

I. BACKGROUND

Section A.

**Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background



*Teddy Roosevelt
USFWS Photo*

Introduction

The Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge sits as an oasis of pre-contact Florida ecology bisecting the burgeoning urban growth centers to the north and south of the cities of Jacksonville and Miami, respectively. Part of the refuge is situated atop ancient sand dunes that reflect the cycles of deposition and erosion in response to sea-level changes during the last 65 million years. These dunes and their associated lagoons served as important ecological environments that provided subsistence to tribal groups living here prior to European colonization and American settlement. Early in the 20th century, the rush to develop Florida resulted in a great loss of native habitats.

However, this refuge's very existence was borne out of the vision of conservation-minded settlers who conveyed lands to the Fish and Wildlife Service in an effort to preserve and protect such rare and threatened species as mermaid-like manatees; chattering scrub jays; and lumbering, gargantuan leatherback sea turtles. In an effort to protect the ecosystems at Hobe Sound, one of those settlers, Joseph V. Reed, established the Reed Wilderness Seashore Sanctuary in 1967, a registered national landmark. This sanctuary is located at the north end of what is now Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is located near Pelican Island, the birthplace of the National Wildlife Refuge System, where 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt in essence made a promise to the American people to set aside a network of lands and waters for wildlife.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has developed this Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge to guide management and resource use over the next 15 years. The refuge vision focuses on protecting wildlife and plants and promoting stewardship of all natural resources through public participation and partnerships. To carry out this vision, the plan identifies funding, staffing, and operation and maintenance needs of the refuge.

The plan's overriding consideration is to carry out the purposes for which the refuge was established. Fish and wildlife resources are the first priority in refuge management, while public use (appropriate wildlife-dependent recreation) is allowed and encouraged, as long as it is compatible with, or does not detract from, the refuge's mission and purposes.

Major issues addressed in this plan include the following:

- Ever-present threat of invasion by exotic species;
- Need to promote biological diversity;
- Context of land-use changes around the refuge boundaries;
- General habitat and wildlife protection;
- Recreational opportunities and public access;
- Environmental education; and
- Community/interagency partnerships.

Based on these issues, a range of alternatives was identified that could be implemented within the time frame of the plan. From these alternatives, the Service has tentatively selected a proposed alternative, which is the Service's recommended course of action for managing the refuge. This plan contributes to the achievement of the South Florida Ecosystem Plan, the South Florida Multi-Species Recovery Plan, and the Partners-in-Flight Initiative.

Purpose of and Need For The Plan

As directed by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, comprehensive conservation plans are to be developed for all national wildlife refuges by 2012. This plan for Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge will identify the role of the refuge in supporting the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and provide guidance in refuge management and public use activities. The plan articulates the Service's management direction (goals, objectives, and strategies) for the next 15 years.

The plan is needed to:

- Articulate a vision statement, framing future management of the refuge;
- Provide refuge neighbors, visitors, the public, and government officials with an understanding of the Service's management actions within and around the refuge;
- Ensure that the refuge's management actions are consistent with the mandates of the National Wildlife Refuge System;
- Provide long-term guidance and continuity for refuge management; and
- Provide a basis for the development of annual budget requests for operational, maintenance, and capital improvement needs.

This draft comprehensive conservation plan has been developed to address important natural resource, compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, and administrative needs. To be specific, there is a need to restore and conserve diverse habitats, species populations, and biological integrity; conserve natural and cultural resources through partnerships, protection, and land acquisition from willing sellers; provide opportunities for appropriate, compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, environmental education, and interpretive programs; and provide effective and efficient administration of the refuge.

Planning Process

This Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan outlines a new vision for the refuge and combines two documents that are required by federal law—a comprehensive conservation plan required by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and an environmental assessment required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

In compliance with these Acts, the refuge has been actively seeking public involvement in its comprehensive planning. The Acts also require the Service to seriously consider all reasonable alternatives to major actions on refuges, including a "no action" alternative. These alternatives are described in Section B, Environmental Assessment.

In developing this plan, the Service completed a 3-step planning process as follows:

- (1) Established and organized a planning team for the purpose of developing a refuge comprehensive conservation plan;
- (2) Held a public meeting to identify the important opportunities, concerns, and issues relating to the future management of the refuge; and
- (3) Prepared this draft plan for public review and comment.

Identifying The Significant Issues

On July 16-17, 1998, the Service assembled a planning team at the refuge headquarters to begin the scoping process for developing a draft plan for the Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge. The planning team was composed of representatives from the Service, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Park Patrol, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, Martin County, Town of Jupiter Island, University of Florida, and Florida Atlantic University. The planning team members are listed in Section B, Environmental Assessment.

The team developed a vision statement for the refuge and identified a number of issues and concerns that were likely to affect the management of the refuge. The planning team also identified several goals for the management direction of the refuge and planned the agenda for a public scoping meeting.

The public scoping meeting was held in Hobe Sound, Florida, on August 18, 1998. Attendees of this meeting identified a variety of issues, concerns, and opportunities for future management of the refuge. The comments from the public scoping meeting and those expressed on the comment sheets are summarized in Appendix V. These comments and each alternative and response are reflected in summary statements identified in Chapter II, Planning Issues and Opportunities.

Following the identification of the issues and opportunities, the planning team began the process of preparing sections of the draft plan and environmental assessment. Information concerning the refuge's physical, biological, and socioeconomic environment was compiled and is described in Chapter III, Refuge Environment.

At subsequent planning team meetings, possible alternatives for the management of the refuge were identified. Alternatives are described as sets of objectives or management actions in Section B, Environmental Assessment. The potential impacts of each alternative on the physical, biological, cultural and historic, and socioeconomic environments are also described in the Environmental Assessment.

This planning process uncovered the additional need over the next few years to acquire remaining tracts of lands that might be developed and lost to wildlife protection as a result of the urban and suburban development that continues to sprawl across Florida.

The draft plan will be distributed to officials of federal, state, and local government agencies; private organizations; and the general public for review and comment. A public meeting will be held to present the pros and cons of each alternative and to obtain additional comments from the public.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Although the Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the Nation's fish, wildlife, and plant populations and their habitats, it shares these responsibilities with other federal, state, tribal, local, and private entities. The Service enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

The mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. As part of its mission, the Service operates more than 540 national wildlife refuges covering over 95 million acres. These areas comprise the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest collection of lands specifically managed for fish and wildlife. The system supports over 800 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 reptiles and amphibians, 1,000 fish, and countless species of invertebrates and plants. Of course, a primary importance is the recovery of 282 threatened or endangered species found on refuge lands.

National Wildlife Refuge System

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as defined by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, is "to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

The Act establishes wildlife conservation as the primary mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Refuges will be managed to fulfill the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; fulfill the individual purposes of each refuge; and maintain the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the system.

While wildlife will have first priority in refuge management, appropriate and wildlife-dependent recreational uses (i.e., hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation) or other uses may only be allowed after they have been determined, by the refuge manager, to be a compatible use. Further, appropriate and wildlife-dependent recreational uses are legitimate and priority public uses and are to receive enhanced consideration over other public uses in planning and management.

*Hobe Sound
National Wildlife Refuge*

**Section A.
Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background

National wildlife refuges provide important habitats for native plants and many species of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and invertebrates. They also play a vital role in preserving threatened and endangered species. Refuges offer a wide variety of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities and many have visitor centers, wildlife trails, and environmental education programs. In the year 2000, more than 30 million people visited national wildlife refuges to hunt, fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and participate in educational and interpretive activities. As visitation increases, significant economic benefits are generated to local communities. On a national basis, refuge visitors contribute more than \$400 million each year to local economies.

Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge

Location, Establishment, and Importance

Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge is one of the few remaining publicly owned sand pine scrub communities and one of the largest contiguous sections of undeveloped beach in southeastern Florida. Refuge habitats are important to threatened and endangered species such as the scrub jay and sea turtles, which are also found at Lake Wales Ridge, Pelican Island, Archie Carr, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuges (Figure 1).

With the exception of two tracts in St. Lucie County, Hobe Sound Refuge is located in southeastern Martin County, near the town of Hobe Sound, Florida (Figure 2). Figure 2 highlights the approved acquisition area of the refuge. Jonathan Dickinson, Atlantic Ridge, Seabranche Preserve, and St. Lucie Inlet Preserve state parks are in the immediate vicinity of the refuge. Personnel at these parks and those at Hobe Sound Refuge collaborate in their efforts to restore and maintain sand pine scrub habitat.

A close-up view shows that the refuge is bisected by the Indian River Lagoon into two tracts—a Mainland Tract and the Jupiter Island Tract (Figure 3). The Mainland Tract is bordered on the west by U.S. Highway 1 and Jonathan Dickinson State Park, on the east by the Indian River Lagoon, and on the north and south by private landowners. The Jupiter Island Tract shares its northern boundary with St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park and its southern boundary with private landowners.

The portions of the Indian River Lagoon adjacent to the refuge are more commonly known as Hobe Sound, Peck Lake, and the Intracoastal Waterway. The Indian River Lagoon, which is inhabited by the endangered West Indian manatee, has been designated as an estuary of national importance. Major threats to the lagoon's ecosystem are excess nutrients, sediment loads, and toxic chemicals associated with intensive development along its shores (Figures 4 and 5).

The refuge was established in 1969, through the foresight and generosity of Jupiter Island residents, with an approved acquisition boundary of approximately 400 acres. The refuge originated from its designation as the Reed Wilderness Seashore Sanctuary and its National Landmark status in 1967. Today, the refuge consists of more than 1,000 acres, including the 300-acre Mainland Tract and the 735-acre Jupiter Island Tract. Most of the refuge was donated by private citizens and The Nature

*Hobe Sound
National Wildlife Refuge*

Conservancy primarily for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and preservation of undeveloped vistas.

**Section A.
Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background

The refuge provides habitat for nearly 40 species listed as either threatened, endangered, or species of special concern by the state or federal government. Of particular importance to these species is the largest remnant of sand pine scrub habitat, the nearly 10 miles of mangrove communities along the Indian River Lagoon, and 3.5 miles of Atlantic Ocean beach. This beach is one of the most productive sea turtle nesting areas in the southeastern United States.

Figure 1. Location of Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge in relation to other refuges with similar habitats in Florida.

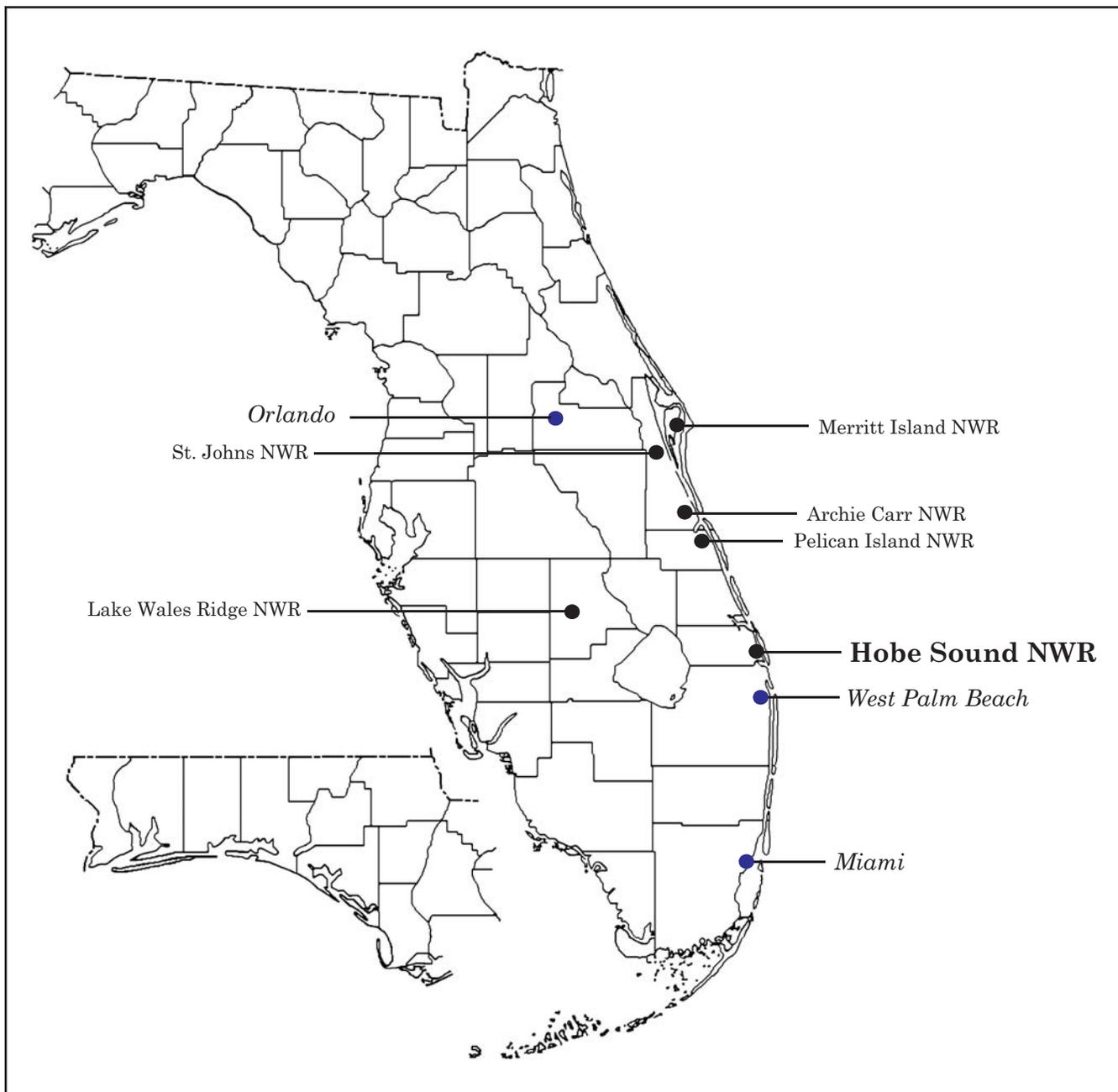


Figure 2. Location of Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge in relation to adjacent state lands.

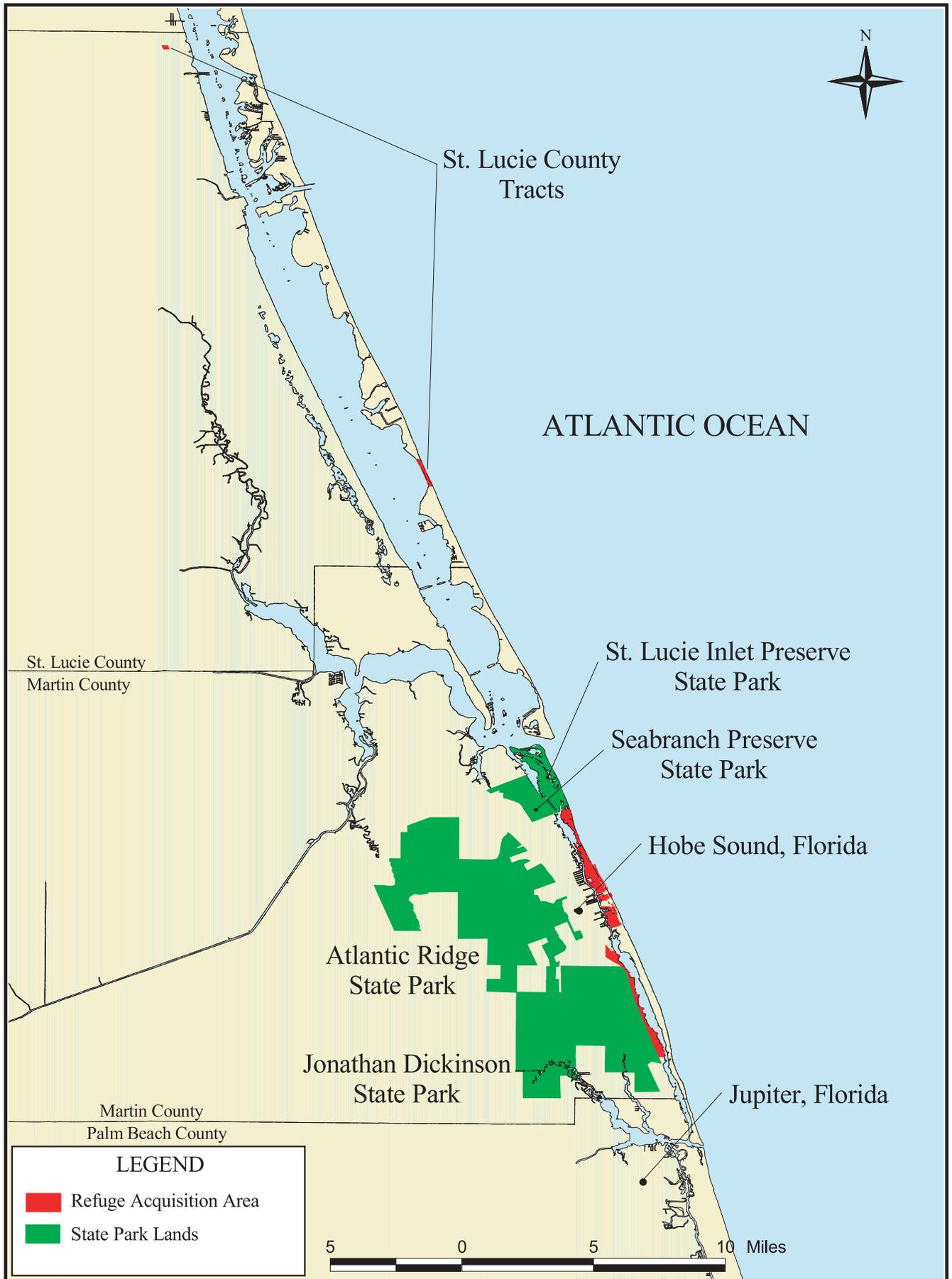


Figure 3. Location of Jupiter Island and mainland tracts of Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge in relation to Indian River Lagoon/Intracoastal Waterway.



Figure 4. Jupiter Island tract of Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge and the Indian River Lagoon, in the context of community development.

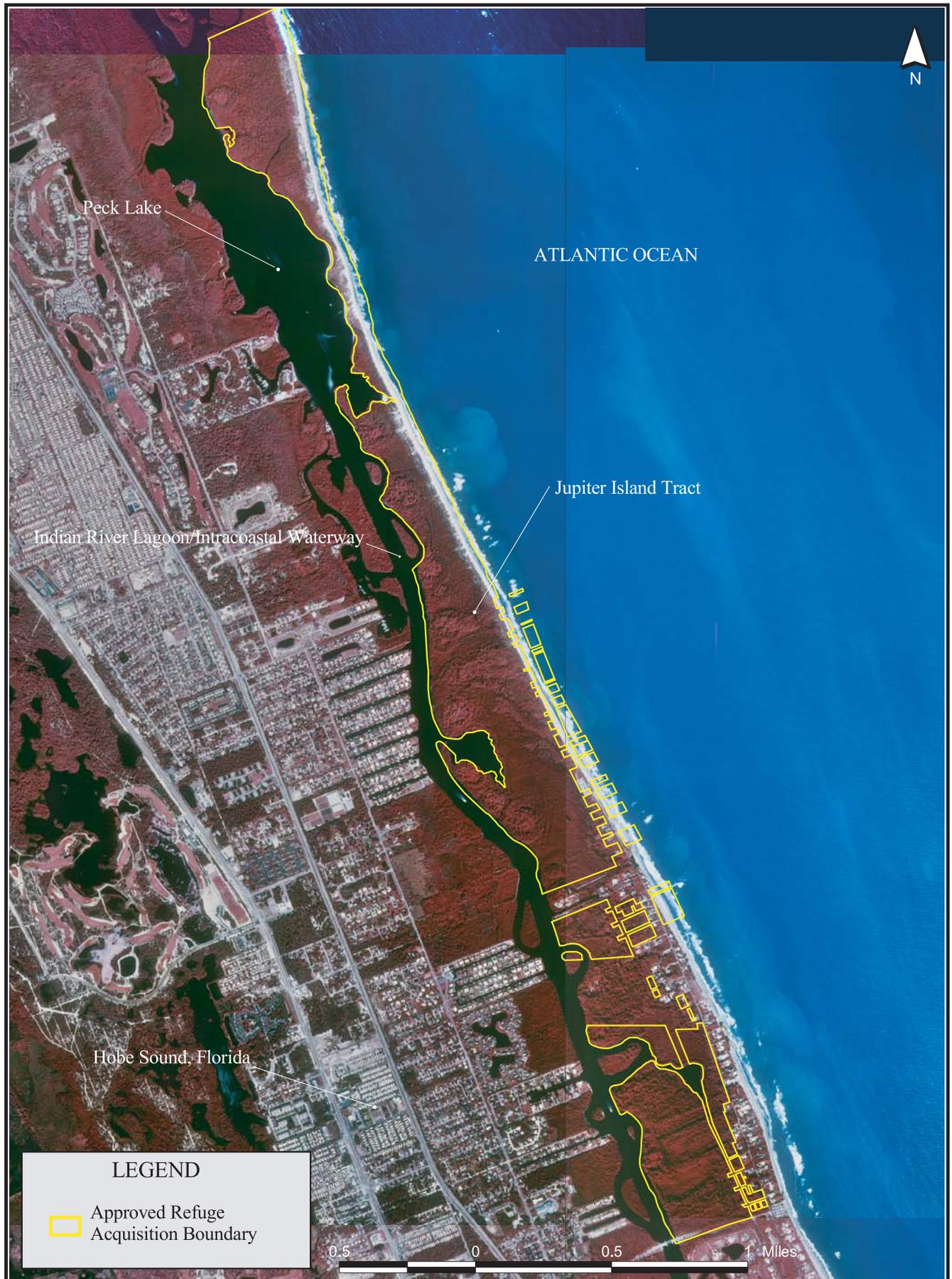


Figure 5. Mainland tract of Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge and the Indian River Lagoon, in the context of community development.



*Hobe Sound
National Wildlife Refuge*

**Section A.
Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background

Refuge Purposes

As indicated in the legislation authorizing the establishment of the refuge, and in land acquisition authorities and documents, the conservation of threatened and endangered fish, wildlife, and plants is paramount. Development of fish and wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities must consider this conservation mandate.

The refuge was established "...to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species... or (B) plants..." 16 U.S.C.1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973); "...suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species...." 16 U.S.C. 460K-1 (Refuge Recreation Act of 1962); "...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929); "...conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans." (16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966); "...for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources." 16 U.S.C. 742f(a)(4) (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956).

This purpose and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System are fundamental to determining the compatibility of proposed uses of the refuge. The compatibility of these uses is discussed in Appendix VI.

Facilities

The headquarters area, the main entrance to the refuge, is located 2 miles south of County Road 708 on U.S. Highway 1 (Figure 3). It consists of an administration building, an environmental education classroom, two residential buildings (e.g., duplex and house), and a maintenance building. Also located at the headquarters area is a Seminole chickee (an open pavilion), which serves as an environmental study and staging area for visitors who use the sand pine scrub trail or access trail to the Indian River Lagoon.



*Hobe Sound NWR headquarters
USFWS Photo*

The administration building, constructed in the 1950s as a motel, provides limited space for the Hobe Sound Nature Center, Inc. Contained in this space is an office, a gift shop, and an interpretive museum. Established in 1973, the Hobe Sound Nature Center is a non-profit environmental education organization and a cooperating association of the refuge.

The environmental education classroom (Jackson Burke Education Center) was constructed in 1998, with funds raised by the Nature Center. The Nature Center is actively involved in public outreach programs which support and foster the refuge. Due in large part to this relationship, the refuge enjoys a great deal of public support.

The refuge beach, the second entrance to the refuge, is located on Jupiter Island approximately 1.5 miles north of the intersection of County Road 708 and North Beach roads (Figure 3). This entrance contains a paved parking lot, entrance fee booth, primitive restroom facilities, two dune cross-over boardwalks, and a foot trail to the beach.

Staffing and Funding

Hobe Sound Refuge is a minimally staffed satellite of the A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, which is located in Boynton Beach, Florida. The Hobe Sound Refuge staff is made up of three permanent employees: a manager, a law enforcement officer, and a maintenance worker. The staff is supplemented, budget permitting, by seasonal positions, including a biological technician, maintenance worker, and two fee rangers. The refuge shares its budget with Loxahatchee Refuge, which in Fiscal Year 2001 totaled \$1,601,700 for payroll and operation needs, and an additional \$1,408,600 in special or one-time funding.

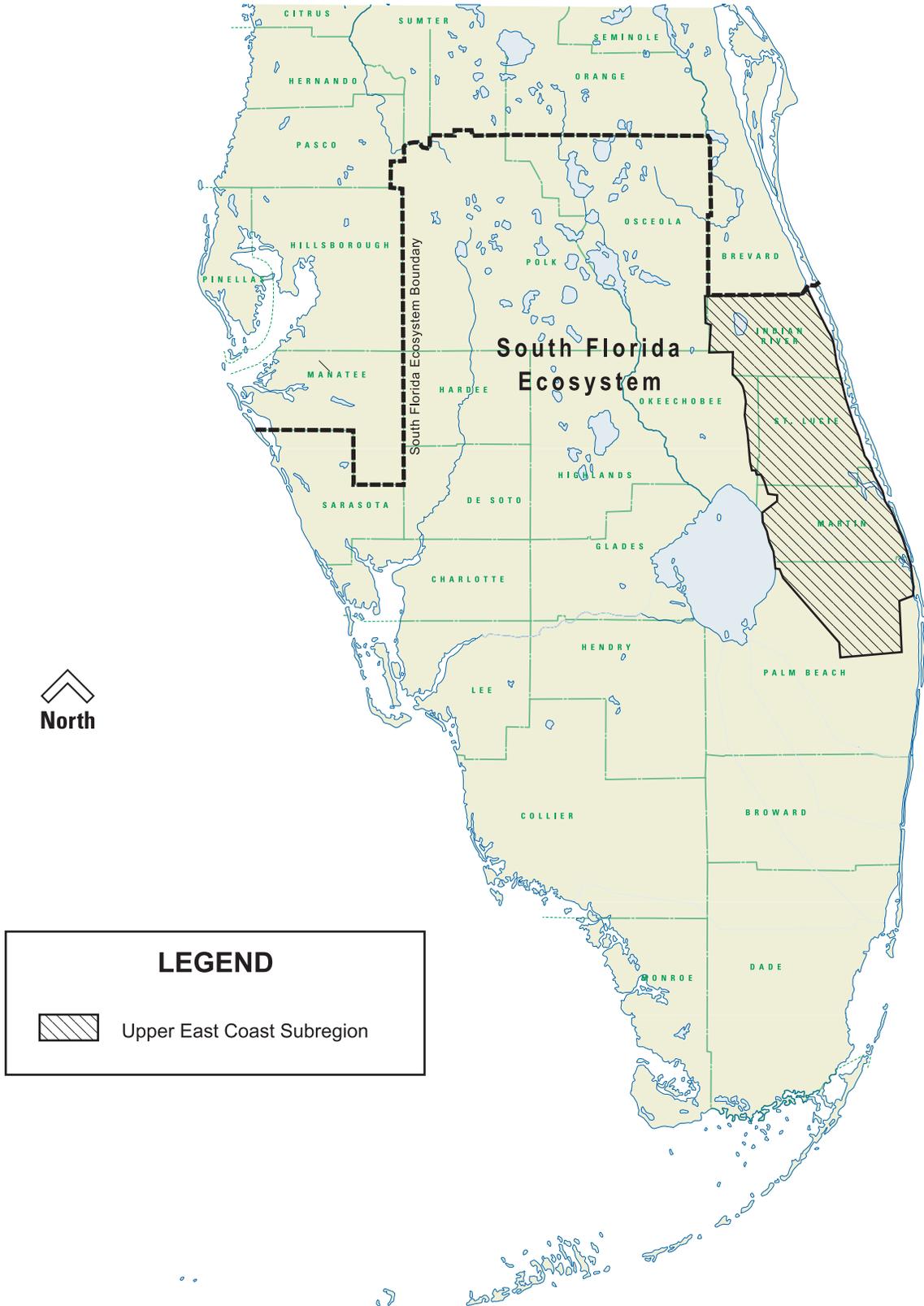
Ecosystem and North American Context

Role of the Refuge in the South Florida Ecosystem

In recognition of the ecosystem complexity in south Florida, a South Florida Ecosystem Plan was completed by the Service's South Florida Ecosystem Team (Fish and Wildlife Service 1998). This plan identified the goals, objectives, and strategies for this ecosystem and the major issues associated with eight ecosystem sub-regions. The plan is one of the first such efforts specifically targeted at recovering multiple species over a large geographic area. Management activities on the refuge, located in the Upper East Coast Ecosystem Subregion (Figure 6), are consistent with the South Florida Ecosystem Plan. These activities include the reduction of exotic and invasive species; enforcement of laws to protect wildlife resources on the refuge; coordination with other agencies regarding the Intracoastal Waterway and its many issues; promotion of public awareness about the imperiled scrub ecosystem; provision of appropriate wildlife-compatible recreation; and, maintenance of facilities and equipment at or above Service standards.

The refuge is represented on the South Florida Ecosystem Team, which is comprised of Service field stations in an area from Vero Beach, south to the Florida Keys, and west to Ft. Myers. This diverse team works together to accomplish Service priorities which include protection and management of federal trust species through the sharing of skills, expertise, equipment, and personnel for special projects. Recently, the refuge has taken a more active role in partnership efforts to protect and enhance habitats and wildlife, both on and off

Figure 6. Upper east coast ecosystem subregion within the South Florida Ecosystem.



*Hobe Sound
National Wildlife Refuge*

**Section A.
Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background

the refuge. Staff have participated on committees to heighten public awareness of the following: feral cat impacts on wildlife; damaging effects of bright lights on sea turtle nesting success; damaging and costly problems caused by exotic animals and plants; actively managing the imperilled coastal scrub plant community; and efforts to enhance the dwindling estuarine habitats and seagrass beds.

Since more than 91 percent of endemic scrub habitat has been lost from south Florida, active management of refuge's scrub is vitally important to the multi-species approach to ecosystem management. In recent years, the staff has improved working associations with other natural resource agencies. This concentrated effort established new partnerships and has directly benefitted the refuge's ability to manage the scrub habitat as a part of a landscape mosaic, instead of as an isolated tract. This encompassing foresight will improve scrub conditions on the refuge and on other undeveloped lands where the refuge may have cooperative agreements in the upper coast of south Florida.

Role of the Refuge in Restoration of the Indian River Lagoon

The Intracoastal Waterway immediately bordering the Hobe Sound Refuge headquarters is one of the most productive and species-rich

portion of the Indian River Lagoon, which is considered the most productive estuary in the United States. North of the headquarters, the lagoon drains into the Atlantic Ocean at the St. Lucie Inlet, where the refuge beach tract is located. To the south of the refuge, the lagoon connects to the Atlantic Ocean at Jupiter Inlet. The draining of the Everglades in the early 20th century resulted in large fresh-water flows into the lagoon, wreaking environmental havoc. An interagency study of the restoration of the southern portion has begun, which is focused on reducing the amount of Lake Okeechobee water reaching the lagoon. In addition, a number of

agencies monitor the lagoon for turbidity, chemical contamination, and saline levels. Refuge staff help state agencies monitor public use of these waters. This cooperation enhances wildlife protection along refuge shores. See Chapter III for a discussion on water quality in the lagoon and surrounding waters.

Partners-In-Flight Program

Diminishing numbers of migratory birds (Hagen and Johnston 1989; Finch and Stengel 1992) stimulated the formation of Partners-In-



*Indian River
USFWS Photo*

Flight, an international organization to address the needs of non-game migratory birds. The Service is a member of the Partners-In-Flight Program which includes coordination among federal, state, and non-government agencies; industry; and conservation groups to promote research, land protection, and education about migratory birds. The refuge is part of the Atlantic Flyway, one of the primary migratory routes of bird species that breed in temperate North America and winter in the tropics of the Caribbean and South America. More than 116 species of neotropical migratory birds have been recorded passing through the South Florida Ecosystem. More than 129 bird species migrate to the ecosystem to overwinter, and another 132 species breed in the ecosystem. Because this ecosystem is located near Cuba and the West Indies, it draws Caribbean species that rarely appear elsewhere in North America.

In 1995, the Service prepared a list of migratory non-game birds of management concern in the United States. This was done to stimulate a coordinated effort by federal, state, and private agencies to develop and implement comprehensive and integrated approaches for managing selected species. The South Florida Ecosystem supports many of these species (Appendix IV).

The refuge's mangroves and sand pine scrub provide important feeding and resting areas for neotropical migratory birds including the common yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*), Cape May warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*), blackpoll warbler (*Dendroica striata*), Connecticut warbler (*Oporornis agilis*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), and black-whiskered vireo (*Vireo altiloquus*). (Roberts and Tamborski 1993; Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida 1996).

National Shorebird Conservation Plan

The refuge is located in the Southeastern Coastal Plains/Caribbean Region, one of twelve regions in the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. For some species of shorebirds designated as high priority in the Florida Peninsula, the refuge provides feeding and resting areas, as well as nesting habitat during migration (Figure 7). For example, the endangered piping plover, uncommonly seen on the refuge, uses it as a stopover site during fall and spring migration. Although the refuge is not designated as a strategic migrational site by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, the refuge contributes survey data to the network.

Historically, the state-listed least tern and the Wilson's plover have traditionally used the Jupiter Island Tract for nesting. The refuge is the southernmost natural area remaining along the eastern Atlantic coast where these birds could successfully nest. However, the loss of the above high tide beach front and vegetation encroachment on the backdune have significantly reduced potential nesting habitat. As a consequence, both species have declined in numbers. To exacerbate the plight of these species, some of the best remaining habitat is subject to extensive use by beachgoers, which causes disturbance during the nesting period. With significant effort and funding directed toward providing adequate nesting conditions and reducing

Figure 7. High priority bird species abundance and seasonal use, Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge.

High Priority Species*	Relative Importance of Southern Coastal Plain**	Abundance and Seasonal Use of Refuge
Piping Plover	B, M, W	Uncommon, Spring, Fall, Winter
American Oystercatcher	B, W	Occasional, Winter
Wilson's Plover	B, W	Uncommon, Winter Common, Spring, Summer, Fall
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	M	Not Observed
Marbled Godwit	M, W	Rare
Solitary Sandpiper	M	Not Observed
Stilt Sandpiper	M, W	Not Observed
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	M	Observed
Short-billed Dowitcher	M, W	Common, Winter

*Categories Ia and Ib, Highest and High Priority Species, Subtropical Florida and Peninsular Florida Partners-in-Flight Bird Conservation Plans: Section 2: Avifaunal Analysis.

**Brown, S., C. Hickey, and B. Harrington (eds.). 2000. United States Shorebird Conservation Plan. Manomet, MA: Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. 60p.

B=Breeding; M=Migrating; W=Wintering.

B,M,W=High concentrations, region extremely important to the species relative to the majority of the other regions.

human disturbance, it is believed that the refuge could make an important contribution toward population increases.

North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

The Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative was launched in 1998, to provide a continental framework and guide for conserving waterbirds of North America, Central America, and the Caribbean. A product of the initiative is the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (James A. Kushlan et. al., 2002). The plan provides for the conservation and management of 210 species of waterbirds, including seabirds, coastal waterbirds, wading birds, and marsh birds. The refuge contributes to the implementation of this plan by providing potential habitat for the little blue heron, tricolored heron, reddish egret, white ibis, and wood stork.

Atlantic Coast Joint Venture and Florida Waterfowl Focus Areas

Since the first settlers arrived, more than 50 percent of the United States' original 220 million acres of wetlands—upon which waterfowl depend—have been destroyed, often causing dramatic declines in numerous waterfowl populations.

Recognizing the importance of waterfowl and wetlands to North America and the need for international cooperation to promote their well-being, the Canadian and United States governments developed a strategy to restore waterfowl populations to 1970s'

levels through habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement. The strategy was documented in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which was signed in 1986 by the Canadian Minister of the Environment and the United States' Secretary of the Interior. This plan identified important waterfowl habitat areas, established habitat and population goals, and established interstate/international partnerships, called joint ventures, to implement plan goals.

In 1997, the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture continued to build upon its firm foundation as Florida became its 17th state partner. Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge is part of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. Additionally, the northern end of the Jupiter Island Tract of the refuge lies proximate to Upper St. Johns and Adjacent Coast Focus Area, a waterfowl focus area delineated by the State of Florida. Contained within this Focus Area is the Indian River Lagoon/Intracoastal Waterway, which is considered an important resource for wintering waterfowl in Florida. The lagoon provides habitat for waterfowl such as green-winged teal, mottled duck, mallard, northern pintail, American wigeon, ring-necked duck, and lesser scaup duck. While the refuge does not have jurisdiction over the Indian River Lagoon, collaboration with federal and state agencies to improve and maintain the quality of its habitat contributes toward meeting the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

National Bird Conservation Initiative

The National Bird Conservation Initiative is a vision for the future of bird conservation in North America. In the United States, this initiative evolved out of a recognition among conservationists of the value of coordinating and integrating the conservation planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts to achieve a comprehensive, landscape-oriented approach to conservation.

Out of this collaboration has come an over-arching framework for integrating the conservation of all birds across all habitats under the National Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners-In-Flight Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the National Waterbird Conservation Plan. Recently, the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Office, associated with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, has begun planning and implementing "conservation of all birds across all habitats" in several bird conservation regions identified by the National Bird Conservation Initiative.

Hobe Sound Refuge is located in the Peninsular Florida Bird Conservation Region. Mentioned as priority species in the National Bird Conservation Initiative, for which Hobe Sound Refuge (or adjacent lands and waters) provides potential habitat, are the Florida scrub-jay, swallow-tailed kite, short-tailed hawk, wood stork, brown pelican, limpkin, black skimmer, tern, black-whiskered vireo, mangrove cuckoo, lesser scaup, ring-necked duck, mottled duck, short-billed dowitcher, piping plover, dunlin, and red knot, as well as a variety of herons and egrets.

**Section A.
Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background

In addition to the refuge's authorizing legislation and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the legal and policy guidance for the operation of national wildlife refuges is contained in some of the more important documents or Acts listed below. For a description of policies and key legislation, see Appendix III.

- Executive Order 1312- Invasive Species (2/3/99)
 - National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997
 - National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee)
 - Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4)
 - Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subchapters B and C
 - Refuge Manual
 - Fish and Wildlife Service Manual
 - Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543)
 - Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 (16 U.S.C. 715-715d)
 - Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act (16 U.S.C. 718-718h)
 - Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712)
 - National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347)
 - Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (16 U.S.C. 668-668d)
 - American Indian Religious Freedom Act (P.L. 95-341, [1978], 92 Stat. 42 U.S.C.1996)
 - Antiquities Act (P.L. 59-209, approved 6/8/1906, 34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431-433)
 - Archaeological Resources Protection Act (PL. 96-95 [10/31/1979], as amended by P.L. 100-555 [10/18/1988] and P.L. 100-588 [11/3/1988], 93 Stat. 721, 16 U.S.C. 470 aa et seq.)
 - Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (PL. 93-291 [1974, 88 Stat. 1974], amending Reservoir Salvage Act, 16 U.S.C. 469)
 - Executive Order 13007 - Sacred Sites (5/24/1996)
 - National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89-665 [1966], 80 Stat. 95, as amended by P.L. 96-515 [1980], 94 Stat. 2987; P.O. 102-575 Title 40 (1992), 106 Stat. 4600)
 - Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601 (1990), 104 Stat. 3048, 25 U.S.C. 3000-3013, 18 U.S.C. 1170)
 - Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361-1421h)
 - National Fire Plan
 - Lacey Act of 1900 (16 U.S.C. 667E, 701; 18 U.S.C. 42-44; 62 Stat. 285), as amended
 - Executive Order 11987 (1977) - Exotic Organisms
- In addition to the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual, important policies influencing refuge planning and management include:
- Compatibility Policy (2002);
 - Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health Policy (2001); and
 - Draft Land Acquisition Planning Policy (2001).

*Hobe Sound
National Wildlife Refuge*

Section A.

**Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background

A new vision document entitled "Fulfilling the Promise" now guides the National Wildlife Refuge System and was used in the development of this comprehensive conservation plan. The vision document states the following beliefs of the Fish and Wildlife Service:

- Refuges are places where wildlife comes first;
- Refuges are anchors for biodiversity and ecosystem-level conservation and the system is a leader in wilderness preservation;
- Lands and waters of the system are biologically healthy and secure from outside threats;
- The system is a national and international leader in habitat management and a center for excellence where the best science and technology are used for wildlife conservation;
- Strategically located lands and waters are added to the System until, in partnership with others, it represents America's diverse ecosystems and sustains the nation's fish, wildlife, and plant resources;
- The system is a model and demonstration area for habitat management which fosters broad participation in natural resource stewardship.

*Hobe Sound
National Wildlife Refuge*

**Section A.
Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan**

CHAPTER I - Background



*Shorebirds
USFWS Photo*