

Key deer hurricane response best management practices

Specific islands: Potential to be present on all islands from Big Pine and No Name Keys south to Sugarloaf Key.

Habitat: Upland areas including pine rocklands, hammock, and developed areas as well as wetland areas that include mangroves and freshwater marsh.



Physical Description: The key deer is the smallest subspecies of the North American white-tailed deer. Adult males average 36 kg and adult females 28 kg. Fawns weigh about 1.5 kg at birth. Height at the shoulder averages 69 cm for adult bucks and 65 cm for adult does (Hardin et al. 1984). The body appears stockier than that of other deer (Klimstra et al. 1978a); the legs are shorter, and the skull is shorter and relatively wider (Klimstra et al. 1991).

Actions to minimize impacts of hurricane clean-up efforts:

1. If silt fencing is to be used to protect wetlands and other sensitive habitats from runoff, on Big Pine and No Name Keys which is the core of the Key deer population, it is recommended that wattles are used in place of silt fence. Wattles do not create a barrier to Key deer and allow free roaming of the deer.
2. Obey all speed limits with particular precautions given to the areas of Big Pine Key and No Name Key
3. Do not feed key deer, do not leave any food items in an area that is accessible to key deer.

Assess all debris piles to ensure no key deer are using it as a refuge prior to using any mechanical equipment to remove piles; if key deer are present wait until they leave the area before commencing debris removal