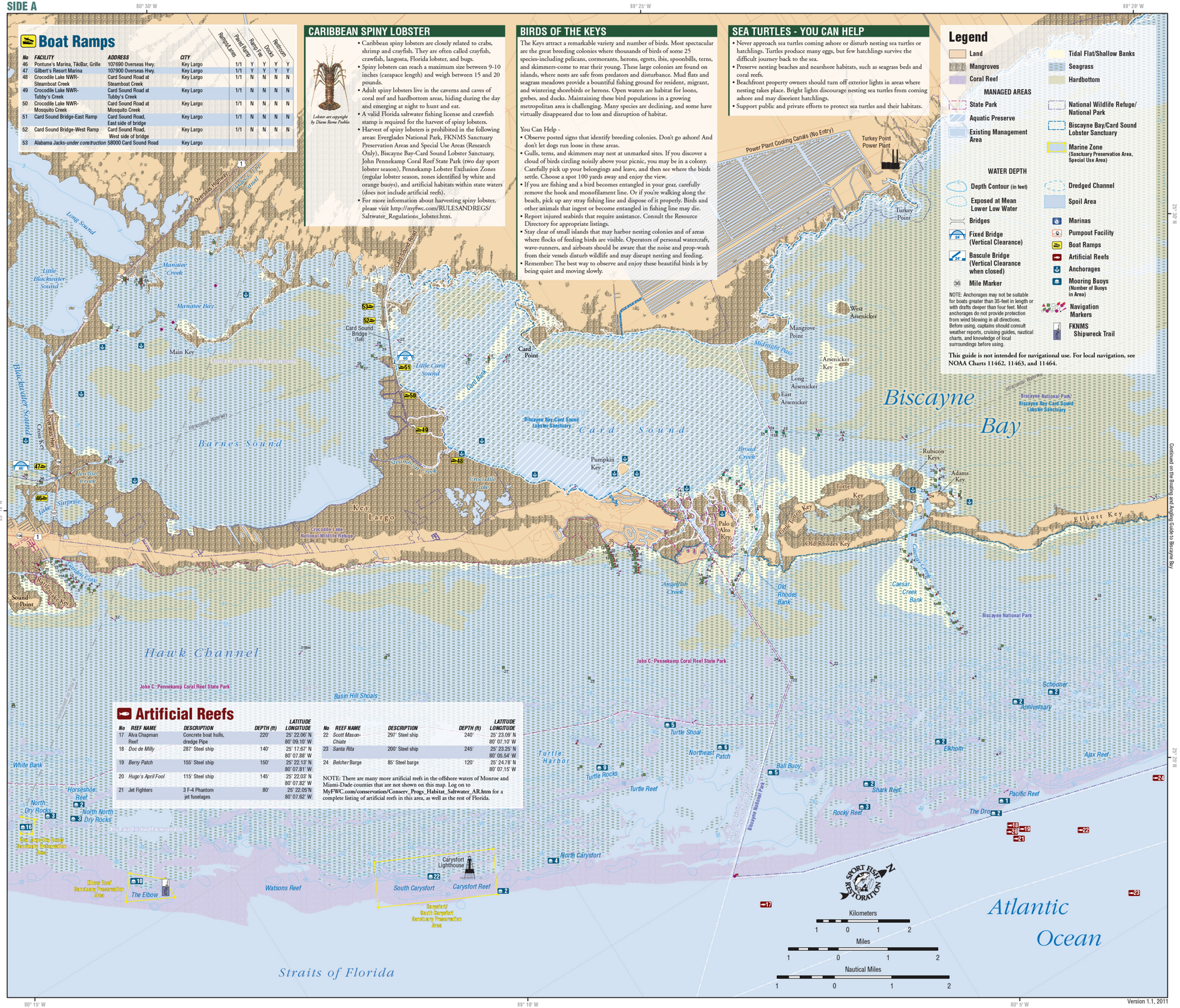
SIDE A



Boat Ramps

No	FACILITY	ADDRESS	CITY	Fee	Paved Ramp	Ramp Fee	Docks	Restroom
46	Pontune's Marina, TikiBar, Grille	107690 Overseas Hwy.	Key Largo	1/1	Y	Y	Y	Y
47	Gilbert's Resort Marina	107900 Overseas Hwy.	Key Largo	1/1	Y	Y	Y	Y
48	Crocodile Lake NWR-Steamboat Creek	Card Sound Road at Steamboat Creek	Key Largo	1/1	N	N	N	N
49	Crocodile Lake NWR-Tubby's Creek	Card Sound Road at Tubby's Creek	Key Largo	1/1	N	N	N	N
50	Crocodile Lake NWR-Mosquito Creek	Card Sound Road at Mosquito Creek	Key Largo	1/1	N	N	N	N
51	Card Sound Bridge-East Ramp	Card Sound Road, East side of bridge	Key Largo	1/1	N	N	N	N
52	Card Sound Bridge-West Ramp	Card Sound Road, West side of bridge	Key Largo	1/1	N	N	N	N
53	Alabama Jacks-*under construction*	58000 Card Sound Road	Key Largo					

CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER

Lobster art copyright by Dianne Renne Peebles

- Caribbean spinny lobsters are closely related to crabs, shrimp and crayfish. They are often called crayfish, crawfish, langosta, Florida lobster, and bugs.
- Spiny lobsters can reach a maximum size between 9-10 inches (carapace length) and weigh between 15 and 20 pounds.
- Adult spiny lobsters live in the caverns and caves of coral reef and hardbottom areas, hiding during the day and emerging at night to hunt and eat.
- A valid Florida saltwater fishing license and crawfish stamp is required for the harvest of spiny lobsters.
- Harvest of spiny lobsters is prohibited in the following areas: Everglades National Park, FKNMS Sanctuary Preservation Areas and Special Use Areas (Research Only), Biscayne Bay-Card Sound Lobster Sanctuary, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park (two day sport lobster season), Pennekamp Lobster Exclusion Zones (regular lobster season, zones identified by white and orange buoys), and artificial habitats within state waters (does not include artificial reefs).
- For more information about harvesting spiny lobster, please visit http://myfwc.com/RULESANDREGS/Saltwater_Regulations_lobster.htm.

BIRDS OF THE KEYS

The Keys attract a remarkable variety and number of birds. Most spectacular are the great breeding colonies where thousands of birds of some 25 species-including pelicans, cormorants, herons, egrets, ibis, spoonbills, terns, and skimmers-come to rear their young. These large colonies are found on islands, where nests are safe from predators and disturbance. Mud flats and seagrass meadows provide a bountiful fishing ground for resident, migrant, and wintering shorebirds or herons. Open waters are habitat for loons, grebes, and ducks. Maintaining these bird populations in a growing metropolitan area is challenging. Many species are declining, and some have virtually disappeared due to loss and disruption of habitat.

You Can Help -

- Observe posted signs that identify breeding colonies. Don't go ashore! And don't let dogs run loose in these areas.
- Gulls, terns, and skimmers may nest at unmarked sites. If you discover a cloud of birds circling noisily above your picnic, you may be in a colony. Carefully pick up your belongings and leave, and then see where the birds settle. Choose a spot 100 yards away and enjoy the view.
- If you are fishing and a bird becomes entangled in your gear, carefully remove the hook and monofilament line. Or if you're walking along the beach, pick up any stray fishing line and dispose of it properly. Birds and other animals that ingest or become entangled in fishing line may die.
- Report injured seabirds that require assistance. Consult the Resource Directory for appropriate listings.
- Stay clear of small islands that may harbor nesting colonies and of areas where flocks of feeding birds are visible. Operators of personal watercraft, wave-runners, and airboats should be aware that the noise and prop-wash from their vessels disturb wildlife and may disrupt nesting and feeding.
- Remember: The best way to observe and enjoy these beautiful birds is by being quiet and moving slowly.

SEA TURTLES - YOU CAN HELP

- Never approach sea turtles coming ashore or disturb nesting sea turtles or hatchlings. Turtles produce many eggs, but few hatchlings survive the difficult journey back to the sea.
- Preserve nesting beaches and nearshore habitats, such as seagrass beds and coral reefs.
- Beachfront property owners should turn off exterior lights in areas where nesting takes place. Bright lights discourage nesting sea turtles from coming ashore and may disorient hatchlings.
- Support public and private efforts to protect sea turtles and their habitats.

Legend

- Land
- Mangroves
- Coral Reef
- MANAGED AREAS
- State Park
- Aquatic Preserve
- Existing Management Area
- WATER DEPTH
- Depth Contour (in feet)
- Exposed at Mean Lower Low Water
- Bridges
- Fixed Bridge (Vertical Clearance)
- Bascule Bridge (Vertical Clearance when closed)
- 36 Mile Marker
- Tidal Flat/Shallow Banks
- Seagrass
- Hardbottom
- National Wildlife Refuge/ National Park
- Biscayne Bay/Card Sound Lobster Sanctuary
- Marine Zone (Sanctuary Preservation Area, Special Use Area)
- Dredged Channel
- Spoil Area
- Marinas
- Pumpout Facility
- Boat Ramps
- Artificial Reefs
- Anchorages
- Mooring Buoys (Number of Buoys in Area)
- Navigation Markers
- FKNMS Shipwreck Trail

NOTE: Anchorages may not be suitable for boats greater than 35-feet in length or with drafts deeper than four feet. Most anchorages do not provide protection from wind blowing in all directions. Before using, captains should consult weather reports, cruising guides, nautical charts, and knowledge of local surroundings before using.

This guide is not intended for navigational use. For local navigation, see NOAA Charts 11462, 11463, and 11464.

Artificial Reefs

No	REEF NAME	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (ft)	LATITUDE LONGITUDE
17	Alva Chapman Reef	Concrete boat hulls, dredge Pipe	220'	25° 22.06' N 80° 09.10' W
18	*Doc de Milly*	287' Steel ship	140'	25° 17.67' N 80° 07.88' W
19	*Berry Patch*	155' Steel ship	150'	25° 22.13' N 80° 07.81' W
20	*Hugo's April Fool*	115' Steel ship	145'	25° 22.03' N 80° 07.82' W
21	Jet Fighters	3 F-4 Phantom jet fuselages	80'	25° 22.05'N 80° 07.62' W
22	*Scott Mason-Chiate*	297' Steel ship	240'	25° 23.09' N 80° 07.10' W
23	*Santa Rita*	200' Steel ship	245'	25° 23.25' N 80° 05.54' W
24	*Belcher* Barge	85' Steel barge	120'	25° 24.78' N 80° 07.15' W

NOTE: There are many more artificial reefs in the offshore waters of Monroe and Miami-Dade counties that are not shown on this map. Log on to MyFWC.com/conservation/Conserv_Progs_Habitat_Saltwater_AR.htm for a complete listing of artificial reefs in this area, as well as the rest of Florida.

Version 1.1, 2011

About This Guide

This guide includes a map of the Lower Florida Keys that depicts seagrasses, artificial reefs, aquatic preserves, and boat ramps open to the public. Also featured is information on habitats and animals, popular sport fish, boating safety and protocol, and a resource directory.

The **Boating and Angling Guide to the Lower Florida Keys** was produced by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. We welcome your comments and inquiries. Please address any comments to:

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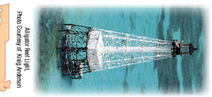
Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
Marine Fisheries
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
http://MyFWC.com/boating_guides
Boating_Guides@MyFWC.com

Map designed and produced by Chris Anderson, Kathleen O'Keffe and Henry Norris, of the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. The Florida Keys Tourist Development Council, the Florida Keys Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration provided partial funding for this guide. The Sport Fish Restoration Program collects money from taxes on fishing equipment and boat fuel and then distributes those funds to projects that improve fishing and boating opportunities and protect aquatic resources. Support was also provided in part by Reef Grants Program, which is funded by proceeds from the sale of the Protect Our Reefs specialty license plate. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is not responsible for omissions, misrepresentations, or factual errors.

NOT FOR RESALE
2011

A Boating and Angling Guide to the Upper Florida Keys

Key Largo Lighthouse, the Transmission Sign at Station, Photo Courtesy of NOAA


Alligator Reef Light, Photo Courtesy of Vicky Anderson

Resource Directory

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Call Phesan
FWC Law Enforcement (West Palm Beach)
To report spills, marine violations, boating accidents, turtle or manatee injuries or strandings: 727-896-8626
Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (St. Petersburg)
For information about resources and research around Florida: 1-800-636-0511
Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (Marathon)
For information about Lat/Long, tide sheet or sunset times: VHF Channel 16
U.S. Coast Guard
Search and Rescue Station (24 hr. emergency service) 305-292-8811
National Response Center
To report oil spills and maritime emergencies: 800-424-8802
Report U.S. Foundation Hotline
To report illegal activities: 1-800-424-0922
NOAA Weather Service Broadcast
Miami
Tel. 3264-Key
Key West
To receive the latest local and offshore weather forecast: VHF Channel 1
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Headquarters, Key West
Upper Keys Region, Key Largo
National Parks and Refuges
Dry Tortugas National Park
Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge/ National Key Deer Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
For information federally managed areas in the Keys: 305-872-2324
State Parks
Bahia Honda State Park/ Bahia Honda Rest Area
Long Key State Park
John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
For information state parks in the Keys: 305-451-1202
Marine Maintenance
Marine Laboratory
Tropical Research Laboratory
For information about marine research in the Keys and reporting of unusual biological events: 305-664-4615
Marine Mammal Stranding (Middle Keys)
Florida Keys Wildlife Rescue Inc.
For assistance with injured wildlife: 305-852-4486
305-872-1882
305-743-2270
305-296-2992
305-296-2229
305-451-1202
305-664-4615
305-289-2690
305-852-4486
305-872-1882

Welcome to the Florida Keys

Welcome to the Florida Keys, a 138-mile-long string of islands extending south and west of the Florida mainland from Key Largo to the Dry Tortugas. The Keys are home to North America's only coral barrier reef. This natural wonder, the third-longest coral barrier reef in the world, lies about six miles seaward of the Florida Keys and stretches over 200 miles from Biscayne Bay to the Dry Tortugas. Several hundred species of fish and corals can be found within this ecosystem. Seven hundred species of fish and corals can be found within this ecosystem. Coastal waters, lakes, mangroves, and beaches that compose this delicate and unique ecosystem.

If traveling by car to the Keys you may suddenly find yourself on a two-lane road heading right through pristine wilderness. You are on the fabled 18-mile stretch. No side traffic, no development here. View this passage as a metamorphosis between the raucous hubbub of the mainland and the tranquil laid-back atmosphere of the fabulous Florida Keys: land of fishing, sailing and couch fritters. If you are traveling by boat, you may note that the water becomes more and more clear as you move from the mainland to the Florida Keys. The Keys are divided by both geography and demography into four distinct units: Upper Keys, Middle Keys, Lower Keys, and Key West. You have entered a marine-oriented environment like none other. Boats, marinas, and marine-related activities are everywhere. In recognition of this important environment, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) was created in 1990. The sanctuary encompasses 2800 square nautical miles on both sides of the Florida Keys. Management in these state and federal waters is accomplished through a partnership between the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Enjoy the riches of the Florida Keys, and help protect them for others by practicing safe boating skills.

Native Habitats

Coral Reef and Hard Bottom

Coral reefs are part of an interdependent ecosystem that includes mangroves and seagrasses. Bank reefs and patch reefs occur on the ocean side, whereas hard bottom coral communities are common on the bay side of the Florida Keys. Coral reefs contain more varieties of life than any other marine environments, rivaling even the rainforests on land.

The coral reef ecosystem of the Florida Keys is alive with an abundance of fish, stony corals, octocorals, sponges, jellyfish, anemones, snails, crabs, lobsters, rays, moray eels, sea turtles, dolphins, sea birds, and other sea life. The reef is home to many of Florida's threatened and endangered species.

Stony corals are actually composed of millions of tiny slow-growing animals called polyps. Each one secretes a calcareous exoskeleton that forms a coral colony. Some boulder corals require years to grow one inch. These coral colonies, as well as other calcium-producing plants and animals, cement together to form the reef structure. The reef can continually evolving as new organisms are colonize settle on top of the skeletons of older ones.

Seagrasses

Seagrasses are flowering underwater plants found at shallow depths in protected bays and lagoons and in patches along the continental shelf of the Gulf of Mexico. As a nursery environments, seagrasses support small fish, shrimp, and crabs that hide among the blades. Seagrasses also help stabilize shifting sands on the bottom of the bay and improve water clarity by trapping fine sediments and particles. Seagrasses are an important food source for many species. They provide food for crabs, manatees, and a variety of fish and habitat for grunts, pinfish, fire-feeding organisms and foraging sea life such as sea urchins and sea cucumbers. Seagrasses provide a nursery for pink shrimp, lobster, snappers, and other sea life. They filter the water by trapping sediments, releasing oxygen, and stabilizing the ocean bottom with their roots.

Although they were once plentiful, seagrass beds now cover less than half of their original acreage, a loss triggered by dredge-and-fill activities and by water pollution. Seagrass habitat is severe in areas. Boats that cruise into shallow waters may dredge up the bottom, uproot seagrasses, and cut sandy trenches that may stay barren for years. The noisy approach of a boat or personal watercraft can disturb nesting birds, exposing the eggs or nestlings to predators and the intense sun. In addition, disturbance of shallow feeding grounds can lead to the starvation of birds. To help preserve seagrasses, stay within marked channels and avoid shallow grass beds. If seagrasses are in your way, slow down, keep your motor, tilt it up, and poke or push your boat through the bed.