

With certain exceptions, the following activities are prohibited Sanctuary-Wide:

- Removing, injuring, or possessing coral or live rock.
- Discharging or depositing trash or other pollutants.
- Dredging, drilling, prop dredging or otherwise altering the seabed, or placing or abandoning any structure on the seabed.
- Operating a vessel in such a manner as to strike or otherwise injure coral, seagrass, or other immobile organisms attached to the seabed, or cause prop scarring.
- Having a vessel anchored on living coral in water less than 40 feet deep when the bottom can be seen. Anchoring on hardbottom is allowed.
- Except in officially marked channels, operating a vessel at more than 4 knots/no wake within 100 yards of residential shorelines, stationary vessels, or navigational aids marking reefs.
- Operating a vessel at more than 4 knots/no wake within 100 feet of a "divers down" flag.
- Diving or snorkeling without a dive flag.
- Operating a vessel in such a manner which endangers life, limb, marine resources, or property.
- Releasing exotic species.
- Damaging or removing markers, mooring buoys, scientific equipment, boundary buoys, and trap buoys.
- Moving, removing, injuring, or possessing historical resources.
- Taking or possessing protected wildlife.
- Using or possessing explosives or electrical charges.
- Harvesting, possessing or landing any marine life species except as allowed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Rule (68B-46 F.A.C.).

Sanctuary Regulations by Zone

With certain exceptions, the following activities are prohibited in the Ecological Reserves (ERs) and Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs):

- Discharging any matter except cooling water or engine exhaust.

- Fishing by any means; removing, harvesting, or possessing any marine life. Catch and release fishing by trolling is allowed in Conch Reef, Alligator Reef, Sombrero Reef, and Sand Key SPAs only.
- Touching or standing on living or dead coral.
- Anchoring on living or dead coral, or any attached organism.
- Anchoring when a mooring buoy is available.
- Bait fishing is allowed in SPAs by FKNMS permit.

Additional regulations for Tortugas South ER:

- Vessels may only enter if they remain in continuous transit with fishing gear stowed. (Diving and snorkeling are prohibited.)

Additional regulations for Tortugas North ER:

- Access permit required to stop or use a mooring buoy.
- Anchoring is prohibited.
- Mooring by vessel(s) more than 100 feet in total or combined length overall is prohibited.
- No access permit necessary if vessel remains in continuous transit with fishing gear stowed.

Special-use Research Only Areas:

- No entry or activities without a FKNMS permit.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs):

- Public access restrictions in these areas include idle speed only/no wake, no access buffer, no motor, and limited closures, and are marked as such.

Existing Management Areas (EMAs):

- Check with the appropriate State or Federal agency for applicable rules and regulations that apply in these areas.

Activities prohibited in the Key Largo and Looe Key Existing Management Areas:

- Removing, taking, spearing, or otherwise damaging any coral, marine invertebrate, plant, soil, rock, or other material. However, commercial taking of spiny lobster and stone crab by trap and recreational taking of spiny lobster by hand or hand gear consistent with applicable State and Federal fishery

regulations are allowed.

- Spearfishing.
- Possession of spearfishing equipment, except while passing through without interruption.

WHAT ARE THE ZONES?

Ecological Reserves (ERs) are designed to encompass large, contiguous diverse habitats. They are intended to provide natural spawning, nursery, and permanent residence areas for the replenishment and genetic protection of marine life and to protect and preserve all habitats and species particularly those not protected by fishery management regulations.

Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs) focus on the protection of shallow, heavily used reefs where conflicts occur between user groups, and where concentrated visitor activity leads to resource degradation. They are designed to enhance the reproductive capabilities of renewable resources, protect areas critical for sustaining and protecting important marine species, and reduce user conflict in high-use areas.

Special-use Areas are used to set aside areas for scientific research and educational purposes, restoration, monitoring, or to establish areas that confine or restrict activities. These areas minimize impacts on sensitive habitats and reduce user conflicts.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have been established to minimize disturbance to especially sensitive wildlife populations and their habitats to ensure protection and preservation consistent with the Sanctuary designation and other applicable laws governing the protection and preservation of wildlife resources in the Sanctuary.

Existing Management Areas (EMAs) have been established by NOAA and other agencies prior to Sanctuary designation. These zones delineate the existing jurisdictional authority.

WHERE ARE THE ZONES?

Ecological Reserves (ERs)

- Western Sambo
- Tortugas (North & South)

Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs)

- Carysfort/S. Carysfort
- The Elbow
- Key Largo Dry Rocks
- Grecian Rocks
- French Reef
- Molasses Reef
- Conch Reef
- Hen and Chickens
- Davis Reef
- Cheeca Rocks
- Alligator Reef
- Coffins Patch
- Sombrero Key
- Newfound Harbor Key
- Looe Key
- Eastern Dry Rocks
- Rock Key
- Sand Key

Special-use Research Only Areas

Located in the vicinity of:

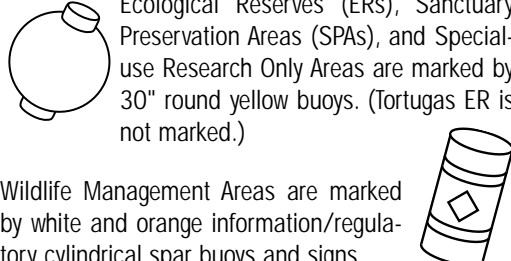
- Conch Reef
- Tennessee Reef
- Looe Key Patch Reef
- Eastern Sambo

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

- Eastern Lake Surprise
- Crocodile Lake
- Rodriguez Key
- Dove Key
- Tavernier Key
- Snake Creek
- Cotton Key
- Horseshoe Key
- Upper Harbor Key
- East Content Keys
- West Content Keys
- Little Crane Key
- Sawyer Keys
- Tidal flat south of Marvin Key
- Snipe Keys
- Mud Keys
- East Harbor Key
- Lower Harbor Keys
- Cayo Agua Keys
- Bay Keys
- Pelican Shoal
- Big Mullet Key
- Cottrell Key
- Little Mullet Key
- Woman Key
- Boca Grande Key
- Marquesas Keys

Existing Management Areas (EMAs)

- Key Largo Existing Management Area
- Looe Key Existing Management Area
- Crocodile Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
- Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge
- National Key Deer Refuge
- Key West National Wildlife Refuge

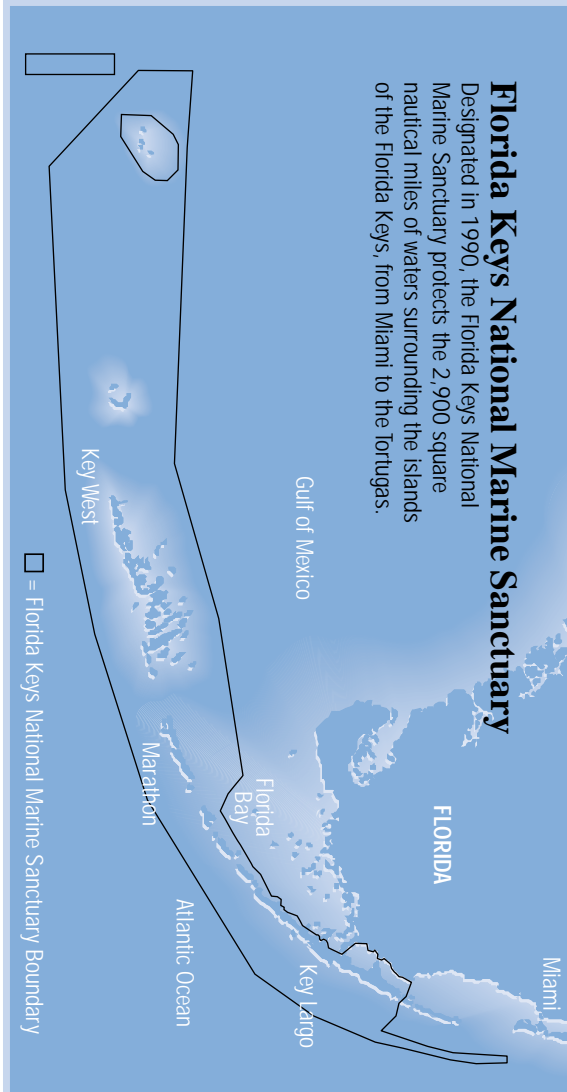


Ecological Reserves (ERs), Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs), and Special-use Research Only Areas are marked by 30" round yellow buoys. (Tortugas ER is not marked.)

Wildlife Management Areas are marked by white and orange information/regulatory cylindrical spar buoys and signs.

SANCTUARY REGULATIONS

This summary is only intended as a general reference to Sanctuary regulations. These regulations have been separated into those that apply throughout the Sanctuary and those that apply to specific Sanctuary zones. The text of the Sanctuary regulations can be found at 15 CFR 922 Subpart P and should be referred to for more specific information. A copy can be obtained by calling any Sanctuary office or on the Sanctuary web site at www.floridakeys.noaa.gov.



Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Upper Region Office: (305) 852-7717

Marathon Office: (305) 743-2437

Lower Region Office: (305) 292-0311

<http://floridakeys.noaa.gov>



Florida Keys
National Marine Sanctuary

Summary of Regulations

THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

The National Marine Sanctuary Program serves as the trustee for a system of thirteen underwater parks, encompassing 18,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The Program is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that manages national marine sanctuaries by working cooperatively with the public to balance enjoyment and use with long-term conservation. Increasing public awareness of our marine heritage, scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs, and outreach are just a few of the ways the National Marine Sanctuary Program fulfills its mission to the American people.

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

North America's only coral barrier reef and the third longest barrier reef in the world lies about six miles seaward of the Florida Keys, a 220-mile long string of islands extending south and west of the Florida mainland. In recognition of the significance of the coral reef ecosystem, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary was created in 1990, extending 2,800 square nautical miles on both sides of the Florida Keys. In 2001, the boundary was increased to 2,900 square nautical miles with the addition of the Tortugas Ecological Reserve. Management in these state and federal waters is achieved through a cooperative agreement with the State of Florida.

Note: There are other existing State and Federal laws regarding fishing and vessel discharges that apply in the Sanctuary.

State fisheries regulations available from:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

1-888-404-3922 or www.floridaconservation.org

Federal fisheries regulations available from:

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

1-888-833-1844 or www.gulfcouncil.org

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

(843) 571-4366 or www.safmc.net

National Marine Fisheries Service - Southeast Region

(727) 570-5333 or <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov/>

"No discharge zone" regulations may be obtained from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Photo: Larry Lipsky

