

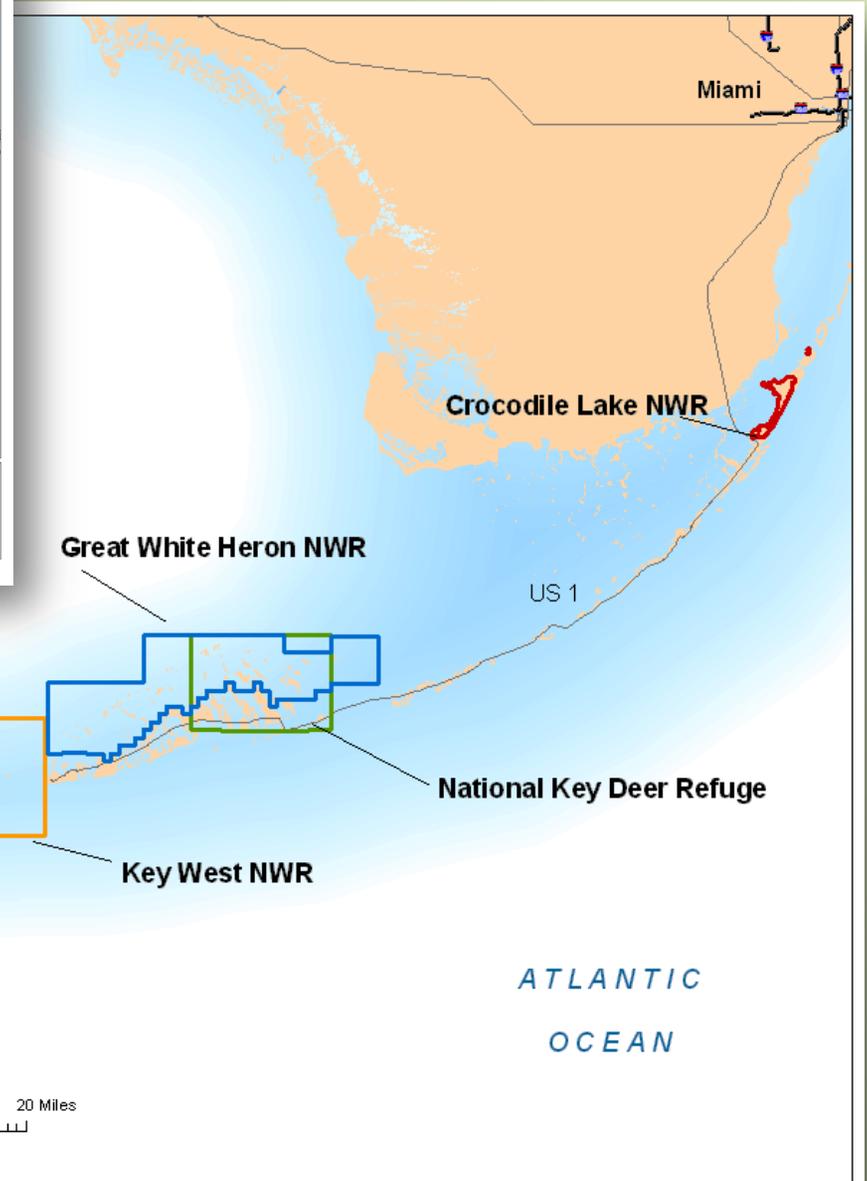
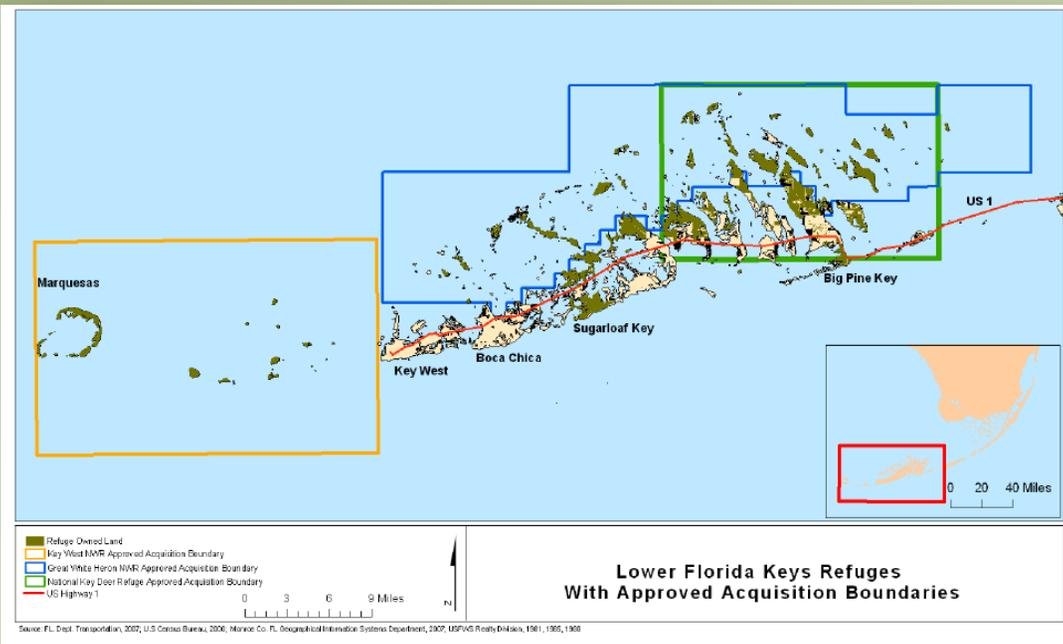
Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Key West NWR

Great White Heron NWR

National Key Deer NWR

Crocodile Lake NWR



Key West NWR

Marquesas Keys and 13 other keys

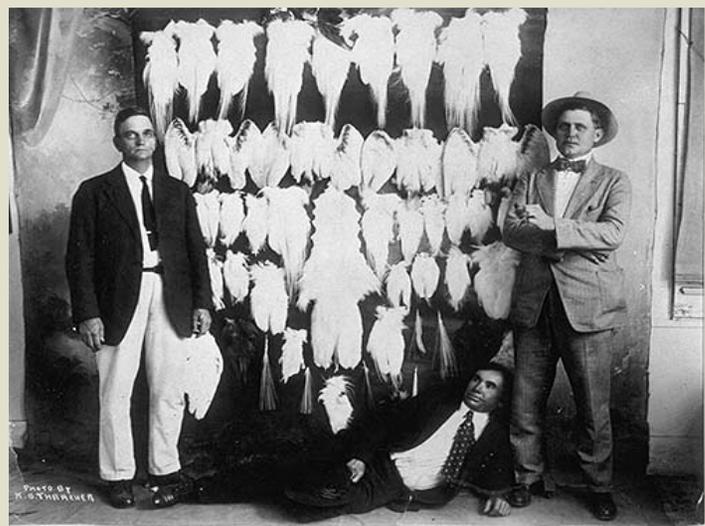
- Mission – “ as a preserve and protect breeding grounds for colonial nesting birds and other wildlife”
 - 250 species of birds
 - Largest wintering population of piping plovers
 - Largest colony of white crowned pigeons
 - Sea turtle nesting habitat
 - Miami blue butterfly habitat



Great White Heron NWR

Backcountry – 117,720 acres of land and water

- Mission - “haven for great white herons, migratory birds, and other wildlife”
 - Protected Great White Herons from going extinct
 - Nesting habitat for 10 wading bird species
 - Sea turtle habitat



National Key Deer Refuge

84,834 acres with nearly 8,983 of land

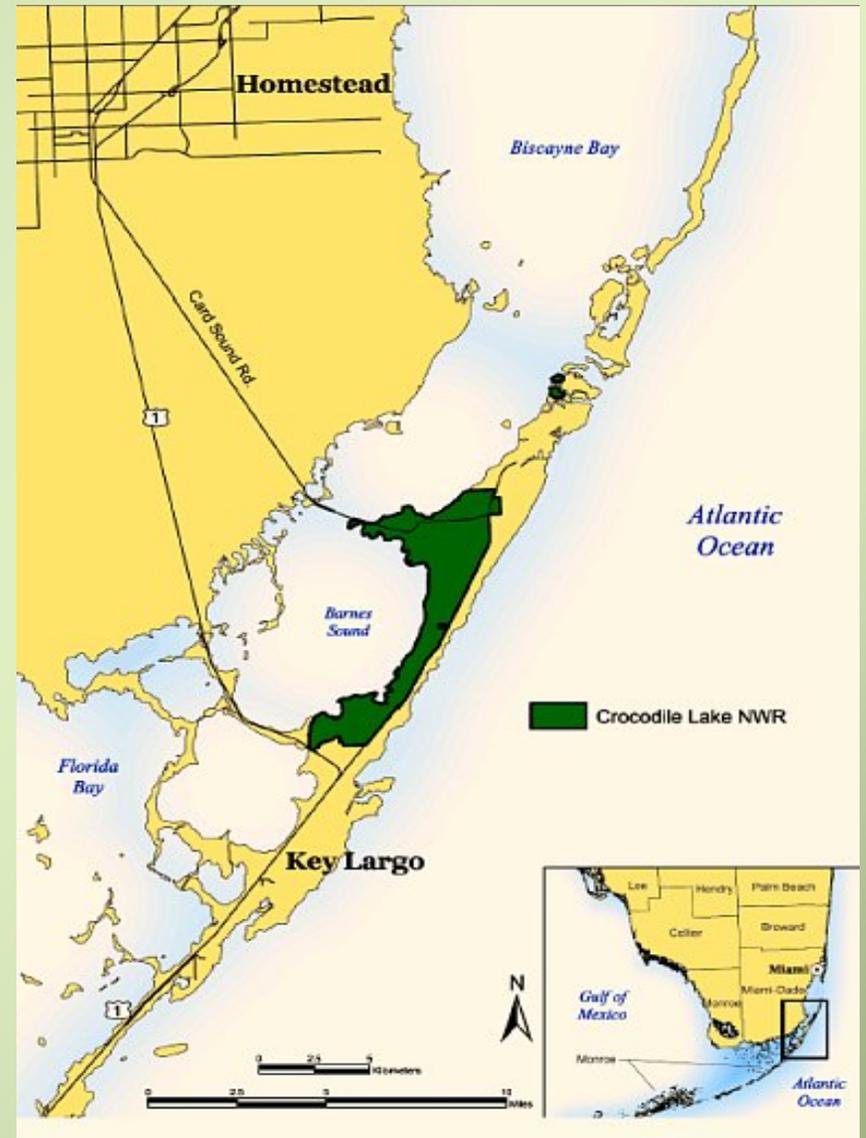
- Mission – “protect and conserve Key deer and other wildlife resources”
 - Prevented deer population from going extinct
 - Globally endangered tropical hardwood hammocks and pine rocklands
 - 25 federally listed species
 - Stopping point for thousands of migrating birds
 - Sea turtle habitat



Crocodile Lake NWR

6,700 acres including
650 acres of open water

- Mission – “preserve critical habitat for the American crocodile”
 - Six federally listed threatened and endangered species
 - Two globally endangered ecosystems – mangrove wetlands and tropical hardwood forests
 - Seasonal home to bald eagles, white-crowned pigeons and other migratory birds



Wilderness Act of 1964

- **Wilderness Character**

- An area where the earth and its community of life are **untrammelled by man**
- Affected primarily by the **forces of nature**
- An area is **undeveloped** and retains its **primeval character and influence**
- Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation

Florida Keys Wilderness Area

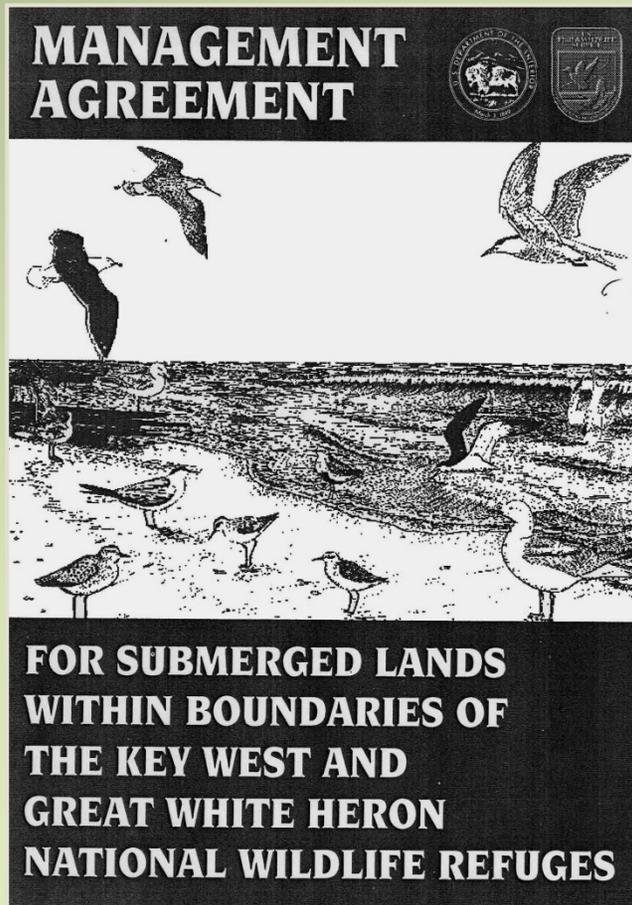
Established 1975



- 6,200 acres of designated wilderness in the three refuges
 - 2,019 ac Key West NWR
 - 1,900 ac Great White Heron NWR
 - 2,278 ac National Key Deer NWR

Submerged Lands Agreement (1992)

"Backcountry Management Plan"



- Agreement between the State of Florida and FWS
- Grants FWS the authority to manage state submerged lands and waters as described in the agreement
- Established idle speed, no motor, and no access zones
- Prohibits PWC, airboats, hovercraft, aircraft landing, and water skiing

Backcountry Management Plan

Benefits

- Disturbance to nesting and roosting birds has been reduced
- Camping and structures on islands has ceased
- Greater public awareness about refuges
- Excellent voluntary compliance with regulations



Endangered Species Act

Endangered (E), Threatened (T), Proposed for Listing (PL) and Candidate Status (C)

Mammals

Key deer (E)*

Key Largo cotton mouse (E)

Key Largo woodrat (E)

Lower Keys marsh rabbit (E)*

Silver rice rat (E)*

Birds

Piping plover (T)*

Roseate tern (T)*

Red knot (T)*

Wood stork (T)

Reptiles

American crocodile

Eastern indigo snake

Green sea turtle (E)*

Hawksbill sea turtle (E)*

Leatherback sea turtle (E)*

Loggerhead sea turtle (T)*



Invertebrates

Schaus swallowtail butterfly (E)

Miami blue butterfly (E)*

Stock Island tree snail (T)

Bartram's hairstreak butterfly (E)

Florida leafwing butterfly (E)

Plants

Garber's spurge (T)*

Key tree-cactus (E)

Big Pine partridge pea (PL)

Blodgett's silverbush (PL)

Cape Sable thoroughwort (C)*

Florida semaphore cactus (E)

Sand flax (PL)

Wedge spurge (PL)

Marine

Elkhorn coral (T)*

Staghorn coral (T)*

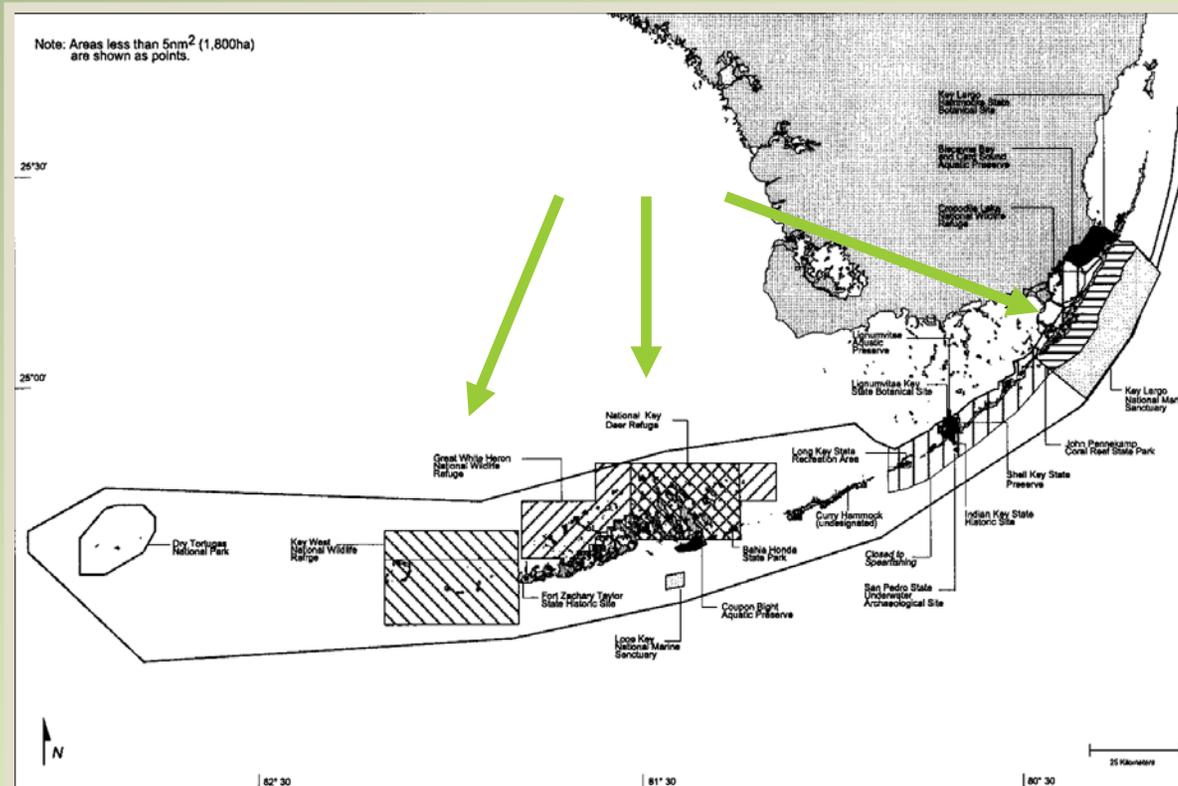
* Occur in Wilderness

National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (1997)

- ❖ Designated NWRS Mission
- ❖ Requirement of preparing CCP for each Refuge
- ❖ New process for **determining compatible uses** on Refuges
- ❖ Recognizing that wildlife-dependent recreational uses, *when determined to be compatible*, are legitimate and appropriate public uses of the Refuge System
- ❖ Wildlife-dependent recreational uses:
 - **Hunting**
 - **Fishing**
 - **Wildlife Observation**
 - **Photography**
 - **Environmental Education and Interpretation**



Partnership with Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary



- Sanctuary incorporates FWS Backcountry Plan managed areas
- Sanctuary terms these 'Wildlife Management Areas'
- Provides additional law enforcement presence
- Helps ensure long-term minimization of disturbance to wildlife

Thank You



All photos were provided by FWS staff