

quate for the job. This is particularly true in the case of our national wildlife refuges and game ranges, many of which were established under legal circumstances which leave them highly vulnerable to incompatible exploitation, development, and uses which are contrary to their basic wildlife purpose. Such incompatible uses can take many forms.

Sometimes they can be intrusions which agencies of government have difficulty in resisting. By placing suitable portions of the refuges and game ranges under the protection of the Wilderness Act, man-made intrusions are legally prohibited except to the limited extent that may be administratively necessary.

The Wilderness Act offers a dual advantage for the wildlife refuges and game ranges. First, by bringing these areas into the national wilderness preservation system, it assures them a level of legal protection for their wild character not now available. Second, such designations bring new variety and breadth to the wilderness system, adding suitable wild lands in different geographical and ecological settings and accessible to different areas of the country. Many of these wildlife units, such as those proposed here today for wilderness designation, lie in close proximity to some of our larger population centers where there is great public need for people to experience wilderness.

It is with this perspective that we turn to the presentation of our views on the specific proposals before you.

THE PELICAN ISLAND WILDERNESS AREA

S. 3343, to designate the Pelican Island Wilderness in Florida, would designate a wilderness area of approximately 403 acres, consisting of 18 islands extending for several miles along the east side of the Indian River on the central Atlantic coast of Florida.

Pelican Island Refuge was the first National Wildlife Refuge to be established in the United States. It was created by Executive order of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. Even before it was a National Wildlife Refuge, its birdlife had been protected by a warden employed by the National Audubon Society. At the time of its establishment, the refuge was predominantly a rookery for pelicans. In 1909 and again in 1963 the refuge was enlarged, so that it consists of a group of islands totaling 616 acres. Historically, this refuge has a special interest in the annals of American conservation. It is appropriate, then, that it be among the first refuges to be proposed for the special protection offered by the Wilderness Act.

The islands are covered with dense stands of black mangrove in the interior, with red mangrove near to the shore. Pickerelweed forms the ground cover where the mangrove is thin or lacking. Numerically important nesting bird species include the brown pelican, wood ibis, double-crested cormorant, cattle egret, common egret, white ibis, Louisiana heron, and anhinga. In addition to its use by nesting birds, the refuge is a seasonal resting place for various migrants including waterfowl, shorebirds, and song birds.

Prior to its inclusion in the refuge, some of the land forming the refuge was ditched for mosquito control by the Indian River Mosquito Control District. Of the lands included in the Bureau's Pelican Island Wilderness proposal, however, only Roseate Island shows minor effects