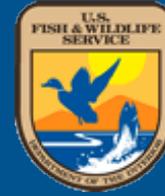


National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection Working Group

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary: Existing Regulations and Marine Zoning

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Council Lead

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Goals of this Presentation



Review current resources and status:

- Objectives for this Working Group
- Habitats and resources
- Why were areas originally designated
- Existing Wildlife Management Areas- regulations
- Management Issues and Responses

Objectives



- Evaluate existing Wildlife Management Areas for effectiveness
- Develop recommendations considering existing regulations and zoning to further protect seagrass and critical shallow water habitats in FKNMS.
- Address concentrated uses that diminish or destroy habitats
- Identify where high impact activities known to occur should be allowed
- Identify seagrass and shallow water habitat areas for exclusion to allow for research control areas
- Evaluate mangrove habitat protection for bird nesting.
- Reduce damage to natural resources from improper vessel salvage methods.



Marine Zoning Action Plan

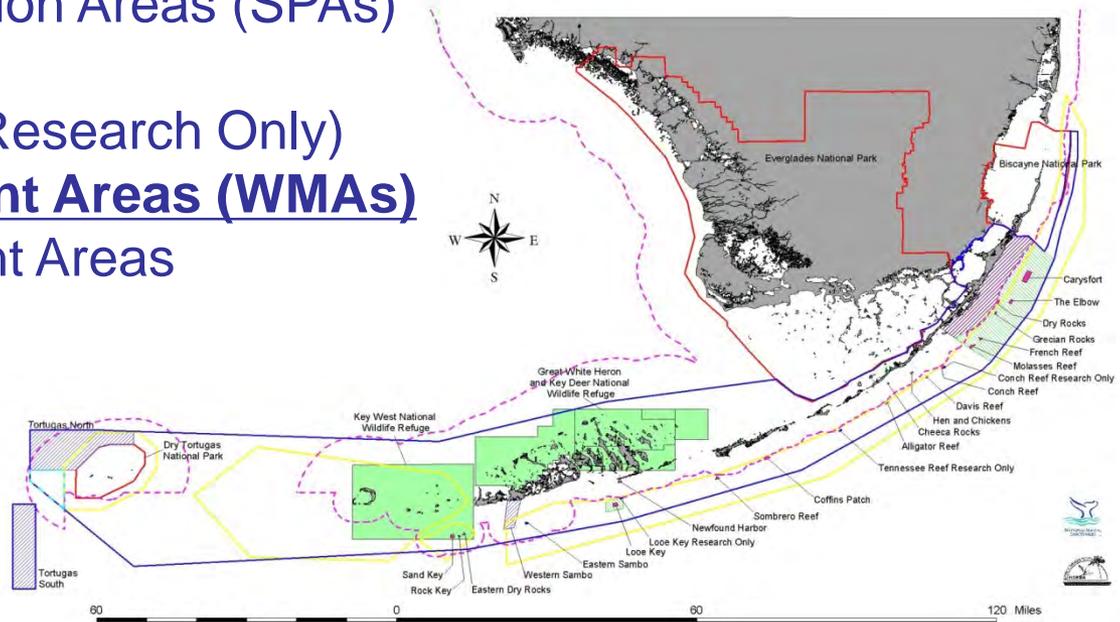


Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary & Protection Act (1990)

- Develop a management plan and form Advisory Council
- Use of temporal and geographic zoning

Management Plan, Zoning Scheme, and Regulations (1997)

- Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs)
- Ecological Reserves
- Special-use Areas (Research Only)
- **Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)**
- Existing Management Areas



Current Wildlife Management Areas



Minimize disturbance to especially sensitive or endangered wildlife and their habitats.

- bird nesting, resting, or feeding areas
- turtle-nesting beaches
- sensitive habitats

Access restrictions

- no-access buffers
- no-motor zones
- idle-speed only/no-wake zones
- closed zones
- Some restrictions may apply to time periods, others to areas.

27 in the Sanctuary

- 20 inside & co-managed with the USFWS
- 7 outside of USFWS



Study Area & Map of Zones

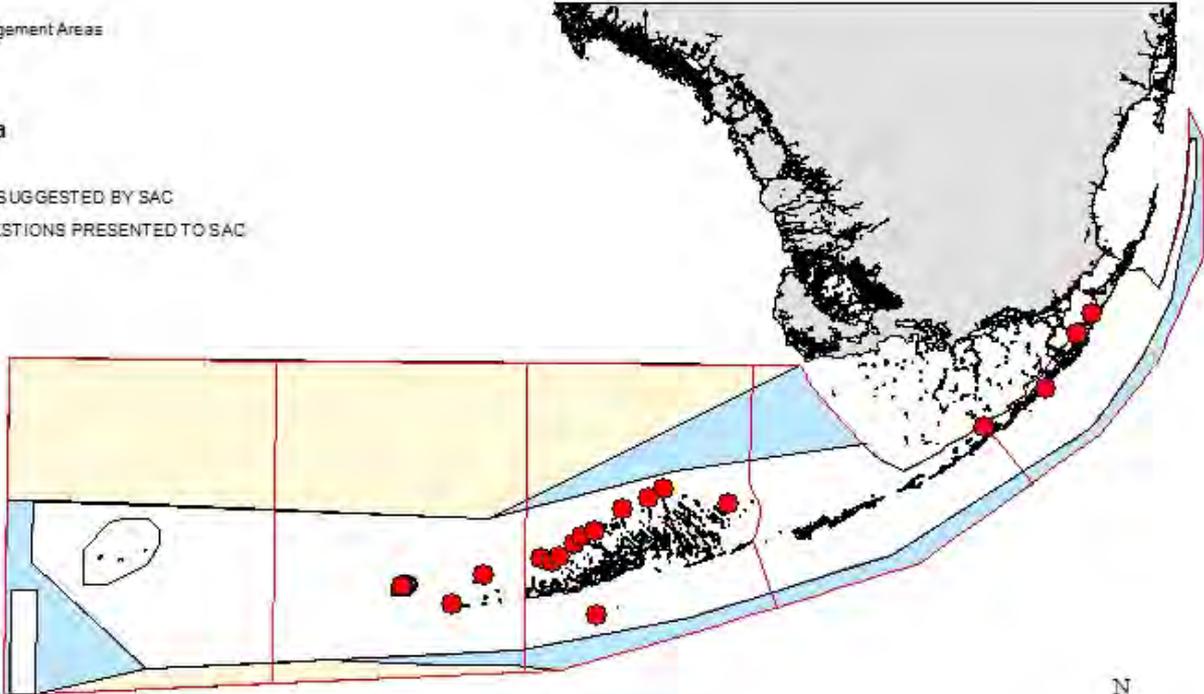


-  FKNMS Wildlife Management Areas
-  FKNMS Boundary
-  Florida Keys Regions

Proposed Study Area

ATTRIBUTE

-  ADDITIONAL AREAS SUGGESTED BY SAC
-  STUDY AREA SUGGESTIONS PRESENTED TO SAC
-  South Florida



Tropical Hardwood Hammock



Photo: Nancy Diersing



- Critical habitat for many plants
- Food, cover, roosting, and nesting sites for a wide variety of wildlife
- Critical habitat for numerous species of special concern



Photo: Nancy Diersing

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation



- Nursery grounds for many fish and invertebrates
- Vital to coral reef habitat
- Carbon storage decreasing effects of global warming
- Stabilize the seafloor preventing erosion

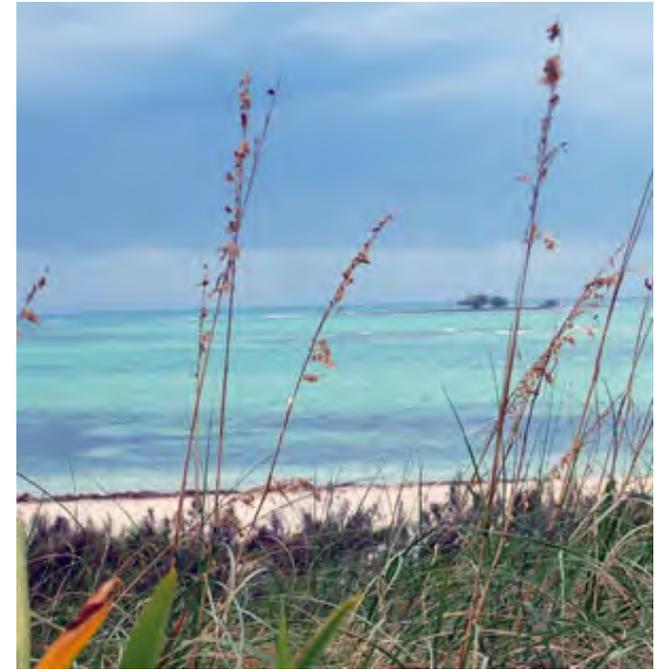


Mangroves



- Nursery for commercially important juvenile fish
- Habitat for crabs, shrimp, birds, and reptiles
- Carbon storage decreasing effects of global warming
- Provide nutrients to neighboring habitats like seagrass beds and coral reefs
- Stabilize the shorelines preventing erosion and protect against hurricanes

Beaches and Dunes



- Critical habitat for many species of special concern
- Nesting areas for turtles and many birds
- Plants stabilize shorelines to prevent erosion

Resources



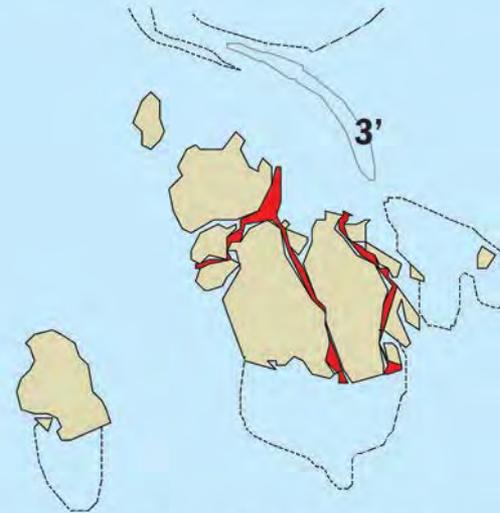
Idle Speed Only/No Wake



Operating a vessel at a speed greater than idle speed only/no wake is prohibited.

- Bay Keys
- Cayo Agua Keys
- East Content Keys
- Eastern Lake Surprise
- Lower Harbor Keys
- Marquesas Keys
- Mud Keys
- Snipe Keys
- West Content Keys

Cayo Agua Keys Wildlife Management Area



Idle-speed only/no wake zones are created in each of the navigable tidal creeks.

No-Motor Zone



Using internal combustion motors or engines for any purposes is prohibited. A vessel with an internal combustion motor or engine may access a “no-motor” zone only through the use of a push pole, paddle, sail, electric motor or similar means of propulsion.

- Bay Keys
- Big Mullet Key
- Cotton Key
- Cottrell Key
- Dove Key
- Marquesas Keys
- Rodriguez Key
- Snake Creek
- Snipe Keys
- Tavernier Key

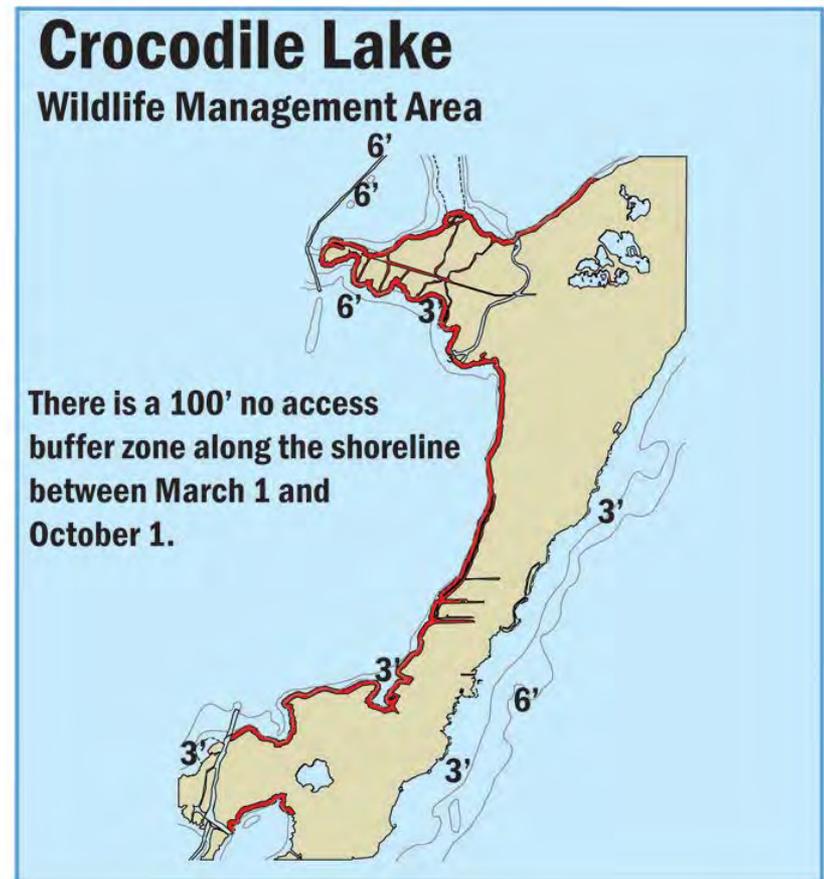


No Access Buffer



Entering the area by vessel is prohibited.

- Crocodile Lake (3/1-10/1)
- East Harbor Key
- Horseshoe Key
- Little Crane Key
- Little Mullet Key
- Marquesas Keys
- Marvin Key
- Pelican Shoal (4/1-8/31)
- Upper Harbor Key
- West Content Keys



Closed



Entering or using the area is prohibited.

- Boca Grande Key
- Dove Key
- Horseshoe Key
- Mud Key
- Sawyer Keys
- Woman Key



Photo: Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge

Resource Management Issues



- Degradation of seagrass habitat
- Loss of mangrove habitat
- Loss of shallow (< 10 m) *Acropora* and *Montastraea* corals
- Human activities impacting shorelines
- Decreases in biodiversity



Photo: USFWS

Resource Management Responses



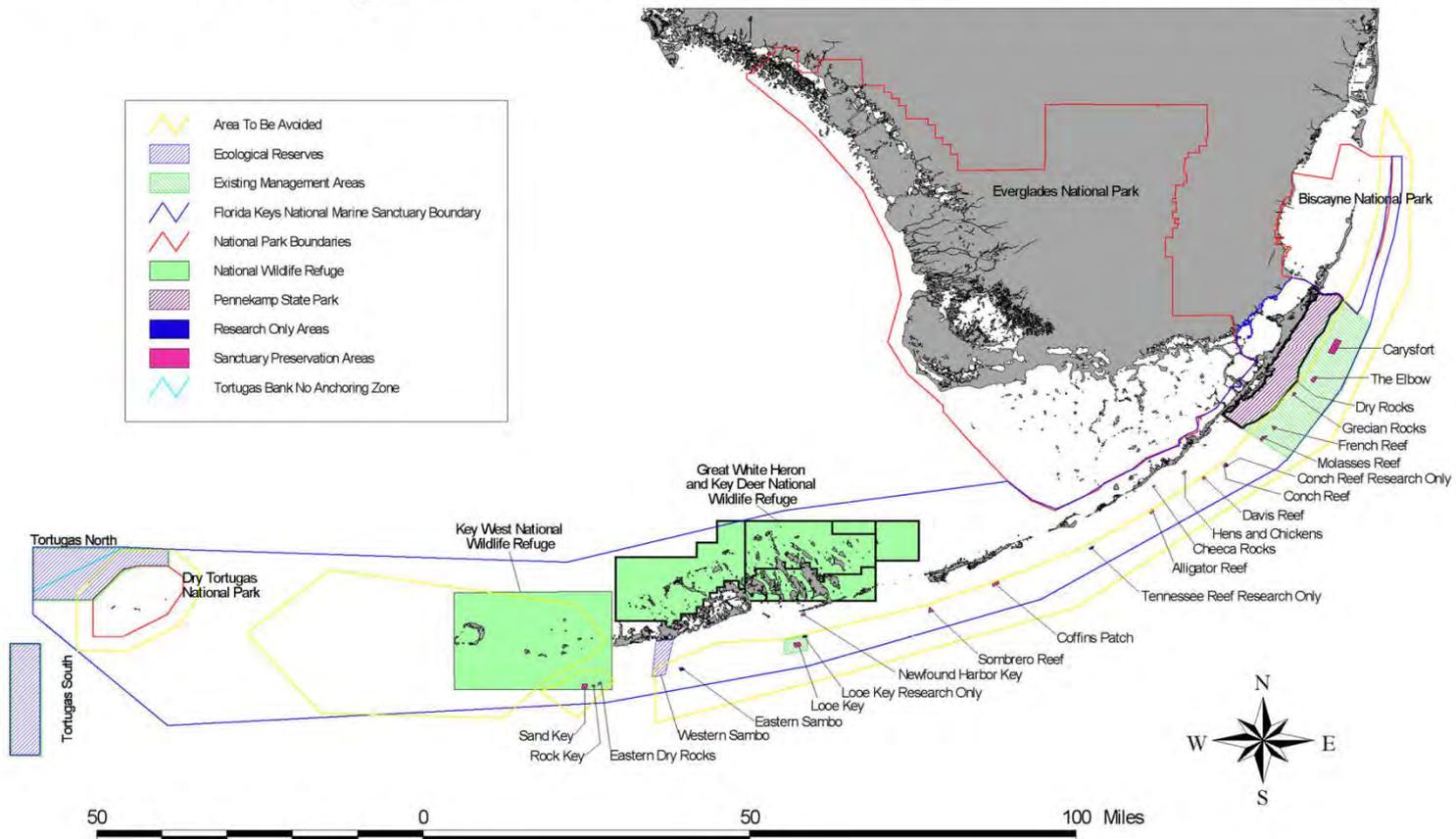
- Implementation of Water Quality Protection Program
- Marine zoning has been used to protect sensitive habitats
- Organized shoreline clean-ups and debris removal projects
- Restoration of vessel grounding sites
- Establishment of permitting and enforcement programs
- Designations of critical habitat



Marine Zoning in FKNMS



Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary



Working Group Resources



Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review: floridakeys.noaa.gov



Marine Zoning & Regulatory Review

Maps, Data, and GIS Resources:
http://ocean.floridamarine.org/fknms_zone_review



Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
Coral health in the sanctuary has declined over the past several



Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection Working Group
Hardbottom communities and



Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves, Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection Working Group