South Florida National Parks
Biscayne, Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Parks
Big Cypress National Preserve

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Trip Planner

The official guide for planning your trip to South Florida National Park Areas.

Big Cypress

Biscayne

Dry Tortugas

Everglades

Planning a Trip?

A visit to South Florida's national parks and preserves can be an experience you won't soon forget. Biscayne, Dry Tortugas, and Everglades National Parks, and Big Cypress National Preserve offer opportunities ranging from snorkeling to wildlife photography to camping on a backcountry chickee. Planning ahead is the best way to take advantage of these opportunities, and choosing what time of year to visit, based on your interests, can be the key to an enjoyable trip.

Rainy Season

During the rainy season warmer, clear ocean waters make snorkeling in Biscayne and Dry Tortugas the perfect way to explore these parks. Boating and canoeing in open waters helps to avoid mosquitoes. Boat tours out of Biscayne National Park and the Gulf Coast and Flamingo areas of Everglades National Park are another way to stay cool.

Seasonal rains bring higher water levels within Everglades and Big Cypress causing wildlife like alligators and wading birds to disperse and to be seen less frequently. Mosquito levels may become high, and exploring trails in some areas of the parks can become intolerable.

While visiting during this season you may find daily afternoon thunderstorms, high humidity, temperatures in the mid- to hi-80's and a multitude of mosquitoes. During this time of year you will also find an array of blooming plants, views of towering storm clouds and opportunities to experience the parks with fewer visitors. Remember, during the rainy season mosquitoes may be unbearable.

Dry Season

While some birds are drawn to the parks year round, the abundance of migrating and wintering birds makes the South Florida National Parks a birder's paradise during the dry season. Falling water levels within the Everglades and Big Cypress areas result in abundant wildlife concentrated in ponds and canals, providing excellent viewing opportunities.

The dry season is the busy season in South Florida's national parks. Most visitors to Big Cypress, Biscayne, and the Everglades come between December and March. March through May are busy months at Dry Tortugas National Park. During months of higher visitation lodging reservations are recommended and campgrounds may be busy.

Larger crowds, fewer mosquitoes, greater wildlife viewing opportunities and more enjoyable hiking, camping and canoeing adventures in all the parks characterize this time of year. Finally, the parks offer a greater variety and number of ranger-led activities that provide an in-depth look into the special natural and cultural resources protected within them.

Month	Average Minimum Temperature	Average Maximum Temperature	Humidity	Average Rainfall
November through April	Dry Season 66°F/19°C	76°F/24°C	57%	2.17"/5.5cm
May through October	Rainy Season 76°F/24°C	85°F/29°C	64%	5.39"/13.3cm
Annual	71°F/22°C	81°F/27°C		45.44"/115.4cm

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Everglades National Park
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, Florida 33034

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The National Park Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior, was established in 1916 to manage a growing system of national parks. Today, the National Park System consists of 388 units. National Parks, National Preserves, Seashores, Monuments, Historic Sites, Lakeshores, Battlefields, and others that make up a great repository of national treasures entrusted to the National Park Service. In South Florida, nearly 2.5 million acres of pineland, prairie, tropical hardwoods, mangrove forests, estuaries and coral reefs are preserved for this and future generations. Their scientific, recreational, aesthetic and educational values are limitless.

Experience Your America

National Parks Guide is published as a service to park visitors by the Florida National Parks and Monuments Association (FNPMA).

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Planning your trip

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there entrance fees?
No entrance fees are charged at Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne National Park, or the Gulf Coast district of Everglades National Park. For cars, vans, and motorhomes, Everglades National Park charges a $10.00 fee at the Homestead and Shark Valley Entrances. Fees vary for buses (call 305-242-7700 for details). Bicyclists and people on foot pay $5.00/person. Dry Tortugas charges $5.00 per person. Entrance fees are valid for 7 days. National Parks Passes, Golden Age, and Golden Access Passes are honored at entrance stations. If you are 62 or older and a U.S. citizen, Golden Age Passes allow free admission to all National Parks, are good for life, and cost $10.00.

What are the hours of operation?
In Everglades National Park, the road from the Coe Visitor Center to Flamingo is open 24 hours; the Shark Valley entrance station is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Big Cypress National Preserve is open 24 hours. Convoy Point at Biscayne National Park is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., the rest of the park is open 24 hours. For visitor center hours, see pages 4, 5 and 6.

What about mosquitoes?
Mosquitoes and a variety of biting flies are most severe during the hot, humid summer months, but can be present year-round. As an alternative to using insect repellents, you can take several actions to avoid insects:
- Cover up! Wear long-sleeved clothing. A good mosquito net jacket can go a long way towards making your visit more enjoyable. Look for one that keeps the netting off your skin.
- Avoid grassy areas where mosquitoes can hide.
- Close doors quickly.
- Where provided, stay on boardwalks and pavement.
- Seek open, breezy areas.
- Avoid shady places.

If you use repellent, apply it sparingly to exposed skin. An effective repellent will contain 20% to 35% DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). DEET in high concentrations (greater than 35%) may cause side effects, particularly in children. Repellents may irritate the eyes and mouth, so avoid applying repellent to the hands of children. Insect repellents should not be applied to very young children (< 3 years old).

Note: Vitamin B and "ultrasonic" devices are NOT effective in preventing mosquito bites.

Should I be aware of certain regulations?
- When observing animals or plants, pull completely off the road. Exercise caution when exiting your vehicle.
- Rangers monitor speed by radar. Obey speed limits.
- It is dangerous and illegal to feed or harass any wildlife.
- Loaded weapons are not permitted in Everglades, Biscayne, and Dry Tortugas National Parks. In Big Cypress National Preserve, special hunting regulations apply.
- Skateboards, roller skates, and personal watercraft, such as Jet skis, Wave Runners, and Sea Doos are prohibited.
- Pets are allowed on a leash in some areas, but not on trails or boardwalks, and must be under physical control at all times.
- Spearfishing is not allowed in Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks. It is allowed in Biscayne National Park with a Florida fishing license.
- Fishing regulations at Everglades National Park differ from state law, and some areas of the park are closed to fishing. Pick up your copy of Everglades fishing regulations at any visitor center or entrance station.
- Each park is unique, and regulations are tailored to fit the particular park area. Check at visitor centers, entrance stations, or ask a ranger for more information.

Local Visitor Information
Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce
(239)695-3941
Homestead/Fla. City Chamber of Commerce
(305)247-2332
Everglades City Chamber of Commerce
(800)914-6355
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
(305)350-7700
Key Largo Chamber of Commerce
(800)822-1088
Naples Chamber of Commerce
(239)262-6141
Key West Welcome Center
(305)296-4444
Tropical Everglades Visitor's Association
(800)388-9669
We Love Florida Keys Visitor Center
(800)SEE-KEYS

Park Activities	Big Cypress		Biscayne		Dry Tortugas		Everglades		Ranger Tips
	Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy	
Alligator Viewing	●	●					●	●	Best in the Dry Season
Bicycling	●						●	●	
Birdwatching	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Best in the Dry Season
Boat / Canoe Rentals			●	●			●	●	
Boat Tours			●	●	●	●	●	●	For Dry Tortugas, from Key West
Camping	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Best in the Dry Season
Crocodile Viewing			●	●			●	●	
Fishing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	State License Required
Gift and Book Sales	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Hiking	●		●				●		
Lighthouses			●	●	●	●			
Lodging							●	●	
Manatees	●		●				●	●	
Paddling	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Picnicking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Buggy in the Wet Season
Ranger Programs	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	Visitor Centers have Details
Snorkeling/SCUBA			●	●	●	●			
Swimming					●	●			
Tram Tours							●	●	
Walking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

Safety in the Parks...

In the area's national parks and preserves it is easy to enjoy viewing these creatures, yet they remain untamed. It is important that we respect animals by not crowding them. If an animal changes its behavior because of your approach, then you are too close.

... While Watching Wildlife

Respecting Animal Homes
Alligators, birds, turtles, bobcats. . . The South Florida parks are spectacular places to experience wildlife. In these natural environments, animals are protected and free to move and live as they wish. They remain wild, untamed, and relatively unafraid of humans. It is your responsibility to keep a safe distance from all wild animals; they can be dangerous if approached too closely.

Do not feed alligators or any other wild animal; it is bad for the animal, risky for you, and illegal in a national park. If you see someone feeding or harassing wildlife, please report this to a ranger or call (305) 242-7740.

Viewing Alligators Safely
An adult alligator has powerful jaws, strong teeth, and a brain the size of a walnut. This reptile acts primarily on instinct, assessing other creatures as potential threat or prey. Avoid approaching an alligator closer than 10 feet; they can easily outrun you.

Wading or swimming is prohibited in most freshwater bodies of water in the parks. Take special care with your small children and dogs; they are closer in size to an alligator's natural foods.

Elevated boardwalks like the Anhinga Trail, the Shark Valley Tram Road and Observation Tower, the Eco Pond viewing platform in Everglades, and the Turner River Road in Big Cypress offer good opportunities to safely view these remarkable creatures.

Keeping Raccoons Healthy
Raccoons are abundant in many areas of the South Florida parks, and are attracted to our food, water, and garbage. These unnatural food sources have led to artificially high populations of raccoons. This means that in times of low visitation (less food and garbage), there are more raccoons turning to the eggs of endangered crocodiles and sea turtles as a food source than in the past. Store food in your vehicle or a hard-sided container when camping. Raccoons can be aggressive if confronted, and may carry rabies.

Identifying Snakes
Twenty-six species of snakes may be found in the South Florida parks. Four of these species are venomous—the eastern diamondback rattlesnake, dusky pygmy rattlesnake, cottonmouth, and coral snake. Venomous snakes are not known to exist at the Dry Tortugas. Snakes usually shy away from people. If you see a snake, give it a wide berth. Rangers at visitor centers can help you learn to identify these reptiles.

This place is for the birds!
Feeding gulls and crows table scraps or other human food can make them overly aggressive and annoying. When pelicans are fed fish they learn to associate humans with food. Many habituated pelicans are then caught on fish hooks while trying to steal from anglers. Discarded monofilament line entangles and kills many birds and other animals, so please dispose of it in designated fishing line recycle containers.

... On The Trails

Heat
Summer heat and humidity can be oppressive, but heat-related injuries can occur during any time of the year in South Florida. Be sure to drink plenty of water. Most doctors recommend drinking at least one gallon of water or electrolyte beverages per day while involved in outdoor activities. Don't wait to drink until you feel thirsty as at that point you may already be dehydrated. Sugary or caffeinated drinks actually do more harm than good.

Thunderstorms
Thunderstorms occur almost daily during much of the summer, and sporadically during the rest of the year. If you hear thunder, seek cover immediately, especially if you are on the water. The safest places to be are inside a building or a vehicle. Check the local weather forecast before heading out for the day.

Avoiding Poisonous Plants
Poison ivy, poisonwood and manchineel are three poisonous plants that can be found in the parks and preserves of South Florida. All are poisonous to the touch. Manchineel is primarily found in the Flamingo area of Everglades National Park, and is rarely contacted. Poison ivy and poisonwood can be found in any wooded area of the parks. Avoid contact with these plants by staying on trails and not touching plants you can not identify. Park staff can assist in recognizing these plants.

... On The Water

Boating Safely
Boating in Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, and the Everglades backcountry can be a challenge. Much of the water is quite shallow, and you can ground your boat quickly. In addition to damaging your boat, groundings destroy precious seagrasses that provide food and shelter to creatures inhabiting these waters. Always refer to nautical charts as well as tide charts for a safe boating excursion. Additional boating safety considerations include:

- Be aware of the weather and water conditions. Get up-to-date information from the National Weather Service at area park visitor centers.

- File a float plan. Be sure that a family member or friend knows where you are going and when you are planning to return. Provide them with a written description of your vessel and whom they should contact if you do not return as scheduled.

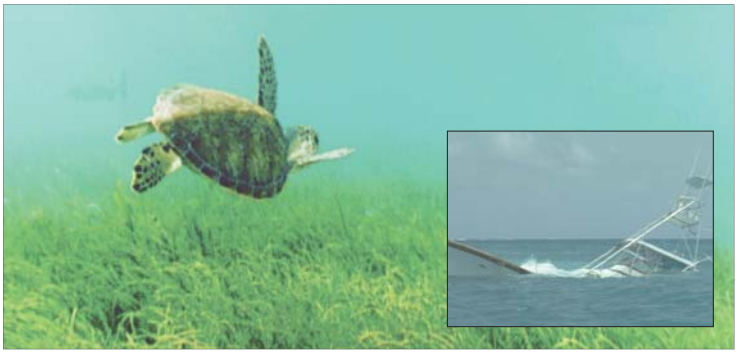
- Be sure that your vessel has all safety equipment, including: Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFD), fire extinguisher, flares, and a working VHF radio. Do not depend on cellular phones.

- Be sure that all passengers 6 years of age and younger wear a PFD at all times.

- Alcohol is a major contributor to boating fatalities. Don't drink and boat, impaired boaters often become impaired drivers.

Manatees
Manatees frequent many of the waterways in Everglades and Biscayne National Parks. Because they are slow–moving and feed in shallow water, many manatees are killed each year by boat propellers. Be especially careful in areas posted with manatee signs. If you see an injured or dead manatee, please report it to the park rangers by calling 305-242-7740

What's back there?
Remember to secure everything in your boat before heading home. Valuable items including fishing poles, life vests, seat cushions, coolers, and clothing often blow out of boats and are found along the roads. Garbage left in boats also finds its way to the roadsides. Please help keep South Florida national parks litter–free!



Safe boating protects natural habitats such as seagrass beds and coral reefs, both of which are valuable to a variety of wildlife, and us. Safe boating also saves money and lives. (Sea turtle photo by Bill Keogh.)

Navigating
Important nautical charts for South Florida National Parks can be purchased at stores in the parks and within local communities. Charts that relate to specific parks are:

Biscayne National Park
NOAA Nautical Chart
11451 — Miami to Marathon and Florida Bay

Dry Tortugas National Park
NOAA Nautical Chart
11438 — Dry Tortugas
11434 — Florida Keys Sombrero Key to Dry Tortugas
11013 — Florida Straits

Everglades National Park
NOAA Nautical Chart
11451 — Miami to Marathon and Florida Bay
11433 — Whitewater Bay
11432 — Shark River to Lostman's River
11430 — Lostman's River to Wiggins Pass

Big Cypress National Preserve

Established in 1974
729,000 acres

Important Information

Mailing Address
HCR 61, Box 110
Ochopee, FL 34141

Phone
Toll-free 24 Hour Emergency
(800)788-0511
Big Cypress Visitor Center
(239)695-1201
Big Cypress Hunting Information
(239)695-2040
Report hunting violations immediately to
(800)788-0511

Website
www.nps.gov/bicy/

Seasonal sheet flows of water from northeast to southwest across the Big Cypress Swamp carve narrow, linear valleys just inches deep into the limestone. Cypress trees grow tall in the slightly deeper water of these eroded strands. In some areas the water has eroded deep circular depressions in the limestone substrate, creating suitable soil depths for tall cypress. The shallower soil along the edge, or higher sides, of these depressions results in smaller trees. As a result, dome-shaped humps dot the horizon — cypress domes. Between the strands, clay-like marl soils form prairies lush with grasses and wildflowers. These strands, domes, and prairies, together with pinelands, hardwood islands or "hammocks," and a fringe of mangrove forest, produce the rich diversity of habitats within Big Cypress National Preserve.

Water is the key here. The Preserve receives nearly 55 inches of rainfall each year, flooding the cypress strands and prairies with a shallow sheet of life-giving water. Plants and animals in Big Cypress and Everglades depend on this water for survival. It flows through the Preserve into the 10,000 Islands area along the Gulf of Mexico, delivering valuable nutrients to estuarine species like snook, shark and crab.

Canoeing and Kayaking is a great way to explore many remote areas of the National Parks and Preserves of South Florida. However, you must be prepared for a variety of situations and conditions. Visit park websites and visitor centers for more details on routes and how to prepare for trips.

The Preserve provides refuge for species threatened by development of this popular state. Florida panthers, wood storks and red-cockaded woodpeckers, endangered species all, can be found in the Preserve. Rare orchids, ferns and bromeliads (air plants) are found in more inaccessible areas. Humans, too, find refuge here. Clear, bright skies unlit by city lights invite stargazing. Hiking, canoeing and camping opportunities abound. With care, future generations will find refuge and a new vocabulary in Big Cypress National Preserve.

What is a Preserve?

Big Cypress National Preserve was authorized in 1974 and comprises 729,000 acres. It was the first national preserve established by the National Park Service. A preserve allows a broader range of pre-existing activities. Hunting, off-road vehicle use and oil drilling are allowed here and not in nearby Everglades National Park.

Visitor Center

Midway between Miami and Naples on the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41). Information, wildlife exhibits, and a 15-minute film. Educational sales items. Open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except December 25.

Ranger-conducted Activities

Programs offered are on a regular basis in several areas of the park. A greater number and variety of programs – including swamp walks, canoe trips, bike tours, and campfire programs – are conducted during the dry season. Consult park website or visitor center for details on dates, times and availability. Park rangers at the Preserve are available to conduct programs within local communities and on-site. Call 239-695-1164 for details and arrangements.

Fishing/Canoeing/Kayaking

Anglers can pursue freshwater fish in the canals along the Tamiami Trail, the Turner River Road and throughout the Preserve. Licenses and regulations are available in Everglades City. Turner River and Halfway Creek as well as the Barron River Drainage, can be canoed or kayaked southward to the Everglades City area. Check at the visitor center for details about this and other canoe/kayak trips.

Camping

There are four small, primitive, free campgrounds within the Preserve. Campgrounds on the Loop Road are not suitable for large R.V.s. Monument Lake Campground has water and modern restroom facilities; a $14.00 per night fee is charged in the winter season (mid-December through mid-April). No fee is charged late April through November. Prepare for mosquitoes and take water if using the primitive campgrounds. There is a privately owned campground in Ochopee and several nearby in Everglades City.

Bicycling

Trails suitable for mountain bicycles can be found in the northern portion of the Preserve. Check at the visitor center for details.

Hiking

The Florida National Scenic Trail begins in the Preserve and provides miles of hiking for the adventurer. Short trails include the Fire Prairie Trail and Tree Snail Hammock. With a GPS unit and good preparation, off-trail hiking is superb in the dry season. Check with the visitor center staff, or website, for trail information.

Lodging and Dining

There are local restaurants in Ochopee, Everglades City and Chokoloskee. Lodging is located in Everglades City and Chokoloskee.

Scenic Drives

The Loop Road (county road 94), Turner River Road (county road 839), Wagonwheel Road (county road 837) and Birdon Road (county road 841) all provide excellent opportunities to get off the main highways and experience a wilder Florida. Inquire at the visitor center about current conditions of these gravel/dirt roads.

Wildlife Viewing and Bird Watching

Alligators, wading birds, and wild flowers are the main attractions here. A drive along the Turner River Road will provide ample opportunities to see these local residents, especially during the dry season. Ask the visitor center staff for the current birding hot spots. Please do not feed wild animals and keep a safe distance of at least 10 feet from them. Alligators can be particularly dangerous when fed and can move much more quickly than most people think. Pets and children are particularly vulnerable. Keep them out of harm's way! Remember, no collecting is allowed and all plants and animals within the Preserve are protected.

Hunting and Off-Road Vehicle Use

Although permitted in the Preserve, these uses are strictly regulated. Permits are required. Inquire at the visitor center.

Pardon our Construction

Projects to improve the safety of Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail) and Big Cypress Visitor Center, increase visitor amenities like boardwalks and pullouts, and improve water flow through the Preserve may create some delays for your travel. Please pardon the inconvenience as we improve your Preserve!

Biscayne National Park

Known locally as a fantastic place for outdoor, and water-based recreation, the park protects and preserves a nationally significant marine ecosystem with mangrove shorelines, a shallow bay, undeveloped islands, and living coral reefs. Biscayne National Park has protected this unique underwater world for over 35 years.

The shoreline of Biscayne Bay is lined with a deep green forest of mangroves. These trees, with their complex system of prop roots, help stabilize the shoreline and provide shelter for animals, birds, and marine life. Their leaves become a vital part of the food chain when they fall into the waters.

Lush seagrass beds found throughout Biscayne Bay help maintain the water's clarity. The Florida spiny lobster depends on this rich habitat and the bay has been designated a sanctuary where the lobsters are protected year-round. Shrimp, fish, sea turtles, and manatees also utilize these productive underwater pastures.

On the eastern edge of Biscayne Bay are the northernmost Florida Keys. These protected islands, with their tropical hardwood forests, remain undeveloped and serve as reminders of the area's past.

On the Atlantic side of the islands lie the most diverse and beautiful of the underwater communities — the coral reefs. The reefs support a kaleidoscope of life. Plants, fish, and other animals abound in all the colors of the rainbow.

The resources protected within Biscayne National Park are beautiful, diverse, and productive; they are also fragile. Fish and animals can be injured and killed by trash in the water. Seagrasses can be torn up by boats. Touching coral may open the way for disease. Some of our actions can cause great damage—forethought and care can preserve and protect.

Dante Fascell Visitor Center
Tour the park's visitor center with exhibits, videos, and information. Educational sales items. Open daily, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the wet season and 8:30 to 5:00 during dry season. From Florida's Turnpike, take exit 6 (Speedway Boulevard) and follow signs.

Ranger-conducted Activities
Programs are offered on a regular basis in several areas of the park. A greater number and variety of programs are conducted during the dry season. Consult park website or visitor center for details on dates, times, and availability.

Fishing/Boating
Anglers and boaters can launch their own boats from county-operated marinas adjacent to the park to venture into Biscayne Bay and to explore offshore coral reefs. Stop at the visitor center for regulations and to purchase nautical charts. For any boats docked after 6:00 p.m., a $15 overnight docking fee is charged at Boca Chita and Elliott Key harbors.

Canoeing/Kayaking
Paddlers can explore the mangrove shoreline along the mainland. Canoes and kayaks are rented by the park concessionaire. Stop by the visitor center for weather conditions and suggested routes.

Boat Tours
The park concessionaire provides snorkeling/SCUBA and glass bottom boat tours of the park's waters and islands. Reservations required. Call (305) 230-1100 for schedule and reservations.

Camping
Primitive campgrounds, accessible only by boat, are located on Boca Chita and Elliott Keys. Individual campsites are $10 per night, group sites are $25 per night. All supplies must be brought in and all trash must be packed out. Prepare for insects! The park's concessionaire provides transportation to Elliott Key for campers November to May — call (305) 230-1100.

Kodak/NPS Photo by Neil Montanus

Established in 1968 as Biscayne National Monument; rededicated and enlarged as Biscayne National Park in 1980.
173,000 acres

Important Information

Mailing Address
9700 SW 328th St
Homestead, FL 33033–5634

Phone
Toll-free 24 Hour Emergency
(800)788-0511
24 Hour Emergency
(305)247-7272
Park Information
(305) 230–PARK

Concession Services
Biscayne National Underwater Park, Inc
(305)230-1100

Website
www.nps.gov/bisc/

Attention Boaters

To prevent damage to your property and to the fragile resources of the park, come to the park prepared.
- Learn how to read and use nautical charts.
- Refer to your chart prior to leaving the dock.
- Know what the tides are. Stop by any local marina or the park visitor center to get the latest tide information.
- Learn how to use your electronic navigation equipment.
- Be sure that your VHF radio, and any other communication equipment is in good working order. Do not depend on cellular phone service in remote areas.
- Check the marine forecast prior to leaving the dock and watch for any changes in weather.

Remember these rhymes, which have aided mariners for years:
Brown, brown, run aground. Avoid brown areas! This water color indicates that reef formations or seagrass beds are close to the surface.
White, white, you just might. Use caution! Sand bars and rubble areas may be much shallower than they appear.
Green, green, nice and clean. Green waters are generally safe for shallow draft boats, larger, deeper draft vessels should exercise caution.
Blue, blue, cruise on through. Clear sailing in deep water areas.

Oh No! You ran aground, now what?
Stop! Attempting to power off can cause significant damage to your vessel and to the living bottom communities. If you do run aground or if you venture into shallow water and start stirring up mud in your wake, **Stop!**
- Turn your motor off. Do not attempt to power off.
- Trim your motor up.
- Try to push or pole your boat off, following the route in.
- Wait for high tide in order to drift off.
- Call for commercial assistance on VHF channel 16.

Boaters have the opportunity to enjoy the bay and the upper keys of Boca Chita, Elliott and Adams Keys within Biscayne. On Boca Chita visitors can camp, picnic and glimpse the area's history

Everglades National Park

Established in 1947
1,508,570 acres

Important Information

Mailing Address
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034–6733

Phone
Toll-free 24 Hour Emergency
(800)788-0511
Everglades 24 Hour Emergency
(305)247-7272
Headquarters
(305) 242–7700
Flamingo Visitor Center
(239)695-2945
Gulf Coast Visitor Center
(239)695-3311
Shark Valley Visitor Center
(305)221-8776
Key Largo Ranger Station
(305)852-0304
Campground Reservations
(800)365-CAMP

Concession Services
Everglades National Park Boat Tours and Canoe Rentals *in Everglades City*
(239)695-2591 or (800)445-7724 in FL
Flamingo Lodge, *including the marina, boat tours, and rentals*
(239)695-3101.
For reservations only
(800)600-3813
Shark Valley Tram Tours
(305)221-8455

Website
www.nps.gov/ever/

Everglades National Park is defined by water. Historically, a freshwater river a few feet deep and 50 miles wide crept seaward through this area on a riverbed that sloped gradually. Along its 80-mile course, the river dropped 15 feet, finally emptying into Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. There, fresh and salt water mix in coastal areas, and mangrove forest dominates.

In General

Ranger-conducted Activities
Programs offered on a regular basis in several areas of the park. Consult park website, ***Parks Guide*** or visitor centers for details on dates, time and availability.

Exploring Trails
Throughout the park trails allow you to explore the diversity of habitats within South Florida. While exploring the park be sure to bring plenty of water, be aware of changing weather conditions and be prepared for mosquitoes and a variety of biting flies, which are most severe during the hot, humid summer months, but can be present year-round.

Fishing/Boating
The mangrove estuary, Gulf of Mexico, and Florida Bay provide opportunities to explore by boat and to fish. Obtain regulations at the Flamingo Visitor Center, Flamingo Marina, and Gulf Coast Visitor Center. Boat ramps are located at Flamingo, the Florida Keys, and Everglades City area. A boat launch fee (good for 7 days) is charged when entering the park: $5 for motorboats, $3 for non-motorized craft. An annual pass ($60) is also available.

Camping
National Park Service campgrounds (fees charged, first come, first served or reserve (Nov-Apr) by calling (800)365-CAMP) are located at Long Pine Key and Flamingo. For information about private campgrounds in Everglades City call their Welcome Center at (239) 695-3941.

Wilderness Camping
Most sites in the park's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness are accessible only by boat or canoe. Permits are required for overnight camping. From November 1 to mid-April a permit must be obtained at the Flamingo or Gulf Coast Visitor Centers, fees apply. In summer, permits are obtained at no charge by self-registration at the Flamingo and Gulf Coast Visitor Centers and the Florida Bay Ranger Station. Ask for a copy of the ***Wilderness Trip Planner*** for information on backcountry camping.

Accessibility
All major trails in the park are accessible, and assistance is provided for access to boat and tram tours.

Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center

From Miami, take the Florida Turnpike south to the last exit. Follow the signs to Everglades National Park. Open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (bookstore closes at 4:30). Information, exhibits and educational sales items.

Royal Palm

4 miles past the Coe Visitor Center
Royal Palm Visitor Center
Open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Information and educational sales items. The Charles Harper gator hole exhibit is next door.

Anhinga Trail
A must–see! This ½-mile loop trail offers one of the best opportunities to view wildlife, including alligators and birds, up close. Accessible.

Gumbo Limbo Trail
½-mile loop. The trail winds through a once-dense tropical hardwood hammock reshaped by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Accessible.

The Main Park Road

A scenic 38 mile drive from the Coe Visitor Center to Flamingo
Walking Trails
Experience a diversity of Everglades habitats on several short, wheelchair-accessible trails leaving from parking areas along the Main Park Road.

Pinelands Trail—½-mile loop through subtropical pine forest maintained by fire. Pine rocklands are the most diverse habitat in South Florida.
Pa-hay-okee Overlook—¼-mile boardwalk leads to an observation deck offering a view of the vast Everglades from horizon to horizon.
Mahogany Hammock Trail — ½-mile boardwalk that meanders through a dense, jungle-like hardwood hammock. Glimpse a variety of tropical plants.
West Lake—½-mile boardwalk through the mysterious mangrove forest. Clinging airplants, mangroves and a view of the lake await you.

Flamingo

38 miles past the Coe Visitor Center
Flamingo Visitor Center
Exhibits, information, and wilderness permits. Staffed daily, 7:30 a.m to 5:00 p.m., from late November until May 1.

Wildlife Viewing
At low tide, birds congregate on the Florida Bay mudflats visible from the visitor center breezeway. Alligators and even endangered crocodiles bask around the Flamingo Marina boat basins. The viewing platform at Eco Pond provides good sightings of the pond's wild residents.

Canoeing/Kayaking
Information and a map of local canoe trails are available in the Flamingo Visitor Center lobby. The Nine Mile Pond Trail (5.5-mile loop) and trips into Florida Bay (variable distances) are suggested routes. Rentals are available at the Flamingo Marina. Be prepared for mosquitoes.

Boat Tours
Narrated boat excursions into the mangrove estuary and Florida Bay depart daily from the Flamingo Marina. Information is available at the Flamingo Marina or by calling (239) 695-3101

Shark Valley

On Hwy. 41 (Tamiami Trail) 30 miles west of the Florida Turnpike exit for S.W. 8th Street
Shark Valley Visitor Center
The visitor center is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. December through April. Hours for May through November are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Information and educational sales items.

Walking Trails
Bobcat Boardwalk—a ¼-mile round trip walk starting at the visitor center passes through sawgrass marsh and a bayhead.
Otter Cave—1-mile round trip from the visitor center. Enters a tropical hardwood hammock.
Tram Trail—The 15-mile tram trail is excellent for strolling and wildlife viewing.

Bicycling
The 15-mile tram trail is great for bicycling. A variety of marsh animals may be seen. Bicycle rentals are available at Shark Valley. Permits are required for groups of 10 or more. Helmets are required for children under 18.

Tram Tour
The Shark Valley Tram Tour provides an introduction to the freshwater Everglades and allows opportunities to view wildlife. Reservations can be made by calling (305) 221-8455.

Gulf Coast

3 miles south of Hwy. 41 (Tamiami Trail) on Highway 29, south of Everglades City
Gulf Coast Visitor Center
The visitor center open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m mid-November through April. It is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the wet season. Wilderness permits, picnicking, wildlife viewing opportunities, and educational sales items. A variety of marinas and boat launch facilities are available near the visitor center.

Boat Tours
Daily boat tours into the mangrove estuary and Ten Thousand Islands offer views of a unique environment and its wildlife. Information available in the lower level of the visitor center or by calling (239) 695-2591 or 1-800-445-7724 (Florida only).

Canoeing/Kayaking
From the visitor center, paddlers can venture into the beautiful Ten Thousand Islands and view birds, dolphins, manatees, and other wildlife. Canoes can be rented in the lower level of the visitor center building.

Dry Tortugas National Park

Dry Tortugas National Park, formerly called Fort Jefferson National Monument, was created on October 25, 1992. Designation as a national park increased the protection of the marine resources of this 100 square mile area.

Lying at the far western end of the Florida Keys, 68 miles west of Key West, are seven coral rubble isles called the Dry Tortugas, dominated by the massive brick fortress of Fort Jefferson.

The Tortugas were first discovered by the Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon in 1513. Abundant sea turtles or "tortugas" provisioned his ships with fresh meat, but there was no fresh water—the Tortugas were dry.

U.S. military attention was drawn to the keys in the early 1800's due to their strategic location. Plans were made for a massive fortress and construction began in 1846, but the fort was never completed. The invention of the rifled cannon made it obsolete.

As the military value of Fort Jefferson waned, its pristine reefs, abundant sea life, and impressive numbers of birds grew in value. Recognizing its significance, President Franklin Roosevelt set aside Fort Jefferson and the surrounding waters as a national monument in 1935.

Dry Tortugas National Park is accessible only by boat or seaplane. Contact the park or local chambers of commerce (see page 2) for a list of private carriers. No water, food, fuel, supplies, or accommodations are available at the park. There is an entrance fee of $5.00 per person.

Visitor Center
Information, exhibits, an orientation video, and educational sales items are available. The visitor center is open daily.

Touring Fort Jefferson
Take a self-guided walking tour of one of America's largest 19th century coastal forts. Follow the signs with a Civil War soldier on them.

Ranger–conducted Activities
Check the dock's announcement board or the visitor center for dates and times of ranger-guided programs.

Camping
At the time of this printing, the campground was closed for improvements; call or visit the park website for more details on future opening. All supplies, including fresh water, must be brought in. Parties of more than ten must make reservations by writing to the park.

Fishing
Sports fishing is permitted. Lobstering and spear fishing are prohibited in the park. Florida state fishing laws and regulations apply. Florida fishing license required. Fishing licenses are available in Key West.

Boating
Private boaters can visit the park. Nautical charts are sold at the park's visitor center and in Key West. Information is obtainable from the Key West U.S. Coast Guard Station, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Charter Boat Association. Boaters should be aware of the possibility of extremely rough seas. Check with a ranger for rules on docking and mooring.

Snorkeling
Patches of healthy coral reef, some easily accessible from shore and in shallow water, are snorkeling havens. Do not disturb coral or shells; all coral, living and dead, is protected from collection. Shipwrecks and all historic artifacts in the park are protected by law.

Bird Watching
The Dry Tortugas are renowned for spring bird migrations and tropical bird species. Contact the park for a bird checklist and information.

Bush Key
Bush Key, adjacent to Fort Jefferson, is closed January through September to protect sensitive bird nesting habitat. Please obey all signage.

Dry Tortugas National Park

Established in 1935 as Fort Jefferson National Monument; rededicated as Dry Tortugas National Park in 1992.
64,700 acres

Information Inquiries
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034–6733
(305) 242-7700

Website
www.nps.gov/drto/

Plan Your Trip
with the Florida National Parks and Monuments Association

BOOKS

Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida by Alden, Cech, and Nelson…Complete field guide to Florida's natural world. Includes birds, insects, reptiles, marine life, plants, geology, weather, ecology, sky maps and a section on the best natural parks and preserves. $19.95

Biscayne–The Story Behind the Scenery by W. Landrum…Dynamic full-color presentation of the mainland, shoreline, and underwater worlds of Biscayne National Park, home to the northernmost coral reefs in the continental U.S. $7.95

Everglades National Park & the Nearby Florida Keys–Golden Guide by H. Zim…Great pocket guide to identify the most commonly seen plant and animal life throughout South Florida. $4.95

Everglades–River of Grass by Marjory Stoneman Douglas…A Florida classic! A study of the unique Florida Everglades – Full of human history and commentary on the present and threatened future of the Everglades. Paper $9.95; Hardbound $18.95

Everglades–The Park Story by W. B. Robertson…Let an Everglades wildlife biologist introduce you to the flora, fauna, and history of the park in this fascinating, reader-friendly narrative. Full Color. $6.95

Everglades–The Story Behind the Scenery by J. de Golia…An interesting review of the Everglades with over 100 photographs of wildlife and habitats. $9.95

Everglades Wildguide by J. C. George… Official National Park Service handbook detailing the plants and animals of the Everglades region. Includes checklists. $7.95

Florida's Unsung Wilderness–The Swamps by Bransilver and Richardson… Journey to Southwest Florida's unique natural treasure–the swamplands. 120 photographs and text provide a rare glimpse into this fragile wilderness. $24.95

Pages From the Past – Pictorial History of Fort Jefferson by A. C. Manucy…Historical Fort Jefferson comes alive in this wonderful comprehensive portfolio full of historic photos, color illustrations and fascinating text. $7.95

Paddler's Guide to Everglades National Park by J. Molloy…Guide to 53 paddling routes in Everglades National Park, including the Wilderness Waterway. Includes maps, a rating system, and descriptions of every wilderness campsite. $16.95

VIDEOS

Fort Jefferson–Gibraltar of the Gulf 11 min., NTSC. $11.95
Birds of the Everglades 30 min., NTSC, English PAL $24.95
Alligators 30 min., NTSC $24.95*
Everglades 60 min. $22.95*
Hidden Worlds of Big Cypress Swamp 45 min. $24.95*
Wonders of Biscayne National Park & Florida Keys 45 min. $24.95*
* Most*Available in:*
NTSC, English PAL, German PAL

DVDs

Everglades & National Parks of South Florida includes Biscayne, Big Cypress & Dry Tortugas. 90 min. $24.95
Everglades A comprehensive look at the Everglades. Also includes "The Wonders of Biscayne/Keys." 90 min. $23.95

Florida National Parks and Monuments Association
Florida National Parks and Monuments Association (FNPMA) is a National Park Service Cooperating Association dedicated to increasing public understanding of the natural and historic values of South Florida's national parks. A wide variety of educational books, videos, and related park theme items may be purchased at park visitor center bookstores or by mail. Proceeds from sales support educational programs in South Florida national parks.

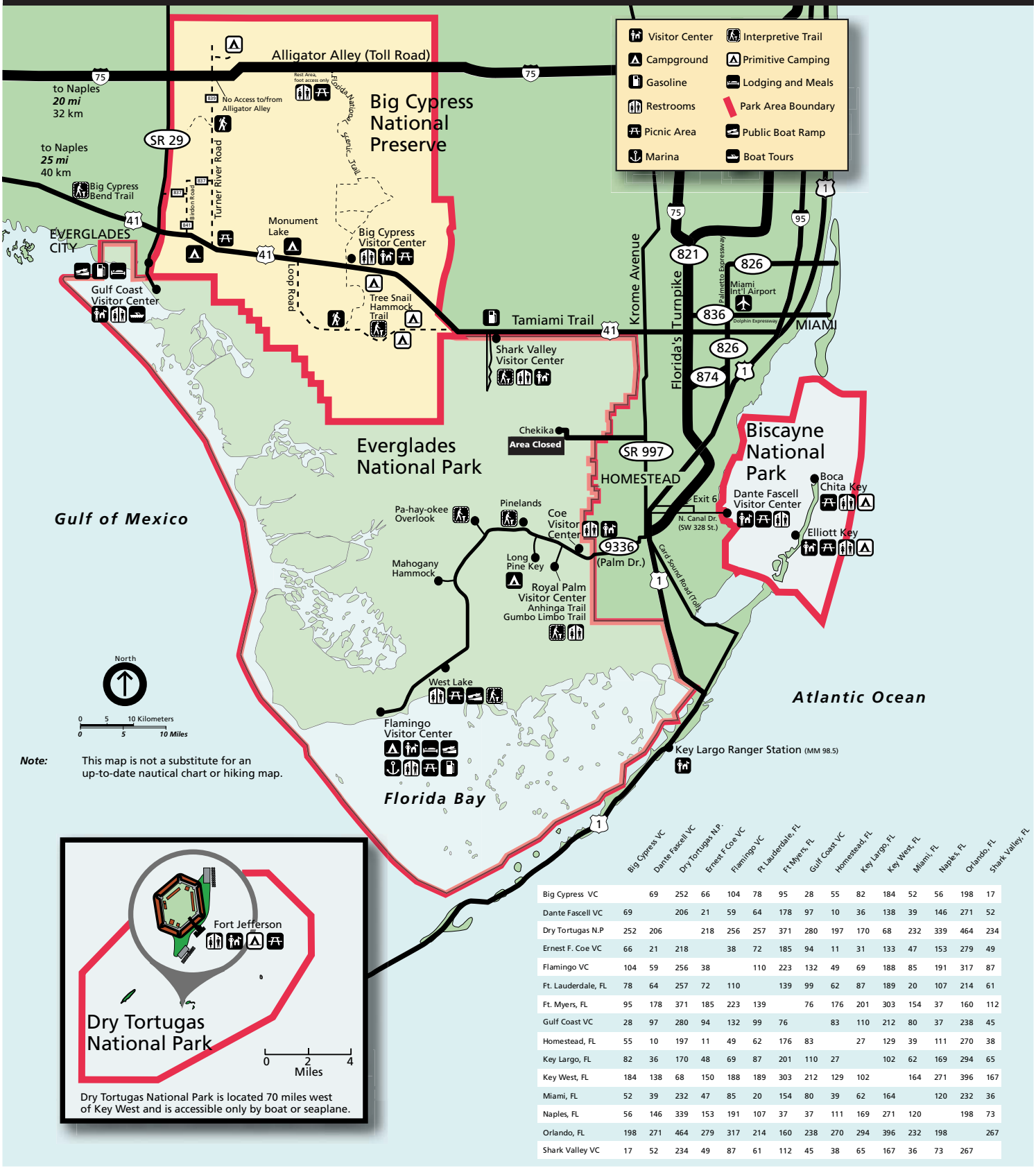
Mailing Address
10 Parachute Key #51
Homestead, FL 33034–6735
(305) 247–1216
(305) 247–1225 FAX

Website
www.nps.gov/ever/fnpma

Phone and Fax orders accepted with Mastercard, Visa, or Discover.

South Florida National Parks and Preserves Map

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Note: This map is not a substitute for an up-to-date nautical chart or hiking map.

	Big Cypress VC	Dante Fascell VC	Dry Tortugas N.P.	Ernest F Coe VC	Flamingo VC	Ft Lauderdale, FL	Ft Myers, FL	Gulf Coast VC	Homestead, FL	Key Largo, FL	Key West, FL	Miami, FL	Naples, FL	Orlando, FL	Shark Valley, FL
Big Cypress VC		69	252	66	104	78	95	28	55	82	184	52	56	198	17
Dante Fascell VC	69		206	21	59	64	178	97	10	36	138	39	146	271	52
Dry Tortugas N.P	252	206		218	256	257	371	280	197	170	68	232	339	464	234
Ernest F. Coe VC	66	21	218		38	72	185	94	11	31	133	47	153	279	49
Flamingo VC	104	59	256	38		110	223	132	49	69	188	85	191	317	87
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	78	64	257	72	110		139	99	62	87	189	20	107	214	61
Ft. Myers, FL	95	178	371	185	223	139		76	176	201	303	154	37	160	112
Gulf Coast VC	28	97	280	94	132	99	76		83	110	212	80	37	238	45
Homestead, FL	55	10	197	11	49	62	176	83		27	129	39	111	270	38
Key Largo, FL	82	36	170	48	69	87	201	110	27		102	62	169	294	65
Key West, FL	184	138	68	150	188	189	303	212	129	102		164	271	396	167
Miami, FL	52	39	232	47	85	20	154	80	39	62	164		120	232	36
Naples, FL	56	146	339	153	191	107	37	37	111	169	271	120		198	73
Orlando, FL	198	271	464	279	317	214	160	238	270	294	396	232	198		267
Shark Valley VC	17	52	234	49	87	61	112	45	38	65	167	36	73	267	