

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Lawrence, Kansas

January 15, 1958

Mr. Ben H. Thompson, Chief
Division of Recreation Resource Planning
National Park Service
Washington 25, D.C.

My dear Mr. Thompson:

The following information is sent in response to your letter of January 8, 1958, to Dr. E.R. Hall, requesting additional information on why nine islands (or parts of islands) should be included in the Virgin Islands National Park, and supplements my report of December 31 and Dr. Hall's statement of that date. The islands you list are as follows:

Dog Island	Great Thatch Island (British)
Little St. James Island	Southwest end Tortola
Great St. James Island	Peter Island "
East end St. Thomas Island	Norman Island "
Thatch Island	

GENERAL STATEMENT

Biological considerations: St. John Island alone, is not large enough successfully to maintain several species of birds in their natural and normal numbers; these birds depend in part upon adjacent islands and cays for their complete biological support. Adequate size of biological area is particularly important to St. John Island in times of unfavorable climate and at times when low points in cyclic fluctuations occur in populations. Hurricane damage, for instance, could reduce certain animal populations on that small island to so small a number that the species might not survive. Protection of the biota on one small island does not guarantee perpetuating wildlife; it could be destroyed by natural forces.

Areas of adequate size for nesting, resting, and feeding are necessary in maintaining normal numbers of marine birds, especially colonial species. Some of these have a minimum threshold of numbers prerequisite to successful rearing of young. The brown booby is an example. Colonies too small result in ineffective breeding. Although many of the islands and cays are not, at present, extensively used by marine birds, it is believed that under natural conditions, they would be and that they would support the normal complement of colonial nesting birds. ^{CONGO} ~~Levange~~ Island, for example, formerly was used extensively for nesting by the brown pelican. Now approximately 700 pelicans rest on the island at night but only a few breed there because man has disturbed them.