



2025 Final Restoration Blueprint: Upper Keys Region Maps



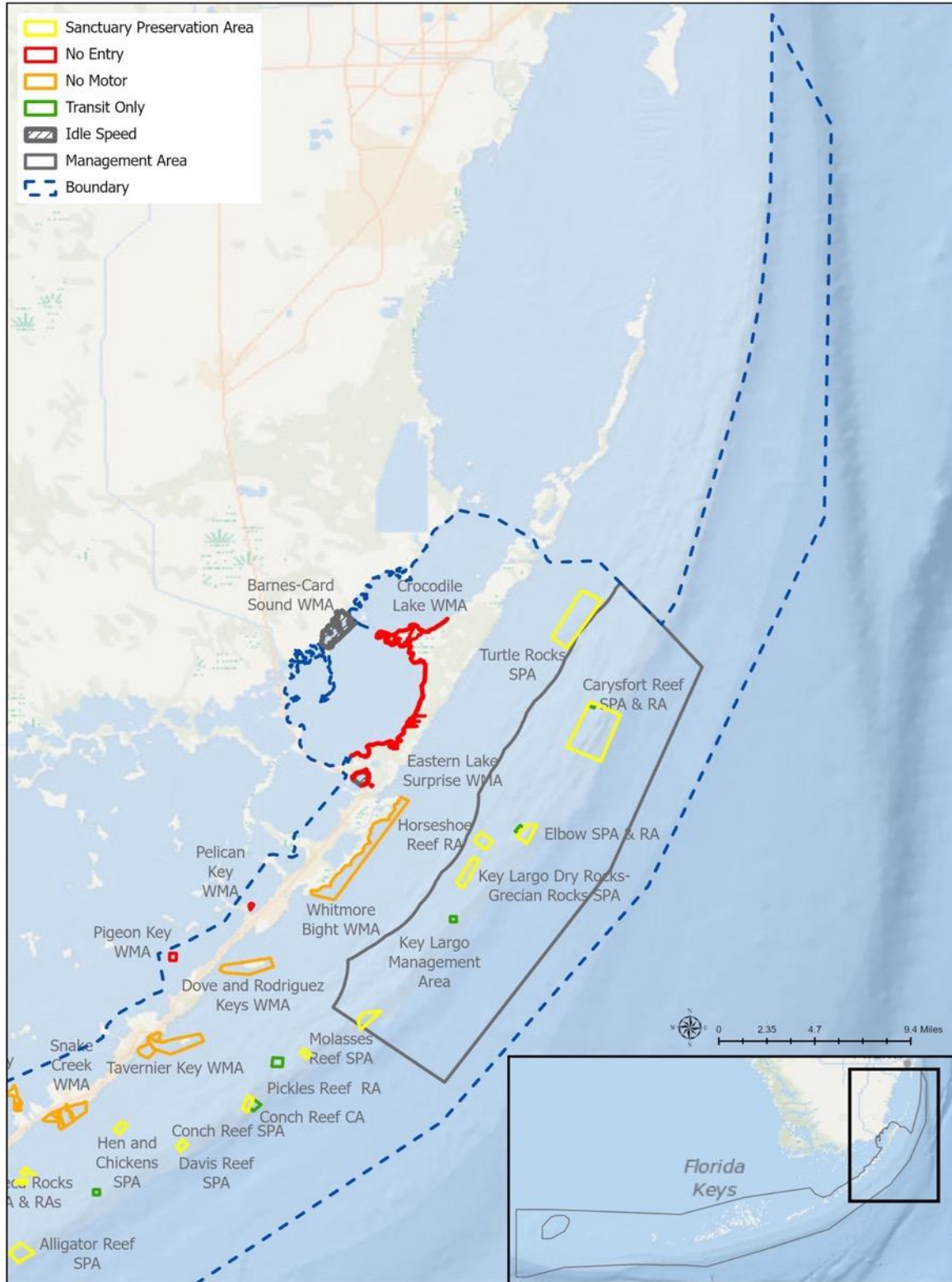


Upper Keys Region: Marine Zones

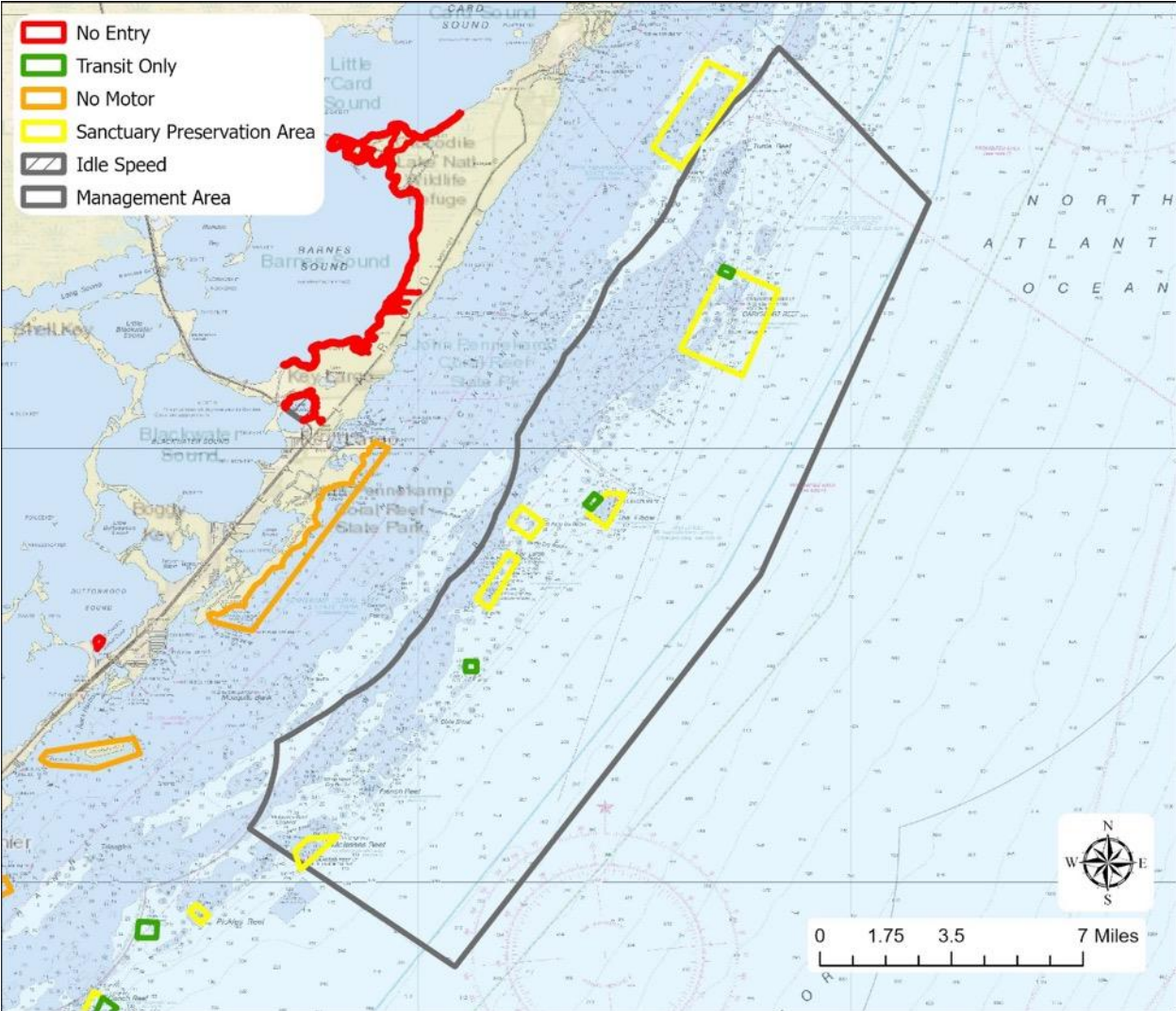
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Cover photo: The historic Carysfort Reef Lighthouse sits at the north end of the Key Largo Existing Management Area. Photo: Amy Massey/NOAA

Upper Keys Regional Map



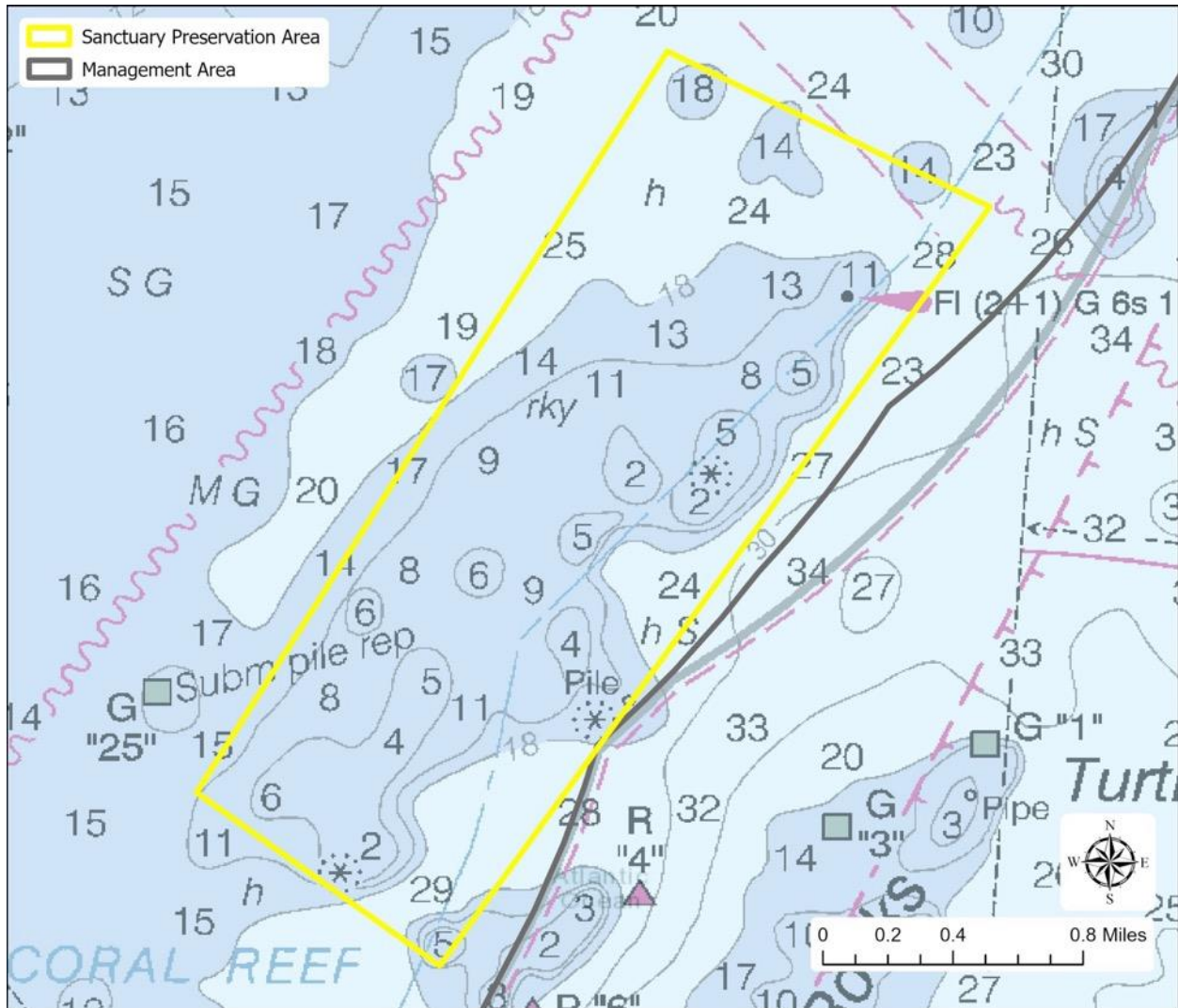
Key Largo Management Area



Designated as the first national marine sanctuary in the Florida Keys, Key Largo Management Area encompasses an interconnected network of habitat types such as seagrass beds, shallow hardbottom, and coral reefs and is home to zones for protection and restoration.

Protections for this area include areas that prohibit spearfishing, marine life collecting, harvest of lobster, and recreational and commercial fishing. Key Largo Management Area is approximately 146.8 square miles (93,932 acres).

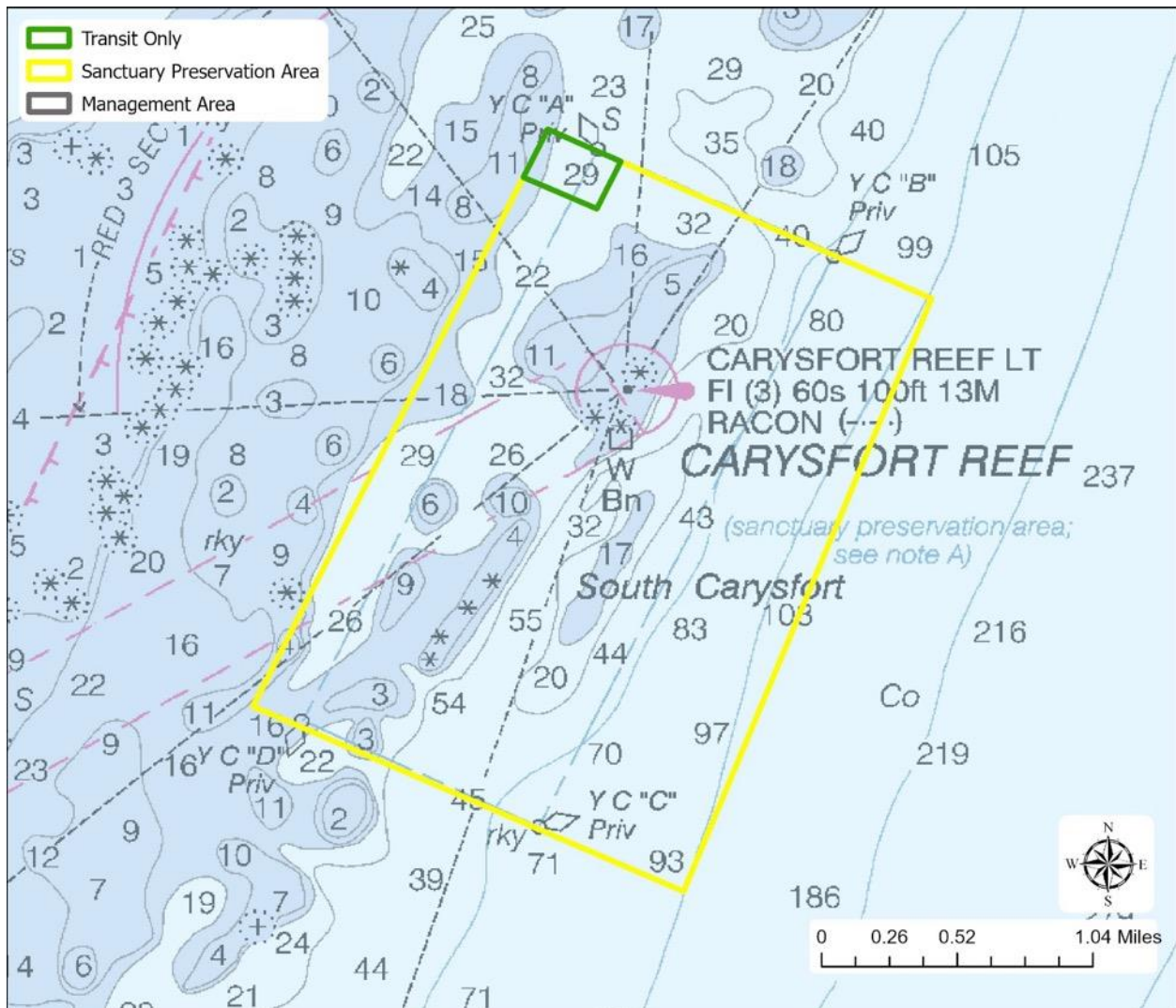
Turtle Rocks Sanctuary Preservation Area



This unique nearshore area historically contained populations of endangered staghorn, elkhorn, and star coral colonies, and is one of the only known reefs with fused staghorn colonies.

The 2025 updated regulations includes this area as a new sanctuary preservation area (SPA) that is approximately 2.5 square miles (1612 acres).

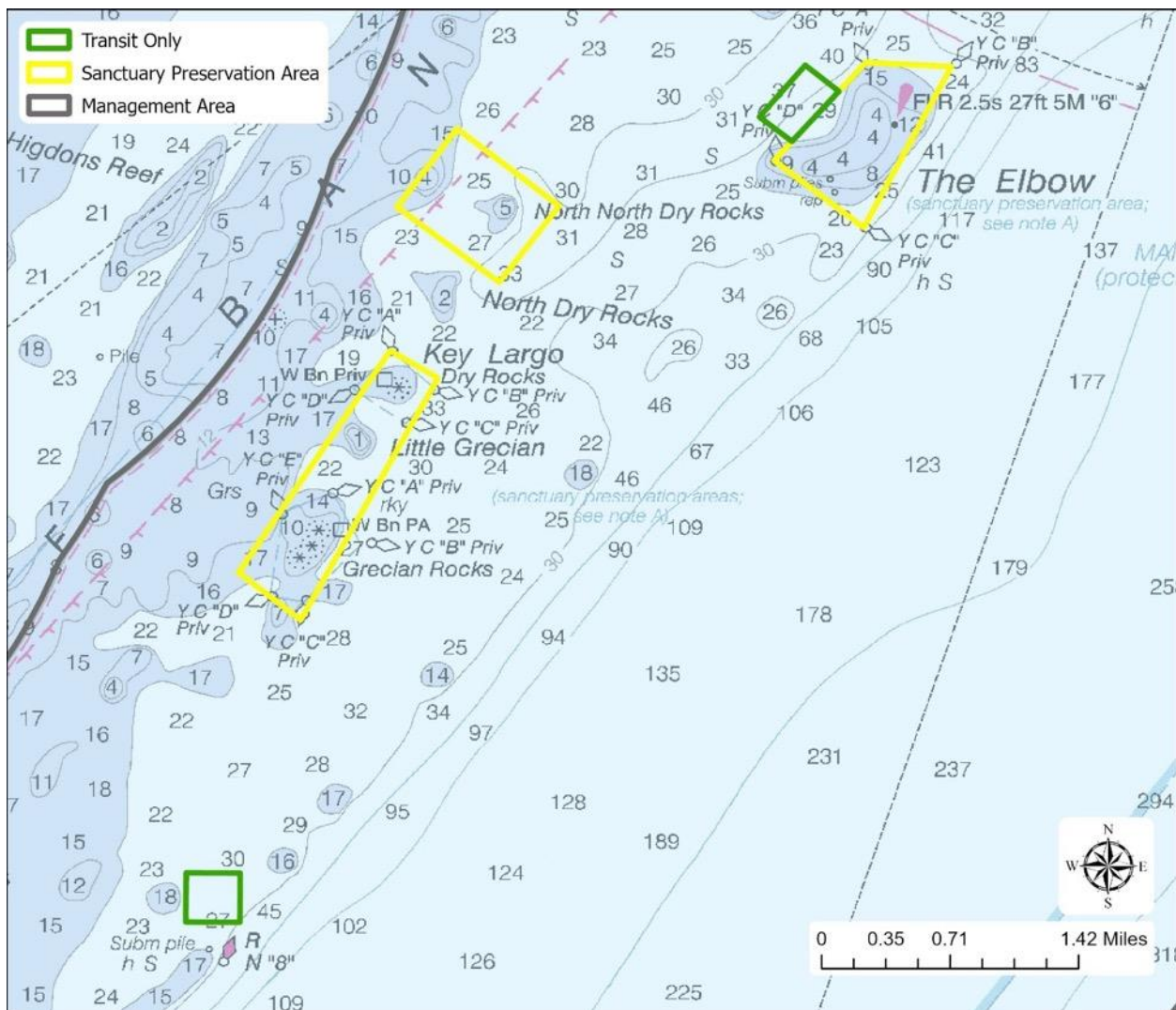
Carysfort Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area and Carysfort Reef Nursery Restoration Area



This SPA protects important cultural and natural resources like the Carysfort lighthouse and the largest demonstration site for restoration of elkhorn and staghorn corals. A Mission: Iconic Reefs restoration site, this reef historically supported extensive elkhorn and staghorn coral colonies.

Historically, this area supported a black grouper aggregation site. Carysfort Reef SPA 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) and expands the zone by approximately 1.6 square miles (1,016 acres) for a total area of 3.8 square miles (2,421 acres). Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

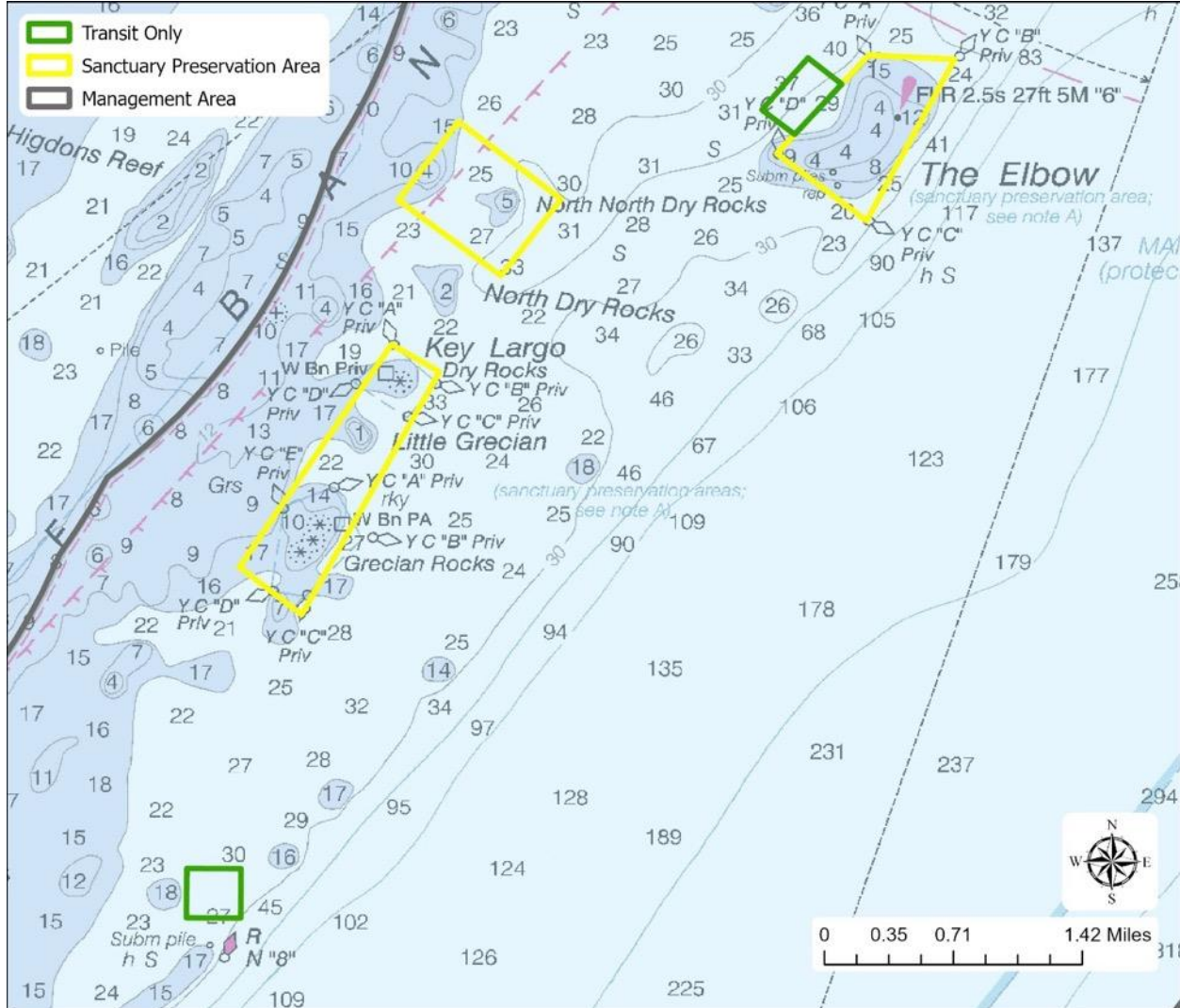
The Elbow Sanctuary Preservation Area and Elbow Nursery Restoration Area



Home to shipwrecks on the shipwreck trail, the Elbow is also an important reef community with a well-defined reef crest, spur-and-grove, and deeper multi-tiered linear reef system. Once home to historic large stands of staghorn and elkhorn coral. The Elbow SPA, approximately 0.4 square miles (256 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.

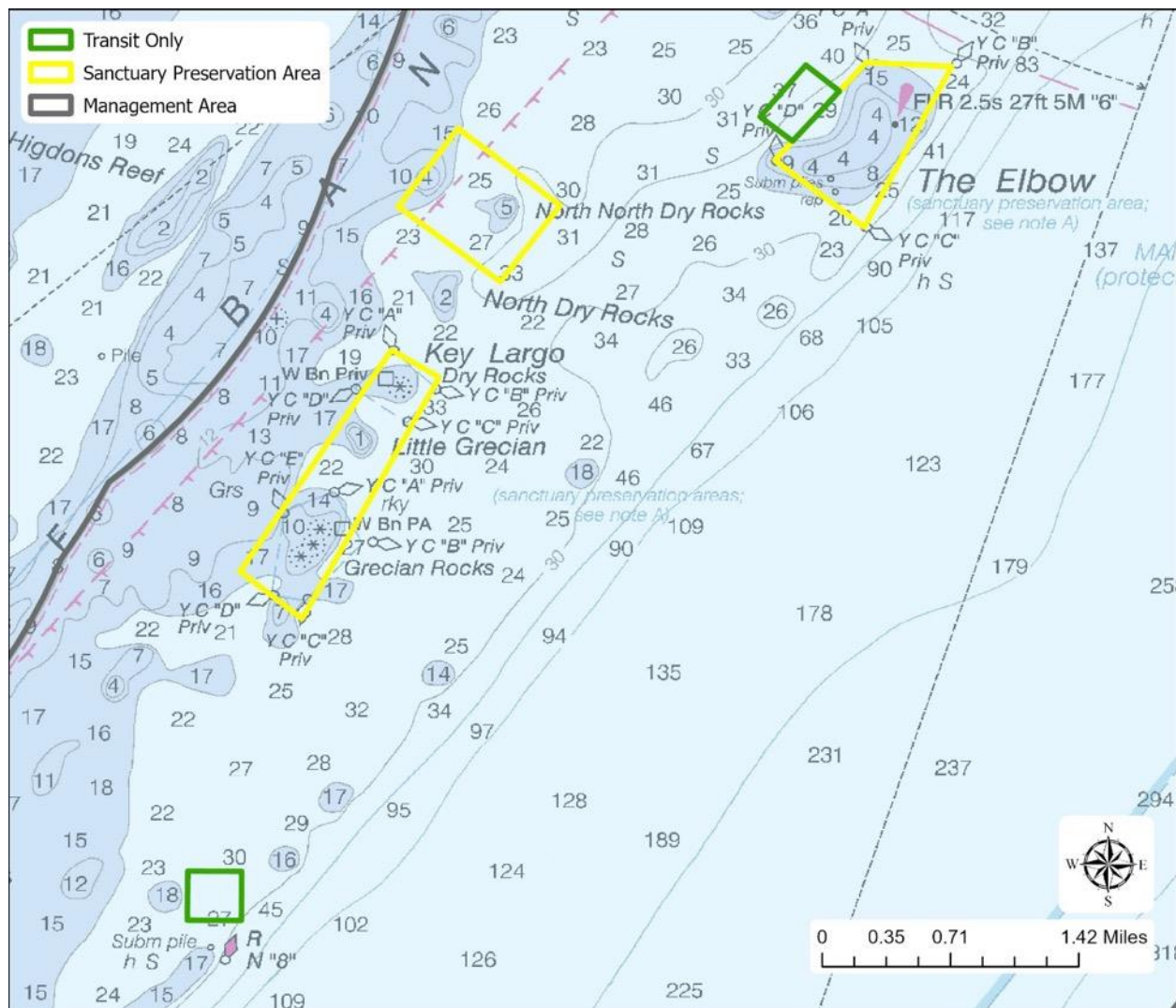
The Elbow Nursery Restoration Area is just inshore and adjacent to the Elbow SPA. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new nursery restoration area that is approximately 0.08 square miles (50 acres).

Horseshoe Reef Habitat Restoration Area



Horseshoe Reef Habitat Restoration Area is the zone nearest North North Dry Rocks and North Dry Rocks. It has the same regulations as a SPA and is therefore depicted with the same zone boundary coloration as SPAs. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new habitat restoration area that is approximately 0.34 square miles (220 acres). Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

Key Largo Dry Rocks-Grecian Rocks Sanctuary Preservation Area and Key Largo Nursery Restoration Area

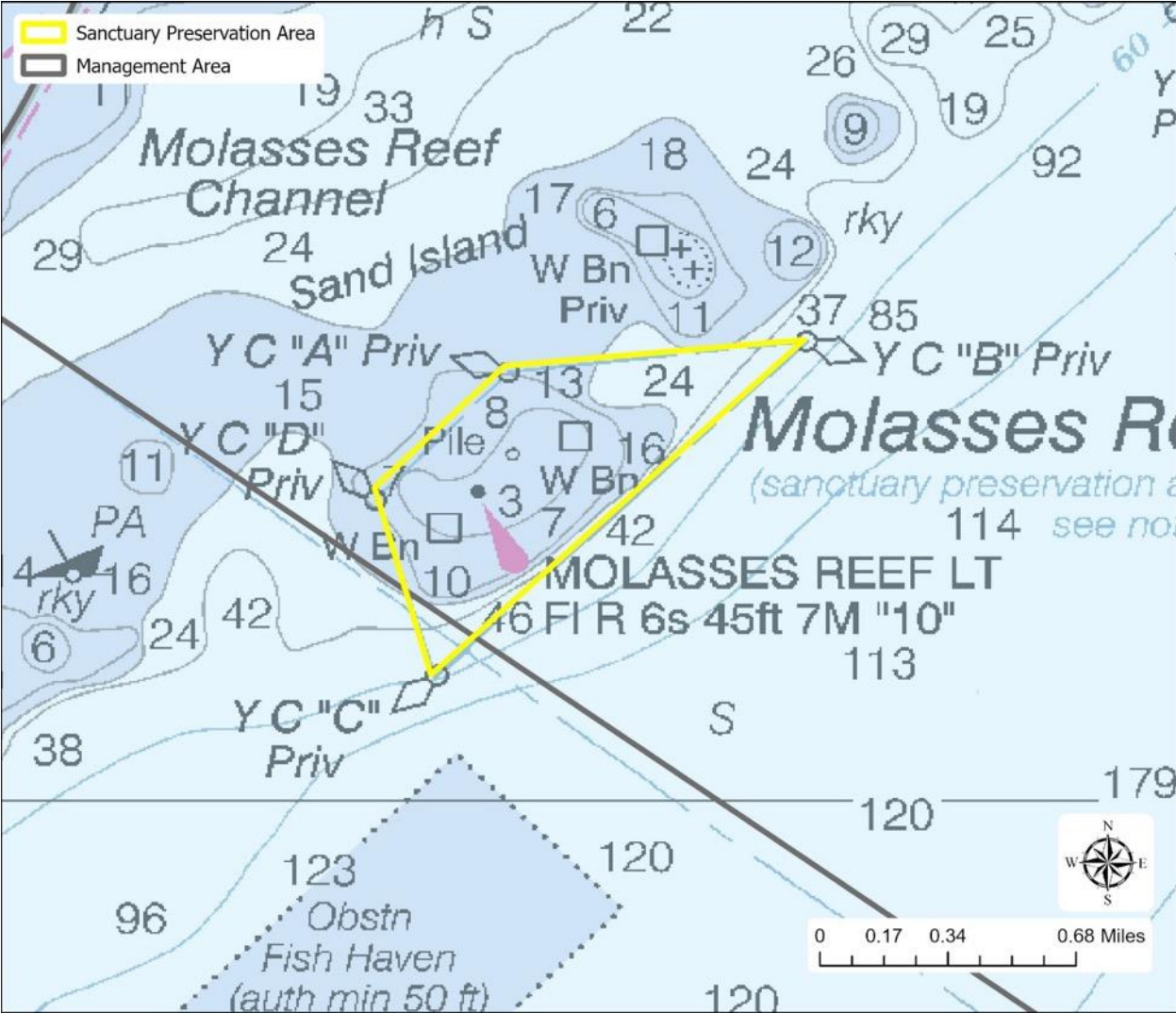


Home to one of the oldest elkhorn and staghorn coral restoration sites in the Florida Keys, this SPA is also home to one of the largest remaining healthy populations of endangered star coral populations. The connection of these SPAs protects seagrass meadows with large populations of herbivorous reef fish, queen conch, and lobster.

Key Largo Dry Rocks SPA (approximately 0.08 square miles; 51 acres) and Grecian Rocks SPA (approximately 0.17 square miles; 107 acres) have been sanctuary marine zones since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations combine these existing zones to create one zone of approximately 0.5 square miles; 314 acres) and 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.

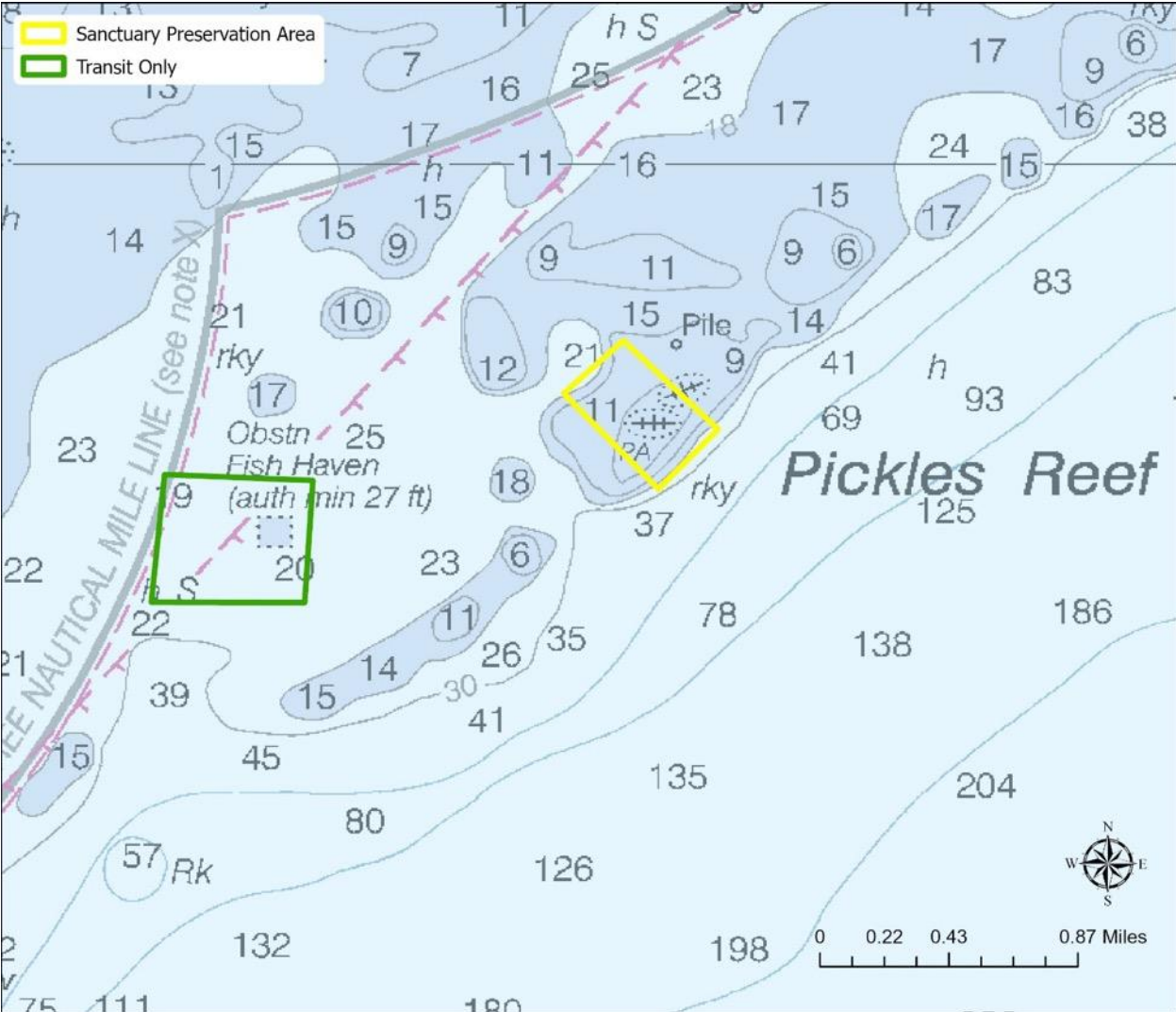
The 2025 updated regulations include Key Largo Nursery Area as a new nursery restoration area that is approximately 0.07 square miles (46.8 acres).

Molasses Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area



Molasses Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area is one of the most visited recreational diving sites in the Upper Keys. It is home to shipwrecks, the Molasses Reef light, and long-term temperature and coral monitoring stations. Historically, Molasses Reef was home to healthy populations of endangered elkhorn, staghorn, and star corals. Molasses Reef SPA, approximately 0.39 square miles (247 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.

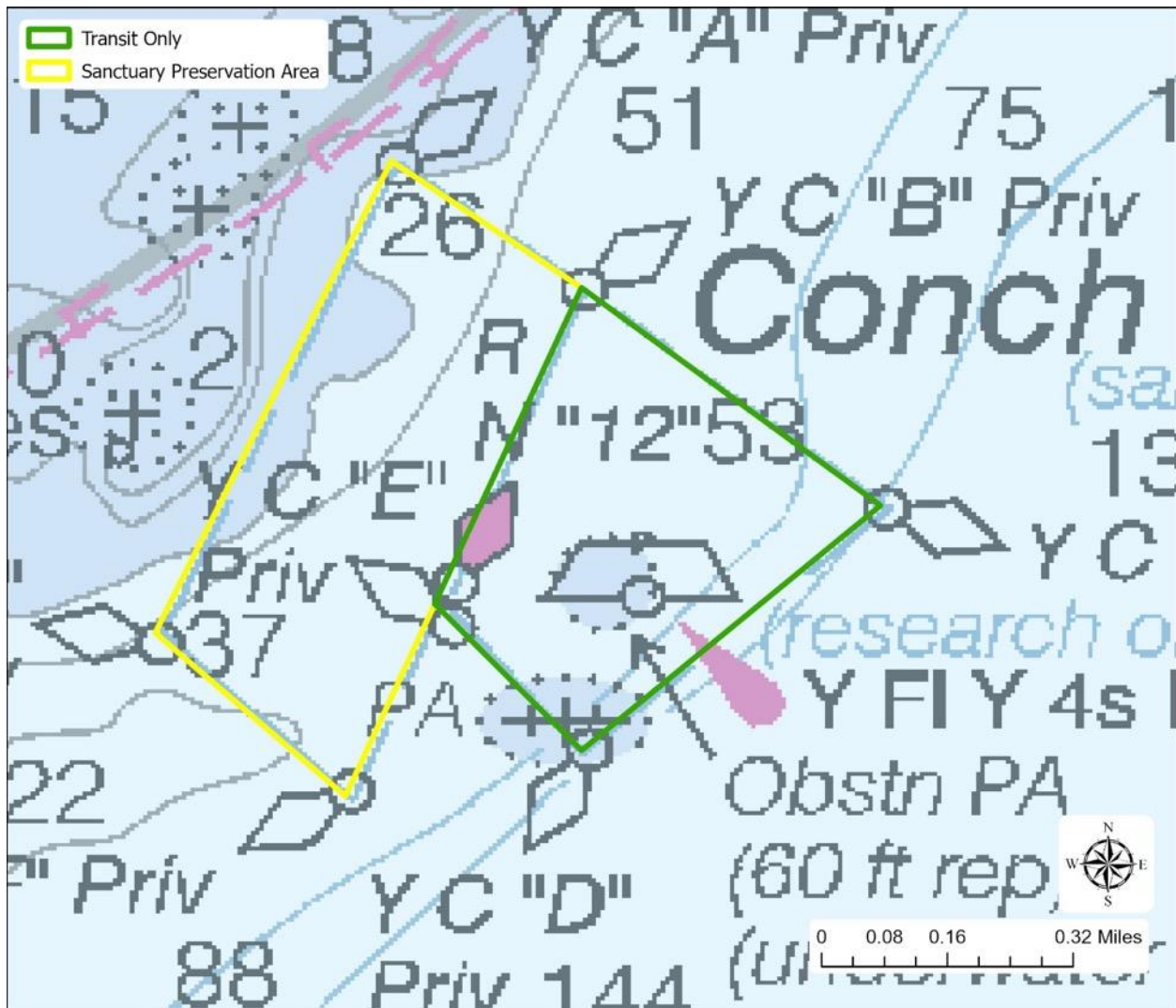
Pickles Reef Habitat Restoration Area and Tavernier Nursery Restoration Area



The 2025 updated regulations include Pickles Reef Habitat Restoration Area, which is approximately 0.11 square miles (71 acres).

The 2025 updated regulations include the Tavernier Nursery Restoration Area, which is approximately 0.2 square miles (124 acres).

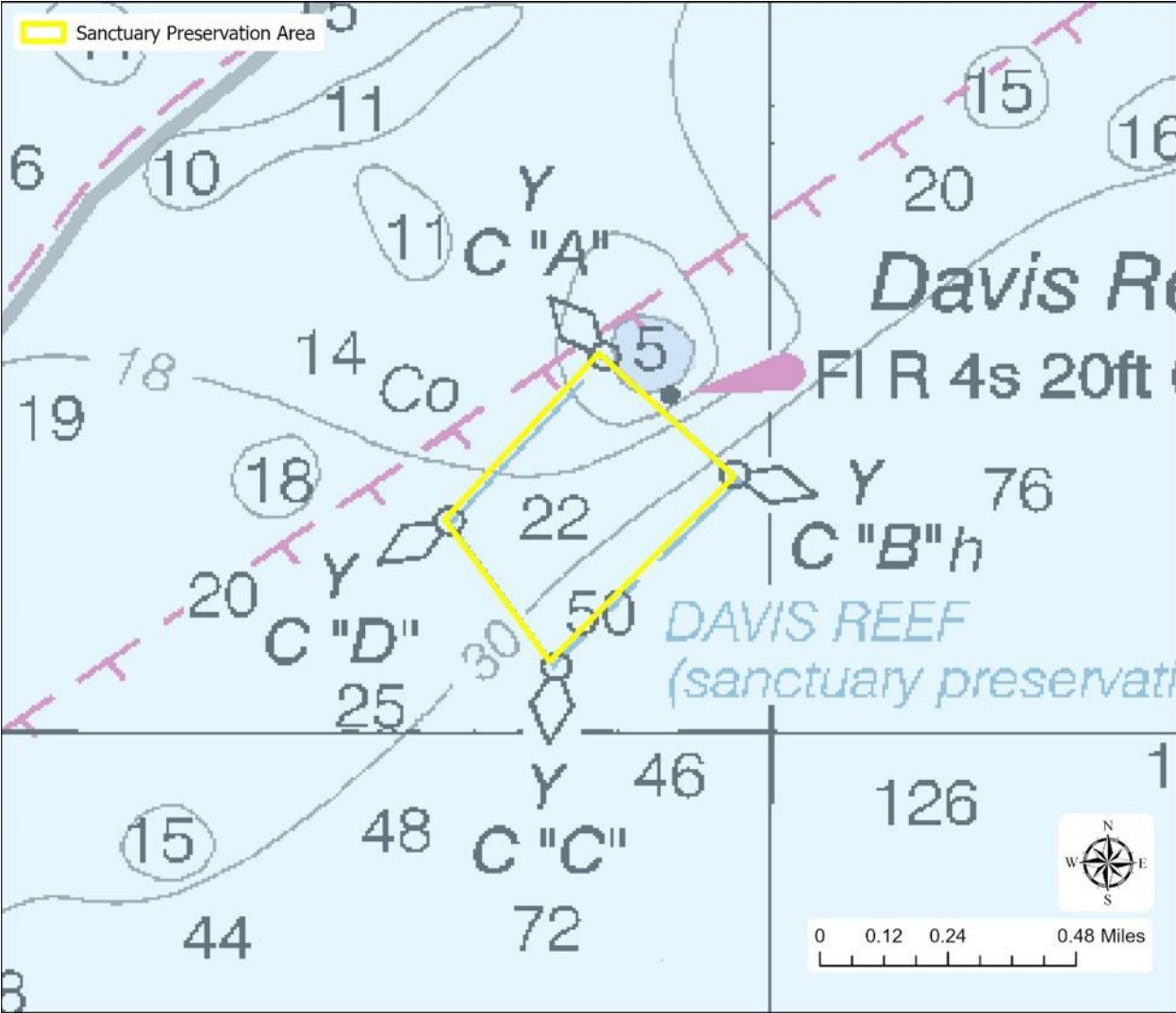
Conch Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area and Conch Reef Conservation Area



Conch Reef SPA is home to one of the best developed reef wall ecosystems in the Florida Keys. It historically contained well developed stands of pillar coral. Conch Reef SPA, approximately 0.19 square miles (119 acres), has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations include the addition of a no anchor regulation throughout this zone and eliminates the current exception for catch and release fishing by trolling; all other existing regulations are maintained. Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

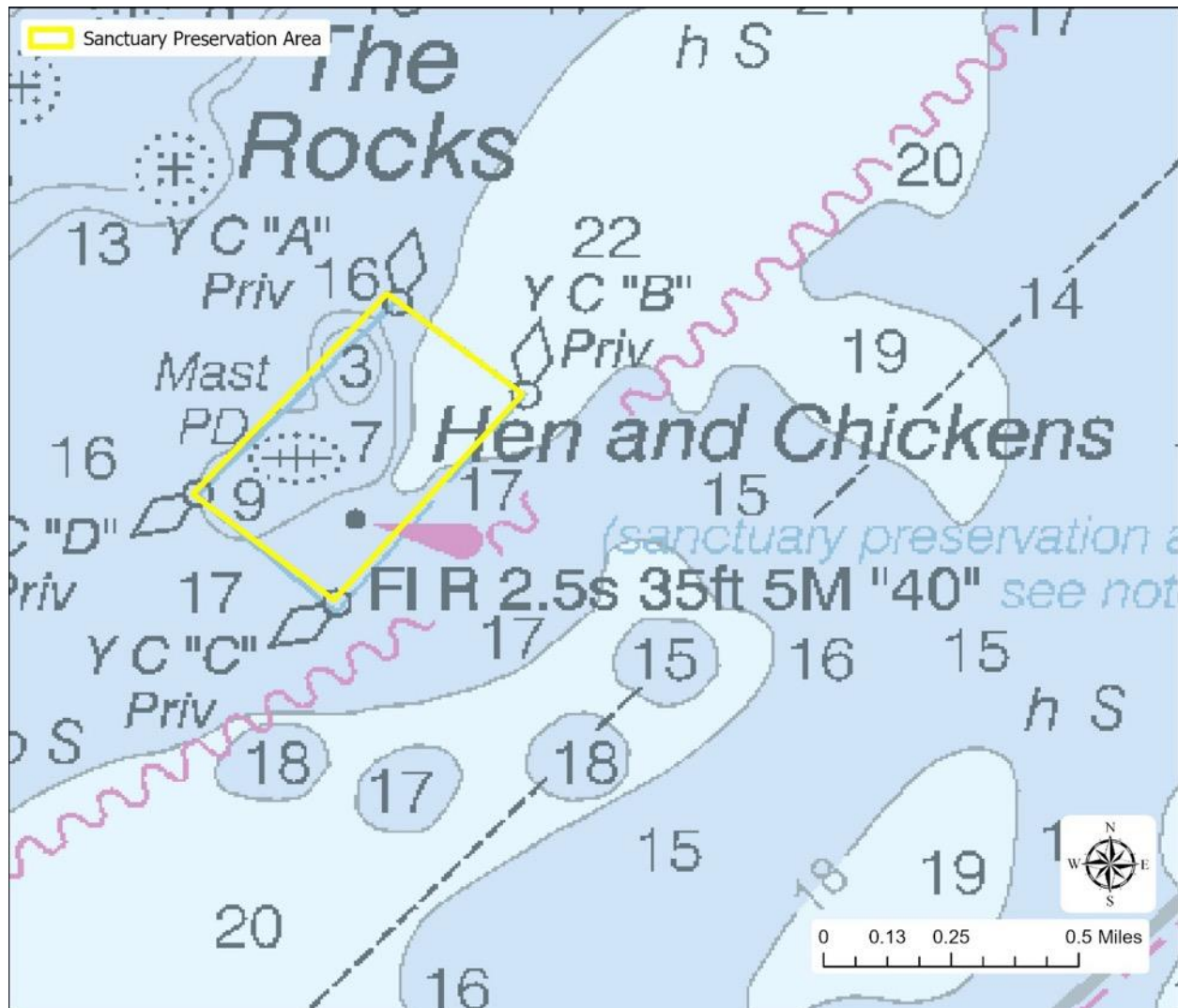
Conch Reef Conservation Area contains threatened species of corals and was established for scientists to examine the impacts caused by human use and environmental conditions. The area has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. Conch Reef, approximately 0.15 square miles (96 acres) has been a marine zone since 1997.

Davis Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area



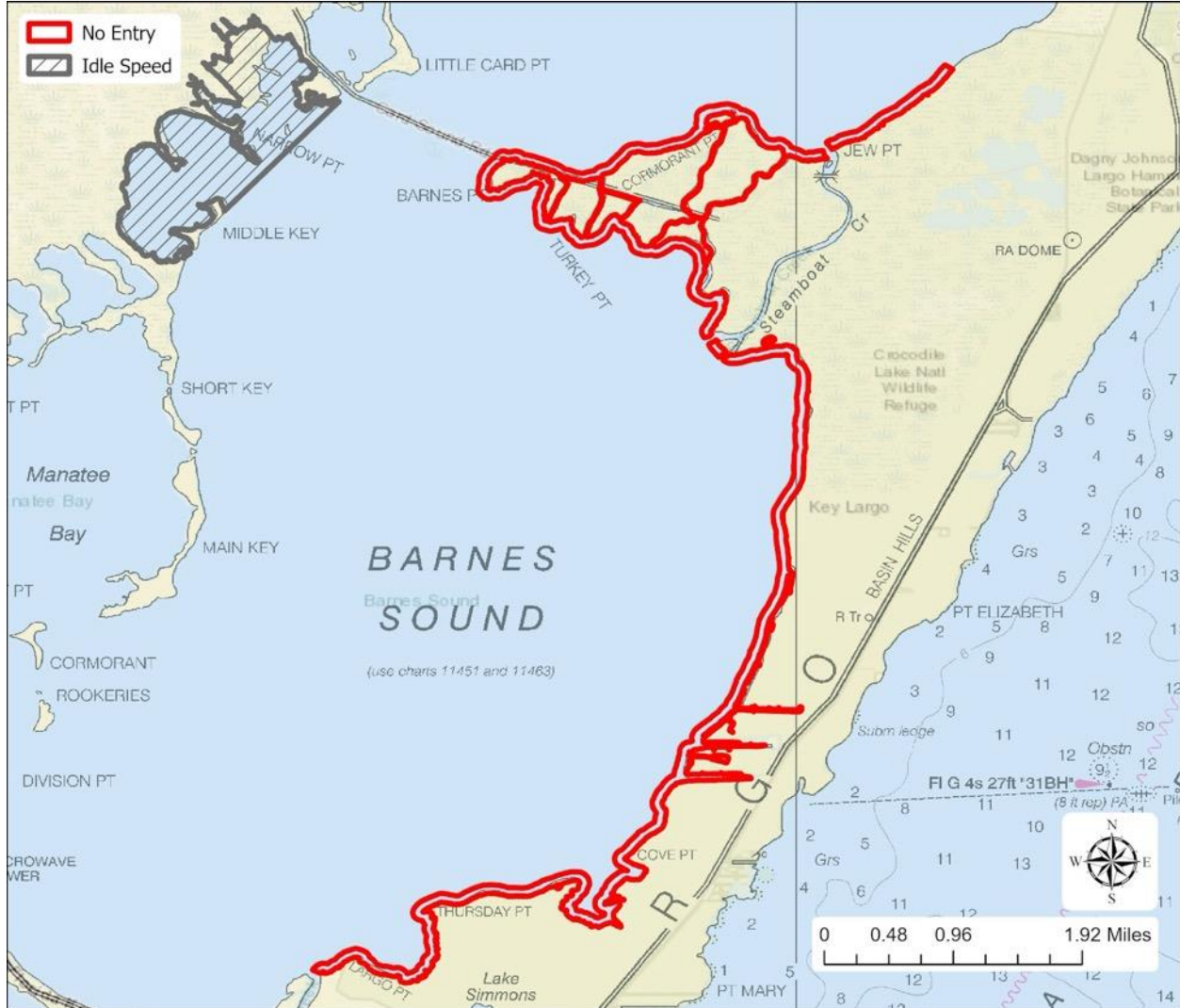
Davis Reef SPA protects a variety of reef ecosystem types, including a coral restoration project site. Davis Reef SPA, approximately 0.14 square miles (88 acres), has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations include the addition of a no anchor regulation throughout this zone; all other existing regulations are maintained. Implementation of the no anchor regulation is delayed until 2027.

Hen and Chickens Sanctuary Preservation Area



Hen and Chickens is a unique mid-channel patch reef with populations of endangered star corals and staghorn corals. Hen and Chickens SPA, approximately 0.17 square miles (106 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.

Crocodile Lake Wildlife Management Area



This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect American crocodiles, West Indian manatee, and wading and migratory bird populations who may use this area to rest and nest. Studies on bird behavior demonstrate the need for this minimum distance to decrease disturbance of their activities.

Crocodile Lake Wildlife Management Area has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. This wildlife management area (WMA) is part of the larger Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge that has been in place since 1980. The 2025 updated regulations expand the no entry protections from 100 feet to 100 yards offshore for a total area of approximately 1.09 square miles (696 acres) and apply this regulation year-round rather than only March 1 to October 1. Access to Steamboat Creek for fishing and other recreational uses is allowed.

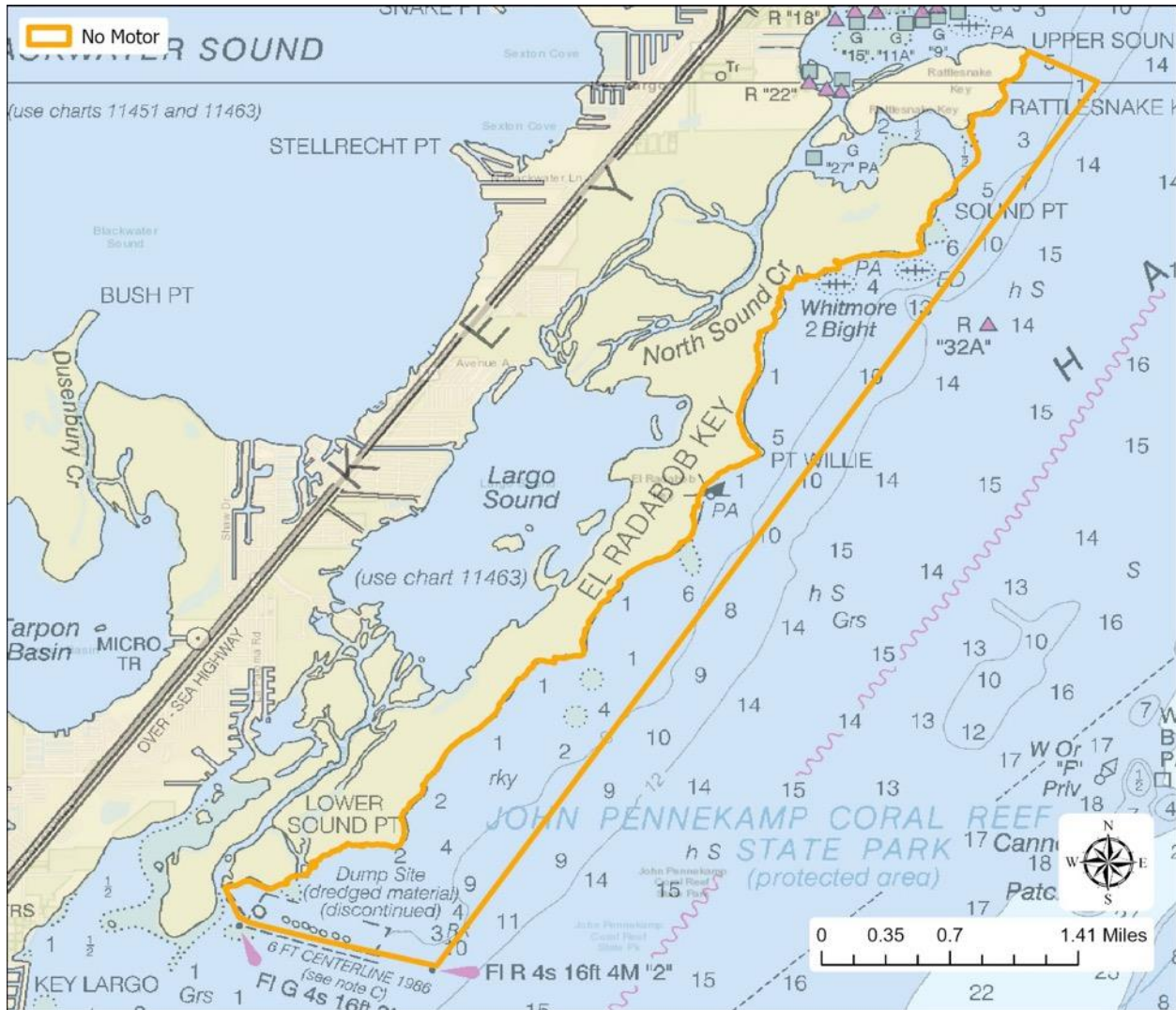
Eastern Lake Surprise Wildlife Management Area



This minimum 100-yard distance no entry addition to this existing zone is to protect American crocodiles, West Indian manatee, and wading and migratory bird populations who may use this area to rest and nest. Studies on bird behavior demonstrate the need for this minimum distance. The idle speed zone will remain in effect to protect wildlife like the West Indian manatee.

Eastern Lake Surprise WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations maintain the existing idle speed no wake area north of Highway 1, changes the existing no access buffer zone to no entry (a terminology change that better aligns with Florida Critical Wildlife Area regulations), and extends no entry along the entire shoreline including the eastern basin. The total area zoned is approximately 0.44 square miles (285 acres).

Whitmore Bight Wildlife Management Area



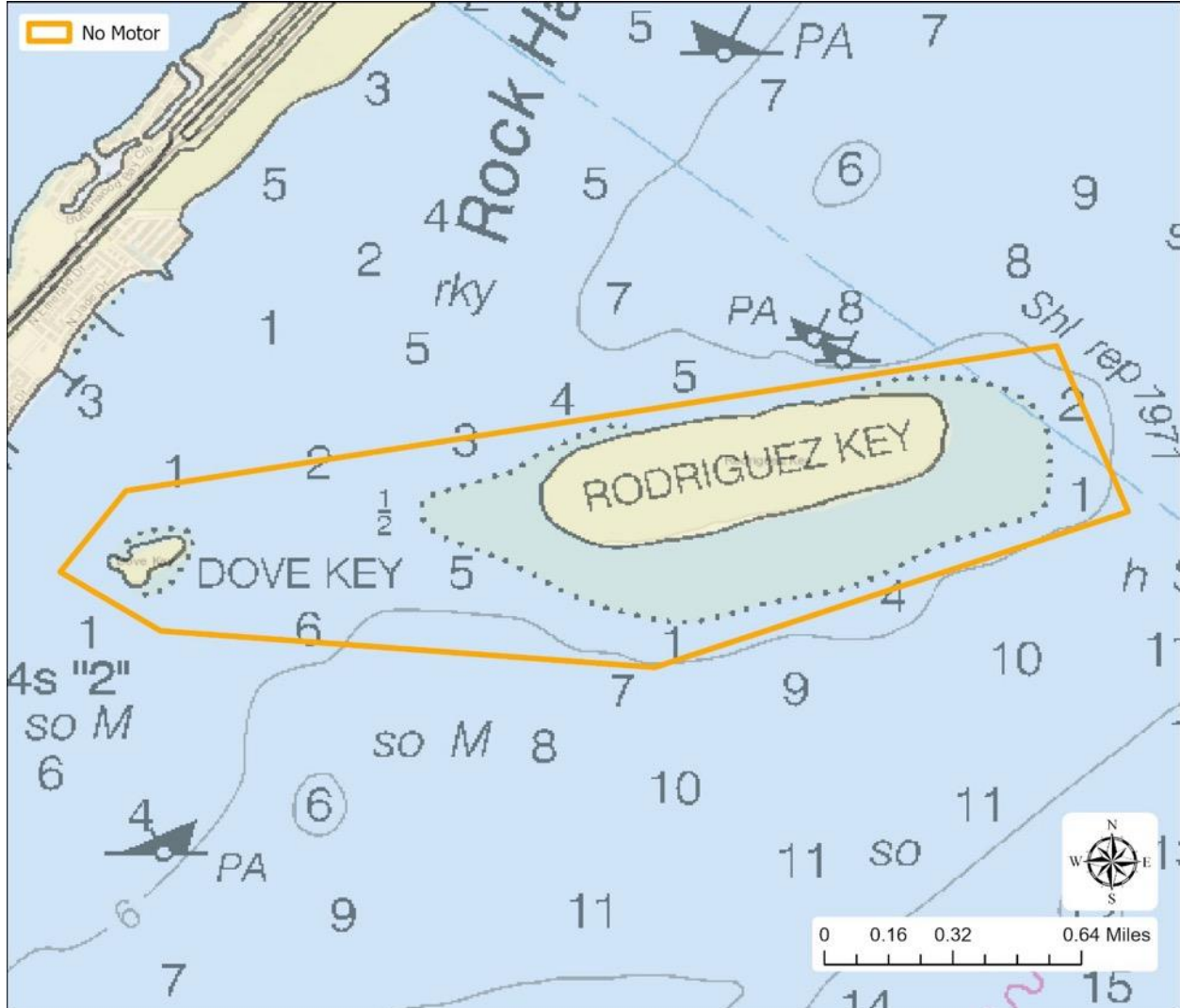
This WMA is a no motor zone to decrease disturbance to the hardbottom community that supports juvenile lobster and various fish. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no motor wildlife management area that is approximately 2.9 square miles (1,824 acres). A portion of this WMA overlaps with one of the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park no motor zones.

Pelican Key Wildlife Management Area



This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect wading and migratory bird populations who may use this area to rest and nest. The 2025 updated regulations includes this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.04 square miles (24 acres).

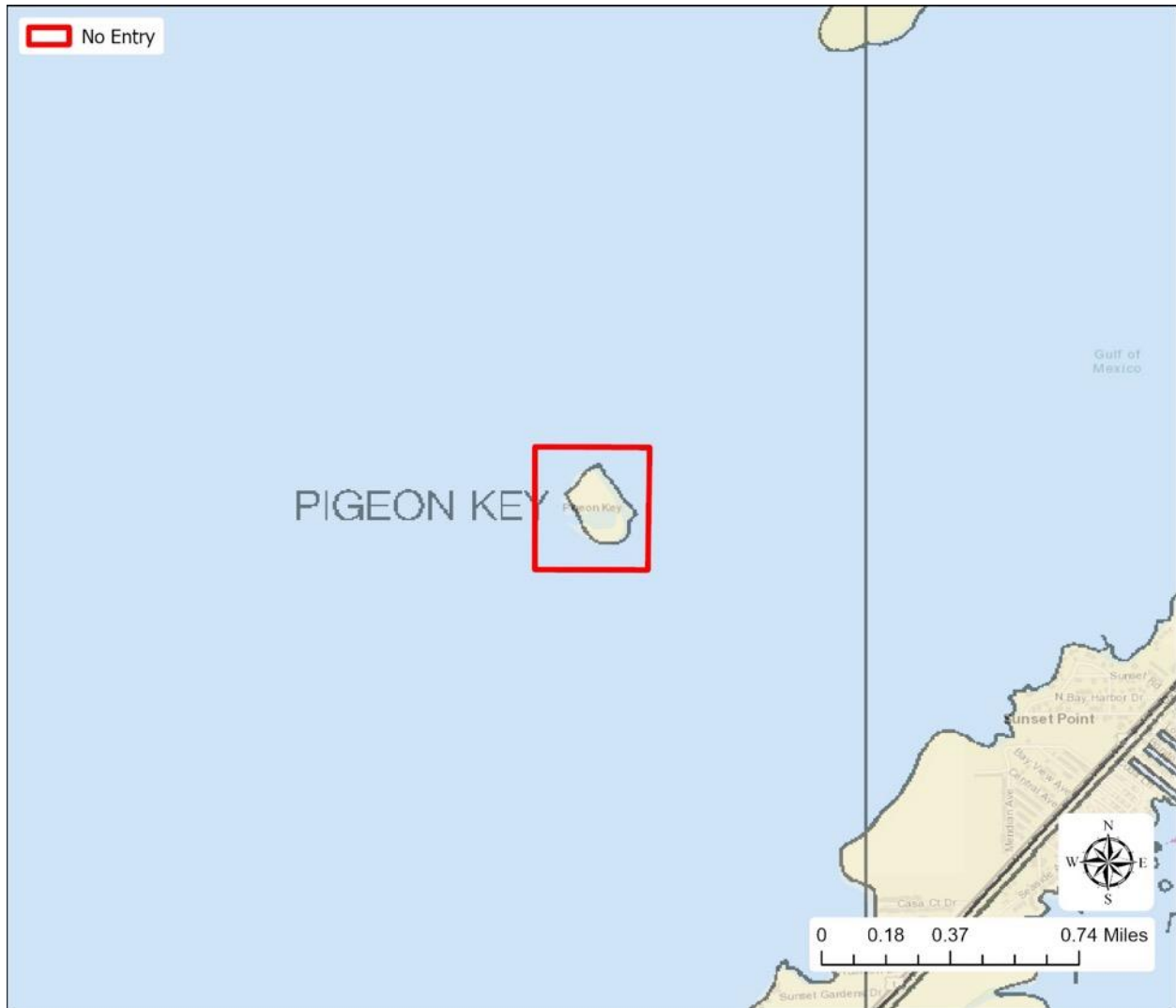
Dove and Rodriguez Keys Wildlife Management Areas



These seagrass and hardbottom habitats are impacted by vessel groundings and scarring. Connection of these existing zones will allow for continued recreation in this area and protection of the habitat.

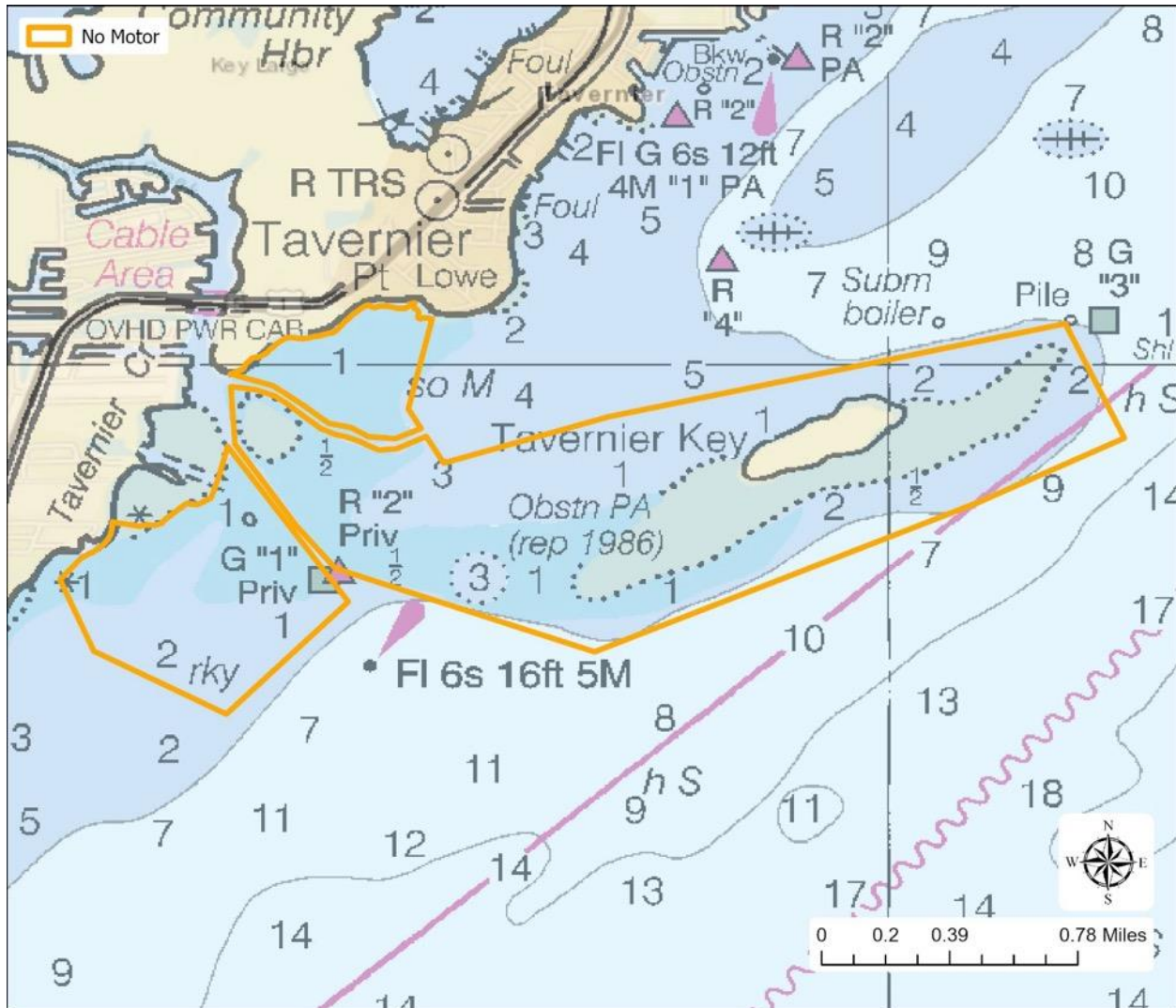
Dove Key WMA (approximately 0.12 square miles; 78 acres) and Rodriguez Key WMA (approximately 0.6 square miles; 381 acres) have been sanctuary marine zones since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations combines these existing zones to create one zone of approximately 0.9 square miles (578 acres). The 2025 updated regulations apply a no motor regulation throughout this area and removes the existing no entry area around Dove Key.

Pigeon Key Wildlife Management Area



This minimum 100-yard distance no entry zone is to protect bird populations who may use this area to rest and nest, such as roseate spoonbills and magnificent frigatebirds. The 2025 updated regulations include this area as a new no entry wildlife management area that is approximately 0.08 square miles (52 acres).

Tavernier Key Wildlife Management Area



A no motor zone is in effect to reduce damage to seagrass and hardbottom habitats and to reduce disturbance to birds and fish. Tavernier Key WMA has been a sanctuary marine zone since 1997. The 2025 updated regulations maintain the existing no motor regulation and modifies the size slightly from approximately 1.57 square miles (1,003 acres) to 1.6 square miles (1,047 acres). Tavernier Creek and the unnamed channel to the northeast leading to Tavernier Creek are open for normal operation.



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