

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED ON WILDERNESS PROPOSAL IN FLORIDA KEYS

The Department of the Interior announced today that it will hold public hearings Oct. 31 in Key West, Fla., on its proposal to designate as wilderness 4,740 acres within three national wildlife refuges on the Florida Keys.

Refuges involved, parts of which would be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System established by Congress in 1964, are National Key Deer Refuge, Great White Heron and Key West refuges, all in Monroe County.

The refuges are located on keys or islands extending 60 miles off the southern tip of Florida. Their tropical climates and abundant vegetation make them ideal for wildlife.

Rare Key deer, great white herons, bald eagles, alligators and sea turtles, plus a large array of birds, are part of the primitive landscape. Surrounding shallow waters are rich in marine life.

A map and other information about the Florida Keys Wilderness proposal are available from the Refuge Manager, National Key Deer Refuge, P. O. Box 385, Big Pine Key, Florida 33040, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Peachtree-Seventh Building, Atlanta, Georgia 30323.

Oral or written statements may be submitted at the hearing, or written comments can be sent to the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in Atlanta, Georgia, by December 12, when the hearing record will be closed.

Notice of the October 31 hearing, to begin at 9 a.m. in Key West's Board of Education Building, was published in the Federal Register on July 29, 1969.

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