



# Florida Keys



## Habitats

- Coral reefs
- Hardbottom
- Mangrove-fringed shorelines & islands
- Sand flats
- Seagrass meadows

## Key Species

- Brain & star coral
- Loggerhead sponge
- Tropical reef fish
- Spiny lobster
- Bottlenose dolphin
- Grouper

## Florida Keys National Marine

**Sanctuary** supports one of the most diverse assemblages of underwater plants and animals in North America. Although best known for its coral reefs, the shallow nearshore waters contain interdependent marine habitats that include fringing mangroves, seagrass meadows, hardbottom regions, as well as patch and bank reefs. This complex marine ecosystem is the foundation for the tourism and commercial fishing based economies that are so important to Florida.

## Research Activities

Within the 3,801-square mile sanctuary, a wide array of research activities are conducted. Research focuses on ecosystem health cause and effect linkages, reef ecology and physiology, and coral diseases. In coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency and state of Florida, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary monitors corals, seagrasses, and water quality. The sanctuary coordinates and facilitates research and monitoring activities through on-site assistance, permitting, data management, and information dissemination.

## Education Activities

The Florida Keys has increased community education through television, radio, print media, and training workshops. School programs like Coral Reef Classroom combine classroom and field activities for eighth graders and promotes the sanctuary's mission of marine preservation. Volunteer programs such as Team OCEAN and public participation at events have increased community involvement.



**Location**  
The water surrounding the archipelago formed by the Florida Keys

**Protected Area**  
3,801-square miles

**Designation**  
November 1990

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