



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### MORE LAND DONATED TO SAVE TINY KEY DEER

Secretary Stewart L. Udall today accepted for the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service a donation from the North American Wildlife Foundation of 167 acres of land in the Florida Keys for the preservation of the diminutive Key deer.

C. R. Gutermuth, secretary of the Foundation, made the presentation in a ceremony in Secretary Udall's office. It was the fourth donation of land by the Foundation for the National Key Deer Refuge in Monroe County, Florida. With the donation of this 166.75-acre tract, all of the 690-acre Howe Key is now in Federal ownership except for a 1.80-acre parcel which is being acquired by exchange.

The first donation by the North American Wildlife Foundation on April 28, 1958, involved 15.7 acres on Big Pine Key as a headquarters site for the Refuge. The next two donations in 1960 covered a total of 340.96 acres of land on Big Pine and Howe Keys.

The National Key Deer Refuge was established on February 1, 1954, on 282 acres of leased land as a result of Congressional action. Public Law 85-154 of August 22, 1957, authorized acquisition of up to 1000 acres of land for the Refuge and a maximum expenditure of \$35,000. Approximately 72 acres of public land were added to the Refuge by a public land order in 1955, and an additional 212 acres were subsequently acquired by purchase and exchange, largely as the result of contributions from interested people and organizations. The leased land and the donations by the North American Wildlife Foundation and others, plus the Federal acquisitions, now have brought the Refuge up to a total of 6,932 acres. Most leases have a 90-day cancellation provision. The Refuge is under the jurisdiction of the Service's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Until the Refuge was established, the cost of patrol and fire prevention to preserve the natural habitat of the Key deer had been underwritten for several

years by the Boone and Crockett Club and the National Wildlife Federation. Among the other conservation organizations which have been actively interested in the campaign to preserve the Key deer are the Camp Fire Club of America, the Wilderness Club of Philadelphia, and the Monroe County (Florida) Audubon Society. Congressman Charles E. Bennett of Jacksonville, Florida, one of the co-sponsors of the Act authorizing the Key Deer Refuge, also made a personal financial contribution.

The Key deer, smallest of all American deer, are only about the size of Collie dogs when full grown. In 1951, there were believed to be only 32 of the animals alive and there was concern that they might be faced with extinction. The animals now number over 200.

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