

13
duction in numbers of birds seen. Several species of birds, such as the sandhill crane, roseate spoonbill, wild turkey, Everglades kite, and ivory-billed woodpecker, are known to be found in greatly reduced numbers.

5. The manatee is now so greatly depleted in numbers as to be seen only occasionally. Furbearers, such as the mink, are less plentiful, as are deer, bear, and puma.

6. Alligators, long sought for their skins and as an object of sport, are greatly diminished in numbers and few large ones are to be found. Crocodiles, likewise, are now a rarity.

7. Even certain species of fish have been captured in such numbers as to diminish the present supply. Along the Gulf Coast clams are subjected to a heavy toll by commercial interests.

Everywhere, when oldtimers were consulted, there was admission that both plant and animal life are not as plentiful as formerly and that several species are in danger of extinction unless better protection is afforded them.

Extensive drainage and a habit of setting fires are important adverse factors in accounting for decrease.

The opportunity to preserve the unique plants and animals of this region for future generations to see and study is undoubtedly the strongest argument for the creation of the national park.

A small area gives less safety to those species needing protecting than a large area. As a national park of large size (over 2,000 square miles) there is afforded opportunity to reserve great areas and keep them undisturbed and free from human intrusion. By this means only can primeval wilderness be retained unmodified and bird and animal life afforded full opportunity for normal increase.

More spectacular to the average person than the sub-tropical plants is the abundant bird life. Even during the breeding season a great area is utilized as feeding grounds and further dispersal is noticeable in winter.

This spectacle can continue if the breeding and feeding area is made an inviolate sanctuary such as is provided by a national park.

The proposed maximum boundary line encloses really only a minimum area necessary to carry out even reasonably the objects for which the park is to be established. A considerably larger area would be correspondingly much more desirable and we trust will be possible of attainment sometime in the future.

Many of the rarest and most beautiful birds which live in this area do not nest here at all but migrate to other localities in the state during the breeding season. The sandhill crane, Everglades kite, and glossy ibis are among this group. Therefore, if these birds are to be