Tennessee Valley Authority have supported the creation of refuges. The national refuge system is a party to that dishonest syndrome, but Fischman doesn't discuss it (or similar larger issues) here. Despite these complaints, I found this a valuable book. Though he's giving us a presentation of administrative law, the book is quite readable and reasonable in length. It makes a very useful reference if you have occasion to refer to wildlife refuges.

The National Wildlife Refuges provides a comprehensive examination of the laws and policies governing management of the national wildlife refuges, offering for the first time a practical description and analysis of the management regime outlined in the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. The 1997 act is the first new statute governing a system of federal public lands enacted since the 1970s. The evolution of law governing the refuge system parallels broader trends in public land management and environmental protection, making the refuge system a valuable case study for those interested in environmental management, policy, and law. The book: describes the National Wildlife Refuge System and its legal history offers a detailed breakdown of the 1997 act, including its purpose, designated uses, comprehensive planning provisions, substantive management criteria, and public participation aspects considers individual refuges and specific issues that apply to only certain refuges discusses oil and gas development in refuges offers observations about how well the refuge system law resolves historic tensions and achieves modern conservation goals A separate chapter examines the special rules governing refuges in Alaska and considers the contentious debate over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Appendixes offer a reference of acronyms and abbreviations, a chronology of the refuge system's development, key statutory provisions (including the full text of the 1997 act), and basic information about each national wildlife refuge. With an approach to conservation that is increasingly prevalent around the world, the National Wildlife Refuge System is an important model for sustainable resource management, and the book's analyses of the refuge system's ecological management criteria, conflicts between primary and subsidiary uses, and tension between site-specific standards and uniform national goals all offer important lessons for environmental governance generally.

"This splendid book will be the indispensable source for everyone who wants to know about America's wildlife refuge system. But it is much more than just a reference work. It also thoughtfully explores the system's distinctive dominant use hierarchy approach to conservation management, and in so doing makes an important contribution to our contemporary environmental literature."