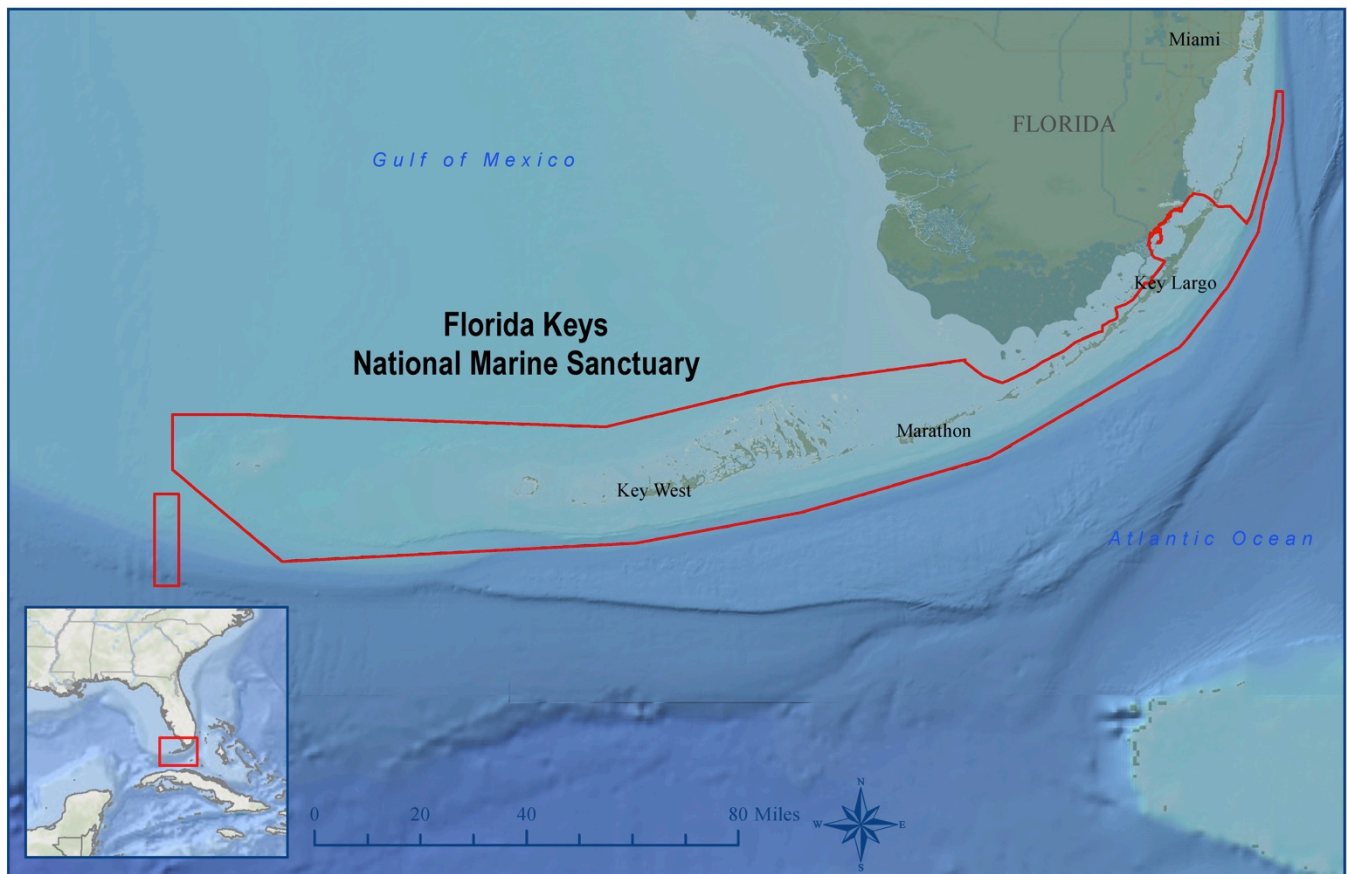


FY16 Accomplishments



BACKGROUND

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1990 to protect and preserve spectacular, unique, and nationally significant marine resources. Within the sanctuary is the world's third largest barrier reef, extensive seagrass beds, mangrove-fringed islands, and more than 6,000 species of marine life. The sanctuary also protects pieces of our nation's history such as shipwrecks and other archeological treasures.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is part of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which is a network of underwater parks encompassing more

than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries are managed for the conservation of their natural and cultural resources, while supporting sustainable recreation, tourism and compatible commercial activities. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.



Photo: NOAA

By partnering with NOAA's National Geodetic Survey and National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, areas within the sanctuary were mapped using LIDAR remote sensing technology.



Photo: FWC

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission law enforcement was on the water in support of enforcing sanctuary regulations.

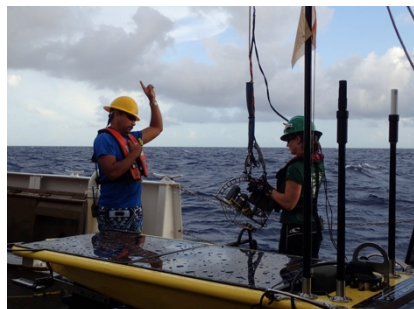


Photo: NOAA

The drop camera from NOAA Ship *Nancy Foster* was deployed to provide visual and acoustic observations.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary visitor use and habitat mapping surveys

Sanctuary managers will have new information about visitor activities and the number of vessels operating in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, thanks to a survey of boater and visitor use in the area. This data is important to document changing patterns of use across different marine zones. Once analysis is complete, it will inform the regulatory and zoning review process. Sanctuary management needs were further supported by habitat mapping using LIDAR remote sensing technology. This aerial survey filled habitat characterization data gaps, thereby refining site-specific management capabilities. The sanctuary leveraged multiple internal and external partnerships to complete the above projects, including collaboration with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Enhancing sanctuary enforcement through partnerships

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is augmenting enforcement of sanctuary regulations with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission through modification of an existing agreement for enforcement of federal fisheries regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Lacey Act, and Endangered Species Act. This Joint Enforcement Agreement better integrates sanctuary priorities and management needs, with a focus on prevention and detection of violations; this model is expected to enhance program efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Multi-partner collaboration to inform sanctuary management decisions

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary led a multi-partner research mission on NOAA Ship *Nancy Foster* to collect data to inform sanctuary management decisions. Scientists mapped 22 miles of habitat; tagged fish with acoustic transmitters and serviced instruments to better track fish movement patterns; and deployed stereo-cameras and an unmanned surface vehicle to provide visual and acoustic observations. Research partners included the National Center for Coastal and Ocean Sciences, National Weather Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Looking Ahead to FY17

- The sanctuary is developing a Blue Star Fishing Guide recognition program to promote education and stewardship practices in the charter fishing guide community.
- The sanctuary is collaborating on the removal of approximately 30 abandoned/derelict vessels and associated debris in the Marquesas Keys, thereby restoring shorelines and nearshore habitats.
- A Draft Environmental Impact Statement addressing potential zoning updates is in preparation with federal partners and consultation with state partners with anticipated completion in late 2017.