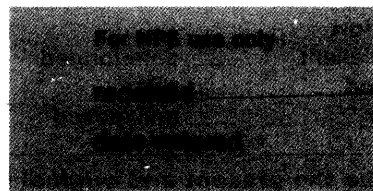


12/31/84

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



**1. Name**

historic *Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge*

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number *Indian River, South of the Town of Sebastian* \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state *Florida* code *12* county *Indian River County* code *061*

**3. Classification**

|                                      |   |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Category</b>                      | <b>Ownership</b>                          | <b>Status</b>                              | <b>Present Use</b>                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district    | <input type="checkbox"/> public           | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private          | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial    | <input type="checkbox"/> park              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure   | <input type="checkbox"/> both             | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress  | <input type="checkbox"/> educational   | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site        | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                 | <b>Accessible</b>                          | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object      | <input type="checkbox"/> in process       | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted   | <input type="checkbox"/> government    | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific        |
|                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation    |
|                                      |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                | <input type="checkbox"/> military      | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

**4. Owner of Property**

name *U.S. Government - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

street & number *Merritt Island NWF* *P.O. Box 6504*

city, town *Titusville* \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state *Florida*

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. *Indian River County Registry of Deeds*

street & number

city, town *Sebastian* \_\_\_\_\_ state *Florida*

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

# 7. Description

Condition  
 excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

Check one  
 unaltered  
 altered

Check one  
 original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

*Pelican Island is low and varies little in elevation except where spoils from channel dredging in the nearby Intracoastal Waterway have created artificial mounds. Dense stands of black mangrove form an almost solid canopy over the island, hiding the miniature ground "forest" of "air" roots which are characteristic of this species. Red mangrove, with its tangle of prop roots, occurs as a fringe of variable width around the shore. Pickle weed forms a dense ground cover where the mangrove canopy is thin or absent. Submerged stands of shoalgrass, widgeongrass, and various algae are abundant in the surrounding waters.*

*The vegetation in Pelican Island has been noticeably altered by years of continuous heavy nesting activity. The mangrove is less dense; many trees are broken or dead and most of those remaining are small with sparse foliage. Old photographs of Pelican Island reveal that the island was almost completely devoid of vegetation in the early 1900's. However, the sparse appearance of the present cover suggests a trend towards the barren condition that existed in the early 1900's when Pelicans nested entirely on the ground.*

# 8. Significance

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning      | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> economics               | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education               | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering             | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement  | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)         |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention               |   |  |

**Specific dates**

**Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

*President Theodore Roosevelt by Executive Order established Pelican Island as a sanctuary to protect Brown Pelicans on March 13, 1903. Pelican Island was the first sanctuary provided for the protection of wildlife. The refuge was originally placed under the administration of the Bureau of Biological Survey which was then in the Department of Agriculture. With the creation of the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1940, the Pelican Island Refuge was placed under its jurisdiction.*

*Since its origin, Pelican Island Refuge has provided nesting areas for the production of from 1,500 to 3,500 Brown Pelicans annually. The refuge is within the Indian River, offshore from the town of Sebastian, Florida. The land area is subject to daily inundation from the tides. The area is essentially a mass of mangrove and one large rookery. In view of the location and limited acreage, it has not been feasible to provide active management. Today serial surveys made periodically and sign posting are the major measures from protection of the Refuge.*

*Pelican Island Refuge is of considerable interest as a first in the history of conservation. It does not represent an important person who was a force in the development of the conservation movement, nor have any conservation ideas emerged from its administration.*

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Ira N. Gabrielson, Wildlife Refuges (New York, 1943)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UMT References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |    |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|------|---|---------|---|---|----|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1    | 7 | 5       | 5 | 9 | 18 | 10       | 3 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 10 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |    | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |

B 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Verbal boundary description and justification

*See Continuation Sheet*

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Boundary Task Force Revised by Cecil McKithan SERO

organization HCRS date 4/30/84

street & number 440 G Street NW telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

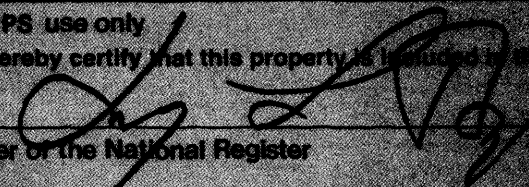
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.  
  
Keeper of the National Register  
Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date 1/22/85  
Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

*Beginning at a point in the Indian River on the east right-of-way boundary line of the Intracoastal Waterway, opposite the first navigation light north of the causeway leading from Wabasso to Wabasso Beach; thence northwesterly with the east right-of-way line of the Intracoastal Waterway, a distance of 34,632 feet to a point opposite the navigation light which is located 3,331 feet southeasterly of the Indian River-Brevard County line; thence due East, approximately 9,800 feet to a point in the bulkhead line established in 1963; thence with the same, S.25°14'51"E., approximately 9,200 feet to a pipe on eastern shoreline of Indian River, at its intersection with the township line between Ts. 30 and 31 S., R. 39 E., being 1,216 feet west of the corner common to Secs. 33, 34, 3 and 4, respectively, of said townships; thence with the bulkhead line approved in 1958, with, in order, the east shoreline of Indian River, the East one-sixteenth line of Sec. 4, T. 31 S., R. 39 E., to its intersection with the south shore of Big Slough, then continuing with the east shoreline of Indian River, Spratt Creek, and East Channel to a point which is N.45°E. approximately 560 feet from the point on the easterly right-of-way boundary line of the Intracoastal Waterway, heretofore described as the Point of Beginning; thence S. 45°W., 560 feet to the Point of Beginning.*