



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ADDITIONAL LAND AND MONEY DONATED FOR PRESERVATION OF KEY DEER

Donations of 341 acres of land and \$22,400 in funds for the preservation of America's diminutive key deer herd were announced today by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler.

The North American Wildlife Foundation, through its secretary, C. R. Gutermuth, presented the Fish and Wildlife Service with six parcels of land totaling 340.96 acres on Big Pine and Howe Keys in the National Key Deer Refuge, Monroe County, Florida. The foundation also donated the sum of \$17,400 to be used in the purchase of other lands for the refuge. Congressman Charles E. Bennett of Florida, sponsor of the bill establishing the permanent refuge, has contributed \$5,000 to be used for the acquisition of refuge lands.

National Key Deer Refuge was established February 1, 1954, on 282 acres of leased land. Approximately 72 acres of public land were added later by public land order and 21 acres were purchased from the State of Florida. Leased land, mostly with 90 day cancellation provisions in the contract, brought the total size of the refuge up to 6,738 acres.

In 1957 Congress authorized the Service to acquire by purchase, gift, or exchange, not more than 1,000 acres as a permanent refuge for the key deer. No restrictions were placed upon the amount to be leased.

On April 30, 1958, a few months after the acquisition of land was authorized, the Foundation, through Mr. Gutermuth, presented the Service with 15.7 acres on Big Pine Key as a headquarters site.

The key deer, the smallest of the deer family in the United States, is about the size of a collie dog--27 inches high and 38 inches long. An adult deer weighs about 30 pounds. Ten years ago there were only 32 key deer known to be in existence. The herd now approximates 200. National Key Deer Refuge includes several keys, most of which have deer on them. The keys include Howe, Big Pine, Big Torch, No-name, Little Pine, Middle Torch, Summerland, Cudjoe, Ramrod and Knockemdown.

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