

# Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

A SPAW listed protected area



**Country:** USA

**Management structure / authority:** NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

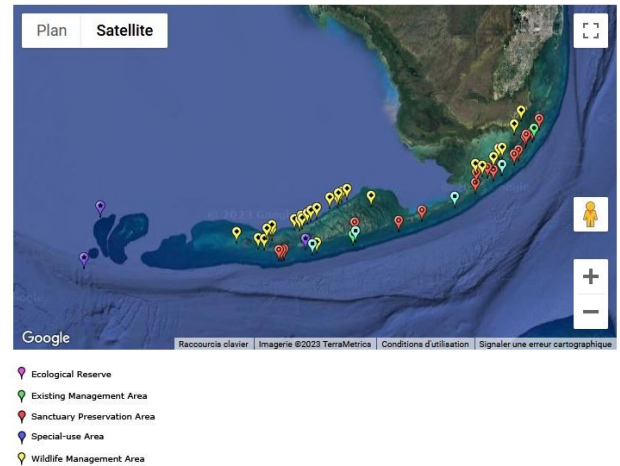
**Date of establishment:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 1990

**Date of listing under SPAW:** 23 October 2012

**Size:** 99 467 sq. km

## Map of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Marine Zones

Click on a marker on the map below for more information about individual zones within Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, or view a complete [list of all zones](#) in the sanctuary.



## Context:

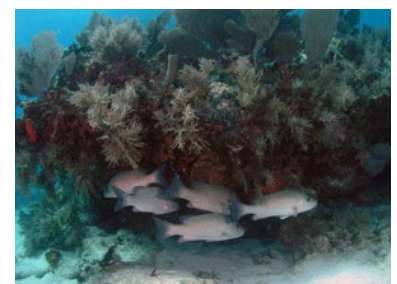
The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary extends approximately 220 miles southwest from the southern tip of the Florida peninsula. Located adjacent to the Keys' land mass are spectacular, unique, and nationally significant marine environments. These support rich biological communities possessing extensive conservation, recreational, commercial, ecological, historical, research, educational, and aesthetic values that give this area special national significance.

Attracted by this natural diversity and tropical climate, approximately four million tourists visit the Keys annually, where they participate primarily in water-related sports such as fishing, diving, boating, and other activities.

## Main fauna populations and/or those of particular importance present (resident or migratory) in the area:

The marine environment of the Florida Keys supports over 6,000 species of plants, fishes, and invertebrates, including the Nation's only coral reef that lies adjacent to the continent, and one of the largest seagrass communities in this hemisphere.

Bisecting the region is the Florida Keys, which serve as a partial biogeographic barrier between the warm-temperate waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the tropical to subtropical waters of the Atlantic Ocean. This division has resulted in a marine ecosystem with fauna components that are found in both the warm-temperate and tropical Caribbean.



### Main ecosystems in the area:

The area has mangrove-fringed, shorelines, mangrove islands, seagrass meadows, hardbottom habitats, thousands of patch reefs, and one of the world's largest coral reef tracts, which create one of the most complex ecosystems on Earth that houses thousands of animal species.

### Potential Threats:

The emerging threats to sanctuary resources include invasive species, climate change, increasing coastal and visitor populations, and recreational use of the sanctuary.

## MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Understanding of Sanctuary Resources

- Assess the state of the science / research of sanctuary natural resources and habitats
- Enhance our understanding, management, and interpretation of sanctuary historical resources
- socioeconomic value and ecosystem services

### Condition of Sanctuary Resources

- Demonstrate greater leadership in engaging with local and regional partners
- identify and address issues related to water quality
- Develop habitat restoration or mitigation plans / activities where needed
- natural biological communities

### Reduce Threats

- Identify and monitor patterns of human uses and potential impacts
- Reduce adverse impacts to key marine species and habitats
- Facilitate and manage human use, ensuring use is compatible with sanctuary resource protection goals

### Increase Awareness and Stewardship

- Implement communication, interpretation, and education programming
- Maintain and enhance community-based and partner engagement to improve collaborative and coordinated management in order to achieve the sanctuary's vision

### Collaborative and Coordinated Management

- Improve operational capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness
- conduct ongoing effectiveness evaluations toward meeting regulatory requirements and management plan objectives
- Maintain and strengthen cooperative management

### Contact:

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The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is part of the **SPAW protected areas managers network**.

For more information about it: <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Protected-Areas>