

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife recommends that 255,878 acres of the 256,145-acre Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge be proposed for designation as a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System under the name "Hawaiian Islands Wilderness".

The proposed wilderness includes all islands, reefs and shoals within the refuge except for 267 acres on Tern Island and adjacent submerged lands in French Frigate Shoals. Tern Island has been intensively developed.

The islands recommended are undeveloped and undisturbed and constitute one of our Nation's most important and unique national wildlife refuges. Some of the world's largest sea bird rookeries are found there as well as five threatened birds and mammals.

Waters overlying submerged refuge lands are not part of the proposed wilderness. These waters are considered navigable and therefore, not under the sole jurisdiction of the refuge.

This recommendation represents a change in the proposal as it was presented at the public hearing. In the absence of an agreement with the State of Hawaii on refuge boundaries, tentative refuge and wilderness boundaries were presented at the hearing. Subsequent agreement between the State and the Department of the Interior necessitated a change in refuge and proposal boundaries. The change is a reduction of about 48,058 acres of submerged lands.

A BILL

To designate certain lands in the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, city and county of Honolulu, Hawaii, as wilderness.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that in accordance with Section 3(c) of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890, 892); 16 U.S.C. 1132(c), certain lands in the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Hawaii, which comprise about 255,878 acres and which are depicted on a map entitled "Hawaiian Islands Wilderness Proposal" and dated _____, are hereby designated as wilderness. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of the Interior.

Section 2. The area designated by this Act as wilderness shall be known as the Hawaiian Islands Wilderness and shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with applicable provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Section 3. Except as necessary to meet minimum requirements in connection with the purposes of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), and, except as noted in the following sections, there shall be no commercial enterprise, no temporary or permanent roads, no use of motorized vehicles or equipment, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transportation, and no structures or

installations within the area designated as wilderness by this Act.

Section 4. Since the only access to the islands is by helicopter or small motorized boat, their continued use for this purpose will be necessary.

Section 5. In view of the hazardous landing conditions on some of the islands and occasional severe storms, improvement of landing facilities on some islands and the erection of small rustic shelters for personnel and equipment are necessary. These developments will be slight and the minimum necessary to provide reasonable safety and protection.

Section 6. Because of the islands' extreme vulnerability to disturbance, emergencies involving threatened species, accidental introduction of pest plants or animals, or similar occurrences, will be dealt with as rapidly as possible and with such means as are necessary. Efforts will be made as compatible with wilderness as feasible, but will be sufficient to correct the problem if at all possible.

Draft Letter - President's Transmittal to the Senate

Dear Mr. President:

The Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge is a chain of eight islands, reefs and shoals stretching over 800 miles of ocean between Midway Island and the main Hawaiian Islands. These tiny bits of land are home for some of the world's largest and most impressive sea bird rookeries, as well as a number of species threatened with extinction.

Three small land birds and the Laysan Teal--the world's rarest duck--are found only on islands of the refuge. Most of the world's surviving Hawaiian monk seal can be found there. Also, the refuge is the largest nesting ground of the green sea turtle remaining in the North Pacific and in the Nation.

The wildlife resources of these islands are truly of international importance. The United States has the responsibility and privilege of safeguarding the islands for future generations of mankind. With this in mind, I am recommending that almost all of the refuge be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System under the name "Hawaiian Islands Wilderness".

I am enclosing a letter and a report from the Secretary of the Interior in support of the recommendation.

I urge Congress to extend wilderness status to these islands at

an early date.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosures

Draft Letter - President's Transmittal to House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Some of the world's largest and most impressive sea bird rookeries are found on islands of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Like eight tiny beds of lava, sand and coral, the islands, reefs and shoals of the refuge are strung out over 800 miles of ocean between the main Hawaiian Islands and Midway Island.

Both physically and biologically, each of the islands is unique in itself with an ecosystem unlike any other. Three small land birds and the Laysan teal--the world's rarest duck--are found only on the refuge. Also, most of the surviving Hawaiian monk seal are here. All are threatened with extinction. The refuge also represents the largest green sea turtle nesting area remaining in the North Pacific and in the Nation.

Today I am recommending that almost all of this refuge be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System as the "Hawaiian Island Wilderness". Future generations of mankind deserve our utmost efforts to preserve these islands and their resources--resources of international importance.

I am enclosing a letter and a report from the Secretary of the Interior in support of the recommendation.

I urge Congress to extend wilderness status to these islands at an early date.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosures

Draft Letter - Secretary of the Interior to the President

The President

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I recommend the establishment of the Hawaiian Islands Wilderness on the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is one of our Nation's most important and unique wildlife sanctuaries and richly deserving preservation as wilderness.

The Hawaiian Islands Refuge encompasses eight islands, reefs and shoals in the Northwestern Hawaiian chain. The various refuge units are distributed over 800 miles of ocean between the main Hawaiian Islands and Midway Island. The islands range from volcanic rocks jutting above the ocean surface to large atolls of sand and coral, reefs and islets. Both physically and biologically each of the islands is unique in itself with an ecosystem unlike any other.

The refuge was established by Executive Order of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909. Even at that early date, the islands' great wildlife resources were recognized. Today, the refuge supports some of the world's largest and most impressive sea bird rookeries. Five wildlife forms threatened with extinction are found within the

refuge. Included are three small land birds existing only on certain islands, as well as the world's rarest duck--the Laysan teal--found only on Laysan Island. The refuge is home to almost all of the world's surviving Hawaiian monk seal. Also, these islands represent the most important nesting area for the green sea turtle remaining in our Nation and in the North Pacific.

The islands have immense value as sites for scientific investigation but they are extremely susceptible to disturbance. Accidental introduction of pest plants or animals are a constant threat. Public use has been and will continue to be limited to those engaged in carefully regulated research.

In accordance with the requirements of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890), a notice of public hearing was issued by the Department, and all interested local, state and federal agencies and officials were notified of the proposal. A public hearing was held in Honolulu, Hawaii. Statements made at the hearings and communications received for the record are summarized in the enclosed Synopsis.

The current boundaries of the refuge and proposed wilderness differ from those presented at the public hearing. For many years the actual location of the refuge boundary has been in question. In the absence of an agreement between the State of Hawaii and the Department of the Interior prior to the public hearing, tentative refuge and wilderness boundaries were established. An agreement reached following

the hearing has necessitated relocation of the boundary along lines mutually acceptable to both the state and the Department.

A complete public hearing record has been compiled including written statements and oral testimony received in response to the announcement of public hearings. The record is available for inspection.

The proposed wilderness is eminently qualified for designation as wilderness, and I recommend submission to the Congress of the enclosed draft legislation to incorporate it into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosures