

FLORIDA KEYS REFUGES COMPLEX



Key West National Wildlife Refuge established in 1908
-208,308 acres

Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge established in 1938
-117,000 acres

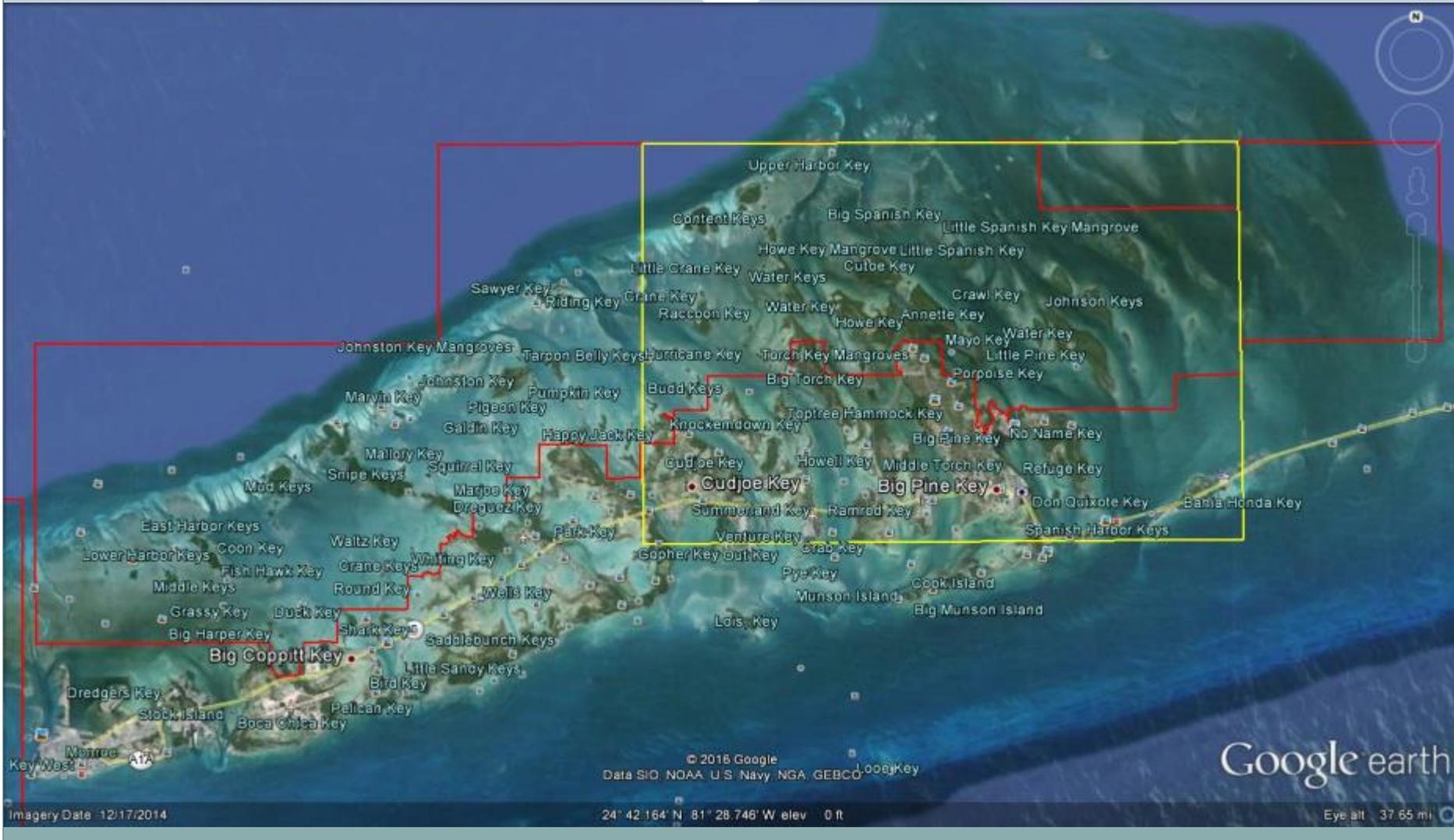
National Key Deer Refuge established in 1957
-9,200 acres

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge established in 1980
-6,700 acres

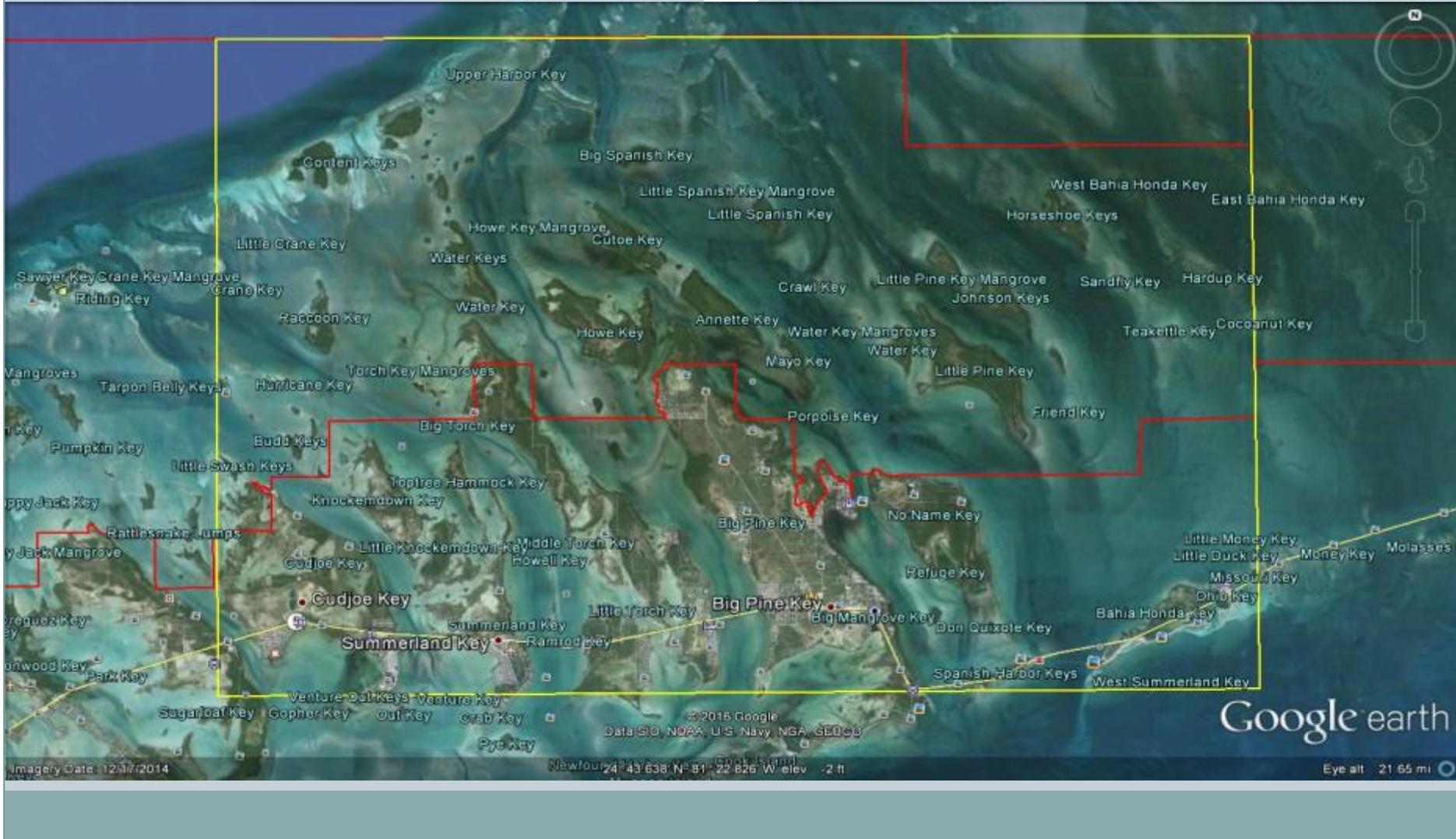
Key West Refuge



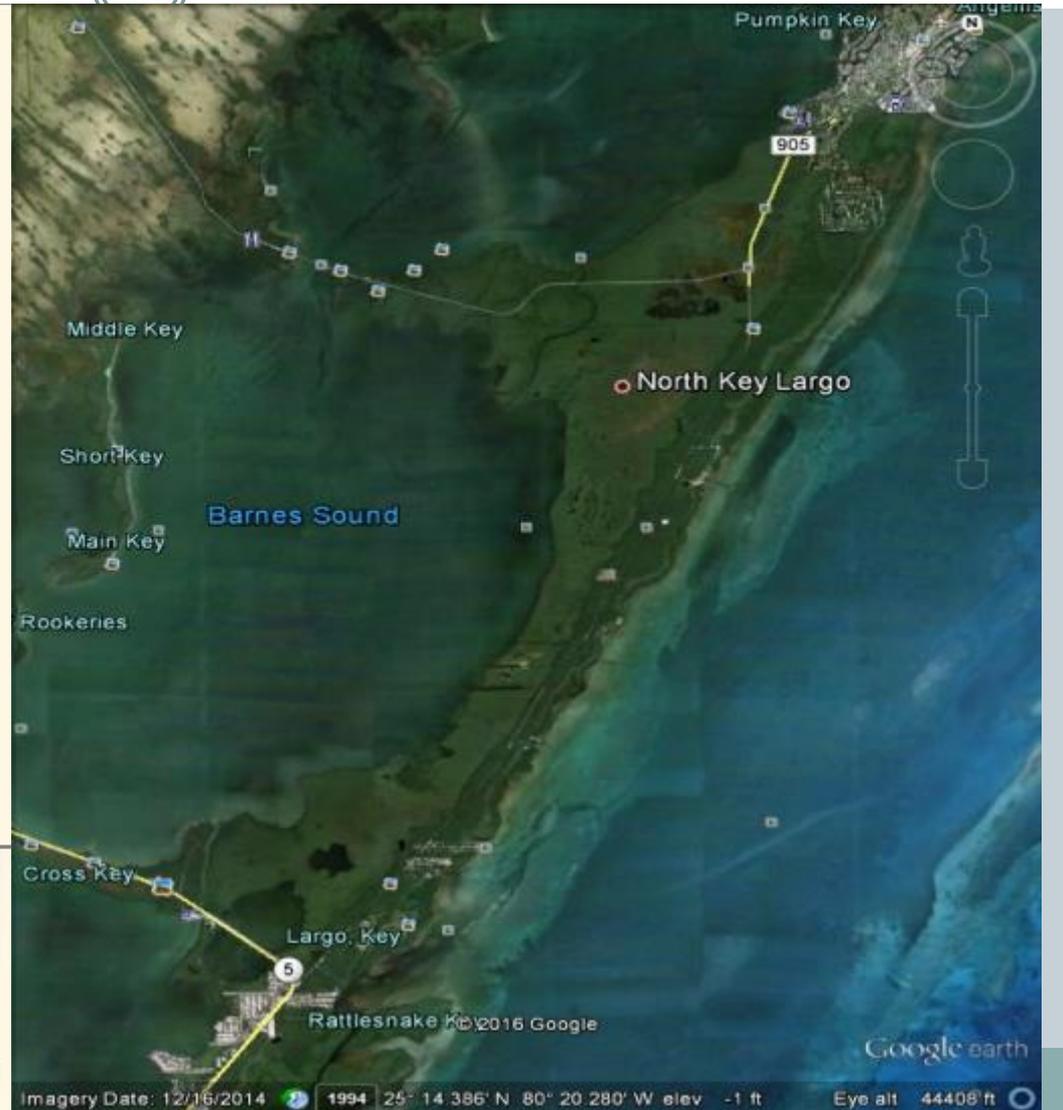
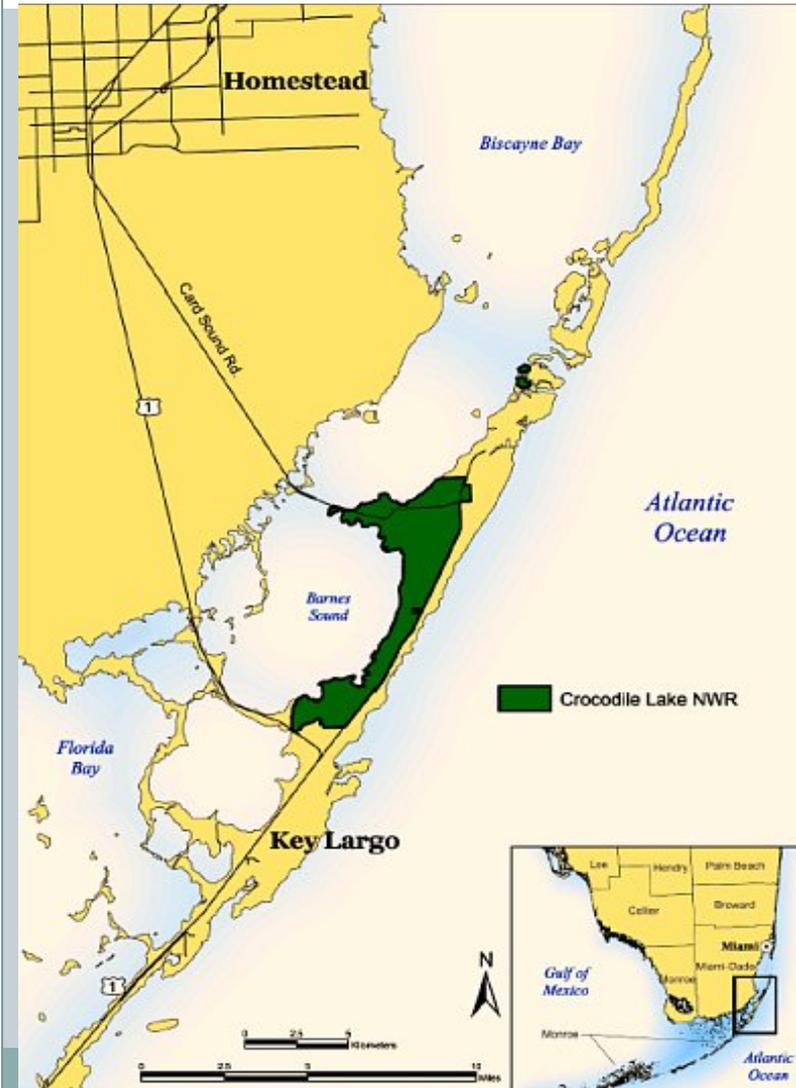
Great White Heron Refuge



Key Deer Refuge



Crocodile Lake Refuge



Law Enforcement Authority



- All Refuges in the Florida Keys fall under proprietary jurisdiction (most common federal jurisdiction)
 - -Basically means we are like a private land owner although we reserve the right to make our own laws and enforce them with our own police force.
 - ✦ USFWS enforces Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations which are all Class B misdemeanors and are all punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment up to 6 months
 - -We can not use the Assimilative Crimes Act on proprietary lands which means we cannot adopt a State law for a crime when there is no existing Federal Law
 - ✦ -example: domestic violence

Law Enforcement Authority



- **What Can Federal Wildlife Officers Enforce?**
 - **Territorial Jurisdiction**
 - ✦ National Wildlife Refuge Systems Administration Act
 - Title 50 CFR – Chapter I - Subchapter C
 - www.ECFR.gov
 - **Subject Matter Jurisdiction**
 - ✦ Endangered Species Act
 - Gives us authority to respond to key deer incidents off Refuge
 - Class A misdemeanors – Must file an information with AUSA
 - ✦ Migratory Bird Treaty Act
 - Used for duck hunting enforcement / protects all birds
 - ✦ Marine Mammal Protection Act
 - ✦ Lacey Act
 - ✦ Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
 - ✦ American Antiquities Act
 - ✦ Archaeological Resources Protections Act
 - ✦ Airborne Hunting Act

Backcountry Management Plan 1992



- Administrative boundaries were created for KWNWR, GWHNWR, and KDNWR to give the USFWS authority to enforce the National Wildlife Refuge Systems Act on State waters to better protect federally and state owned backcountry islands.
 - Problems included bird disturbance from PWCs and waterskiing, camping(fires/clearcutting/litter), discharge of firearms, unrestrained pets, social gathering areas. Even talks about baseball games that were held at the northwest Bay Key.
 - Many of these problems still exist

Common Violations – Key Deer Refuge



- **Harassing Key Deer**
 - FEEDING!, touching, chasing
- **Unrestrained Pets**
 - dogs chasing and/or killing key deer
 - cats hunting birds, silver rice mice, marsh rabbits, and all native species
 - ✦ cat feeders are a large part of the problem
- **Entering Closed Areas**
 - all Refuge lands are closed after dark
 - Some Refuge lands are permanently closed
- **Vehicles driving on Refuge lands**
 - trucks, ATVs, motorcycles
- **Illegal Dumping**
 - yard debris, commercial debris, home refuse
- **Homeless Camps**
 - clear cutting camp sites, littering, fires
- **Human Caused Wildfires**
- **Vandalism**



Common Violations – Great White Heron/Key West Refuges



- **Wildlife Disturbance**
 - party zones, boaters, fishermen
- **Discharging Firearms**
 - usually target practice
- **Illegal Camping**
 - litter, clear cutting, ground fires, constructed structures
- **Closure Violations**
 - entering islands above high water line, boating in closed waters
- **Unrestrained Pets**
 - dogs disturbing birds, digging turtle nests
- **Personal Watercraft Operation**
- **Idle Speed Zone Violations**
- **Seagrass Destruction**
- **Fishing Violations**



Common Violations- Crocodile Lake



- **Entering Closed Area**
 - Entire Refuge is closed to public entry to protect Crocodile nesting and Key Largo Woodrat
 - People enter to hike/explore, fish, and go to bathroom
- **Unrestrained Pets**
 - Feral and domesticated cats enter from surrounding communities that support these populations
 - Cats hunt Key Largo Woodrats, birds, and other native species



Key Deer Refuge – Key Deer Take by Dogs



Great White Heron Refuge – Habitat Destruction



Key West Refuge – Habitat Destruction



Key West Refuge – Habitat Destruction



Crocodile Lake Refuge – Cats



Crocodile Lake Refuge - Cats



Enforcement Problems



- **Limited Law Enforcement Staff**
 - 2 FWOs = 663 square miles
- **Limited Authority Off-Refuge**
 - Limited authority to address cat feeding stations
 - No authority to enforce Refuge Act on roadways/right-of-ways
 - ✦ Can not make vehicle stops for speeding through key deer zones
 - Inability to write Refuge Act tickets with fines for key deer issues off Refuge
 - ✦ Feeding, harassing, unrestrained pets