



# 2025 Final Restoration Blueprint: Lower Keys Region Maps

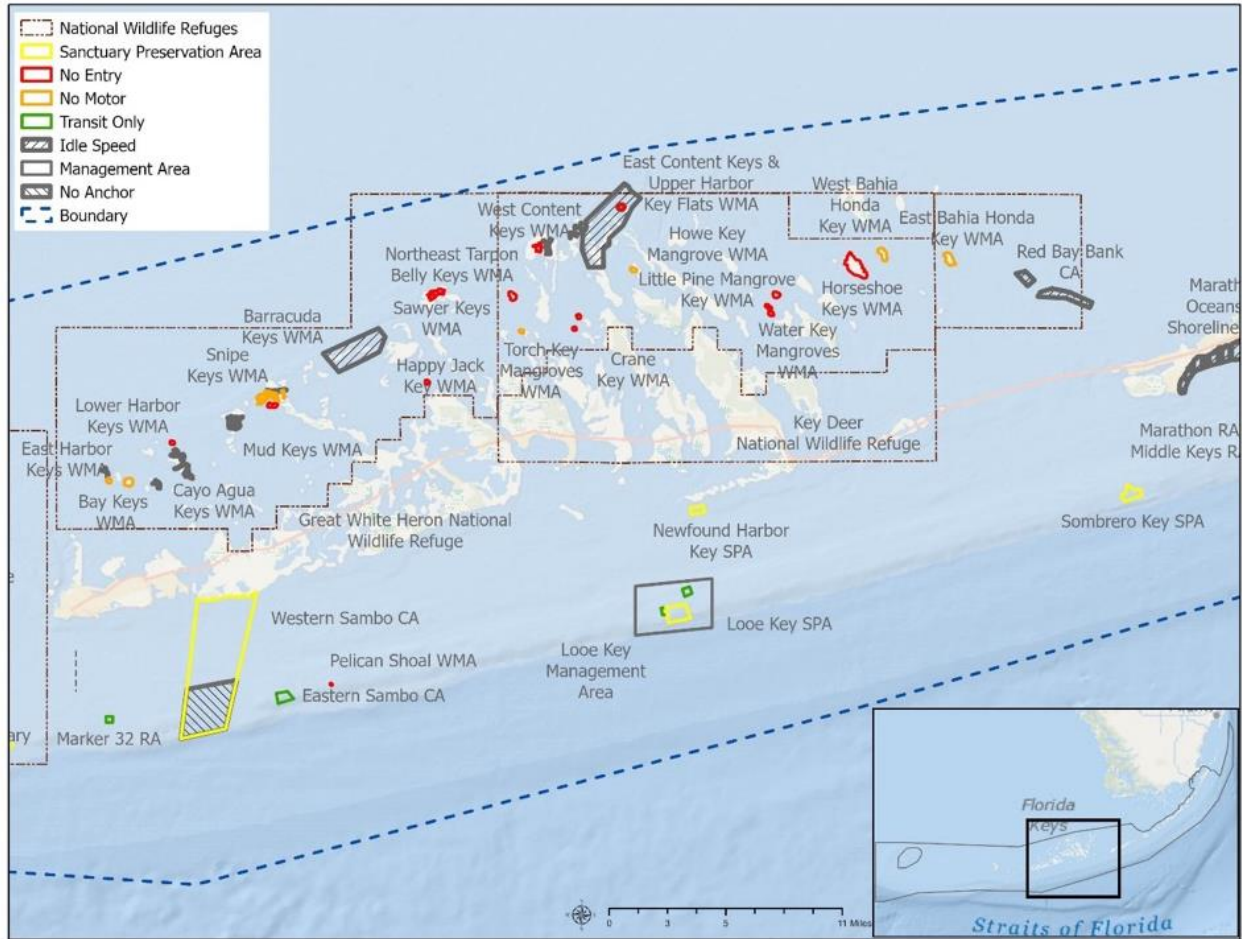


## Lower Keys Region: Marine Zones

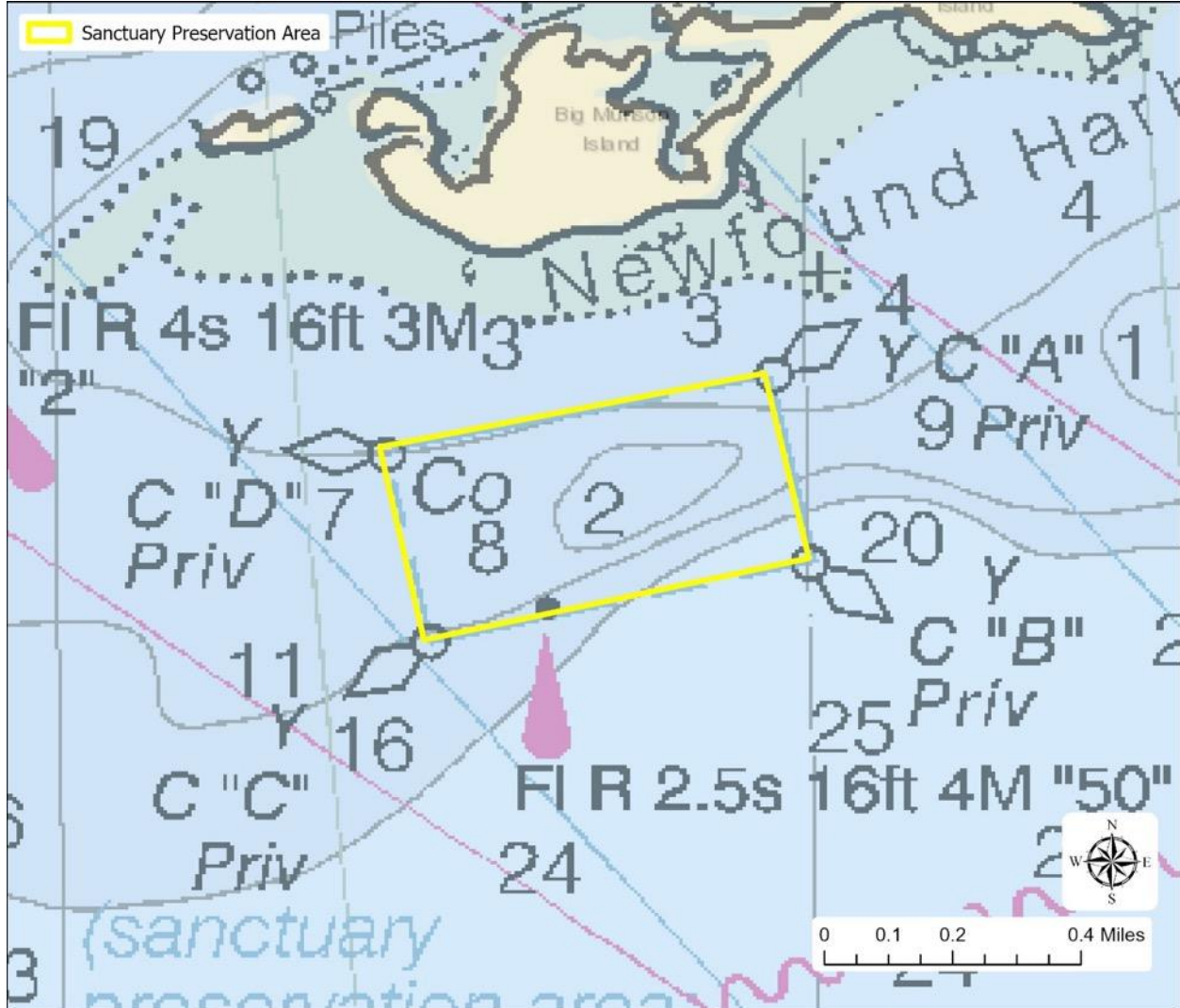
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Cover photo: Looe Key, a popular dive and snorkel site in the Lower Florida Keys, was designated a national marine sanctuary in 1981, and incorporated into Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in 1990. Photo: Shawn Verne

# Lower Keys Regional Map

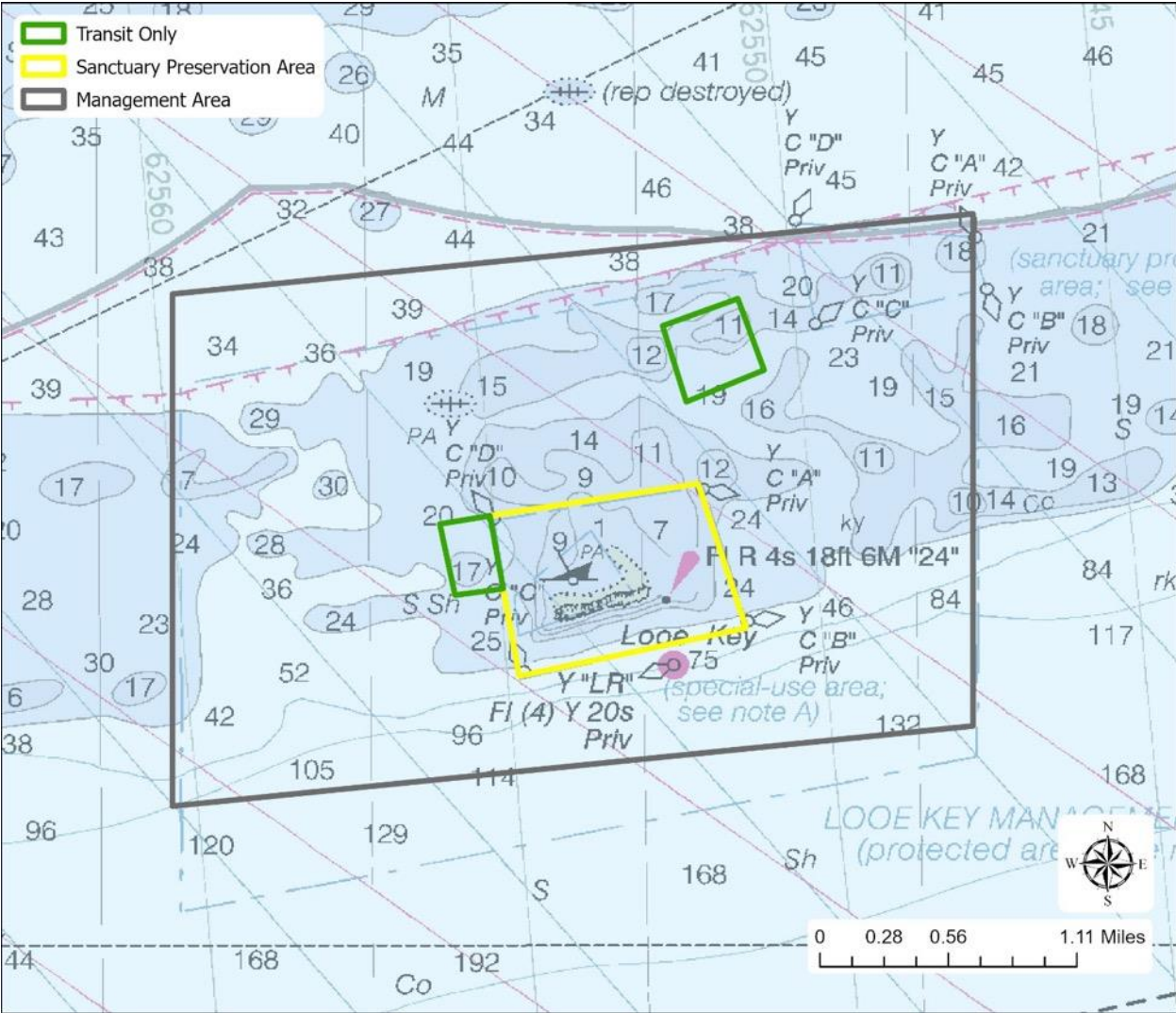


## Newfound Harbor Key Sanctuary Preservation Area




Newfound Harbor Sanctuary Preservation Area is an important nearshore patch reef in the Lower Keys that historically supports endangered staghorn and star corals. It is one of the seven Mission: Iconic Reefs Sites and serves as an important educational site. This sanctuary preservation area (SPA), approximately 0.17 square miles (107 acres), has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations include the addition of a no anchor regulation throughout this zone; all other existing regulations are maintained. Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

# Looe Key Management Area, Looe Key Sanctuary Preservation Area, and Looe Key East and Looe Key West Nursery Restoration Areas



Looe Key Management Area: a premier snorkel and dive destination for its high relief spur and groove habitats. Historically, this area supported rare and endangered species of coral. It is also home to a sanctuary preservation area, three restoration areas, and populations of threatened and endangered coral species. Designated in 1981 as a national marine sanctuary, Looe Key Management Area is approximately 6.9 square miles (4,425 acres). The 2025 updated regulations make no change to this zone’s area or regulations.

Looe Key SPA is one of the most visited sites in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and protects coral reef habitats and other important bottom communities like seagrass. Looe Key SPA, approximately 0.58 square miles (374 acres), has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations include the addition of a no anchor regulation throughout this

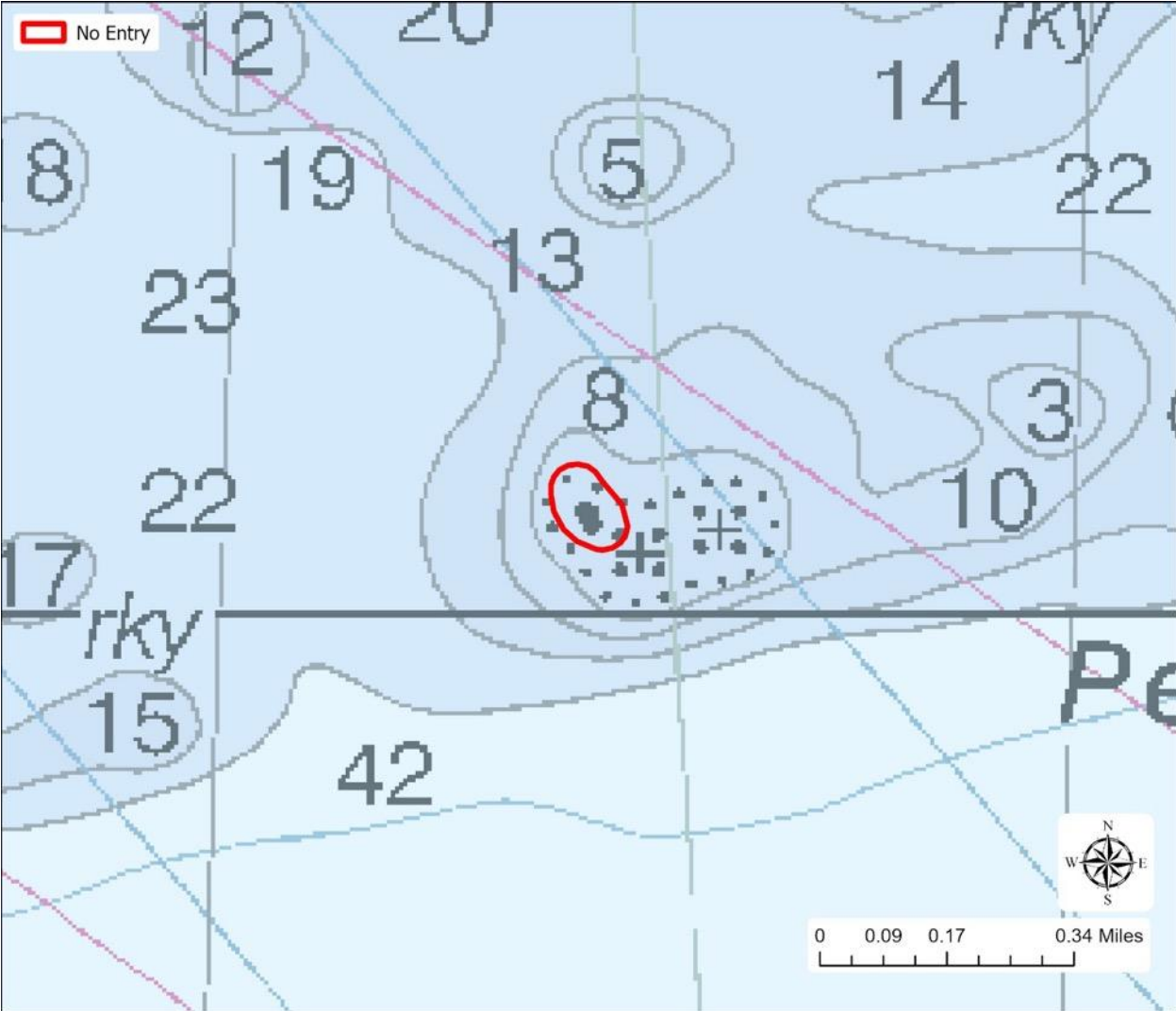


zone; all other existing regulations are maintained. Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

Looe Key East Nursery Restoration Area: The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new nursery restoration area that is approximately 0.12 square miles (69 acres).

Looe Key West Nursery Restoration Area: The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new nursery restoration area that is approximately 0.06 square miles (39 acres).

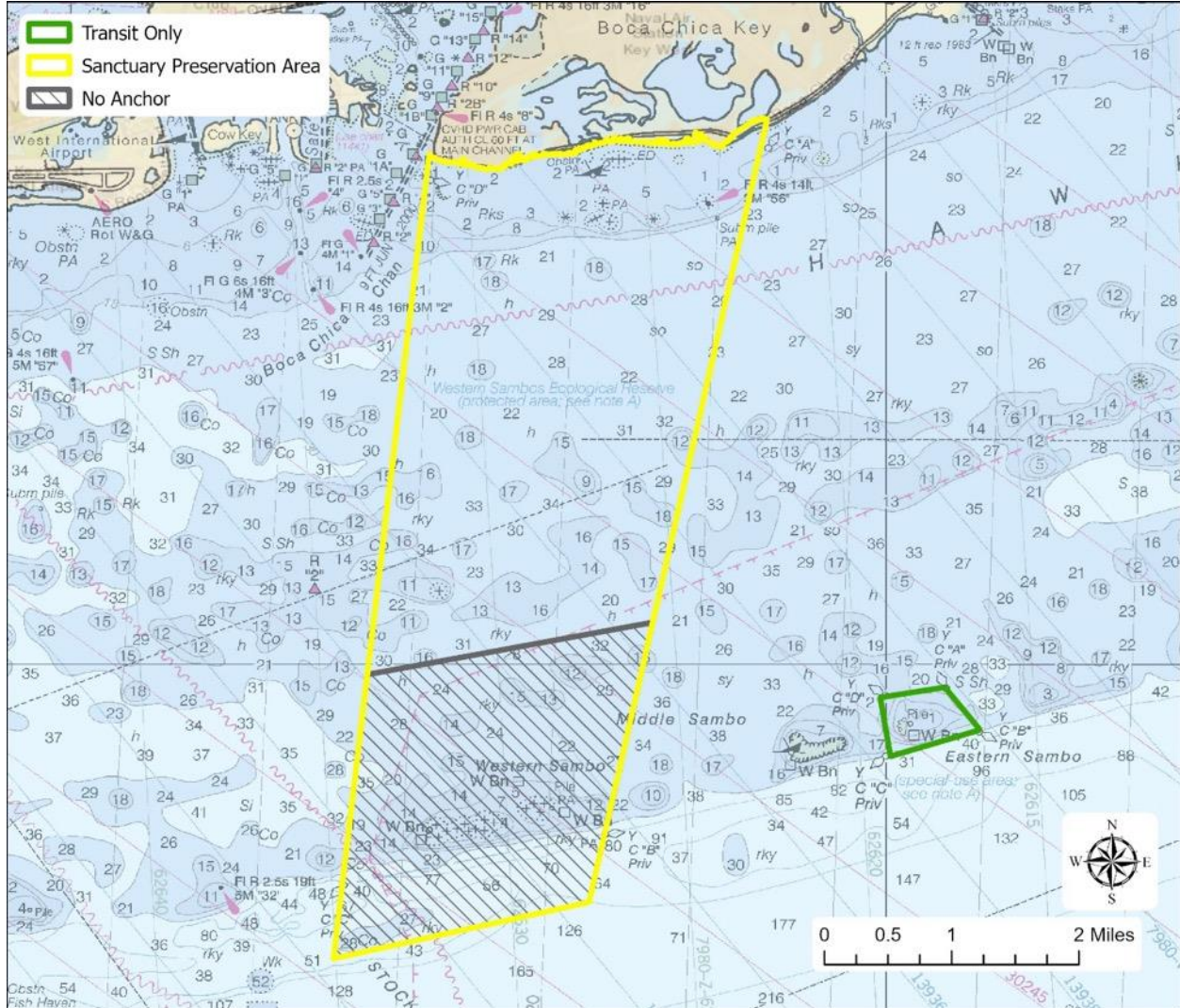
# Pelican Shoal Wildlife Management Area



This existing wildlife management area (WMA) maintains a minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect bird populations who may use this area to nest. This area is thought to be the last active ground-breeding location in Florida for roseate terns and endangered species.


This area is also managed as a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission critical wildlife area. Pelican Shoal WMA (approximately 0.01 square miles; 4.5 acres) has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations change the regulatory terminology of no access buffer to no entry to better align with regulatory terminology used by the state of Florida.

## Eastern Sambo and Western Sambo Conservation Areas



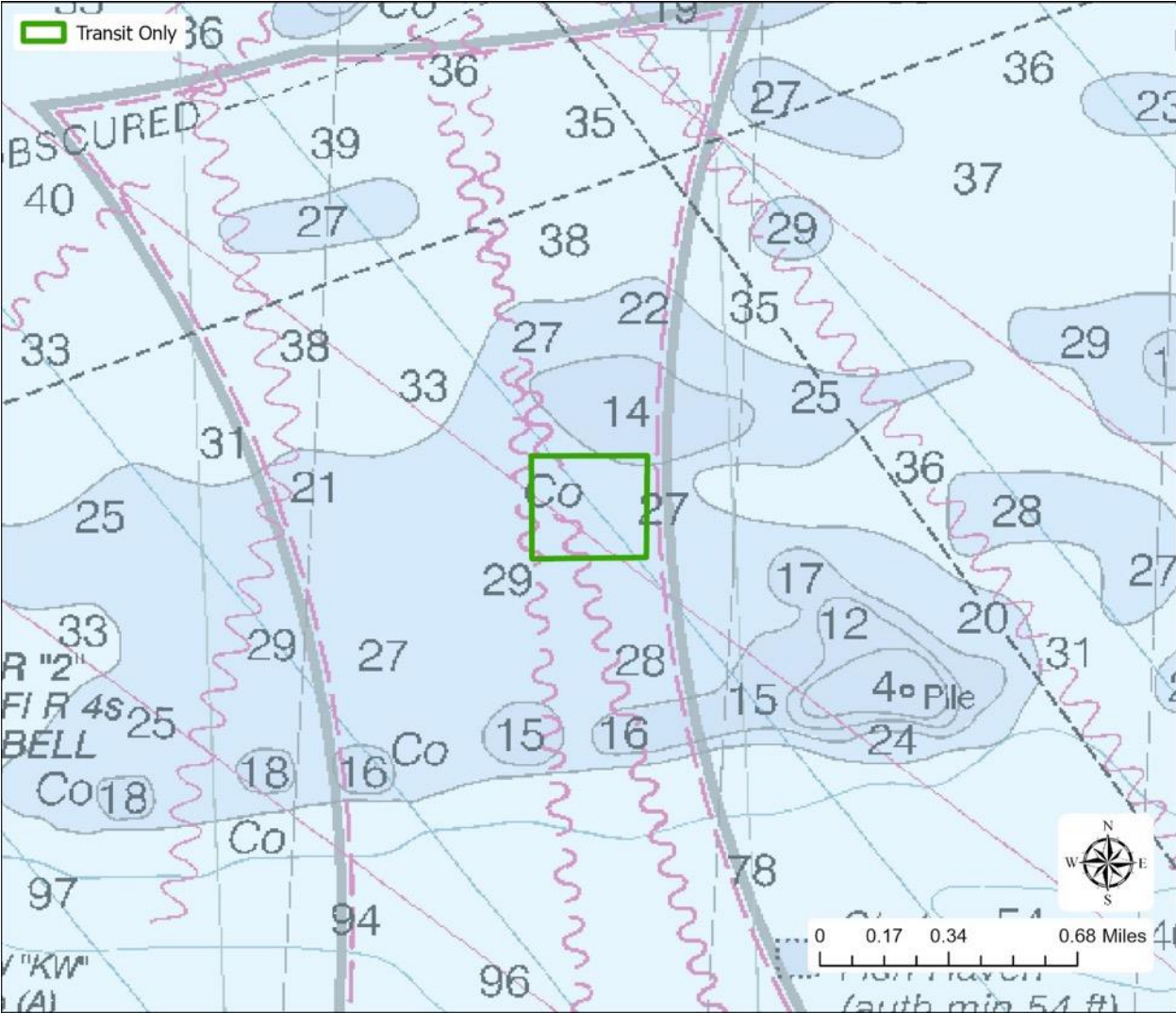
Eastern Sambo Conservation Area was historically home to threatened and endangered species of coral and is an important breeding site for queen conch. Eastern Sambo, approximately 0.24 square miles (154 acres) has been a marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations make no change to this zone’s area or regulations.

Western Sambo Conservation Area protects a large area of interconnected and diverse coral reefs, seagrass, and hardbottom communities. This zone provides a corridor for the migration of juvenile and adult fish and invertebrate populations as they move through their life cycle and protects a known lobster spawning area. Through the 2025 updated regulations, this zone is expanding to include deep reef coral assemblages and a no anchor zone was added in the area of greatest high relief coral to protect these corals from anchor damage. Western Sambo has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations include the addition of a no anchor regulation in the offshore high relief reef area, all other existing regulations are maintained. This zone is expanded by approximately 5.1 square miles (3,248 acres) for a total area of 16.7 square miles (10,679 acres); of this total area, the no anchor regulation would apply



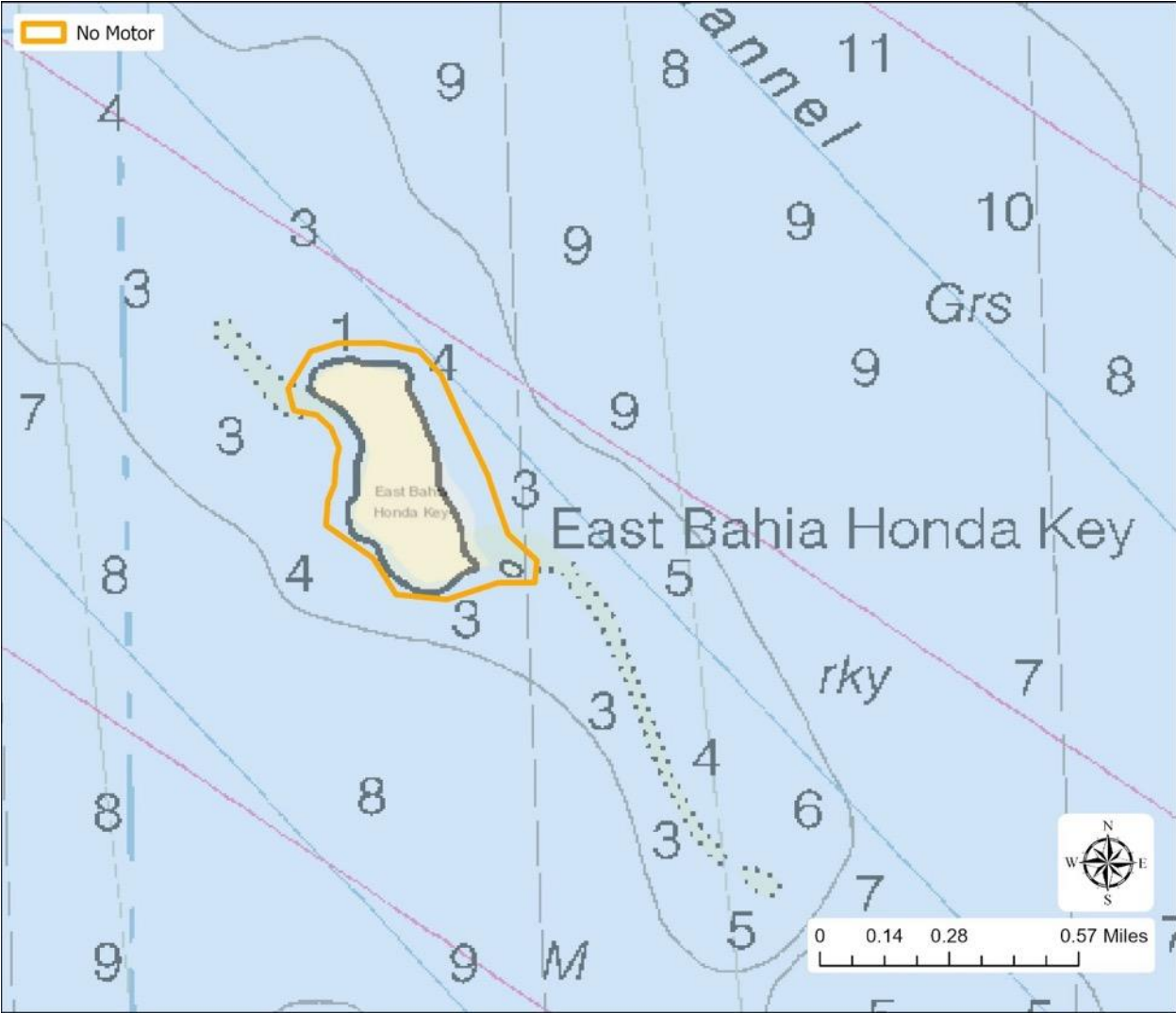
in approximately 4.1 square miles (2631 acres). Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

# Marker 32 Nursery Restoration Area



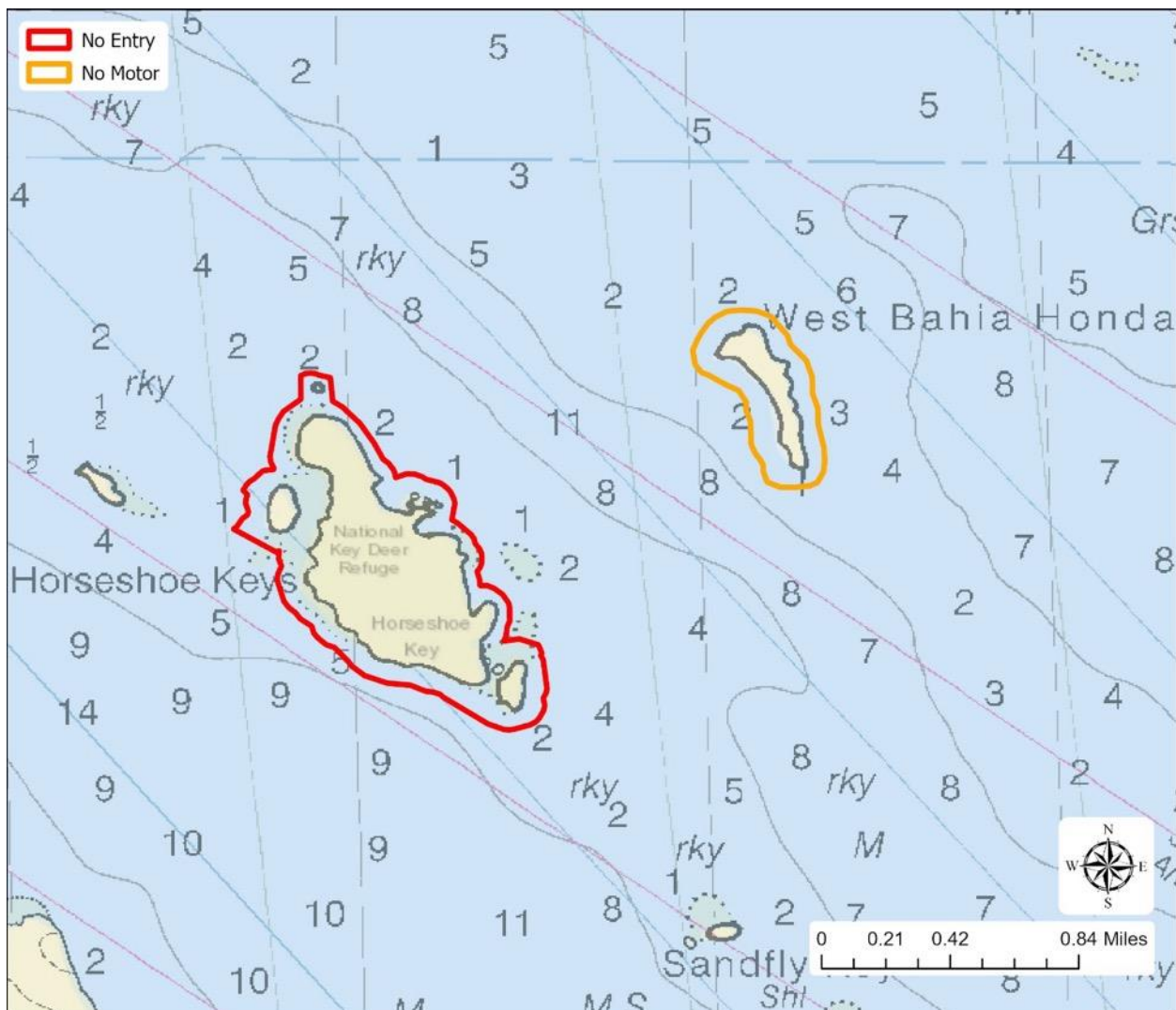
The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new nursery restoration area that is approximately 0.07 square miles (48 acres).

# East Bahia Honda Key Wildlife Management Area



This no motor zone is in effect to protect many birds who use this area to find food and nest. This area is an important nesting ground for white-crowned pigeons and great white herons. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no motor wildlife management area that is approximately 0.8 square miles (52 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge.

## West Bahia Honda Key and Horseshoe Keys Wildlife Management Area



**West Bahia Honda Key WMA:** This no motor zone is in effect to protect wading birds, white-crowned pigeons, and bald eagles who use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no motor wildlife management area that is approximately 0.9 square miles (58 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.

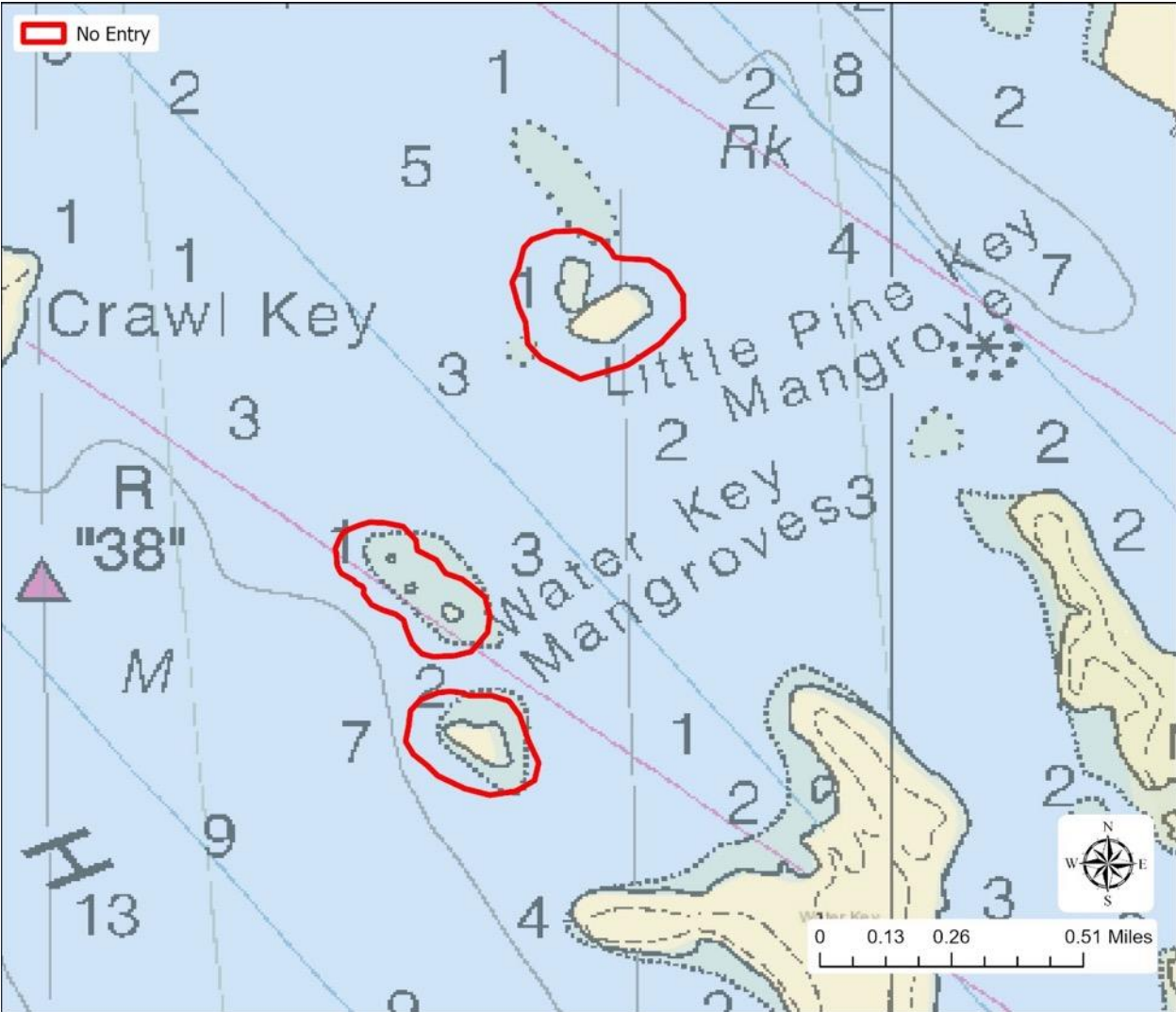
**Horseshoe Keys WMA:** This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect birds like white-crowned pigeons, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. Horseshoe Key WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997.

The 2025 updated regulations expand this zone slightly from approximately 0.17 square miles (107 acres) to approximately 0.22 square miles (134 acres) and changes the regulatory terminology of no access buffer to no entry to better align with regulatory terminology used by



the state of Florida. This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

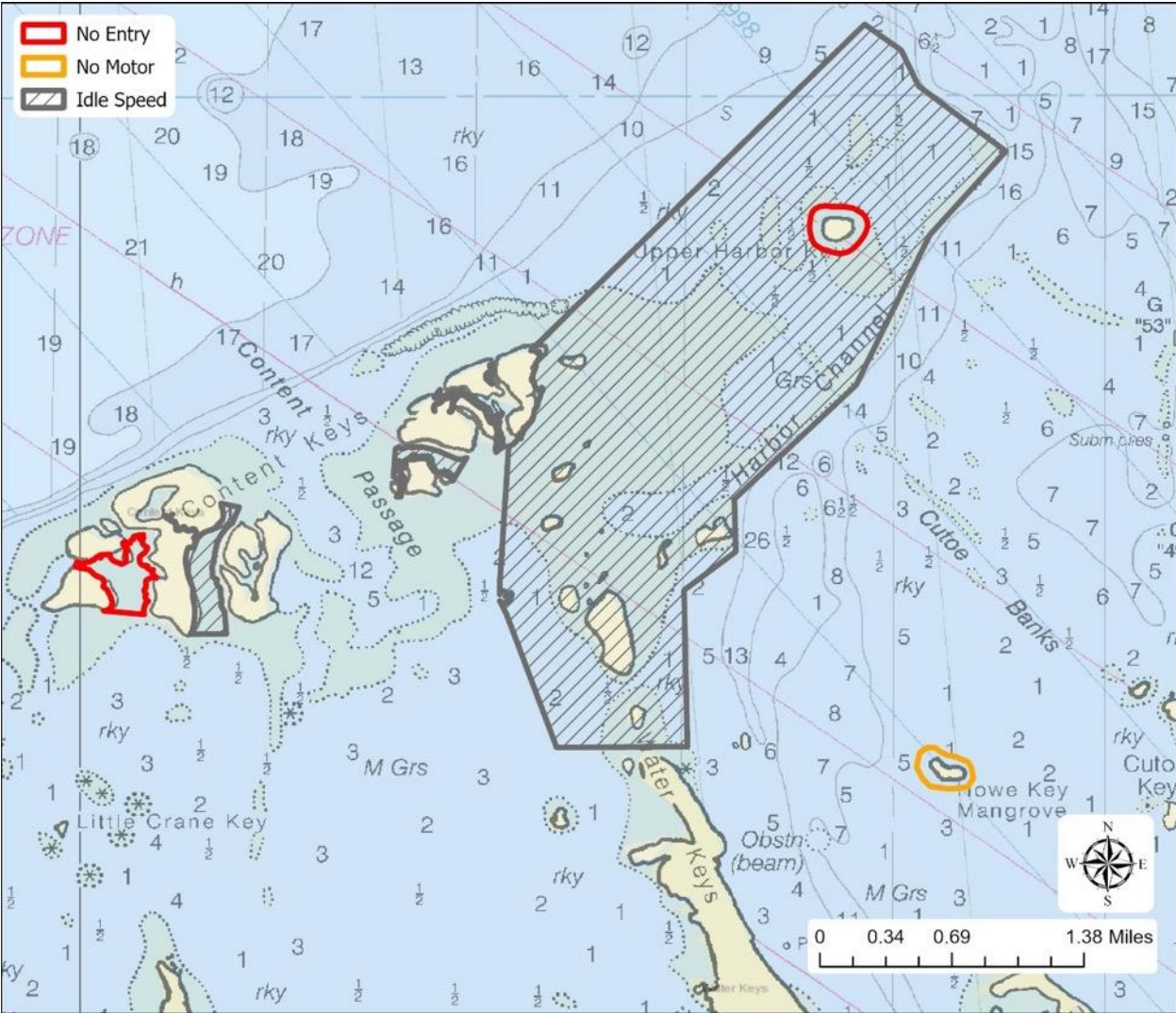
# Little Pine Key Mangrove and Water Key Mangroves Wildlife Management Area



Little Pine Key Mangrove WMA: This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect birds like reddish egrets, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.05 square miles (30 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.


Water Key Mangroves WMA: This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect birds like reddish egrets, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.07 square miles (44 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.

# East Content Keys and Upper Harbor Key Flats Wildlife Management Area, West Content Keys, and Howe Key Mangrove Wildlife Management Area



East Content and Upper Harbor Key Flats Wildlife Management Area: This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone around Upper Harbor Key is to protect birds like reddish egrets, great white herons, little blue herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The idle speed no wake for the surrounding flats is in effect to reduce prop scars and vessel groundings, which have impacted this area that is used by foraging birds.

Upper Harbor Key WMA (approximately 0.04 square miles; 24 acres) and East Content Keys WMA (approximately 0.03 square miles; 19 acres) have been sanctuary marine zones since 1997. At Upper Harbor Key, the 2025 updated regulations change the regulatory terminology of no access buffer to no entry to better align with regulatory terminology used by the state of Florida. The existing idle speed no wake area is expanded to encompass approximately 3.9

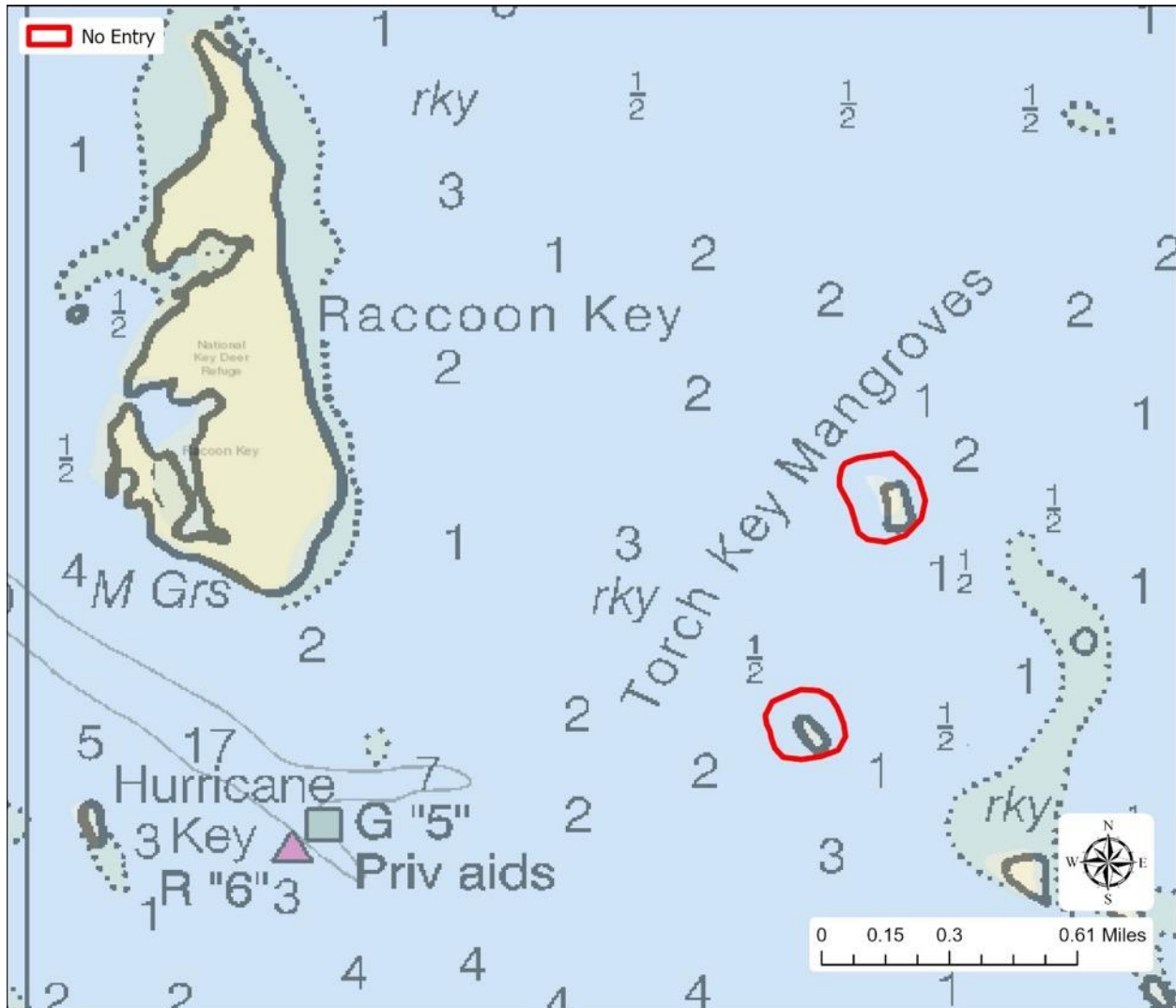


square miles (2, 468 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

West Content Keys: The idle speed and no wake regulations are in effect to reduce disturbance to shorebirds and wading birds who use this area to eat and rest. West Content Key WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997 and includes areas of idle speed no wake (approximately 0.08 square miles; 51 acres) and no entry (0.07 square miles; 44 acres). The 2025 updated regulations make no change to this zone other than changing the regulatory terminology of no access buffer to no entry to better align with regulatory terminology used by the state of Florida. This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

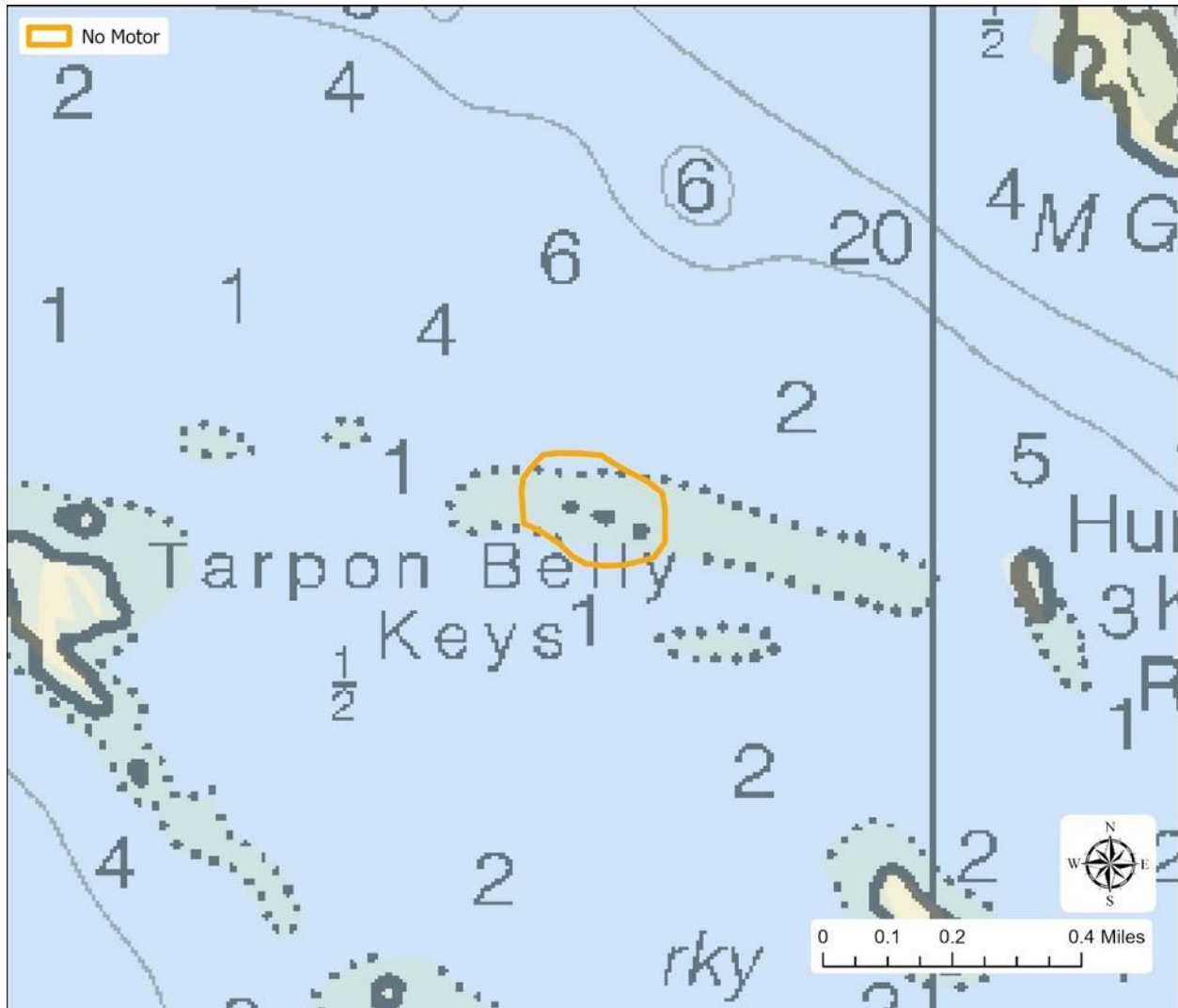
Howe Key Mangrove: This minimum 100-yard distance no motor zone is to protect birds like reddish egrets, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no motor wildlife management area that is approximately 0.04 square miles (23 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.

## Torch Key Mangroves Wildlife Management Area



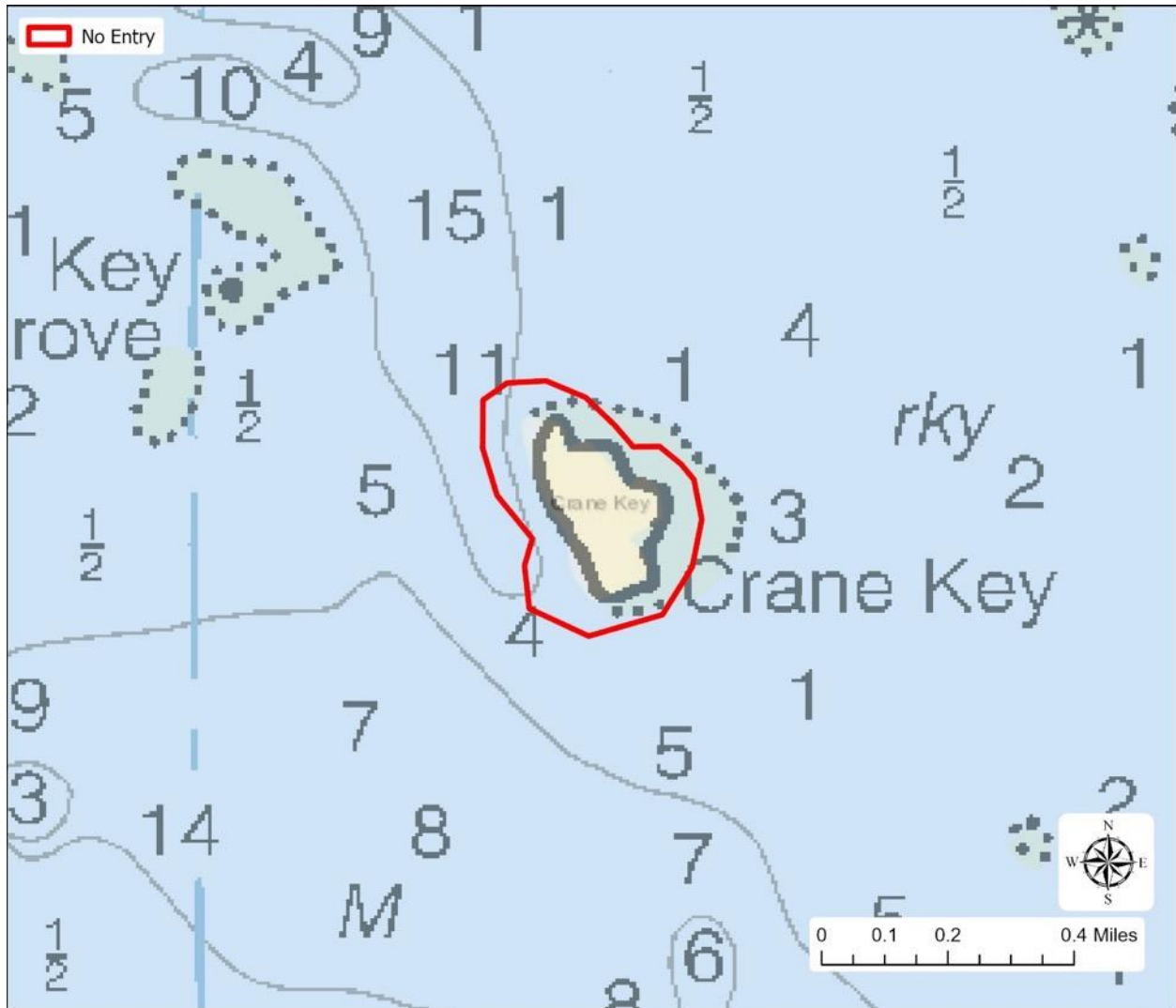
This minimum 100-yard distance no motor zone is to protect birds like reddish egrets, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.05 square miles (29 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.

## Northeast Tarpon Belly Keys Wildlife Management Area



A minimum 100-yard distance (i.e., 100-yard No Entry Zone) is needed to minimize disturbance to wading and migratory birds. This minimum 100-yard distance no motor zone is to protect birds like reddish egrets, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.03 square miles (16 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.

## Crane Key Wildlife Management Area

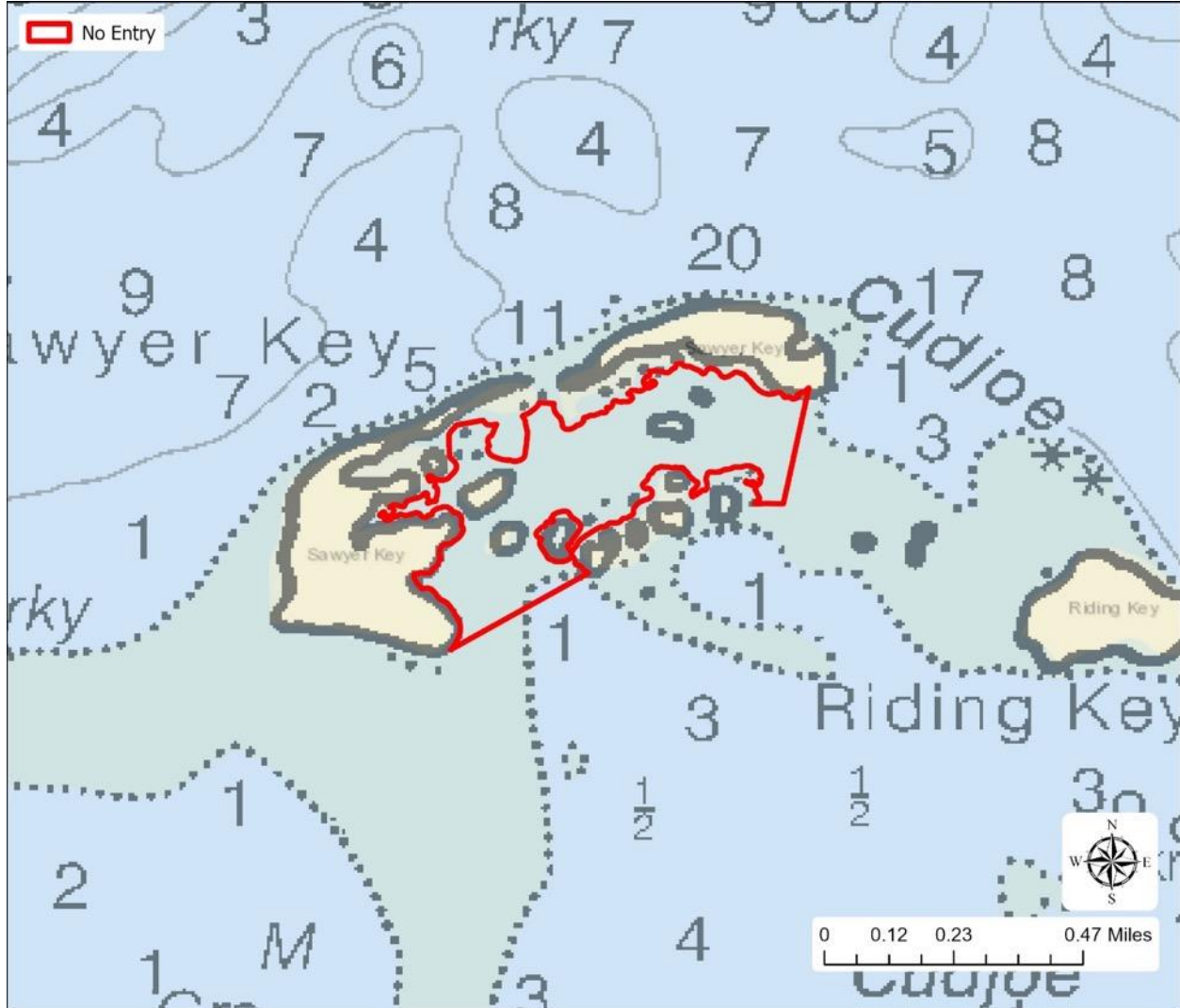


This minimum 100-yard distance no motor zone is to protect birds like magnificent frigatebirds, great white herons, and more who may use this area to nest, rest, and eat.

Crane Key has the highest post Hurricane Irma annual count of nesting great white herons in the backcountry. This additional no entry protection reduces flushing of birds from their nesting and roosting sites. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.05 square miles (34 acres). This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge.

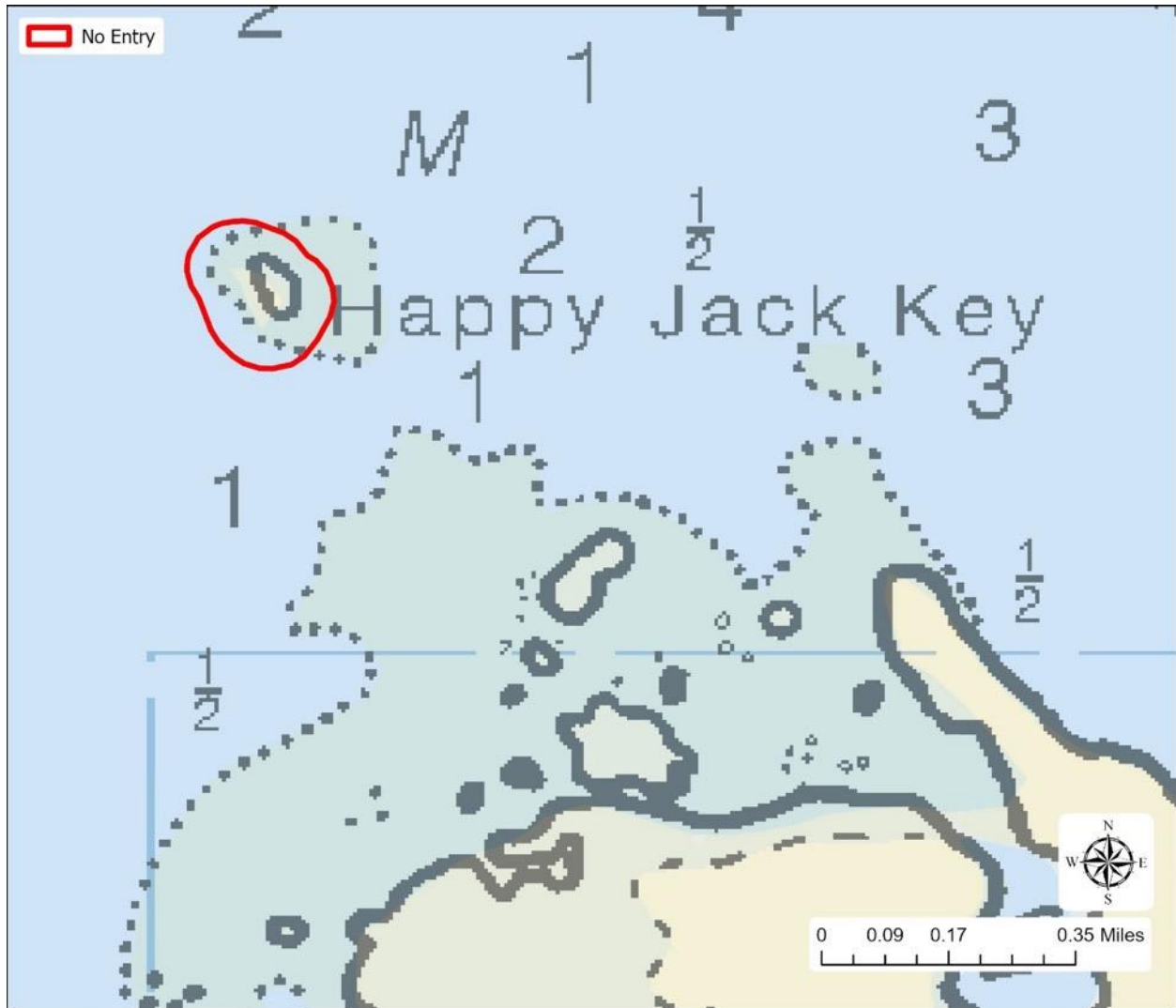
The 2025 updated regulations eliminates Little Crane Key WMA.

## Sawyer Key Wildlife Management Area



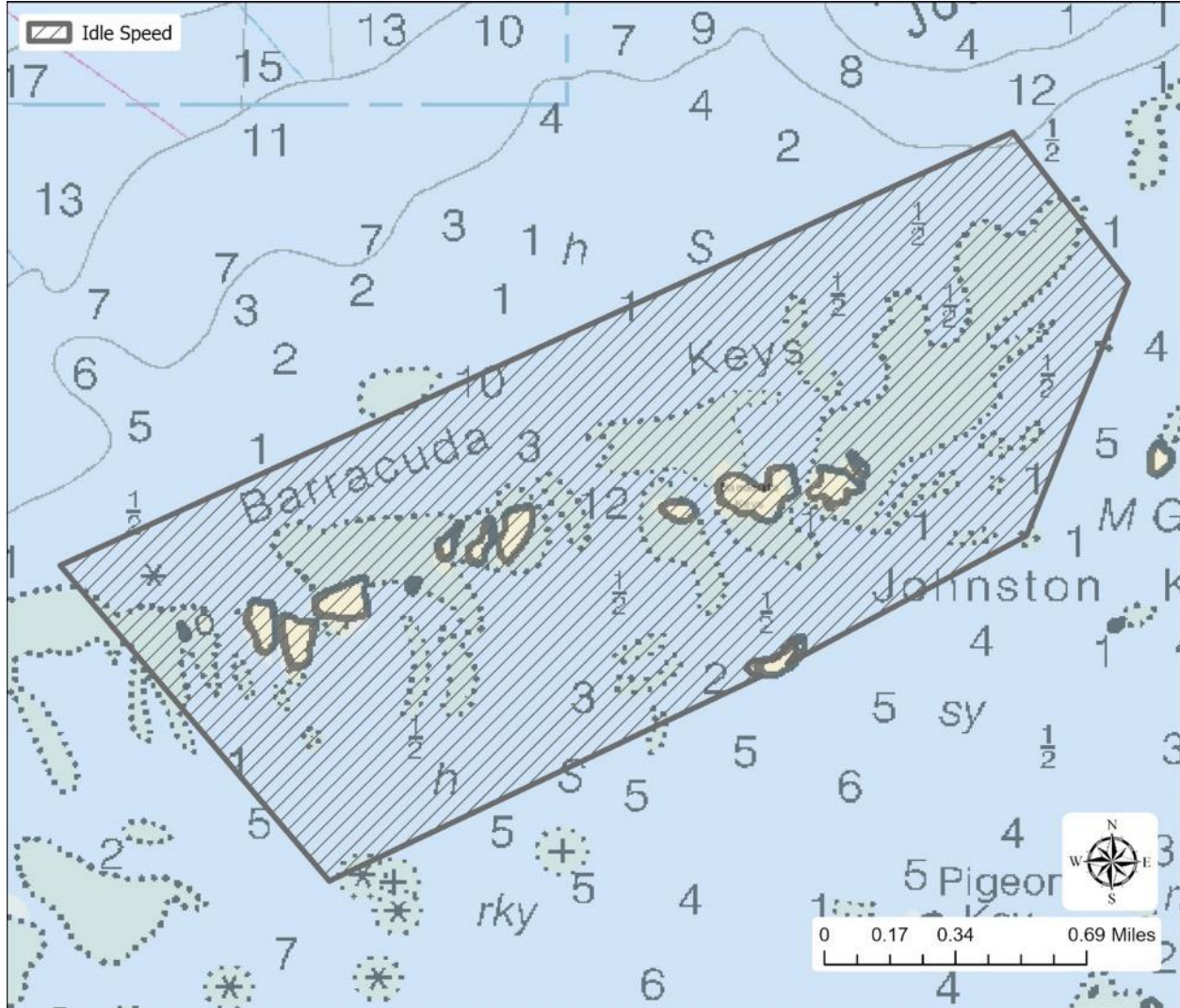
This existing no entry zone is designed to protect birds like osprey, shorebirds, and other bird populations who use this area to nest, rest, and eat. Sawyer Keys WMA (0.12 square miles; 77 acres) has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations make no change to this zone. This WMA is within the National Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

## Happy Jack Key Wildlife Management Area



This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is needed to protect wading birds, like reddish egrets, who use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.02 square miles (15 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge.

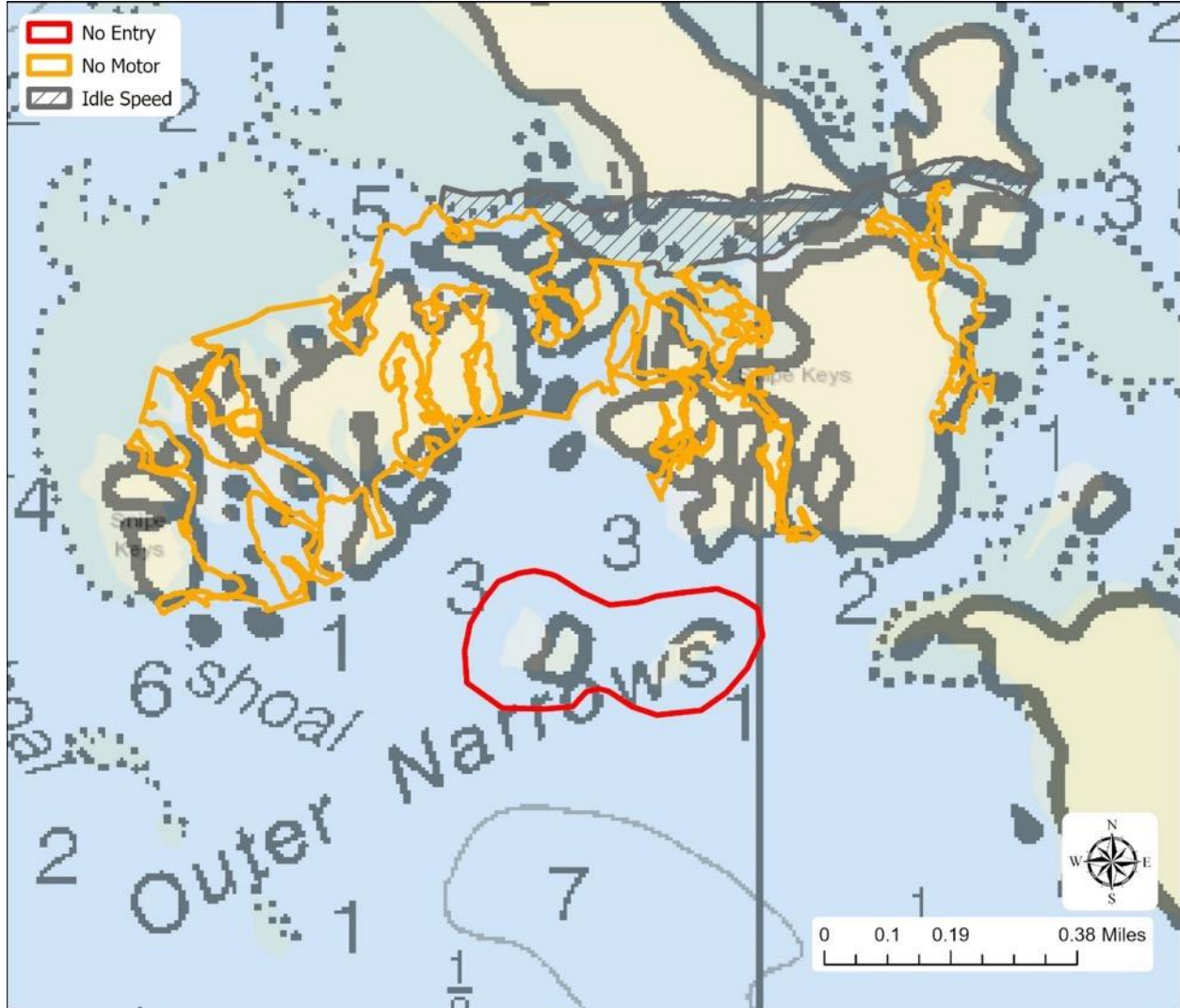
## Barracuda Keys Wildlife Management Area



This idle speed no wake is needed to protect the shallow bottom habitat and places for birds to forage for food. This will also reduce conflict between different recreational users. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no idle speed no wake wildlife management area that is approximately 2.2 square miles (1,434 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge.

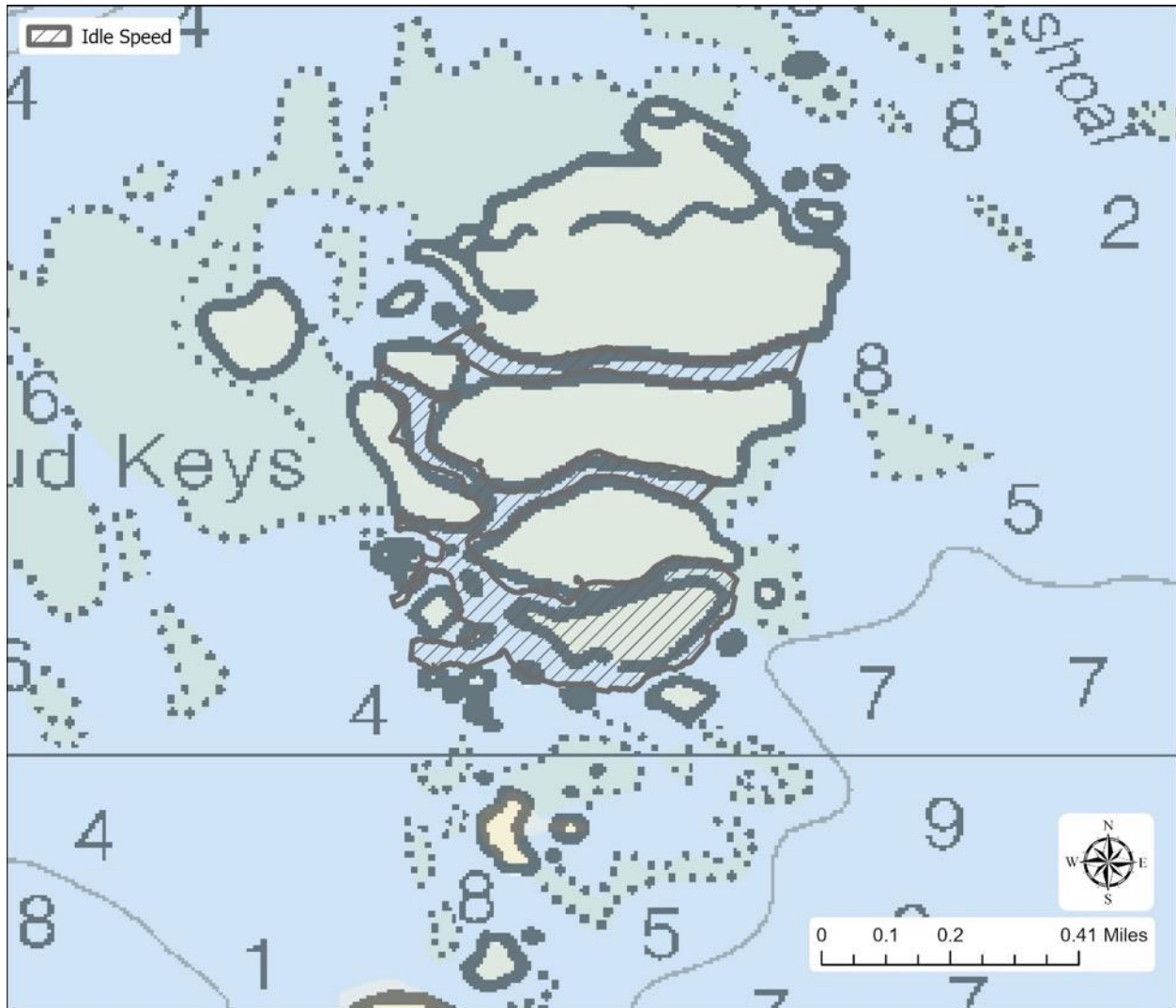
The 2025 updated regulations eliminate Tidal Flat South of Marvin Key Wildlife Management Area.

## Snipe Keys Wildlife Management Area



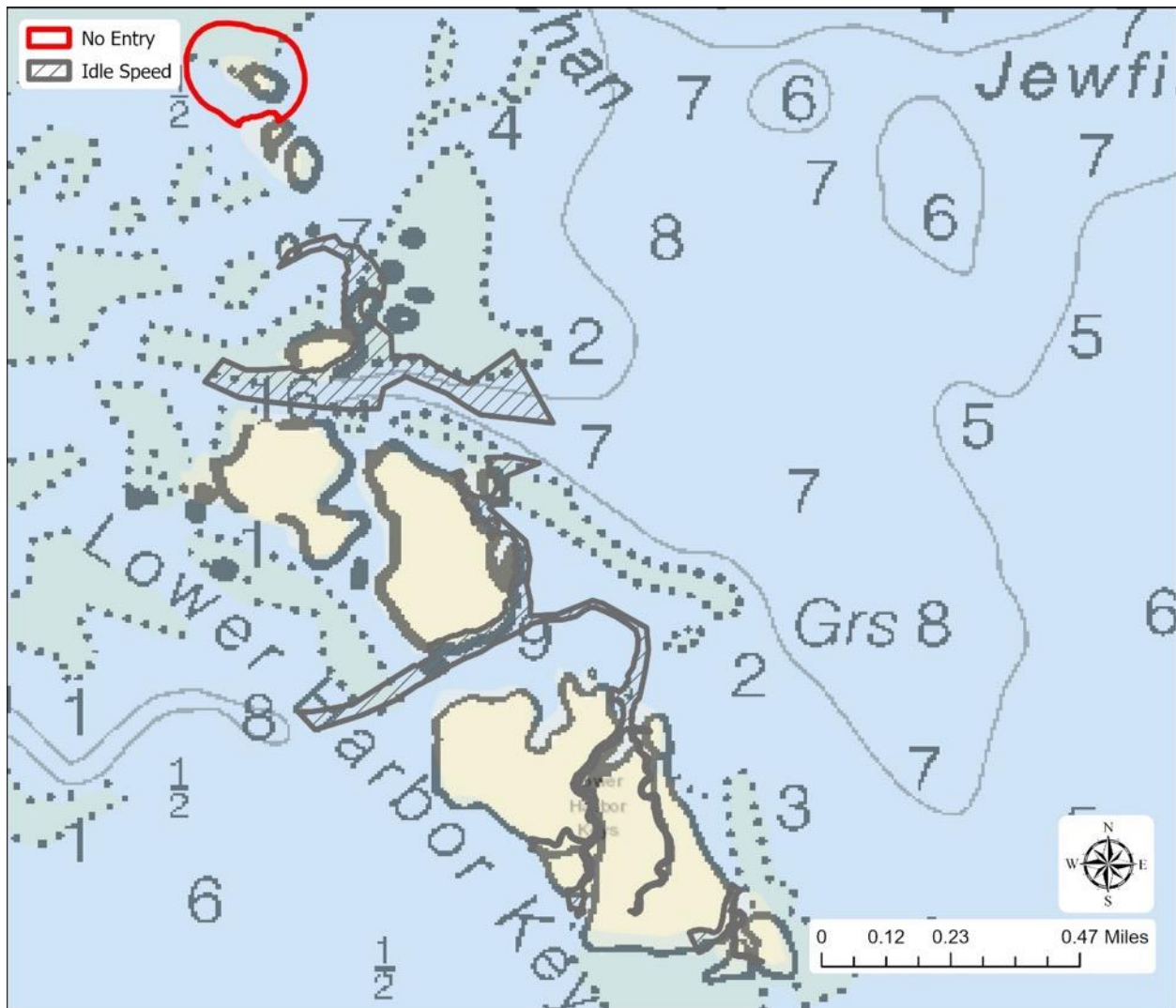
The addition of the minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone for the two small southern islands is needed to protect birds, like magnificent frigatebirds and great white herons, who use this area to nest, rest, and eat. The 2025 updated regulations make no change to the existing idle speed no wake (approximately 0.04 square miles; 26 acres) and no motor areas (0.11 square miles; 72 acres) that have been in place since 1997. These regulations would not impact sandbar use on the northern side of Snipe Keys. and no motor The 2025 updated regulations include an additional no entry area that is approximately 0.06 square miles (36 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

## Mud Keys Wildlife Management Area



An idle speed no wake zone is designed to provide options for transit while reducing disturbance to birds, like great white herons and magnificent frigatebirds, who use this area to rest, nest, and eat. Mud Keys WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations modify this zone to shift a closed area to idle speed no wake, for a total idle speed no wake area of approximately 0.08 square miles (53 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

## East Harbor Key and Lower Harbor Keys Wildlife Management Areas



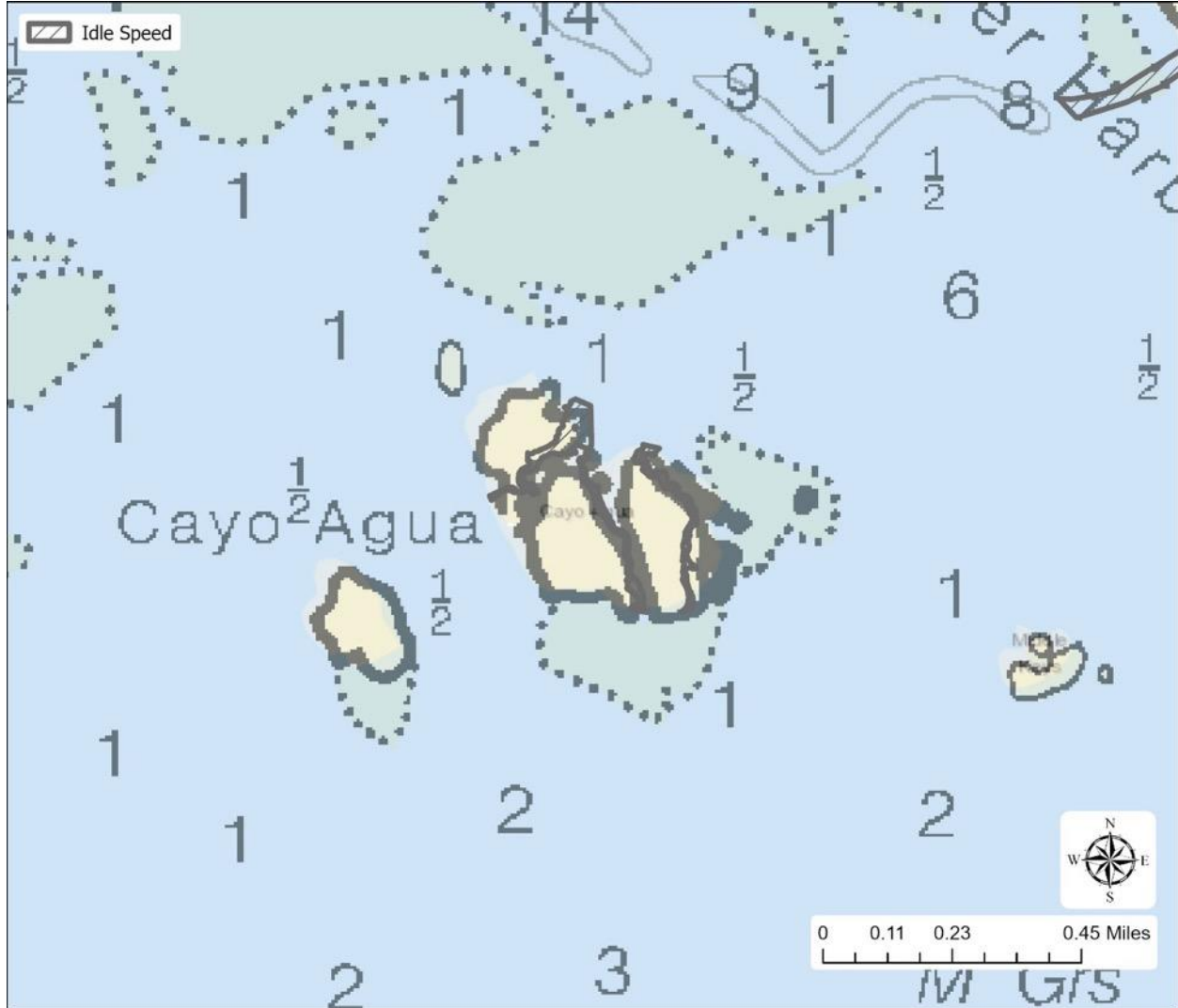
East Harbor Key: This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is needed to protect wading birds, like great white herons, who use this area to nest, rest, and eat. East Harbor Key WMA (0.02 square miles; 16 acres) has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations make no change to this zone other than changing the regulatory terminology of no access buffer to no entry to better align with regulatory terminology used by the state of Florida. This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

Lower Harbor Key: This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is needed to protect wading birds, like great white herons, who use this area to nest, rest, and eat. Lower Harbor Keys WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations expand this existing idle speed no wake zone slightly from approximately 0.07 square miles (42 acres) to 0.09 square



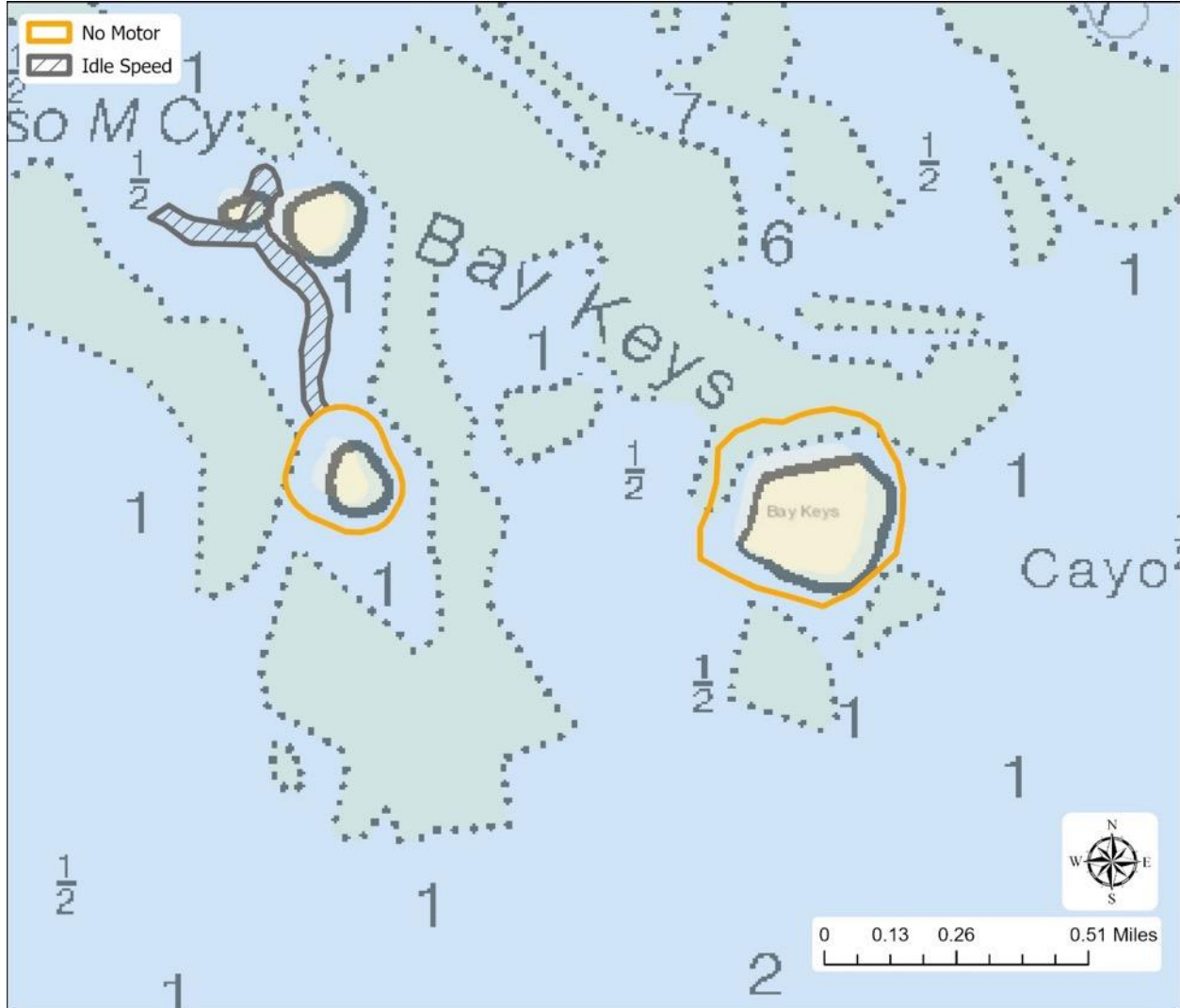
miles (56 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

## Cayo Agua Keys Wildlife Management Area



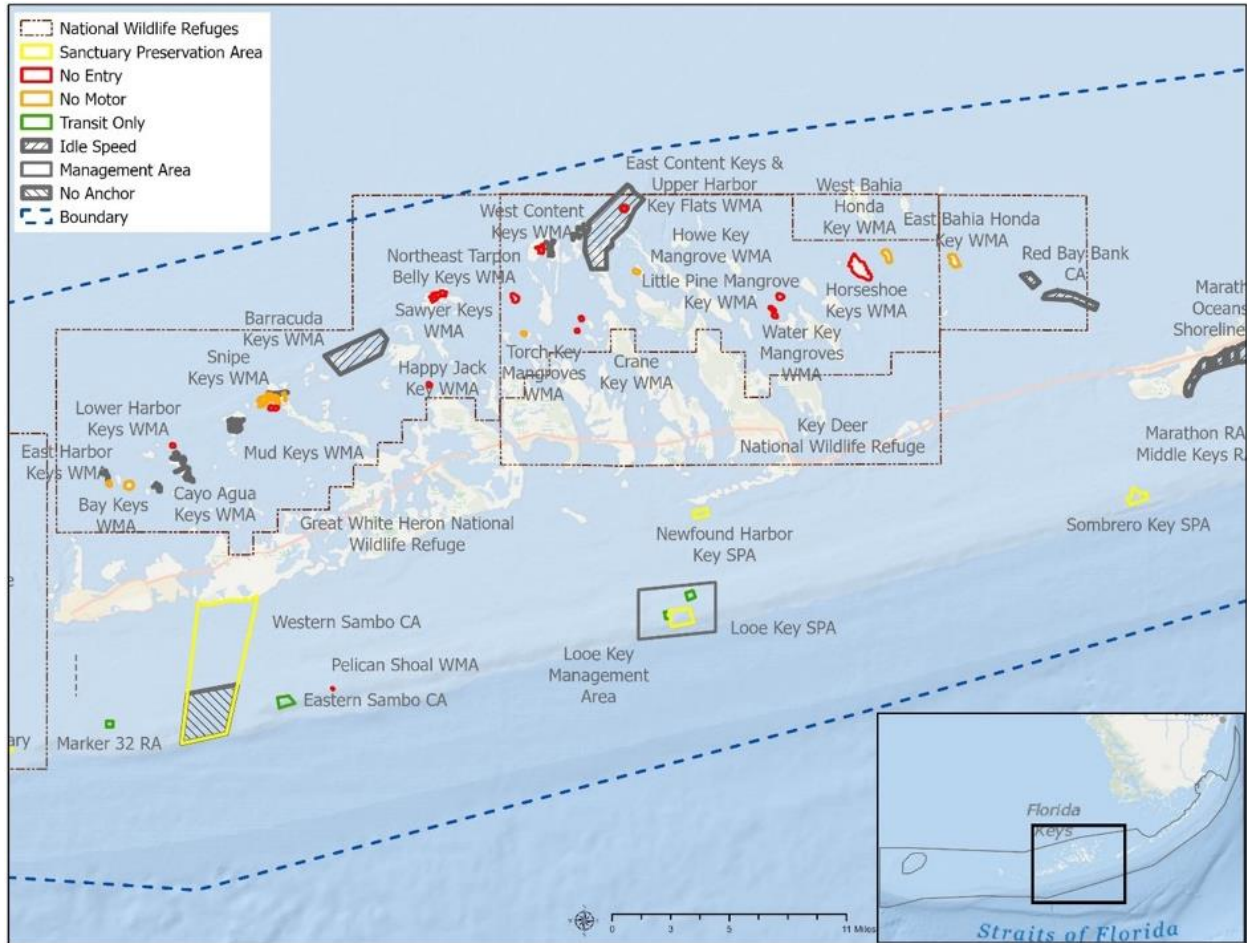
An idle speed no wake zone is in effect to reduce disturbance to birds, like the great white heron, who find food and rest in this area. Cayo Agua Keys WMA (0.01 square miles; 7.0 acres) has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

## Bay Keys Wildlife Management Area



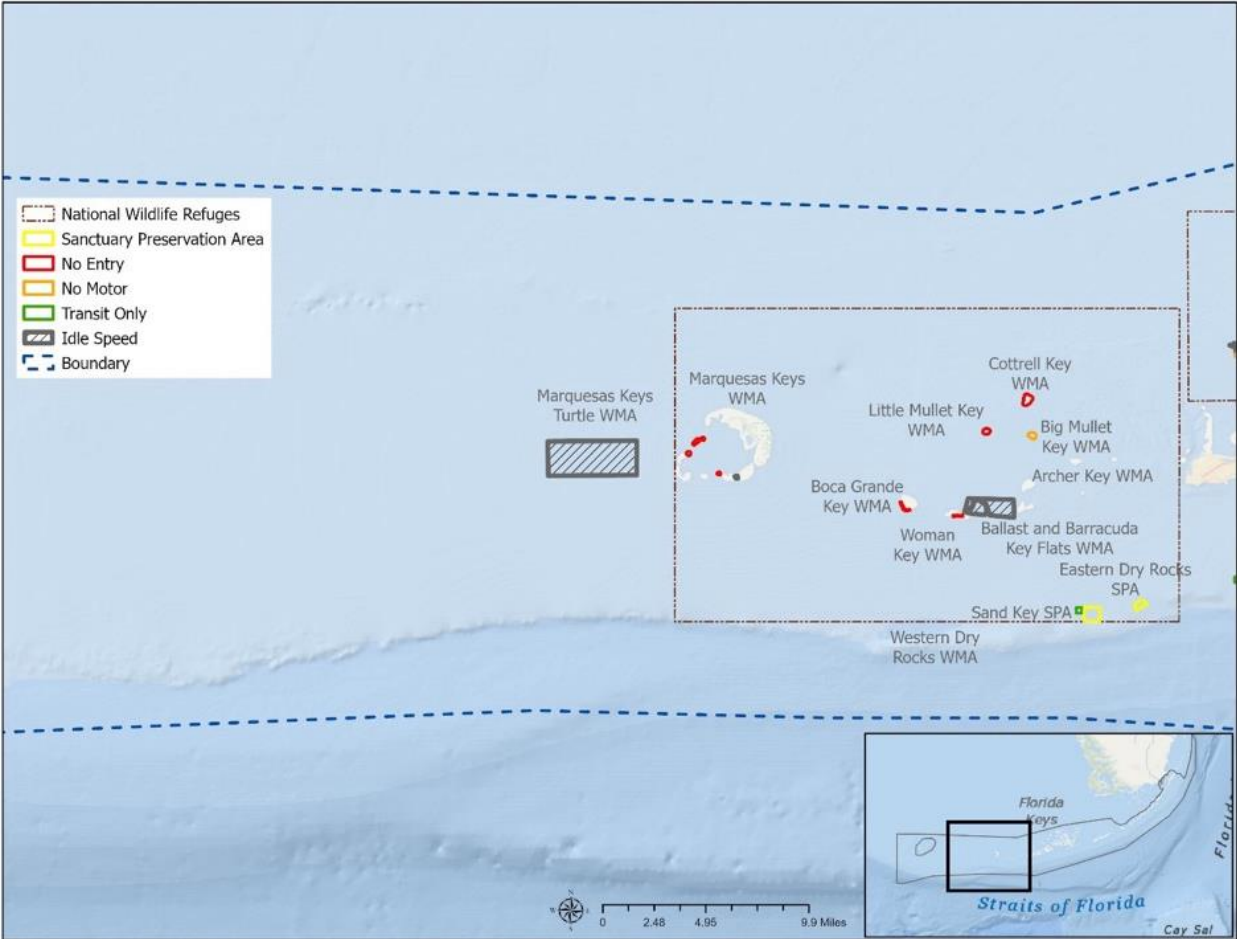
To protect magnificent frigatebirds and great white herons, a minimum 100-yard distance no motor zone around Southwest and Southeast Bay Keys is needed to minimize disturbance to these birds when they rest and nest in this area. The 2025 updated regulations expand an existing idle speed no wake zone leading up to Southwest Bay Keys to further protect the habitat from vessel damage. Bay Keys WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations expand the existing idle speed no wake area by approximately 0.02 square miles (8.7 acres) and adds an additional island with no motor regulations expanding the area with no motor regulations from approximately 0.03 square miles (18 acres) to approximately 0.08 square miles (56 acres). This WMA is within the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge with access restrictions outlined in their 1992 backcountry management plan.

## Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge



This national wildlife refuge is a haven for hundreds of species of birds, including the great white heron, this refuge's namesake. Protected since the 1930s, this refuge provides a place where birds and other wildlife like sea turtles can nest, feed, and rest. This national wildlife refuge encompasses approximately 309 square miles. The 2025 updated regulations make no change to the area or regulations that apply within this area.

# Key West National Wildlife Refuge



Designated in 1908 to protect birds and other wildlife, this wildlife refuge now is home to the largest wintering population of piping plover, the largest colony of white crowned pigeon, and is home for over 250 other species of birds. Other threatened species that call this refuge home include the Miami blue butterfly and sea turtles, with more loggerhead and green sea turtle nests found each year than any area of the Florida Keys except the Dry Tortugas. This national wildlife refuge encompasses approximately 333 square miles. The 2025 updated regulations include a modification to the prohibition of personal watercraft to allow passage of around marker G13 but on the inside of GWR5.



NATIONAL MARINE  
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AMERICA'S UNDERWATER TREASURES