

25,000,000 ACRES IN SANCTUARIES.

According to the best information available, there are now almost 25,000,000 acres set aside in the United States of America in refuges for wild life. Of this figure, 3,500,000 acres are State-owned lands, 10,000,000 acres leased lands, 10,400,000 acres Federal lands (exclusive of parks), and almost 700,000 acres which are unclassified. The big difficulty is that the bulk of these refuge lands is not well guarded, and is located in vast stretches of wild country far removed from large centres of population.

Only a few States have launched refuge acquisition programmes. California recently decided to set aside one-third of her hunting licence income during the next five years for the purchase of refuges, and the first tract containing 3,000 acres of excellent waterfowl territory has been acquired.

The Connecticut Legislature appropriated 50,000 dollars for leasing hunting and fishing rights during the biennium. The plan provides that for the refuge area the rental shall be 1.00 dollar per year, but for the public hunting grounds adjacent the State may pay at the rate of 10 cents per acre annually.

Michigan's Legislature this year passed a wild life refuge Act allowing adjustment of owners' interests to wild life development. The Conservation Department plans the development of one refuge unit with public hunting grounds adjacent for every 100,000 acres of wild land in the State. This is a definite goal, a programme worth emulating, but it still offers no remedy in the farming sections of the State.

Minnesota launched a definite refuge and public hunting grounds programme this year which will involve the expenditure of a sum exceeding 2,000,000 dollars.

Pennsylvania continues to expand her well-known refuge and public hunting grounds system by setting aside 75 cents out of each 2.00 dollars hunting licence fee, which provides 200,000 dollars annually for this purpose. Many of the refuges there are located on State forest lands, but the Game Commission has acquired 150,000 acres, mostly located in forest areas, at a cost of 516,000 dollars, and has 86,000 acres additional under contract. The Keystone State also has under lease almost 95,000 acres in sixty-nine small game refuges scattered throughout the farming regions.

Oklahoma has 192,000 acres under lease for refuges, but Texas has the most ambitious refuge and hunting grounds leasing plan of all the States. The Lone Star State has 3,000,000 acres under lease for ten year periods, and may pay up to 25 cents per acre to secure the hunting rights.