

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED ON WILDERNESS STUDIES IN WASHINGTON, FLORIDA, MARYLAND

Public hearings to discuss the results of wilderness studies involving national wildlife refuge areas are scheduled in Washington, Florida, and Maryland, the Interior Department announced today.

Specific times and areas involved are:

- I. Matia Island and San Juan National Wildlife Refuge in Washington, 28 acres, hearing 9 a.m., Aug. 28, Anacortes City Council Chambers, 6th and Q Streets, Anacortes, Washington. Notice of the hearing was published in Federal Register on June 25.

The 28-acre proposal was the narrowed-down result of a wilderness study which included all other lands in the Matia Island and San Juan National Wildlife Refuges, plus the Smith Island and Jones Island National Wildlife Refuges, as well as some scattered islands and rocks proposed for refuge status. The four national refuges are in the large island complex known as the San Juan Archipelago, or simply the "San Juans," situated between the mainland of northwestern Washington and Victoria, B.C. The first of the island refuges, which are important breeding areas for marine birds, was established in 1914; the last was added in 1970.

A map and other information about the San Juan Islands wilderness proposal is available from the Refuge Manager, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, Ilwaco, Washington 98624, or the Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 3737, Portland, Oregon 97208.

Oral or written statements may be submitted at the hearing or written comments can be sent to the Regional Director at the above address by Sept. 28, 1971, when the hearing record will be closed.

- II. Martin National Wildlife Refuge in Somerset County, Md., 4,423 acres, hearing 9 a.m., Sept. 10, Prince Anne, Md. Notice of the hearing was published in Federal Register on July 8.

The 4,423-acre Martin National Wildlife Refuge is a relatively undisturbed marsh island in Chesapeake Bay, one of the Nation's largest waterfowl feeding grounds. In addition to providing wintering habitat for ducks and geese, this refuge is also an important black duck, osprey, and wading bird nesting area.

A map and other information about the Martin wilderness study is available from the Refuge Manager, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Cambridge, Maryland 21613, or the Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, 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 at the above address by Oct. 12, 1971, when the hearing record will be closed.

III. St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Taylor, Jefferson, and Wakulla Counties, Fla., 11,800 acres, hearing 9 a.m., Sept. 24, Tallahassee, Fla. Notice of the hearing was published in Federal Register on June 25.

The 64,000-acre St. Marks Refuge is diverse in its habitat and wildlife resources. Marsh, forest, and water are managed to provide habitat for more than 300 bird species as well as white-tailed deer, black bear, and smaller mammals.

A map and other information about the St. Marks wilderness proposal is available from the Refuge Manager, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 68, St. Marks, Florida 32355, or the Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, 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, Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, Georgia, by Oct. 26, 1971, when the hearing record will be closed.

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