



Lower Keys Region





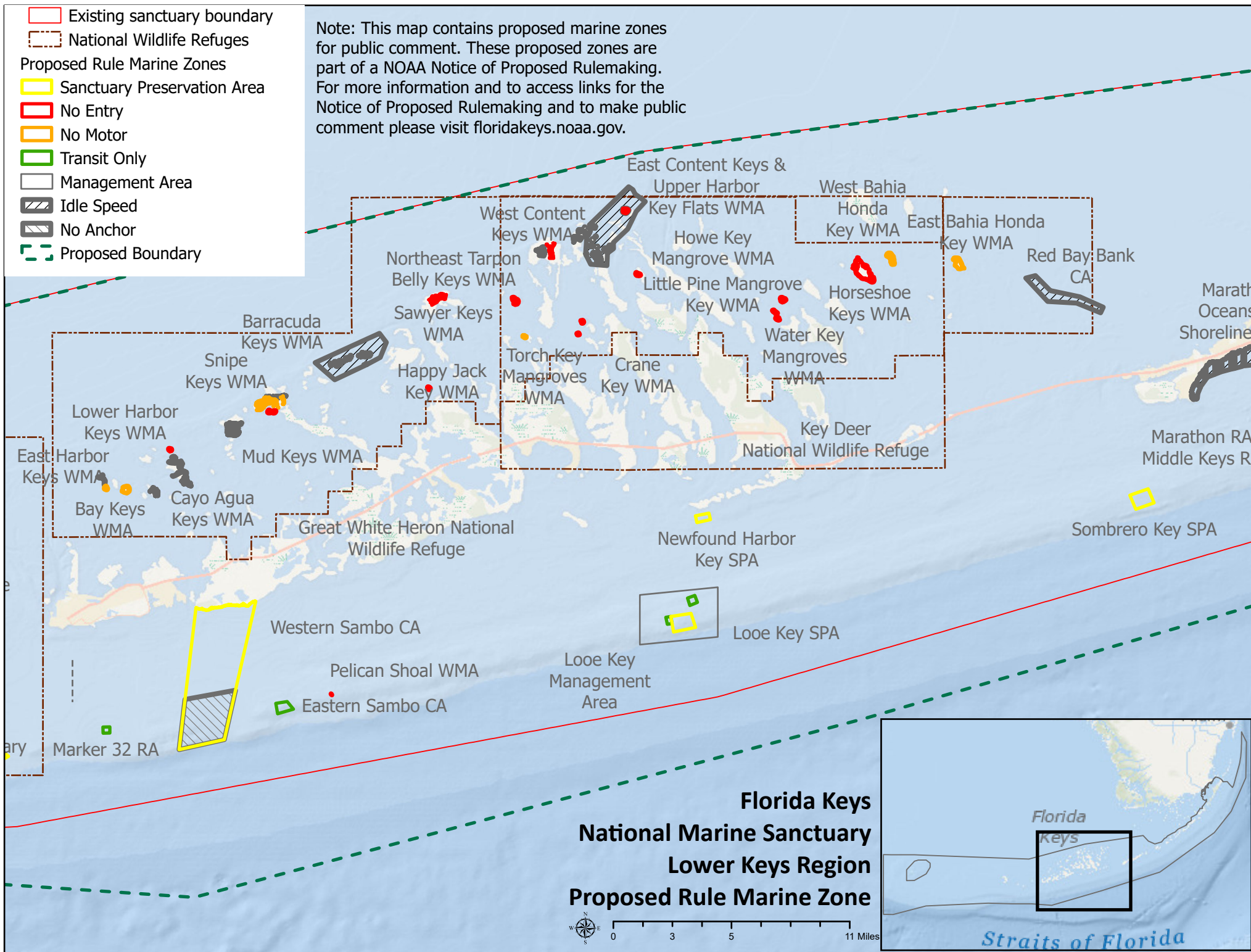
Lower Keys Region: Marine Zones

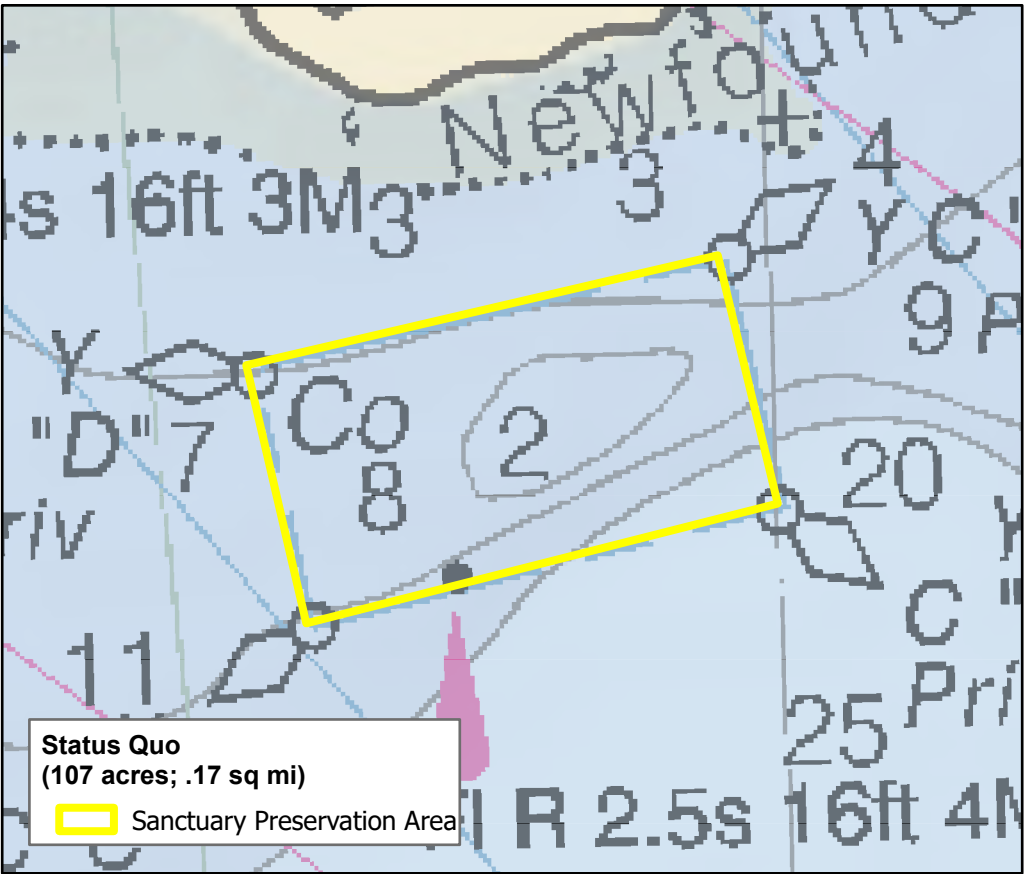
- Lower Keys Regional Map
- Newfound Harbor Key Sanctuary Preservation Area
- Looe Key Management Area, Looe Key Sanctuary Preservation Area, and Looe Key East and Looe Key West Nursery Restoration Areas
- Pelican Shoal Wildlife Management Area
- Eastern Sambo and Western Sambo Conservation Areas
- Marker 32 Nursery Restoration Area
- East Bahia Honda Key Wildlife Management Area
- West Bahia Honda Key Wildlife Management Area
- Horseshoe Keys Wildlife Management Area
- Little Pine Key Mangrove Wildlife Management Area
- Water Key Mangroves Wildlife Management Area
- East Content Keys and Upper Harbor Key Flats Wildlife Management Area, West Content Keys, and Howe Key Mangrove Wildlife Management Area
- Torch Key Mangroves Wildlife Management Area
- Northeast Tarpon Belly Keys Wildlife Management Area
- Little Crane Key and Crane Key Wildlife Management Areas
- Sawyer Key Wildlife Management Area
- Happy Jack Key Wildlife Management Area
- Tidal Flat South of Marvin Key WMA and Barracuda Keys Wildlife Management Area
- Snipe Keys Wildlife Management Area
- Mud Keys Wildlife Management Area
- East Harbor Key and Lower Harbor Keys Wildlife Management Areas
- Cayo Agua Keys Wildlife Management Area
- Bay Keys Wildlife Management Area
- Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge
- Key West National Wildlife Refuge

Cover photo: Looe Key, a popular dive and snorkel site in the Lower Florida Keys, was designated a national marine sanctuary in 1981, and incorporated into Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in 1990.
Photo: Shawn Verne

- Existing sanctuary boundary
- National Wildlife Refuges
- Proposed Rule Marine Zones
- Sanctuary Preservation Area
- No Entry
- No Motor
- Transit Only
- Management Area
- Idle Speed
- No Anchor
- Proposed Boundary

Note: This map contains proposed marine zones for public comment. These proposed zones are part of a NOAA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. For more information and to access links for the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and to make public comment please visit floridakeys.noaa.gov.





**Draft Rule is the same
as status quo**

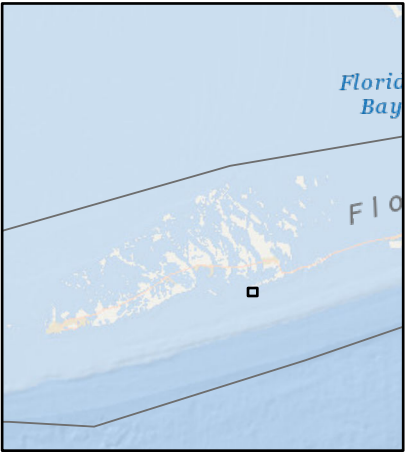
Newfound Harbor Key Sanctuary Preservation Area

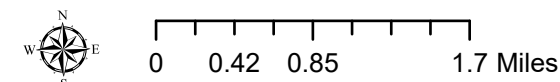
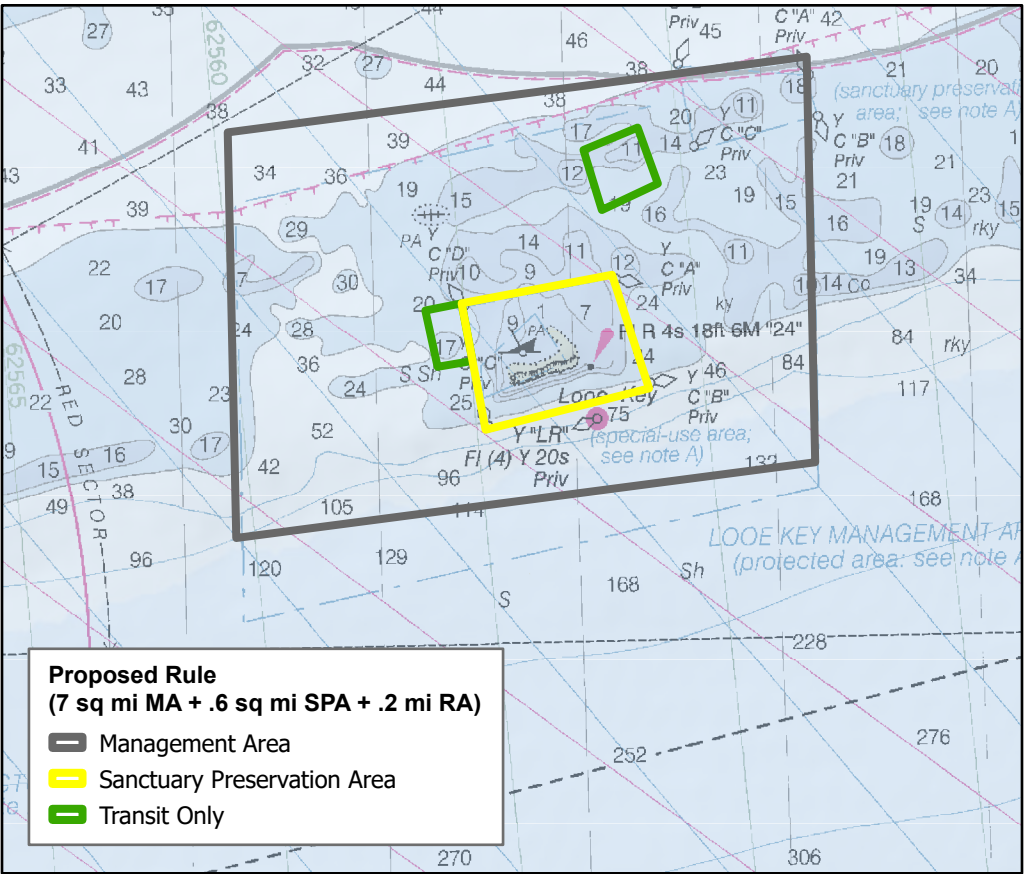
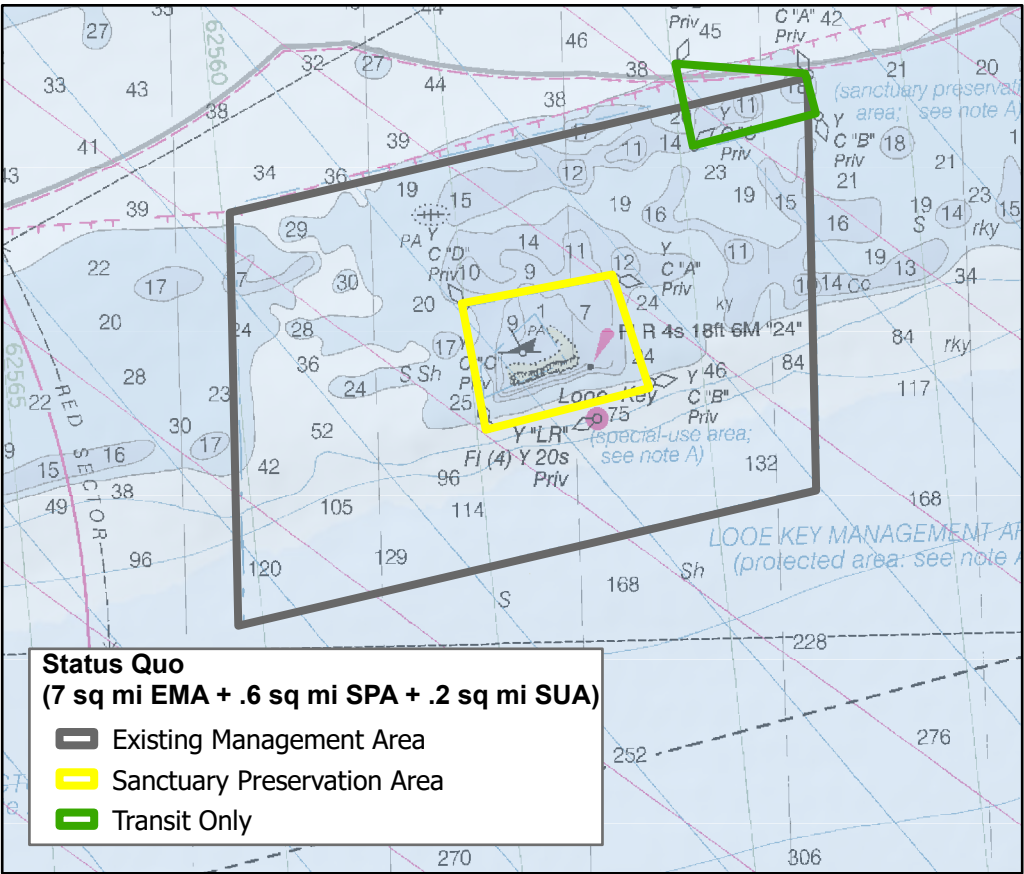
Protects an important nearshore patch reef community in the Lower Keys near Newfound Harbor that historically supported ESA-listed staghorn coral, and unusually large lobate and mountainous star corals. This site includes coral restoration projects, is one of the 7 Mission Iconic Reef sites, and serves as a site for experiential education. This zone was originally designed to limit consumptive activities and separate users engaged in different activities.

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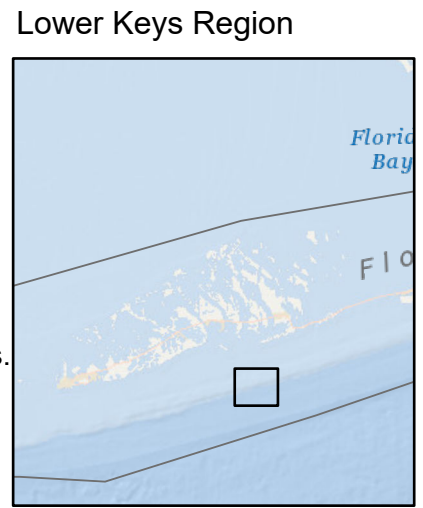


Looe Key Management Area, Looe Key Sanctuary Preservation Area, and Looe Key East and West Nursery Restoration Areas

MA: Designated in 1981 as a National Marine Sanctuary, this zone encompasses a Sanctuary Preservation Area and three Restoration Areas. Reef habitats historically supported large thickets of ESA-listed elkhorn coral and staghorn coral as well as star coral and pillar corals. The site currently contains the only remaining remnant elkhorn thickets within the Lower Keys, along with unusually large colonies of ESA-listed star corals. The site contains premier snorkel and dive locations and is renowned for high relief spur and groove habitats, undercut ledges and swim throughs that support diverse fish assemblages. It also contains an ongoing site for restoration of ESA-listed and other non ESA-listed coral species. This is one of seven Mission: Iconic Reef sites.

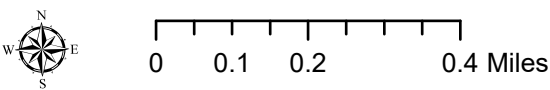
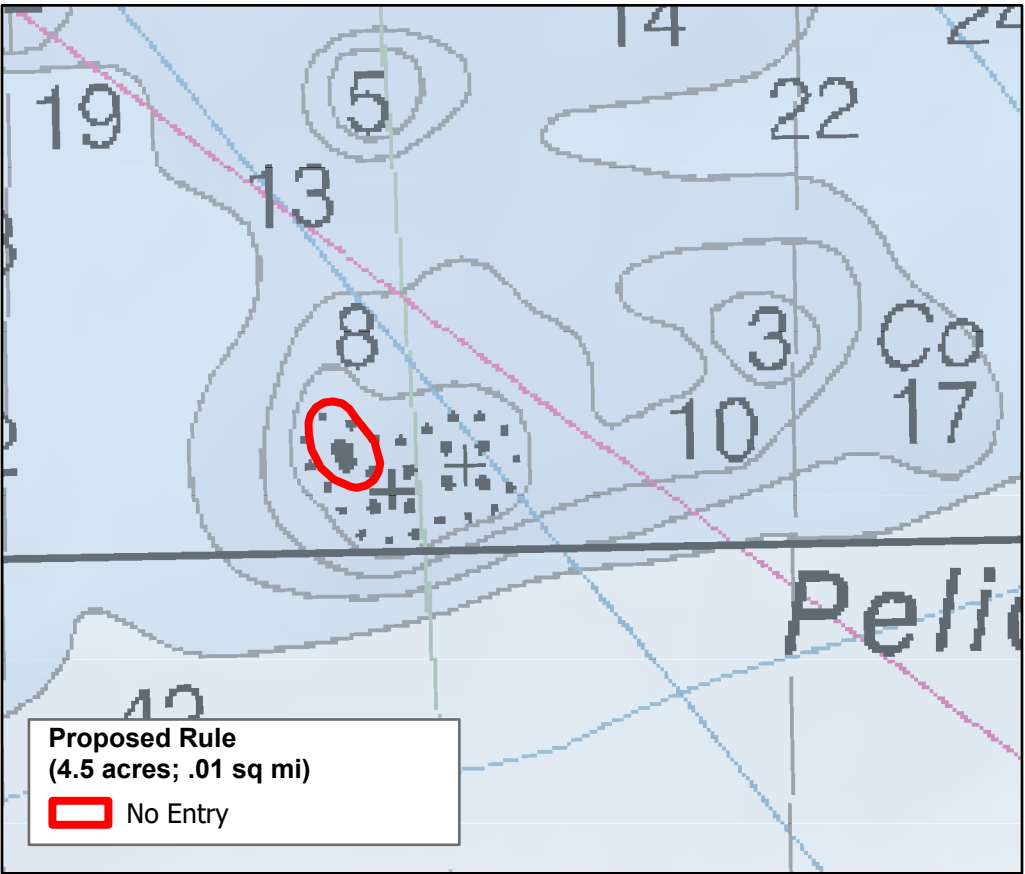
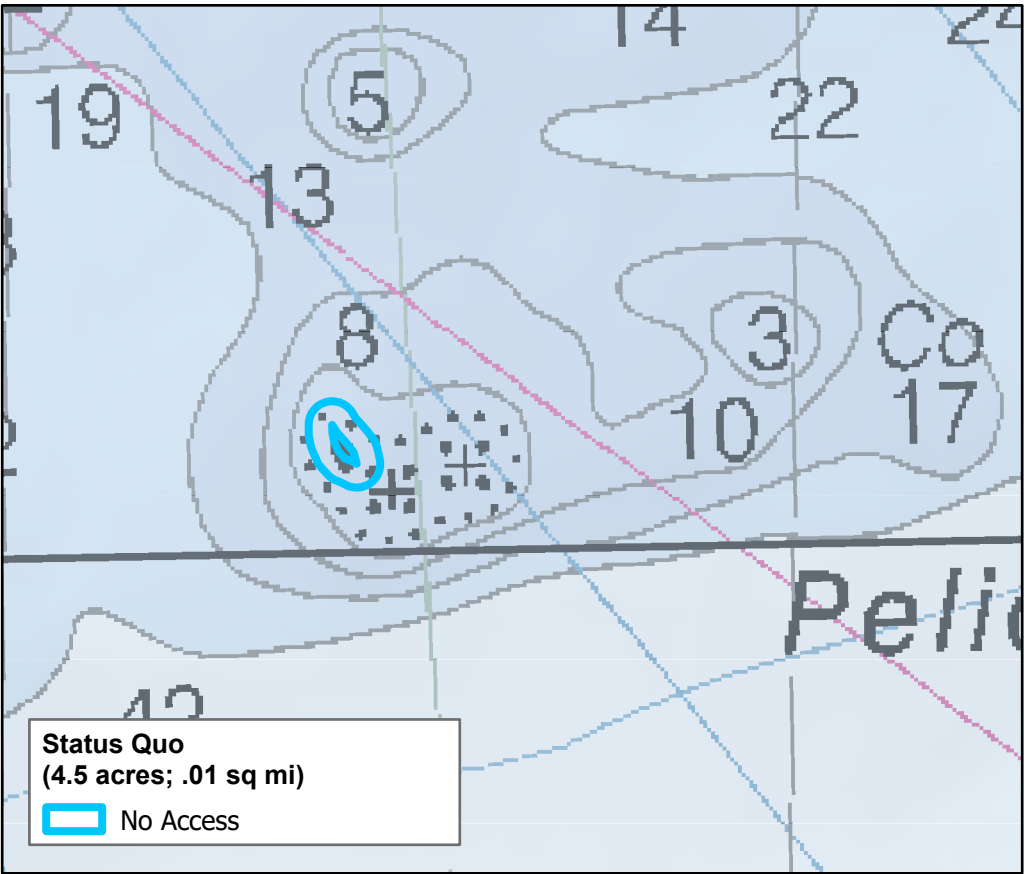
SPA: Protects an area of transitional coral reef features and other benthic communities including seagrass. This zone was originally designed to limit consumptive activities and separate users engaged in different activities.

RAs: Provide additional protections to an existing, permitted coral nursery site



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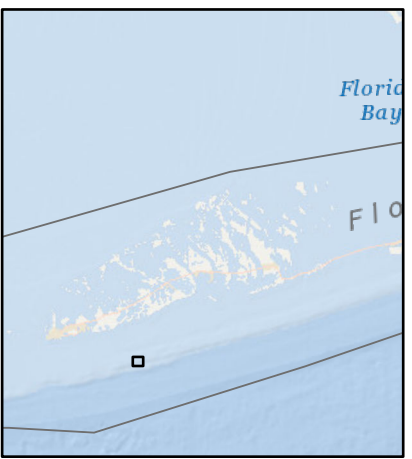
Pelican Shoal Wildlife Management Area

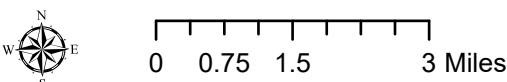
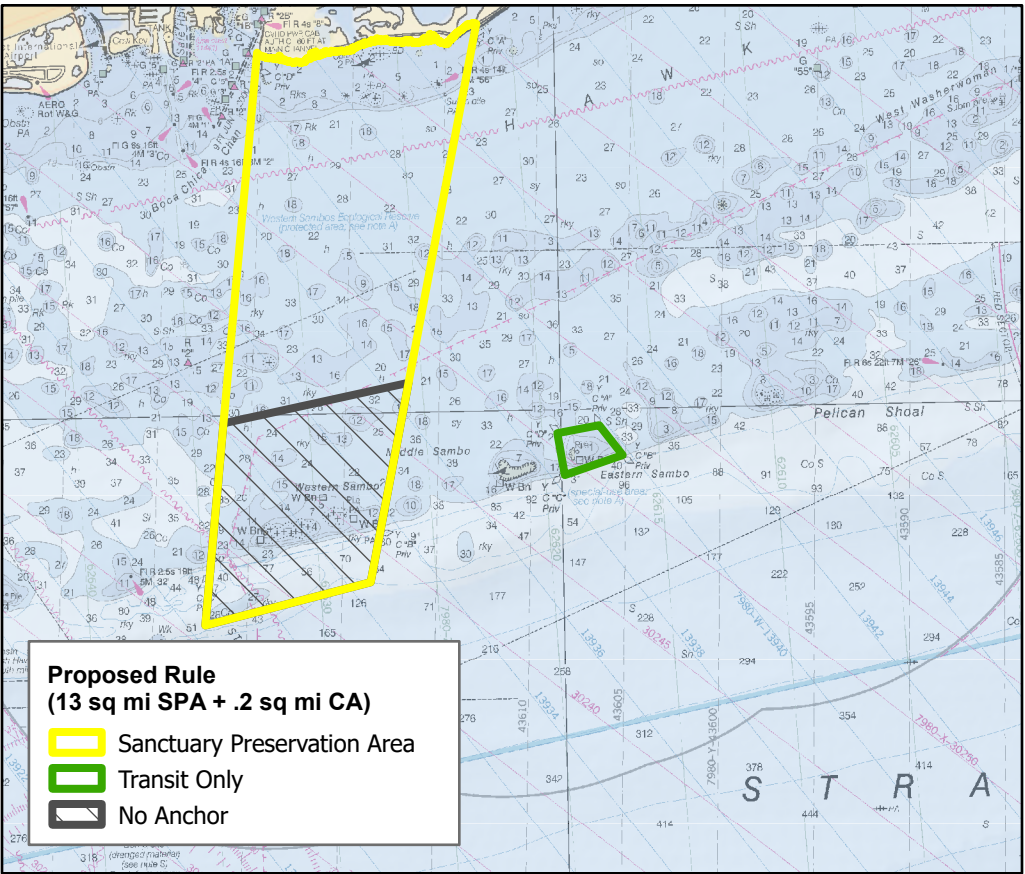
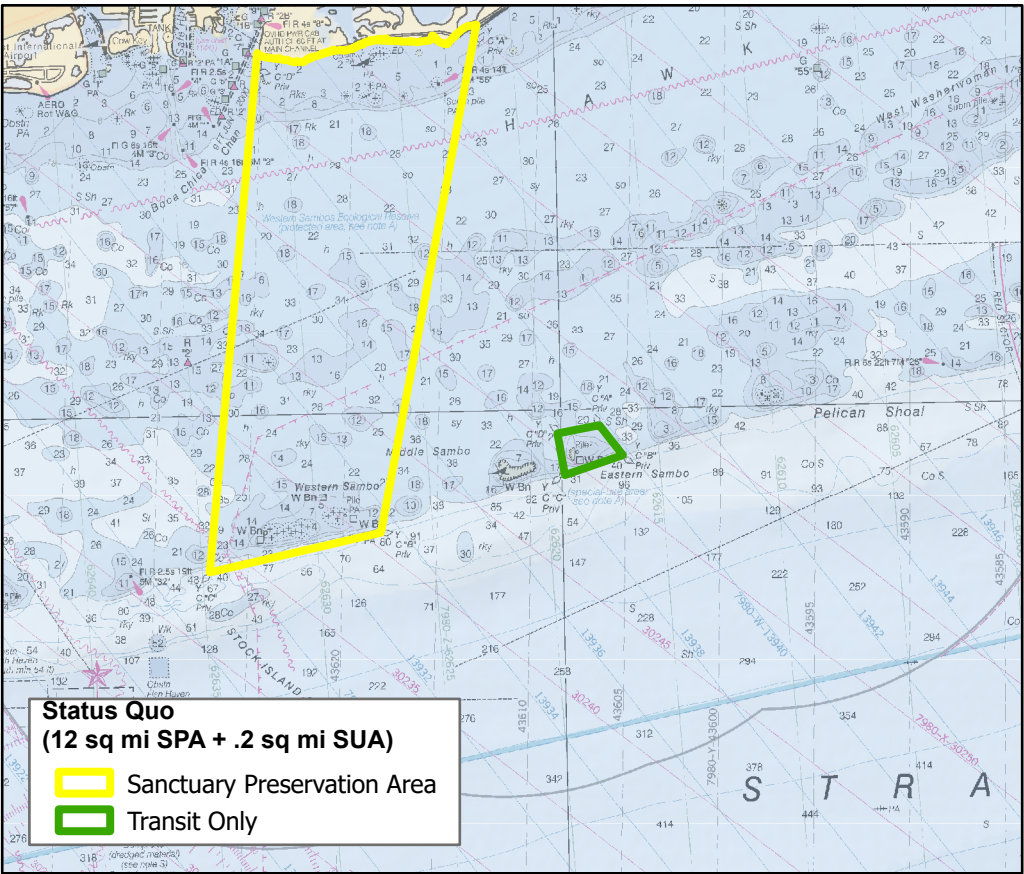
Decrease disturbance of bird nesting site for roseate terns, an area that is thought to be the last active ground-breeding location for ESA-listed roseate terns in Florida. Additionally, this is a FWC Critical Wildlife Area that was established in 1990.

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Eastern Sambo and Western Sambo Conservation Areas

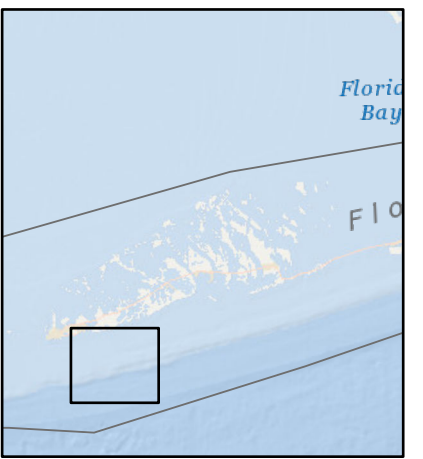
Western Sambo CA: Protects a large area of interconnected nearshore and midshelf patch reefs, and a well-developed bank reef with a prominent spur-and-groove habitat along with associated seagrass and hardbottom communities. This zone provides a corridor for the migration of juvenile and adult fish and invertebrate populations and protects a known lobster spawning area. This area meets the Advisory Council goal to protect large, contiguous, diverse and interconnected habitats, including for fish moving inshore to offshore through their life cycle.

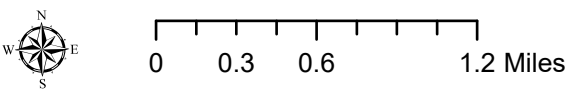
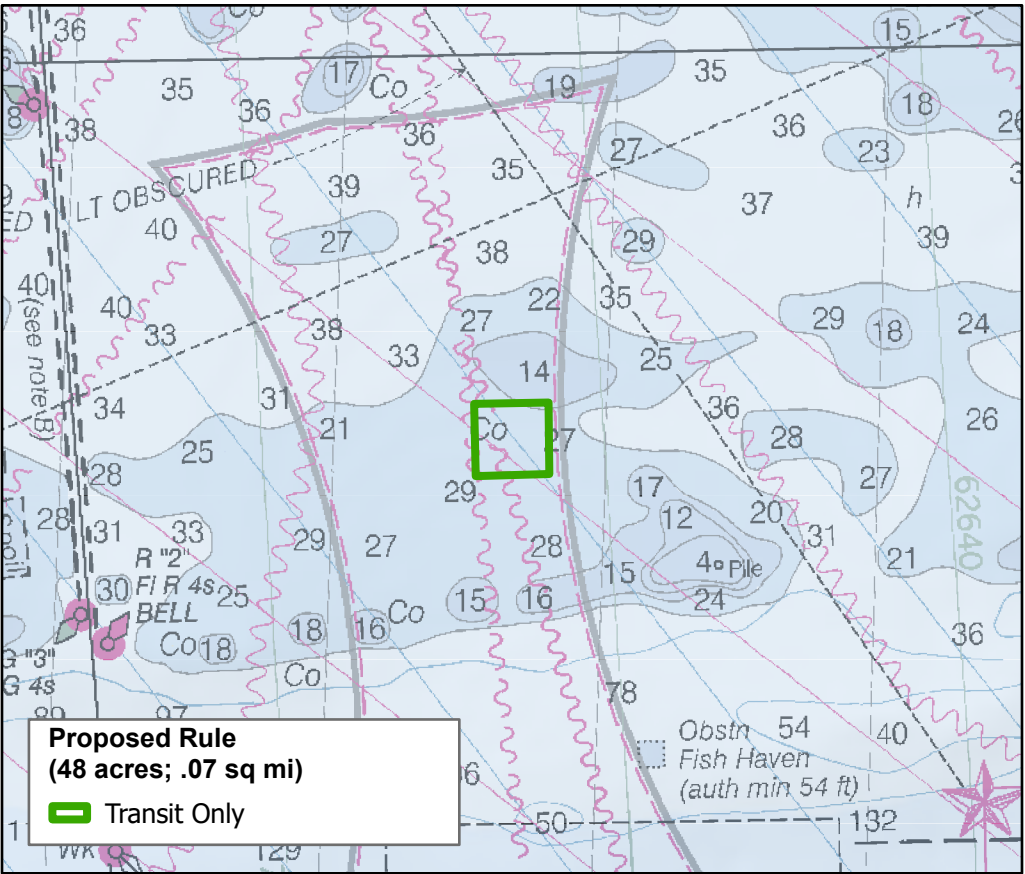
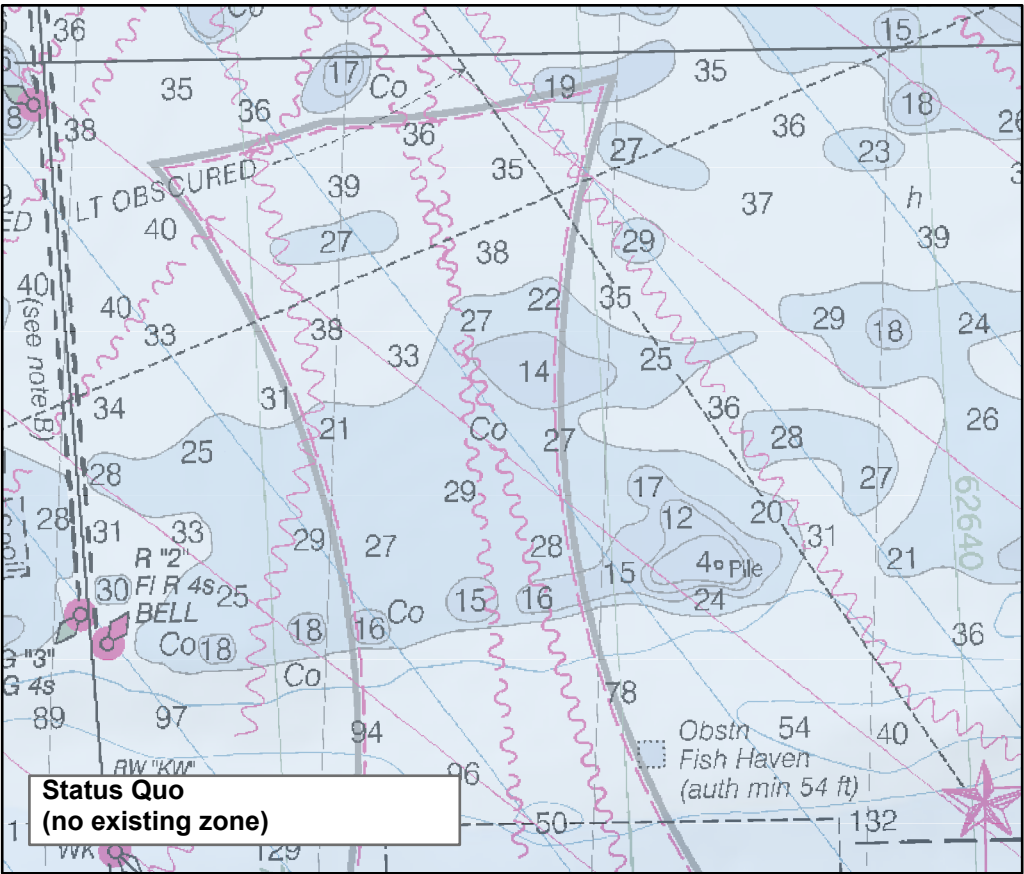
Eastern Sambo CA: Protects a well-developed spur-and-groove bank reef that formerly contained thickets of ESA-listed elkhorn and staghorn corals and important breeding populations of queen conch. This zone was originally established to serve as a shallow reef community in an area of good water quality, in comparison with Tennessee Reef, which is located in an area of poor water quality opposite of Florida Bay.

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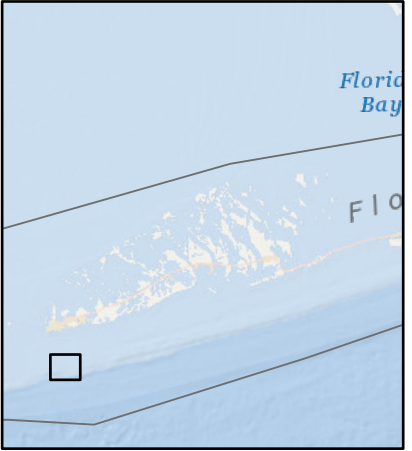
Marker 32 Nursery Restoration Area

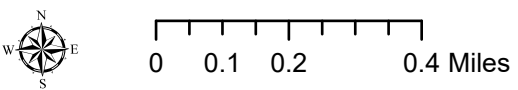
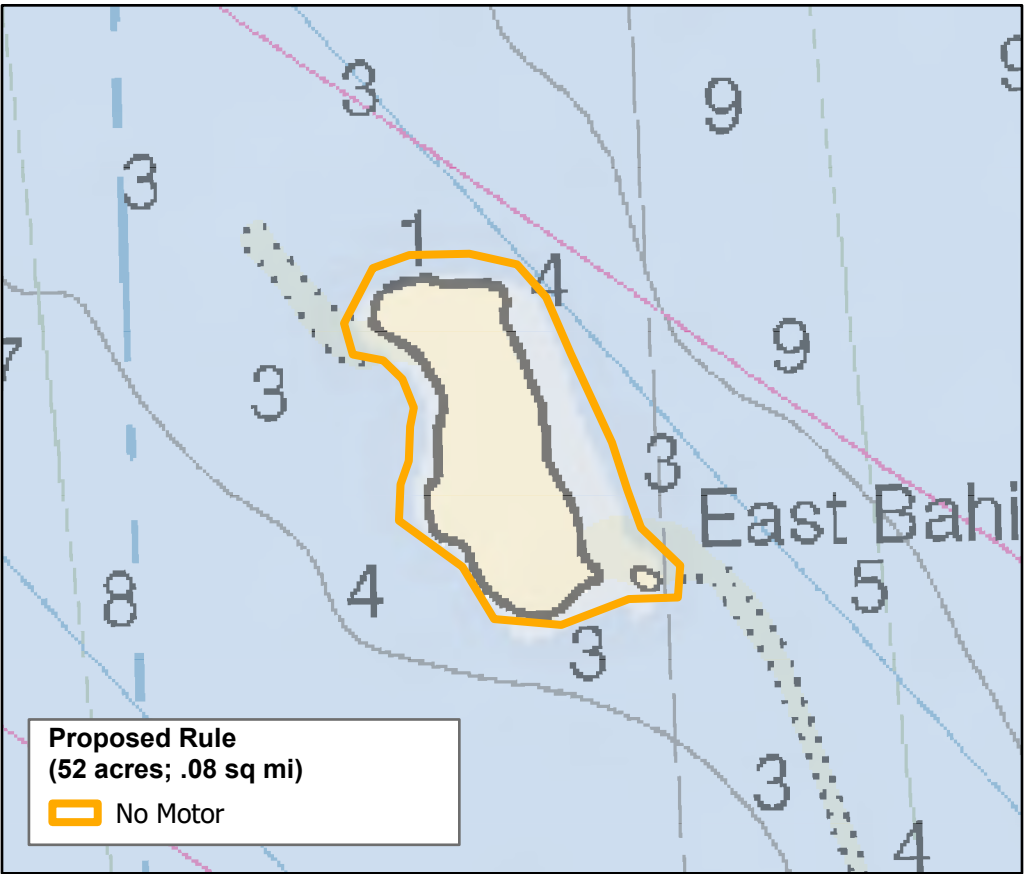
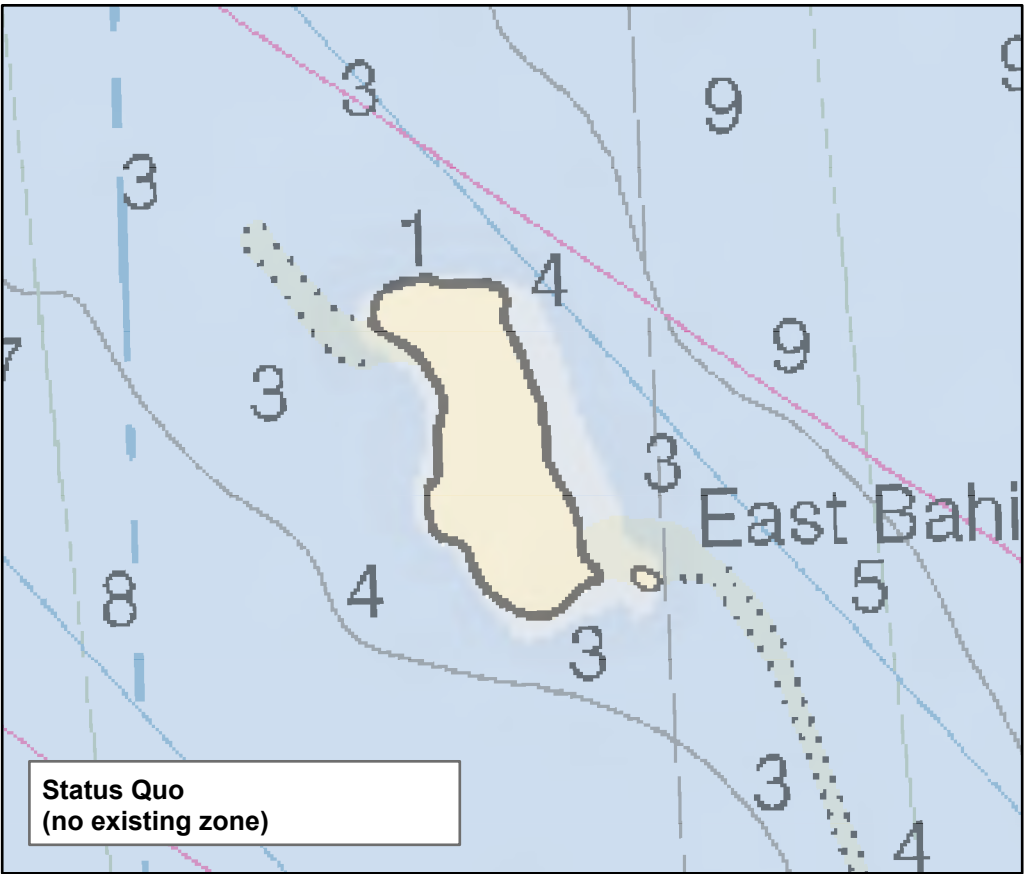
Provide additional protections to an existing, permitted coral nursery site.

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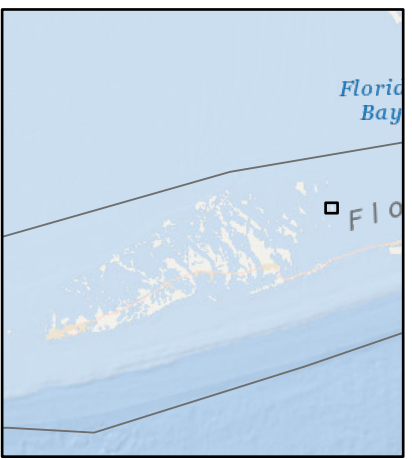
East Bahia Honda Key Wildlife Management Area

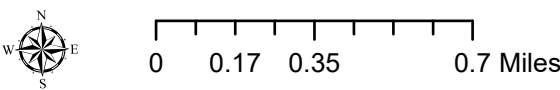
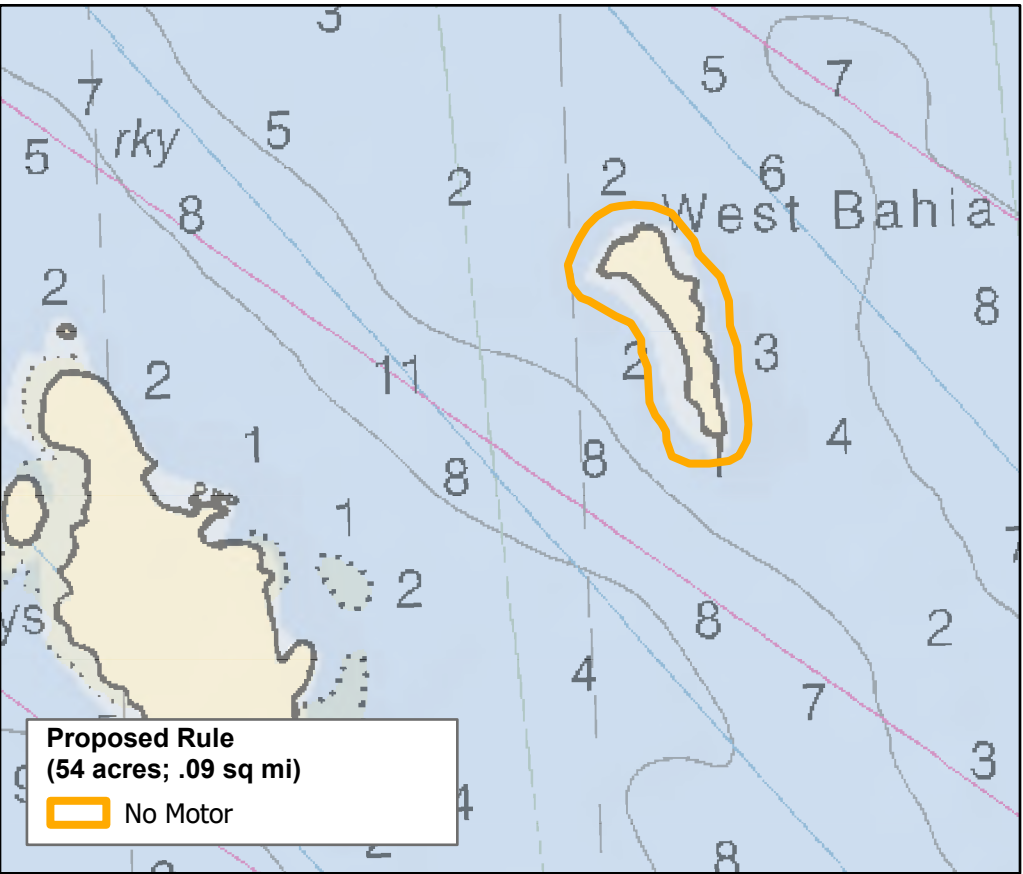
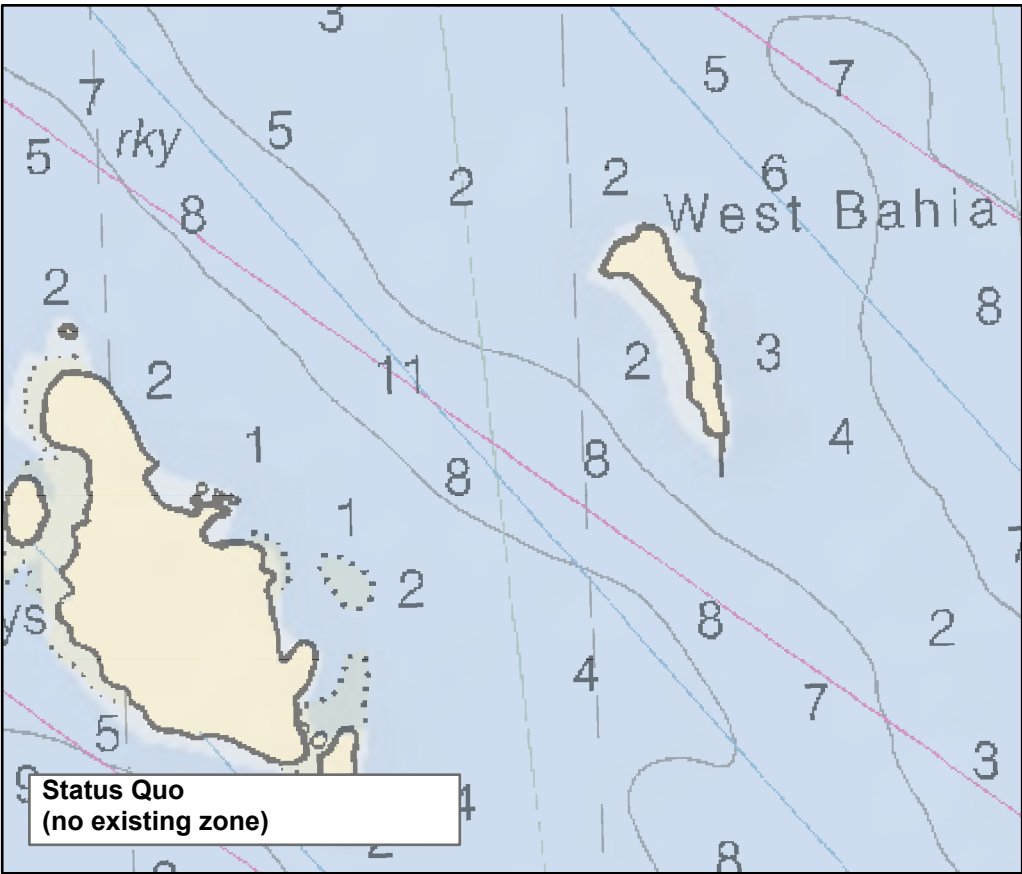
Decrease disturbance of nesting and/or foraging birds including white-crowned pigeons, reddish egrets and great white herons. Shallow seagrass flats exhibit light-to-severe prop scarring.

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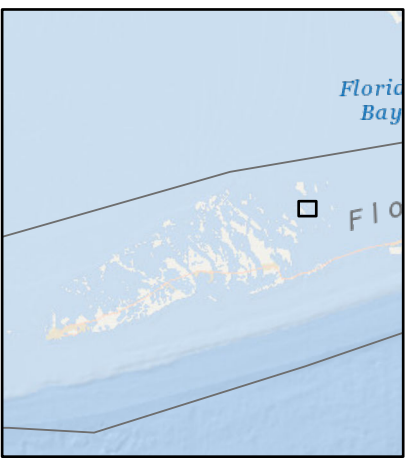
West Bahia Honda Key Wildlife Management Area

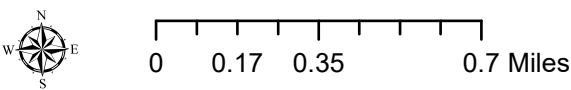
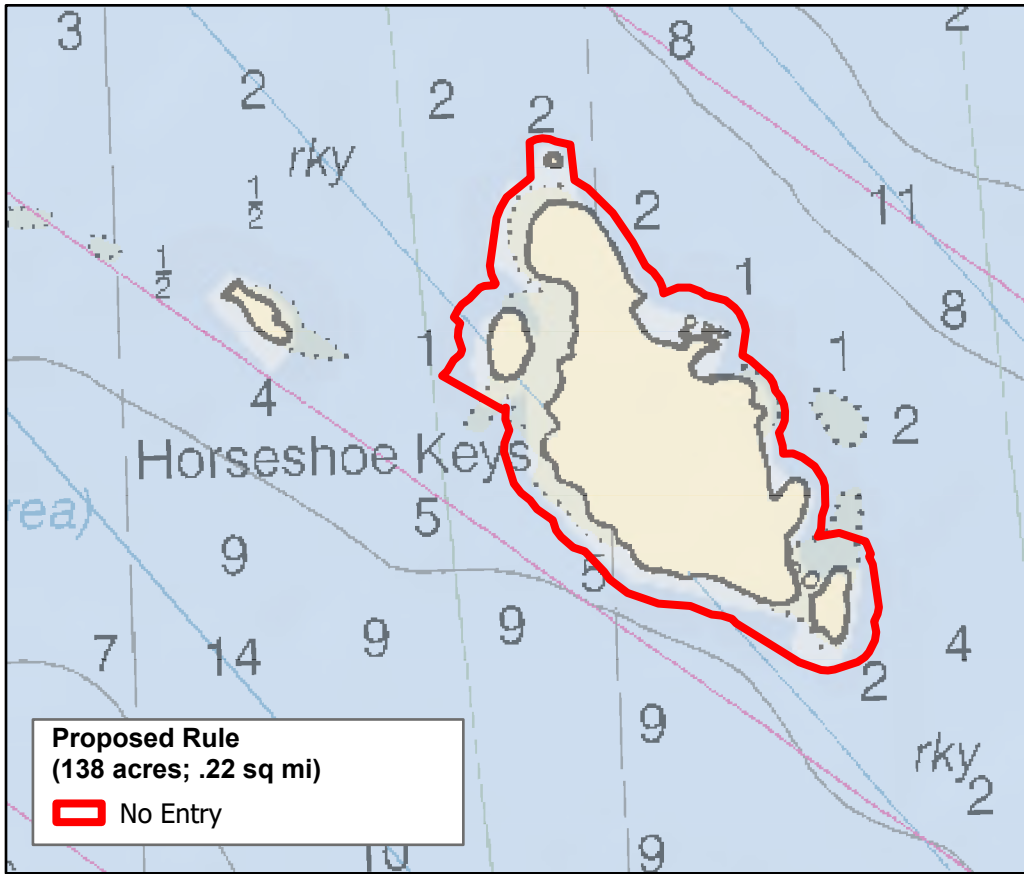
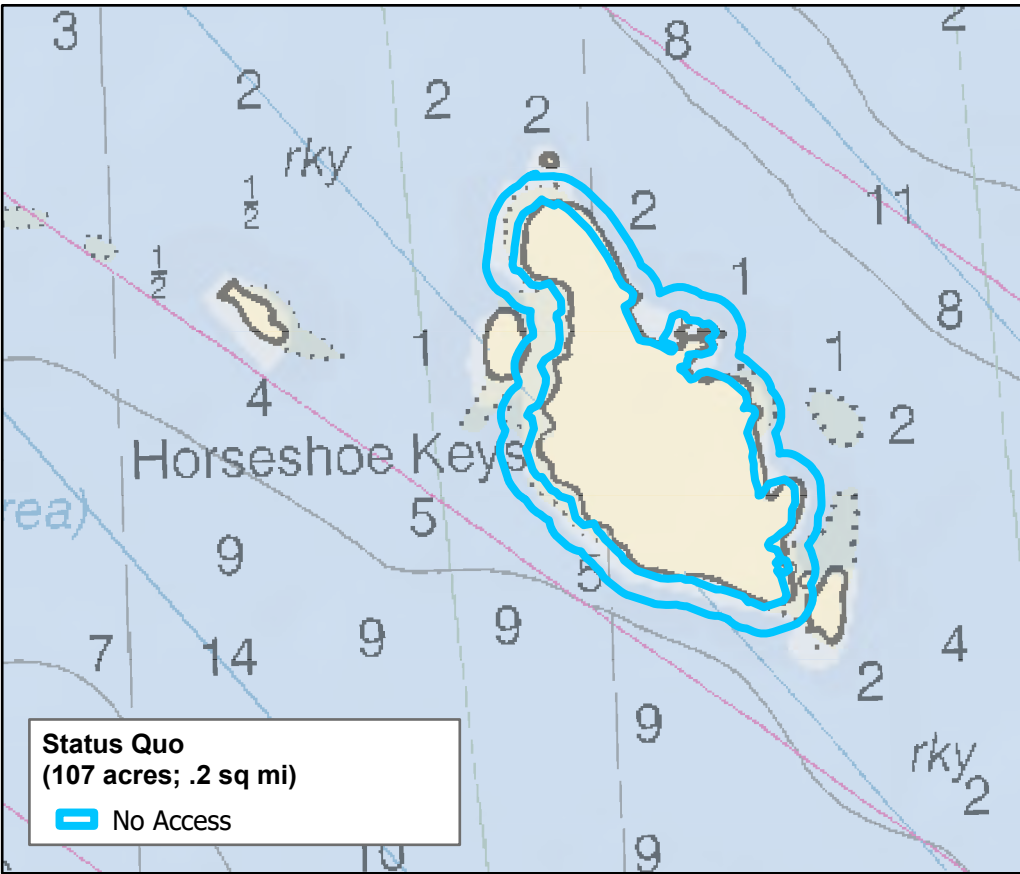
Decrease disturbance of nesting and foraging birds including white-crowned pigeons, reddish egrets, and bald eagles.

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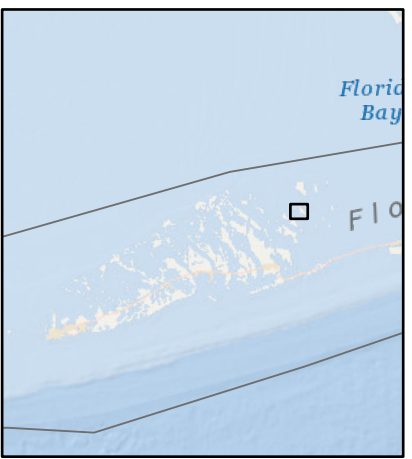
Horseshoe Keys Wildlife Management Area

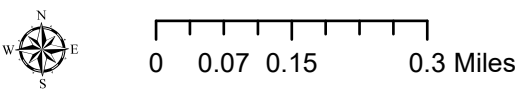
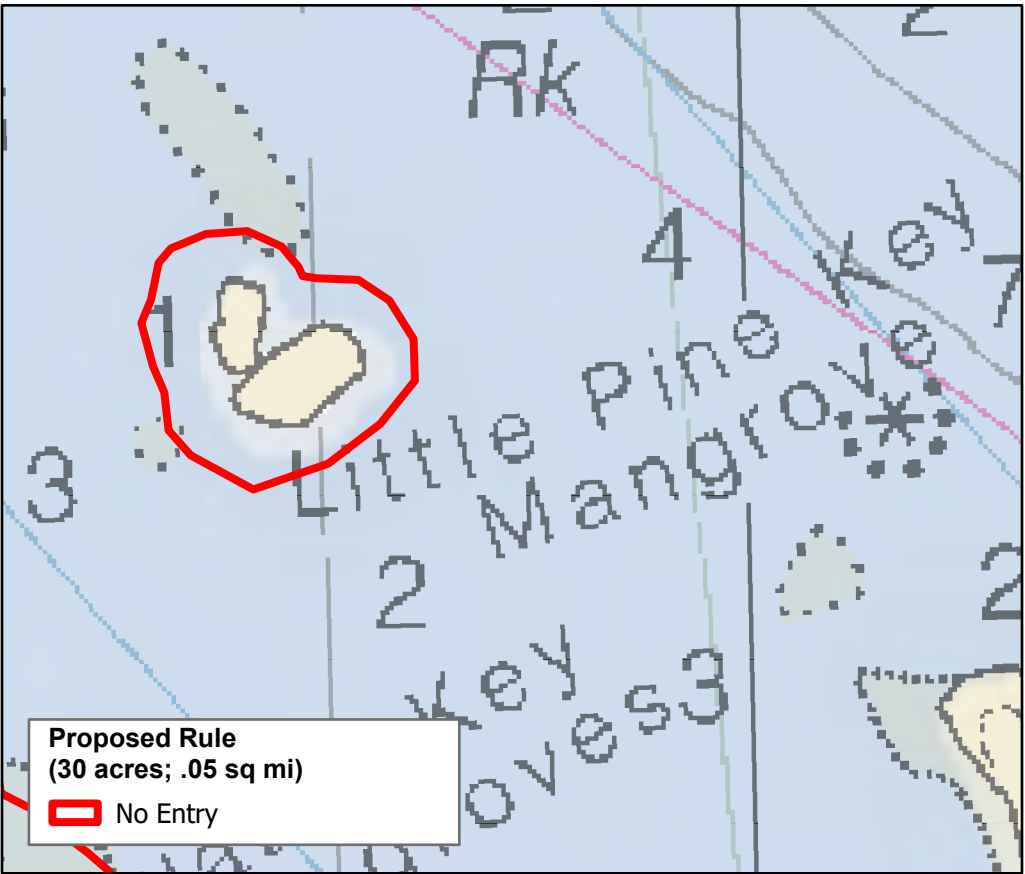
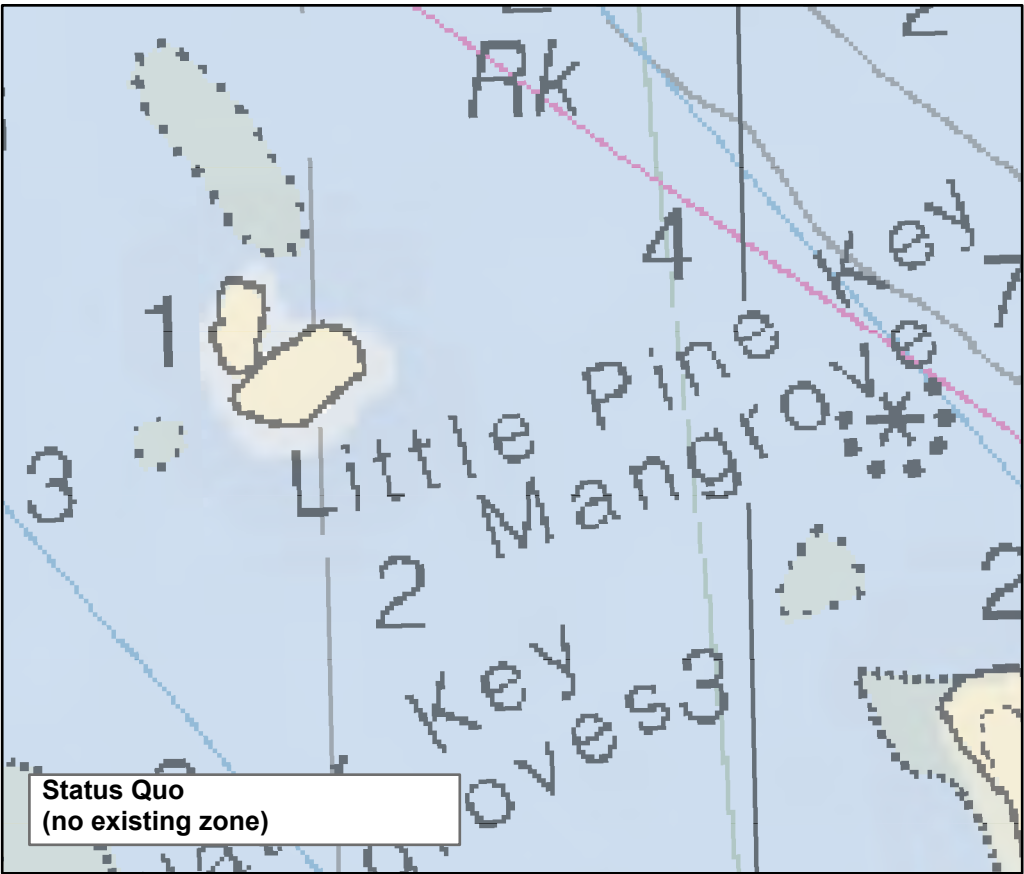
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting birds including white-crowned pigeon, great white and little blue herons, willet, and osprey.

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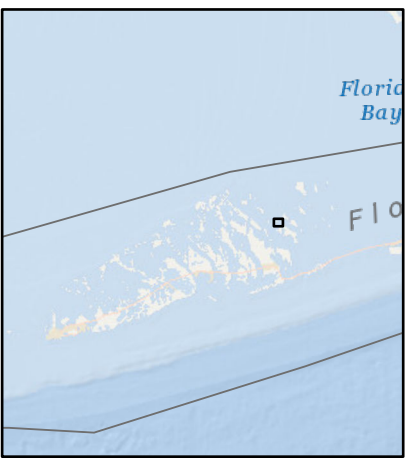
Little Pine Key Mangrove Wildlife Management Area

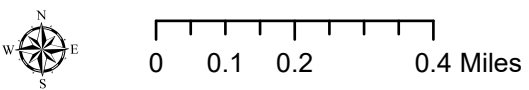
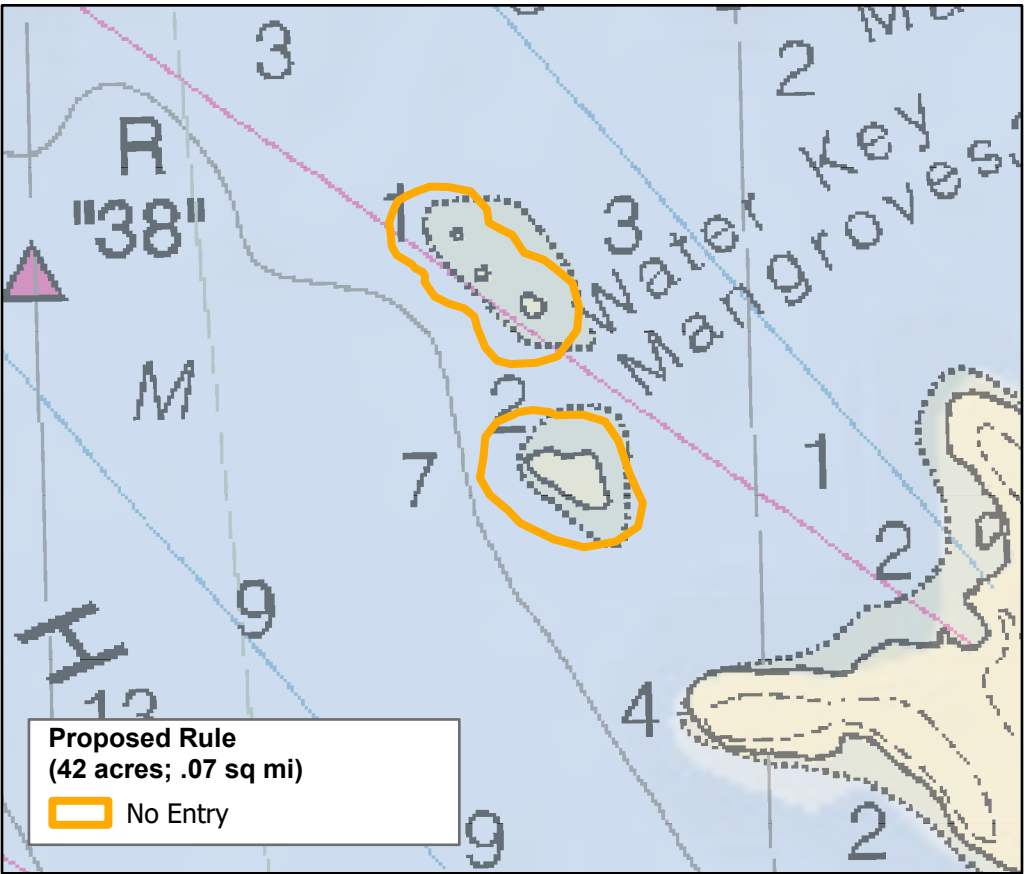
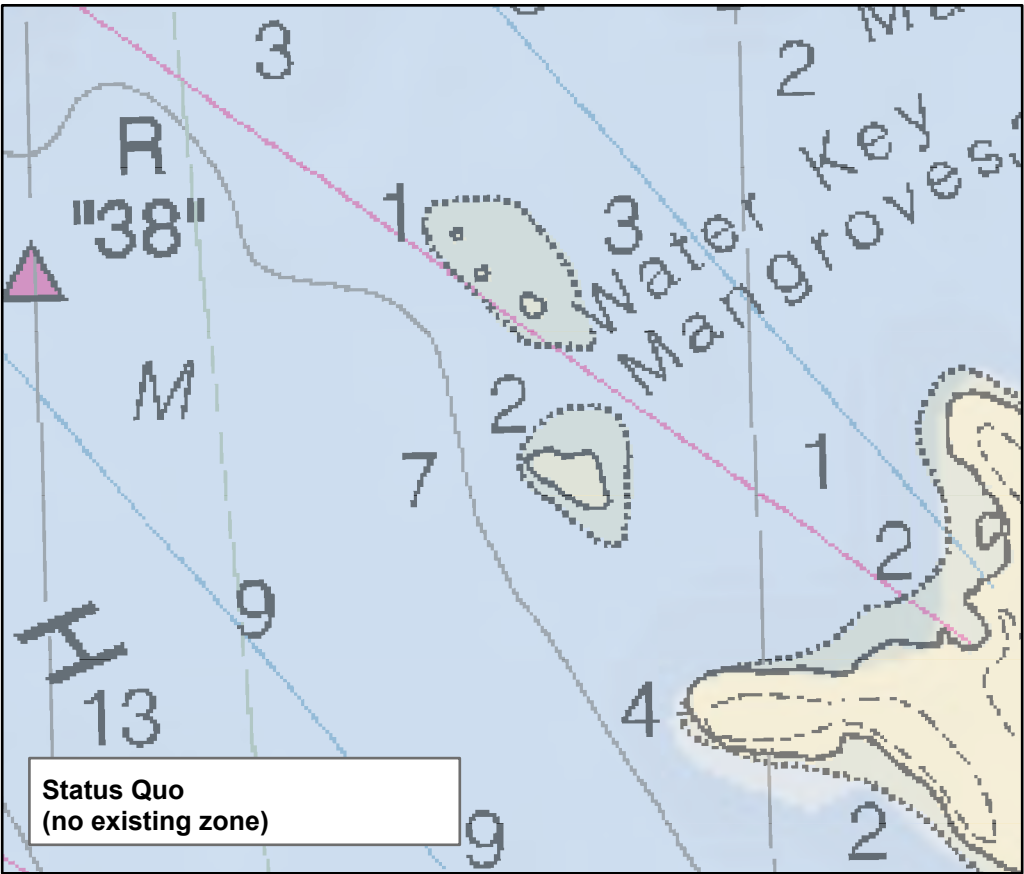
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting birds including magnificent frigatebird, reddish egrets, and tri-colored and great white herons. Additional protections would reduce flushing of these birds from their nests and roosting sites.

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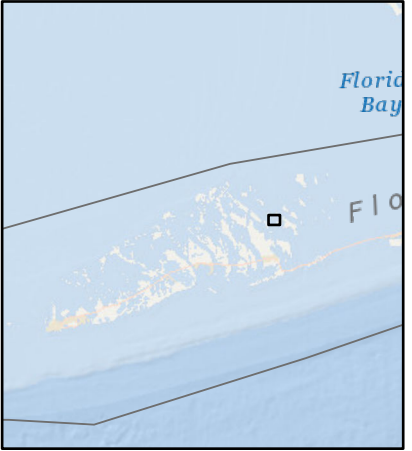
Water Key Mangroves Wildlife Management Area

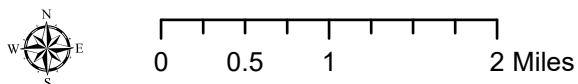
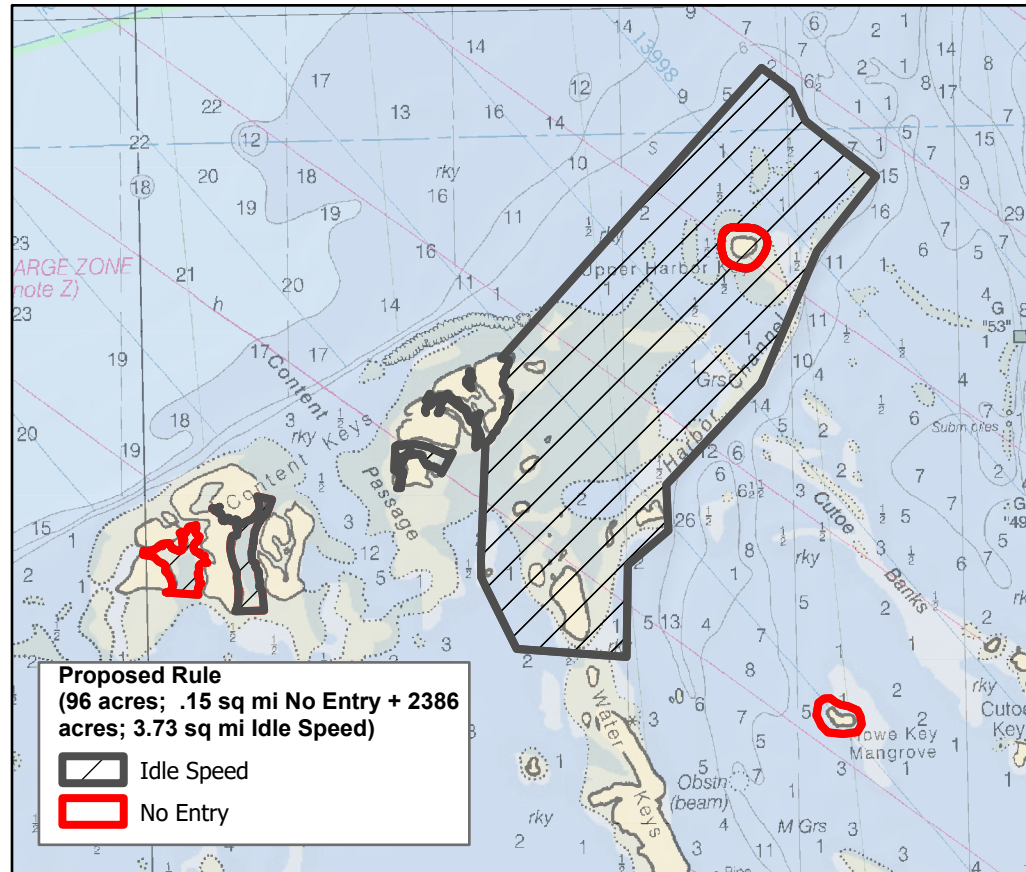
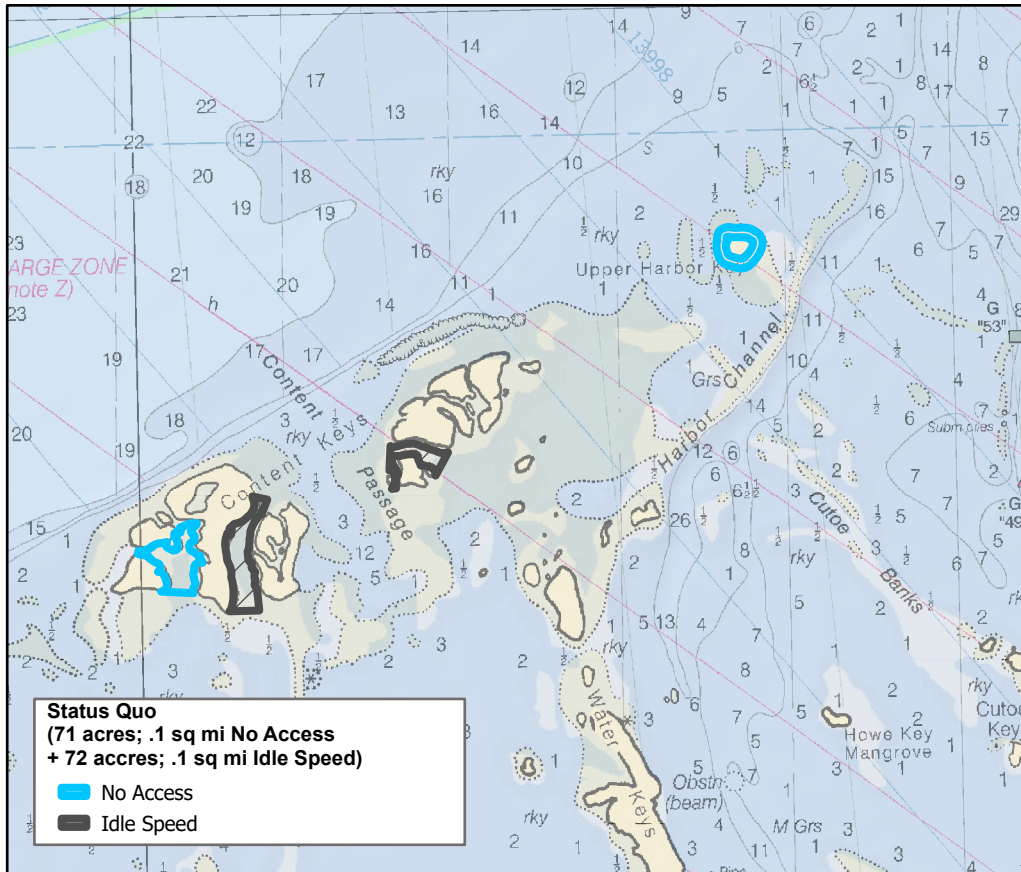
Decrease disturbance of nesting, wading, and foraging birds including reddish egret and great white herons. Decrease impact to habitats for shallow water foraging shorebirds.

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East Content Keys and Upper Harbor Key Flats, West Content Key, and Howe Key Mangrove Wildlife Management Areas

East Content Keys and Upper Harbor Key Flats WMA: Decrease the disturbance of various bird species including osprey, magnificent frigate-birds, double crested cormorant, heron, white ibis, and other wading birds. This area is an important great white heron nesting and roosting area and the interior tidal creeks of East Content Key support high numbers of nesting little blue herons. Decrease impacts to shallow water seagrass and hardbottom habitat from vessels. Many of the surrounding flats exhibit light-to-severe prop scarring.

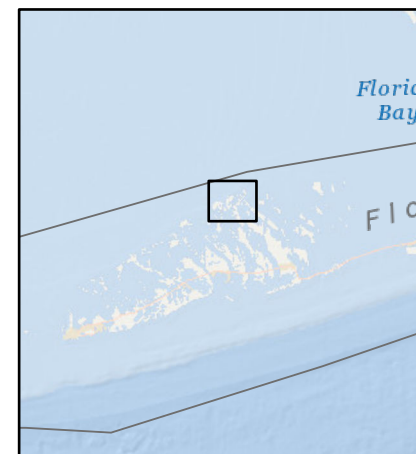
West Content Keys WMA: Decrease disturbance of shorebirds including least terns, royal terns, willets, and laughing gulls using the eastern sandbar for foraging and resting habitat. Decrease impacts to shallow water seagrass and hardbottom habitat from vessels. Some of the surrounding flats and shallow banks to the northeast and southeast exhibit light prop scarring.

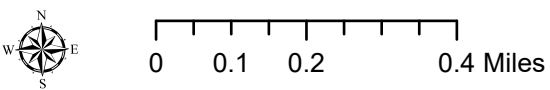
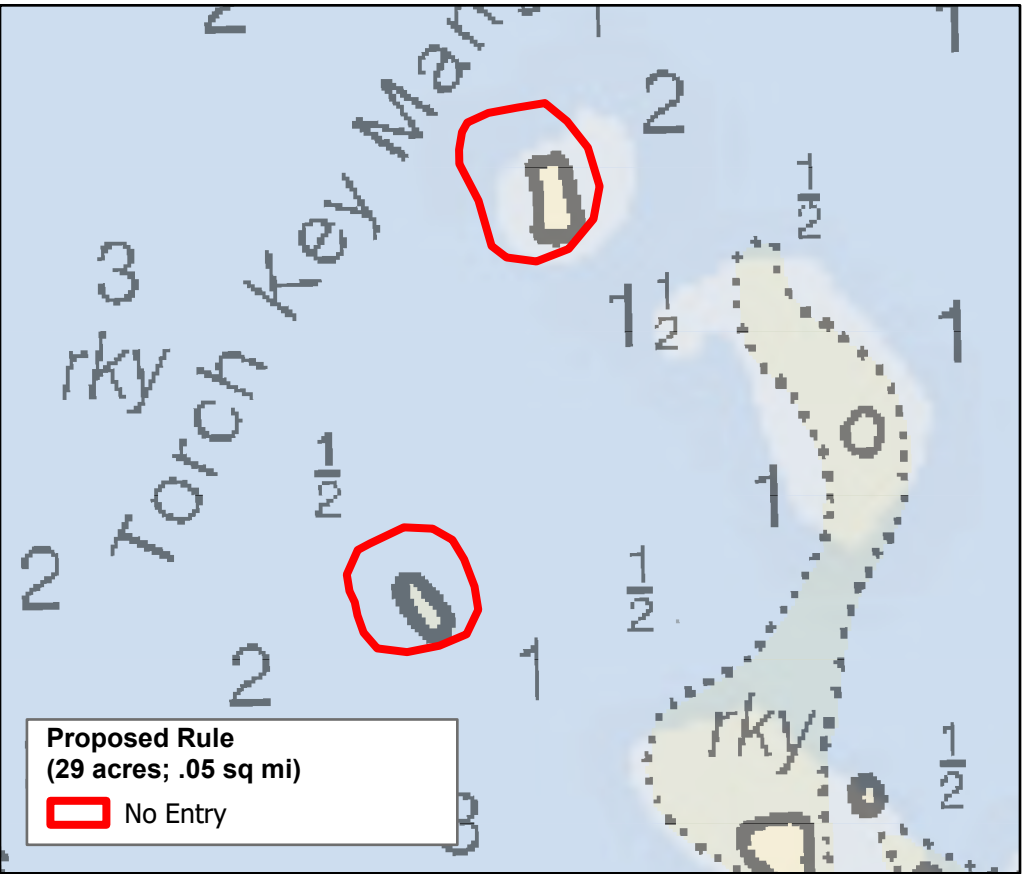
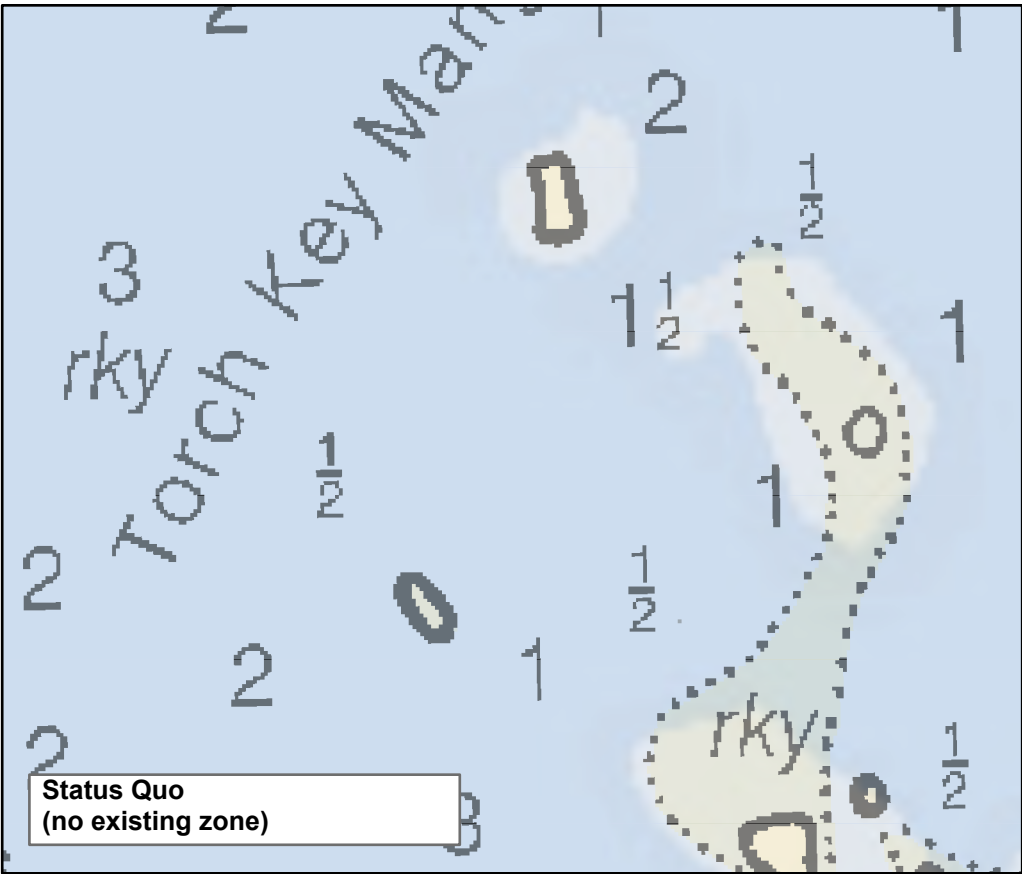
Howe Key Mangrove WMA: Decrease disturbance of nesting birds including great white heron, great blue and reddish egret.

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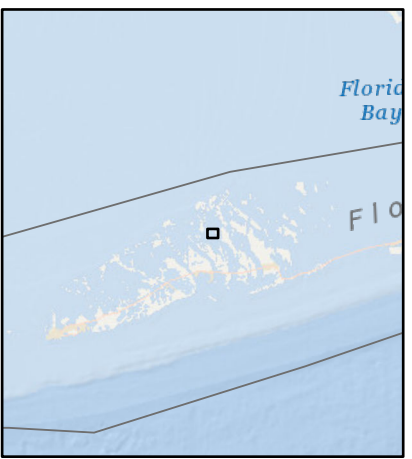
Torch Key Mangroves Wildlife Management Area

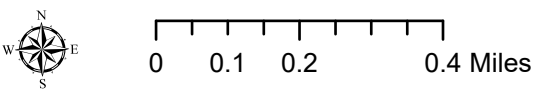
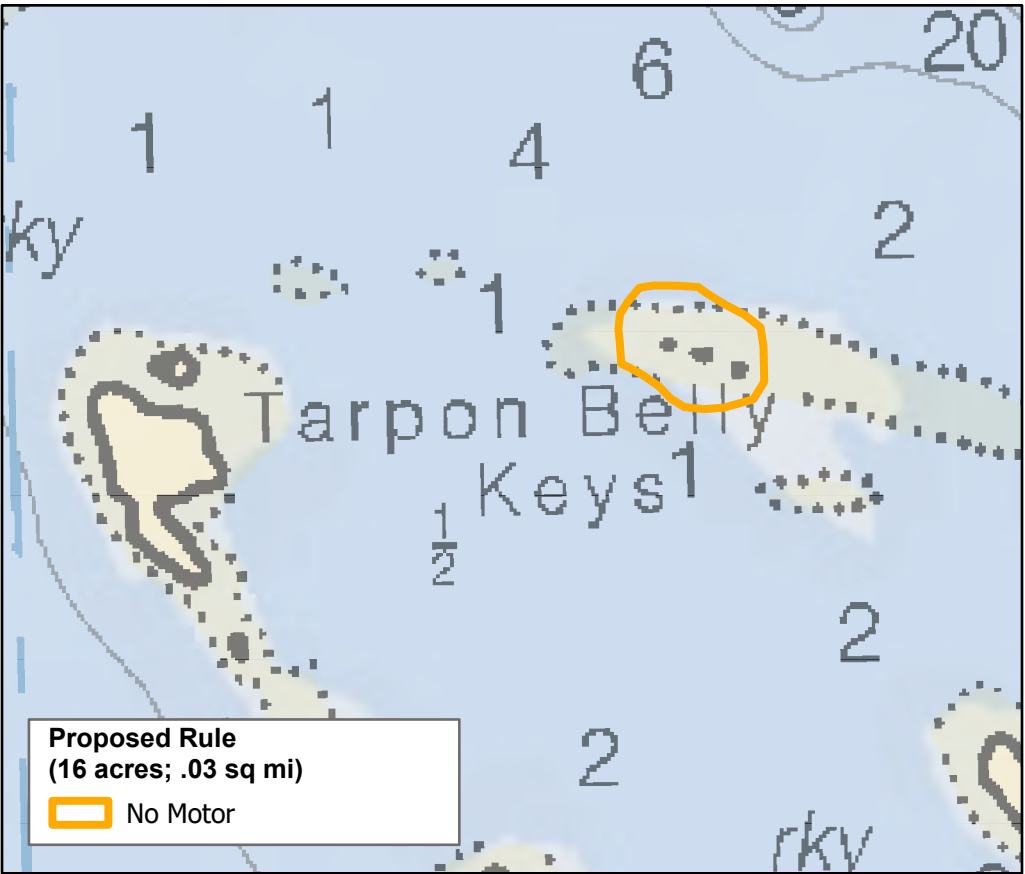
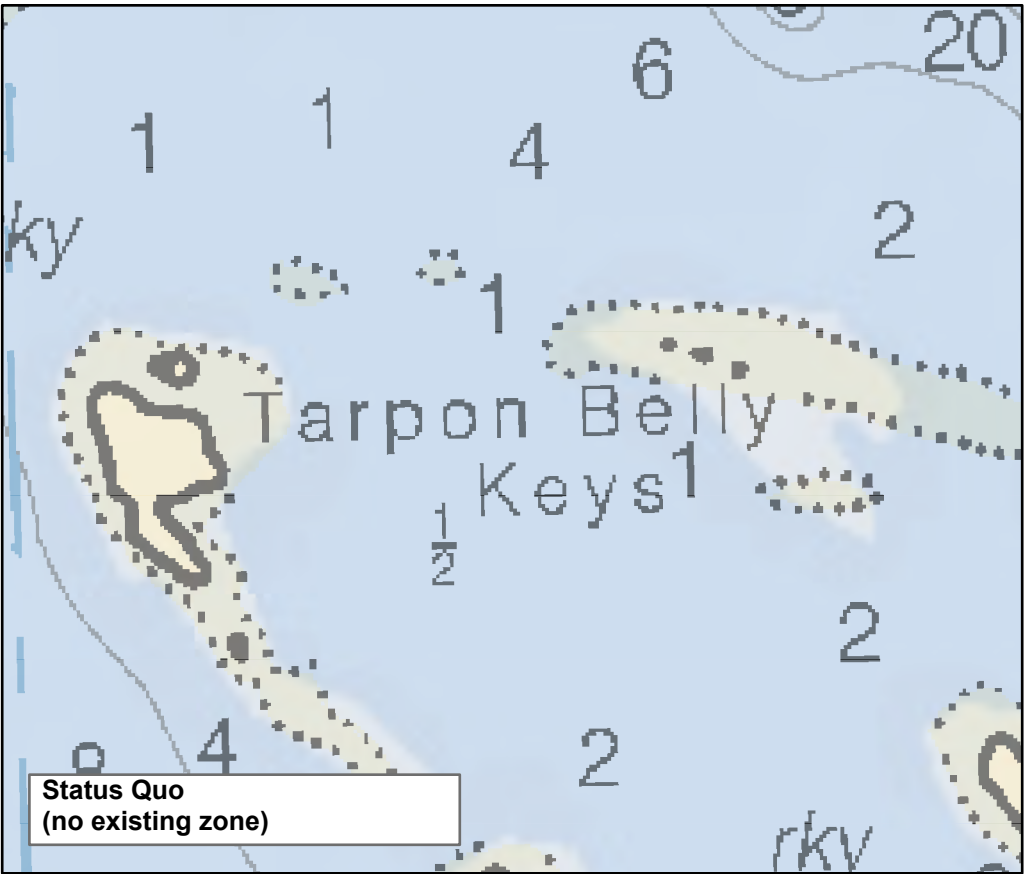
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting habitat for various birds including white-crowned pigeon and reddish egret, and is a shallow water foraging habitat for wading and shorebirds.

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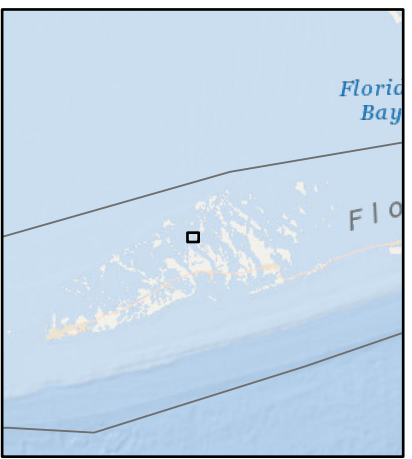




Northeast Tarpon Belly Keys Wildlife Management Area

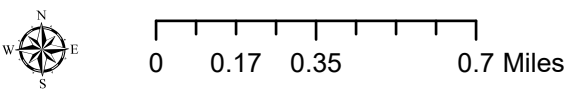
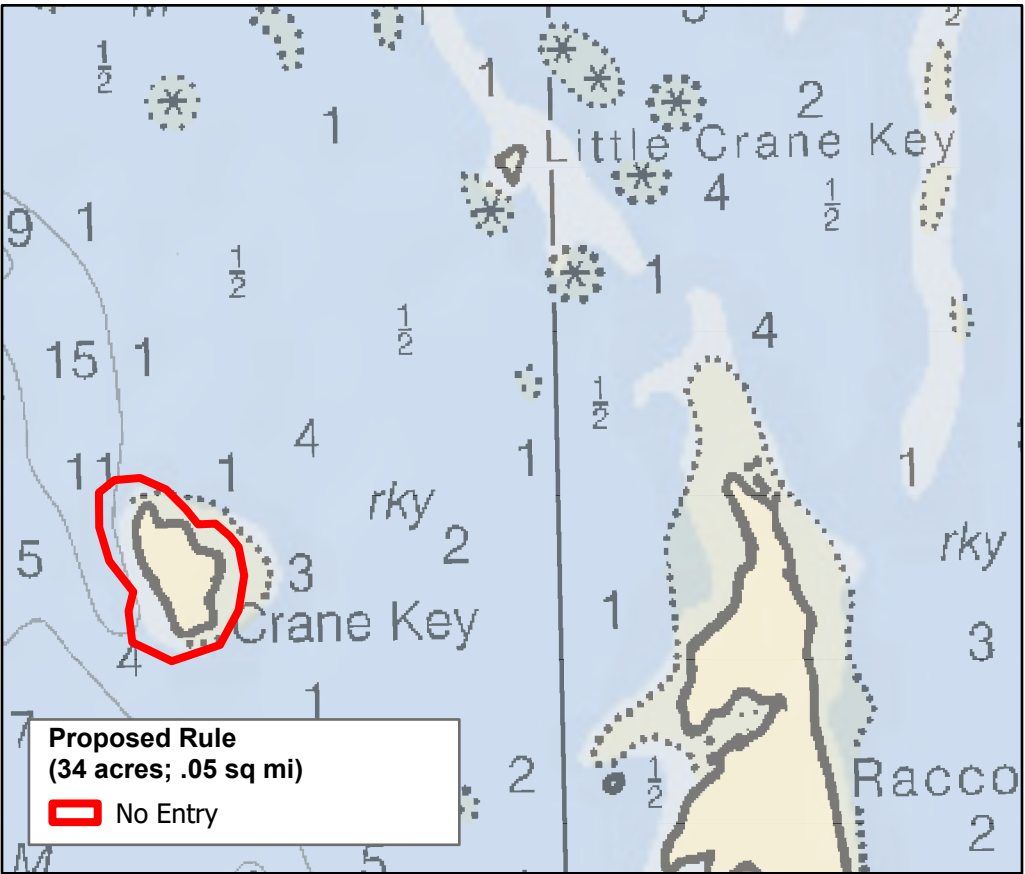
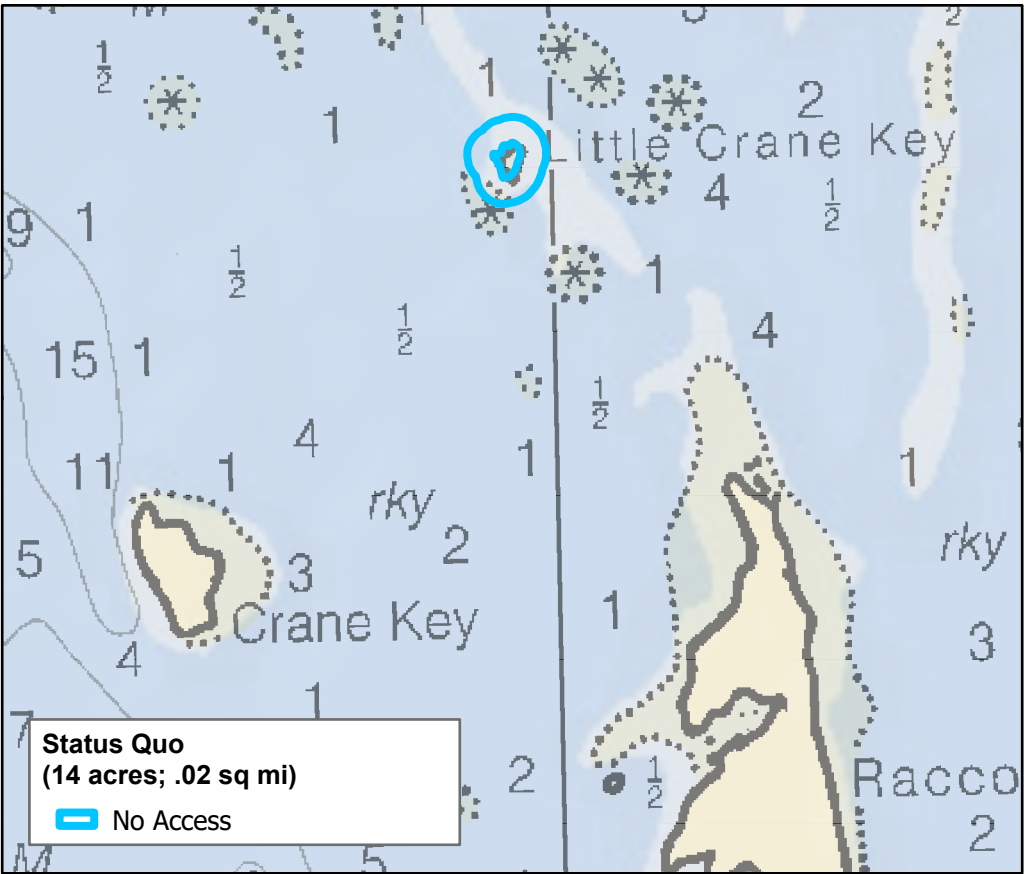
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting sites for reddish egrets and other wading birds.

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Little Crane Key and Crane Key Wildlife Management Areas

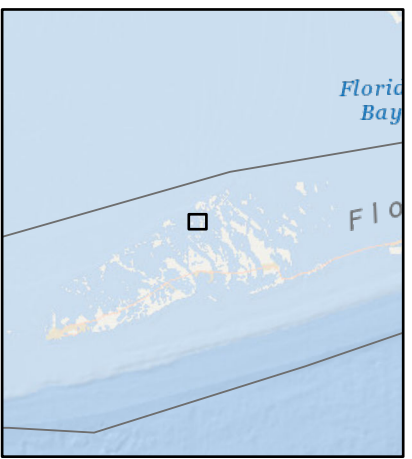
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting birds including magnificent frigatebird and great white heron. Crane Key has the highest post-Irma annual count of nesting great white herons in the backcountry, and serves as an important island for other nesting, roosting and foraging birds. Additional protections would reduce flushing of these birds from their nests and roosting sites. Shallow seagrass flats exhibit light-to-moderate prop scarring.

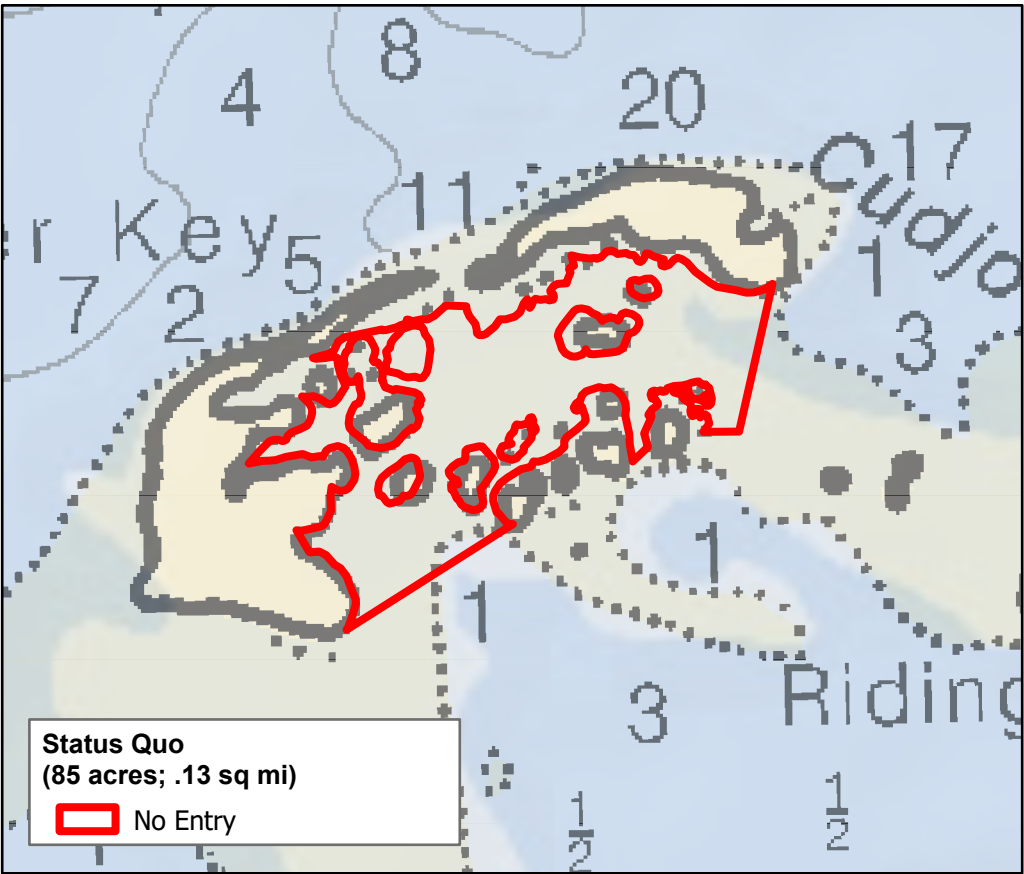
Little Crane Key is eliminated. The area shifted following storm events and no longer supports bird nesting and roosting sites.

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Lower Keys Region





**Draft Rule is the same
as status quo**

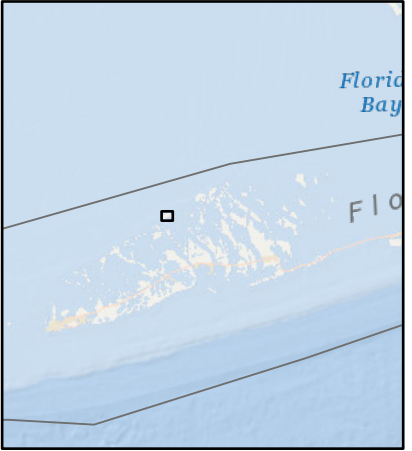
Sawyer Key Wildlife Management Area

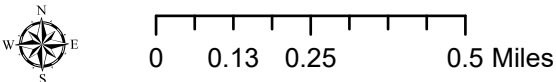
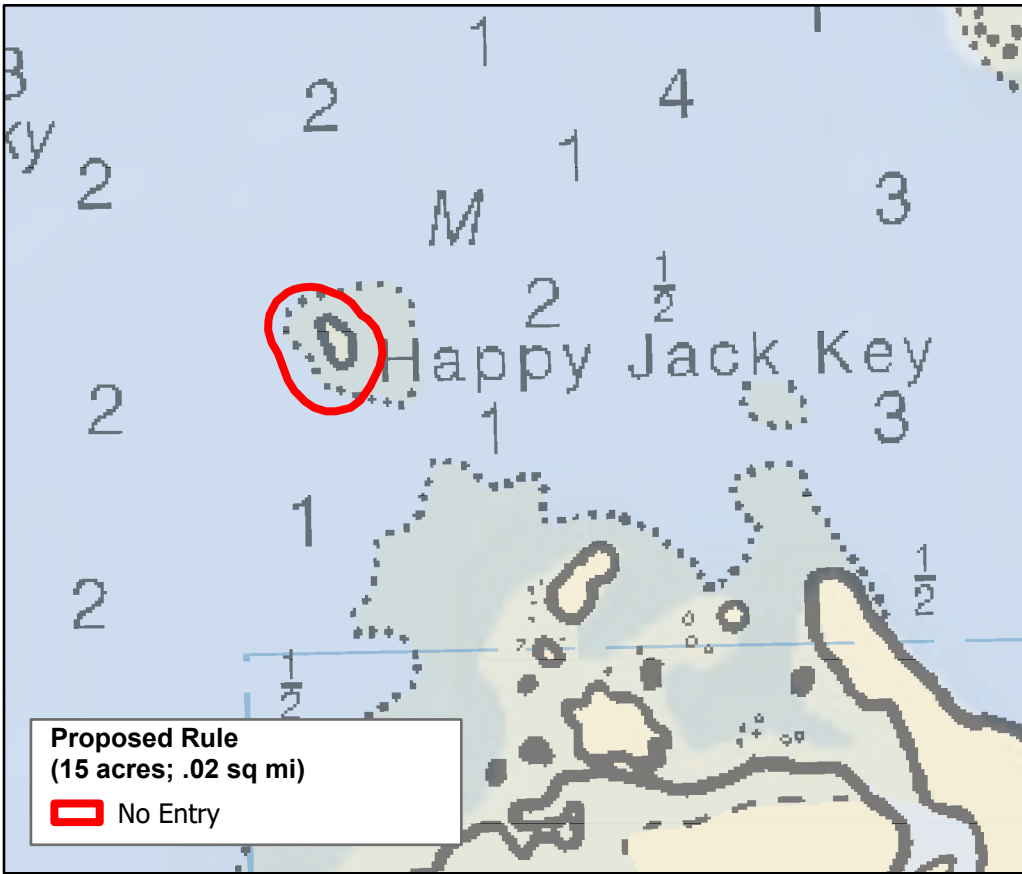
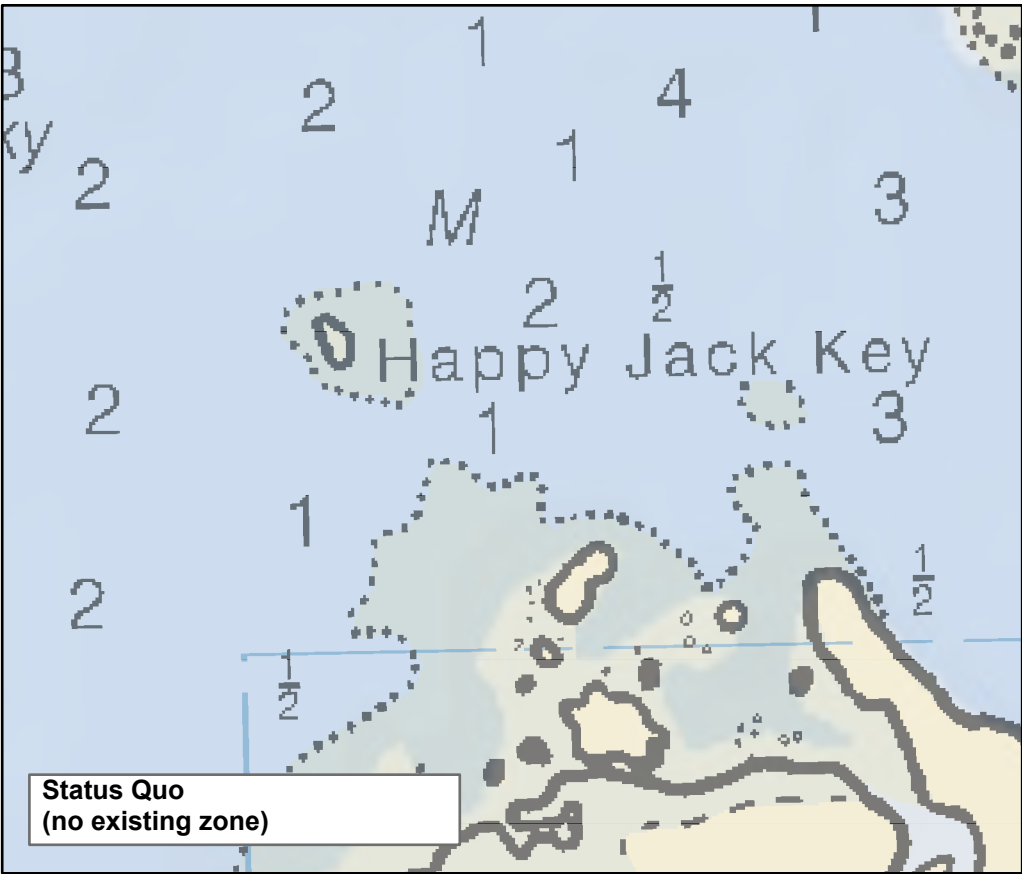
Decreases disturbance of nesting birds including osprey and several species of wading birds, and is a staging area for migrant shorebirds. Surrounding flats and shallow banks to the northeast exhibit light prop scarring.

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Lower Keys Region





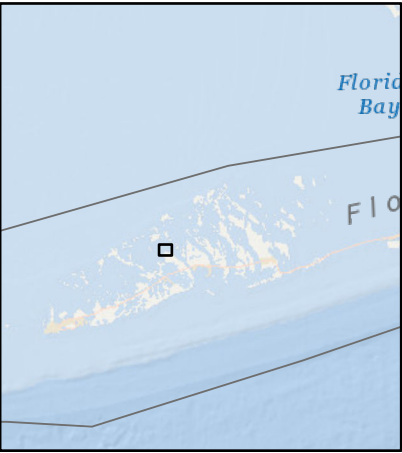
Happy Jack Key Wildlife Management Area

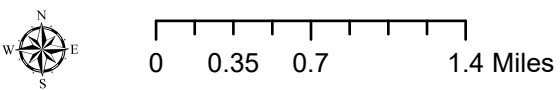
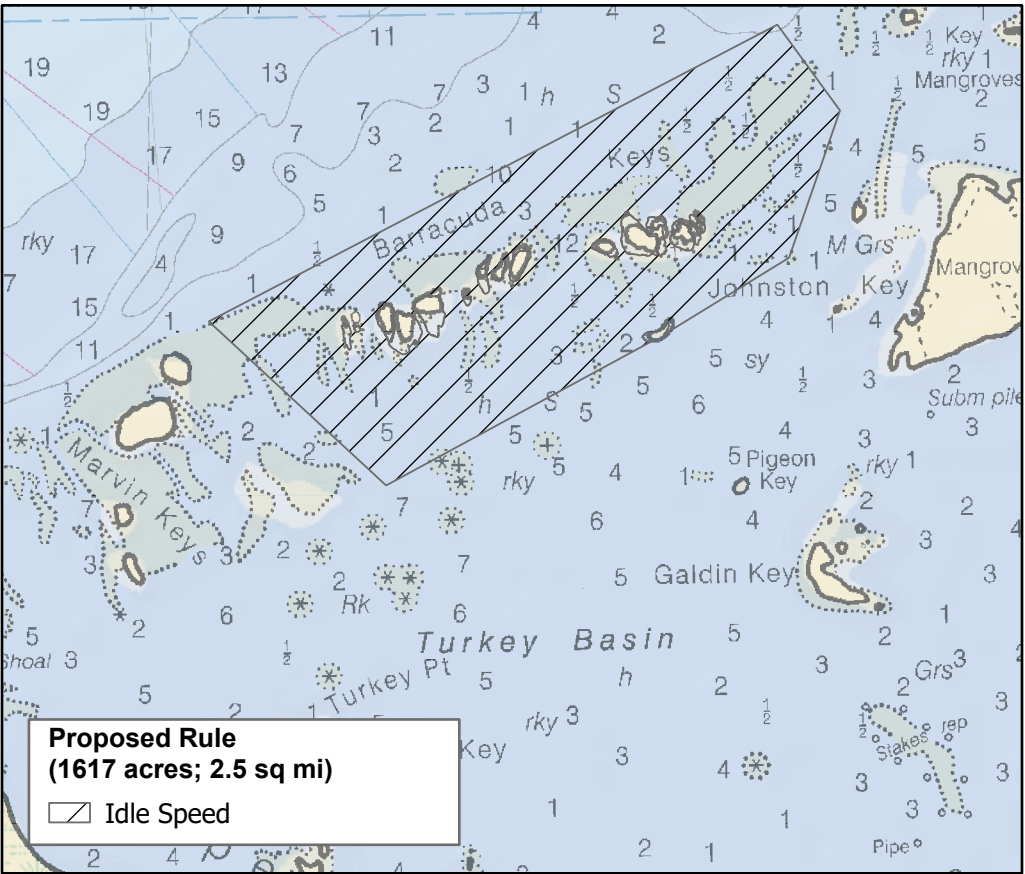
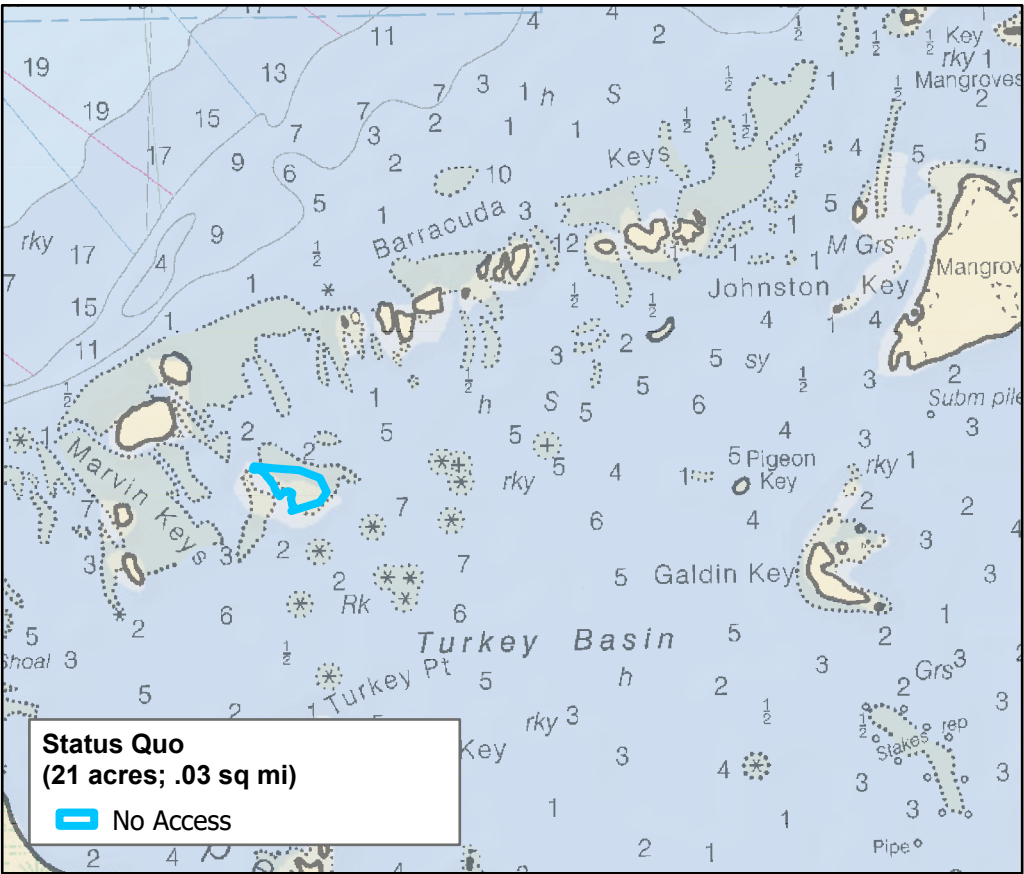
Decrease disturbance of wading bird foraging habitat and nesting reddish egret and great white heron. Happy Jack Key supports high numbers of nesting and roosting reddish egrets, while the surrounding shallows provide pristine foraging habitat.

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Lower Keys Region





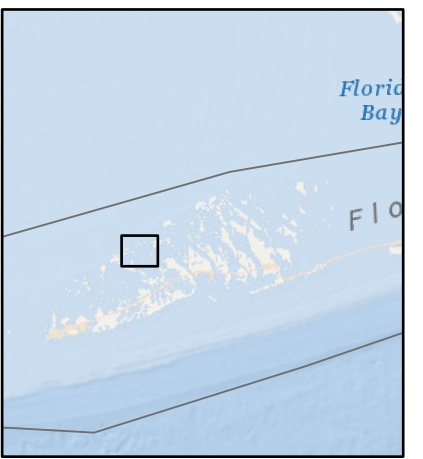
Tidal Flat South of Marvin Key and Barracuda Keys Wildlife Management Areas

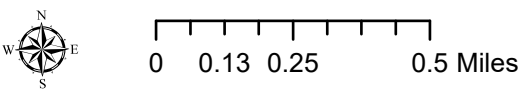
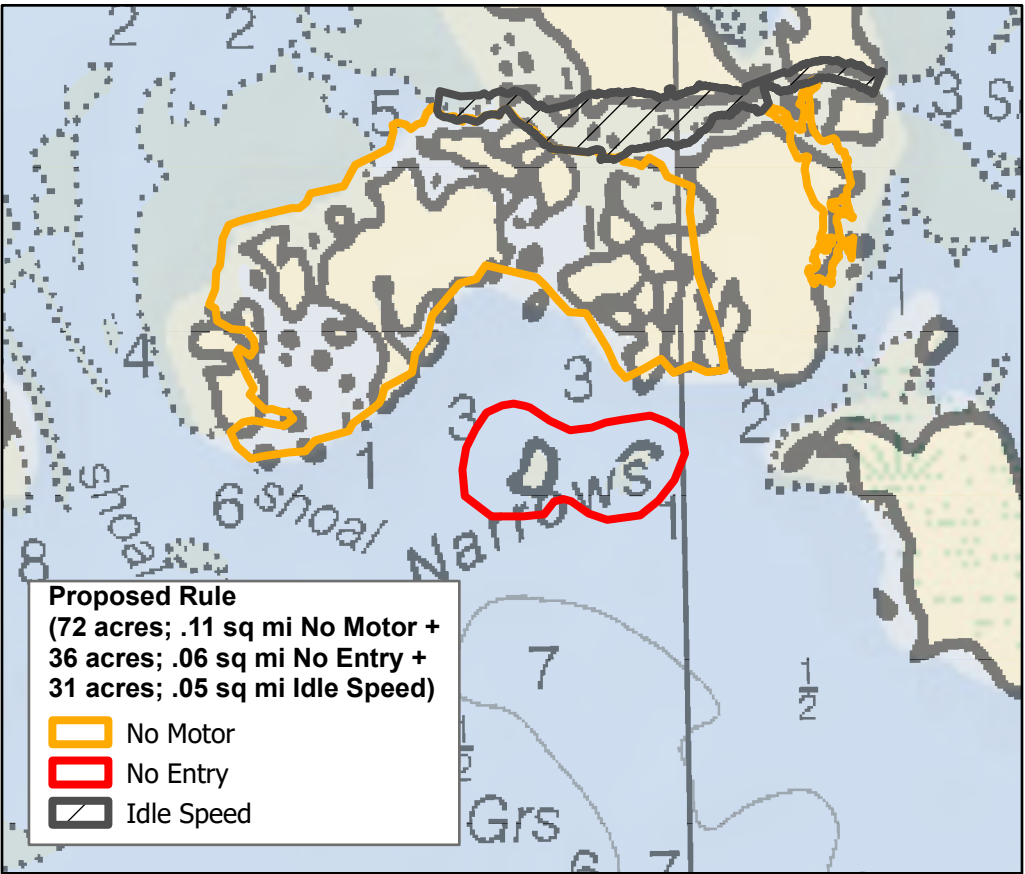
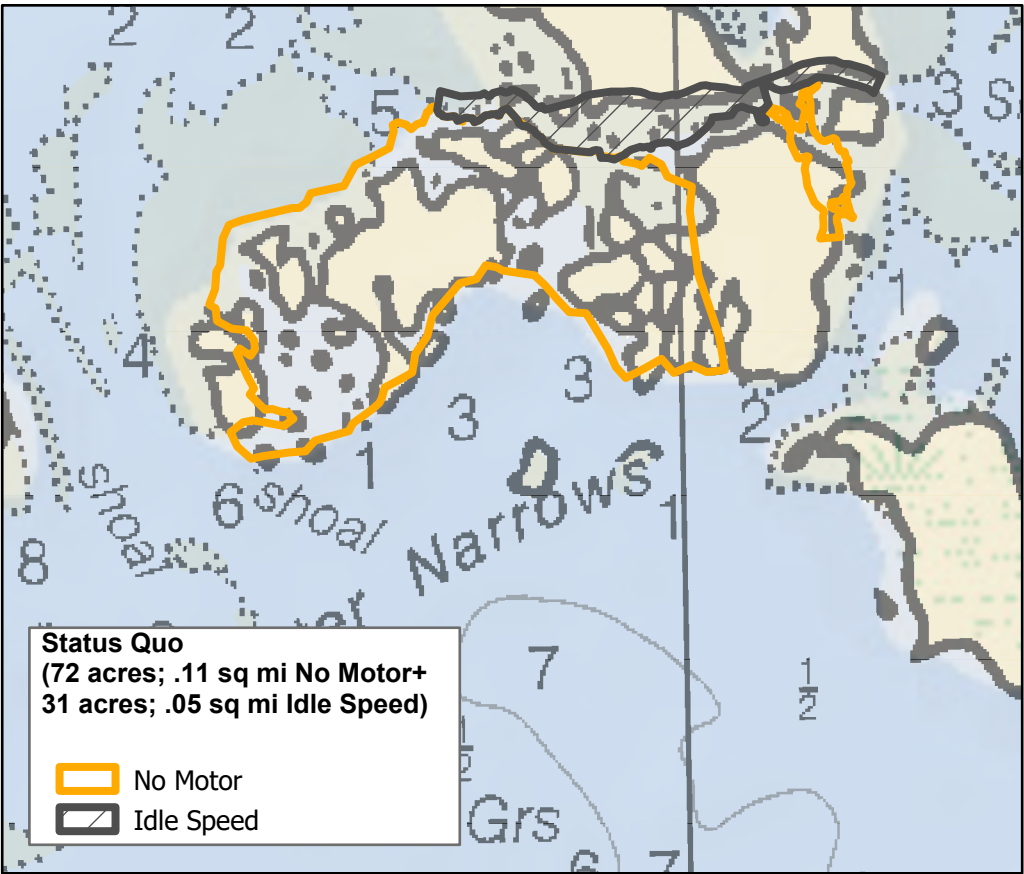
Decreases disturbance to important shallow water habitats and the large numbers of resting shorebirds that use the shallow seagrass flats. Shallow flats exhibit light-to-severe prop scarring. Additional regulation in this area would better protect sensitive benthic habitat and reduce user conflict between flats fishers and recreational boaters. Maintain use of channels.

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Lower Keys Region





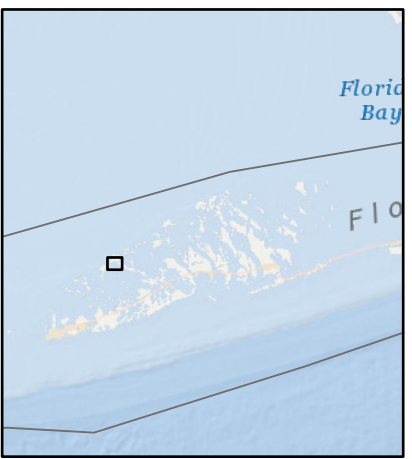
Snipe Keys Wildlife Management Area

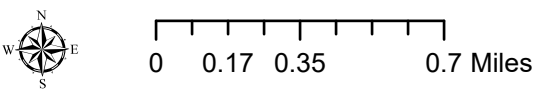
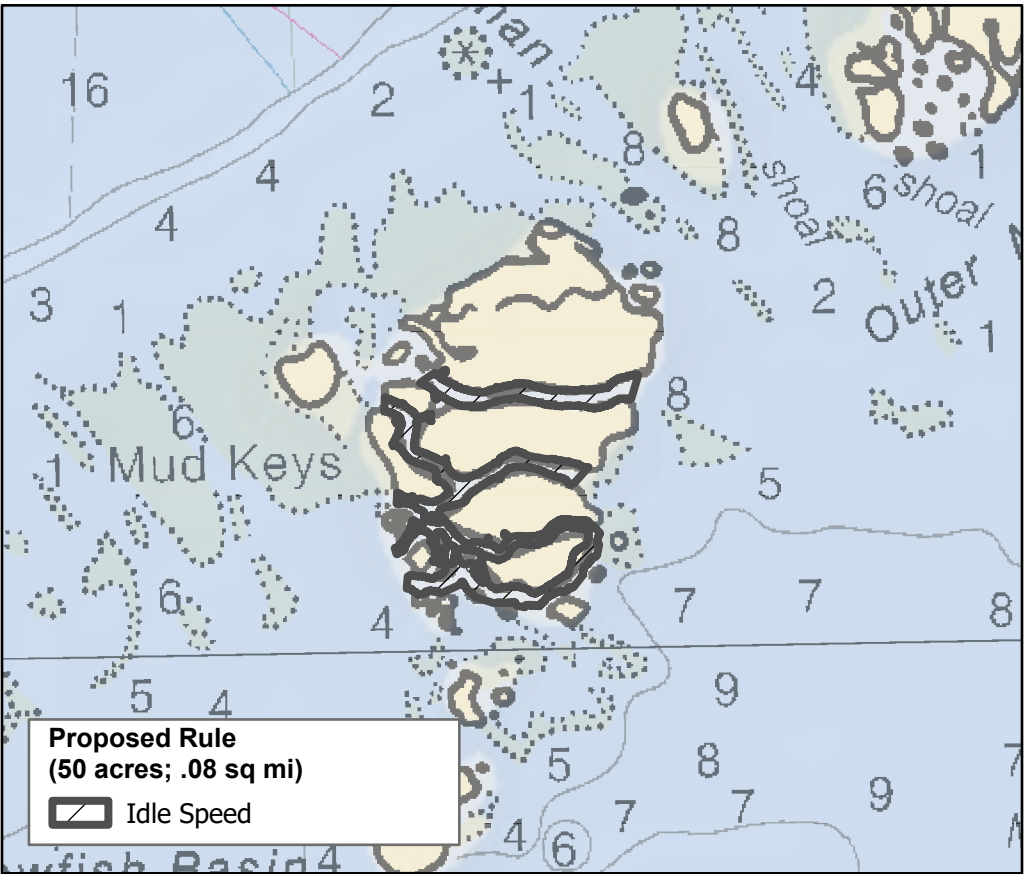
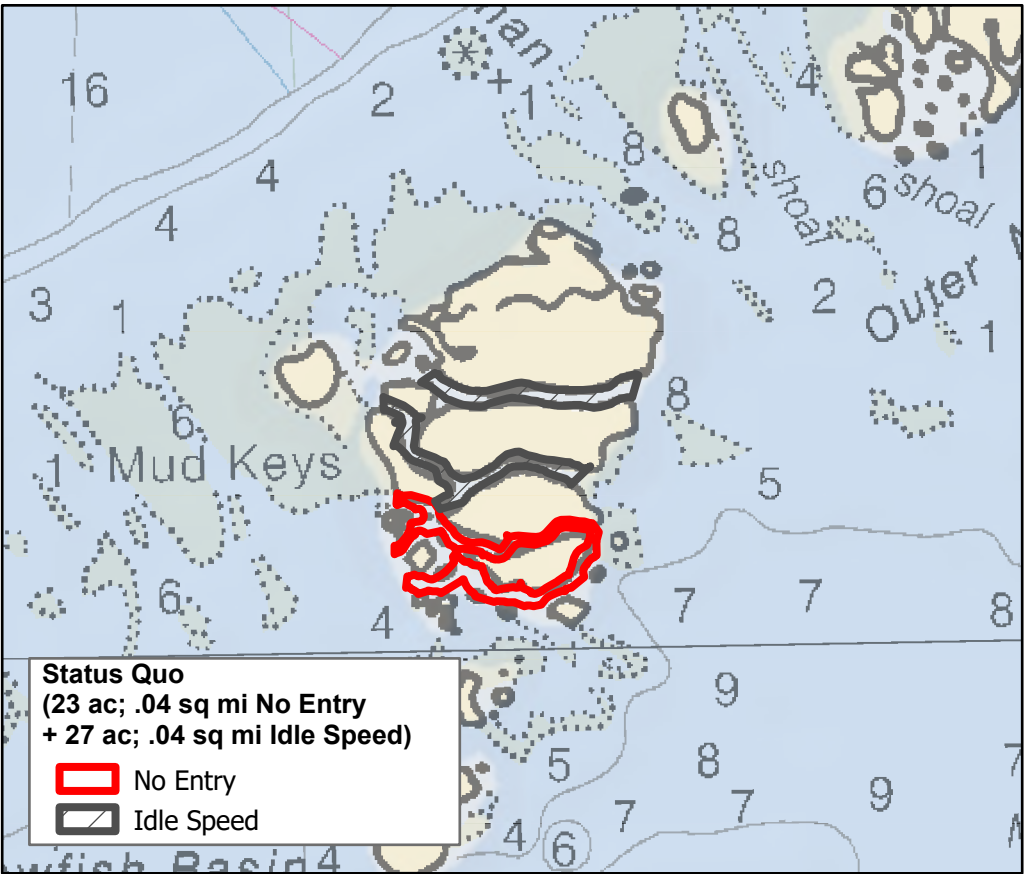
Decrease disturbance to an important magnificent frigatebird roosting area. These birds are easily disturbed by motorized and non-motorized boat traffic. This addition would not affect boater use of sandbars on the north side of Snipe Keys.

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Lower Keys Region





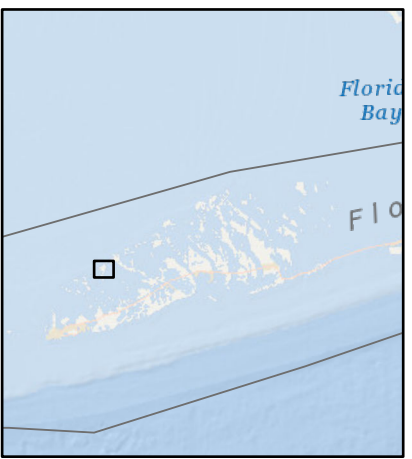
Mud Keys Wildlife Management Area

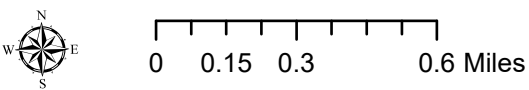
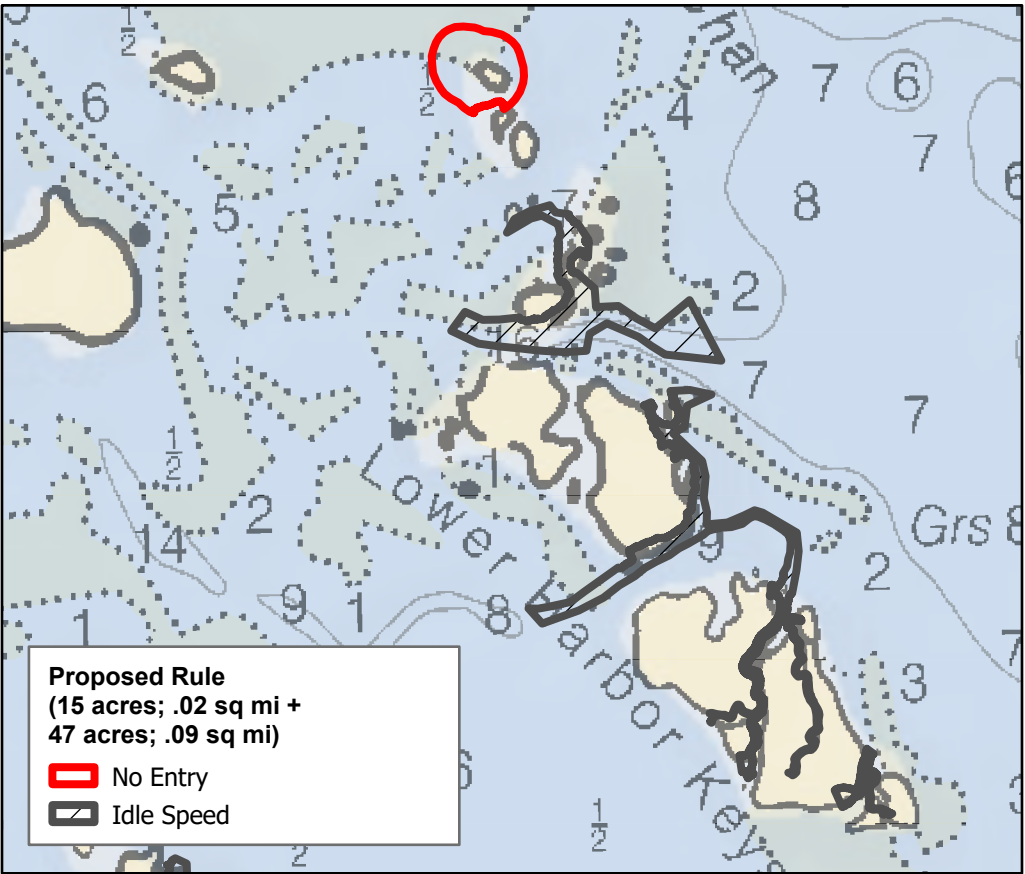
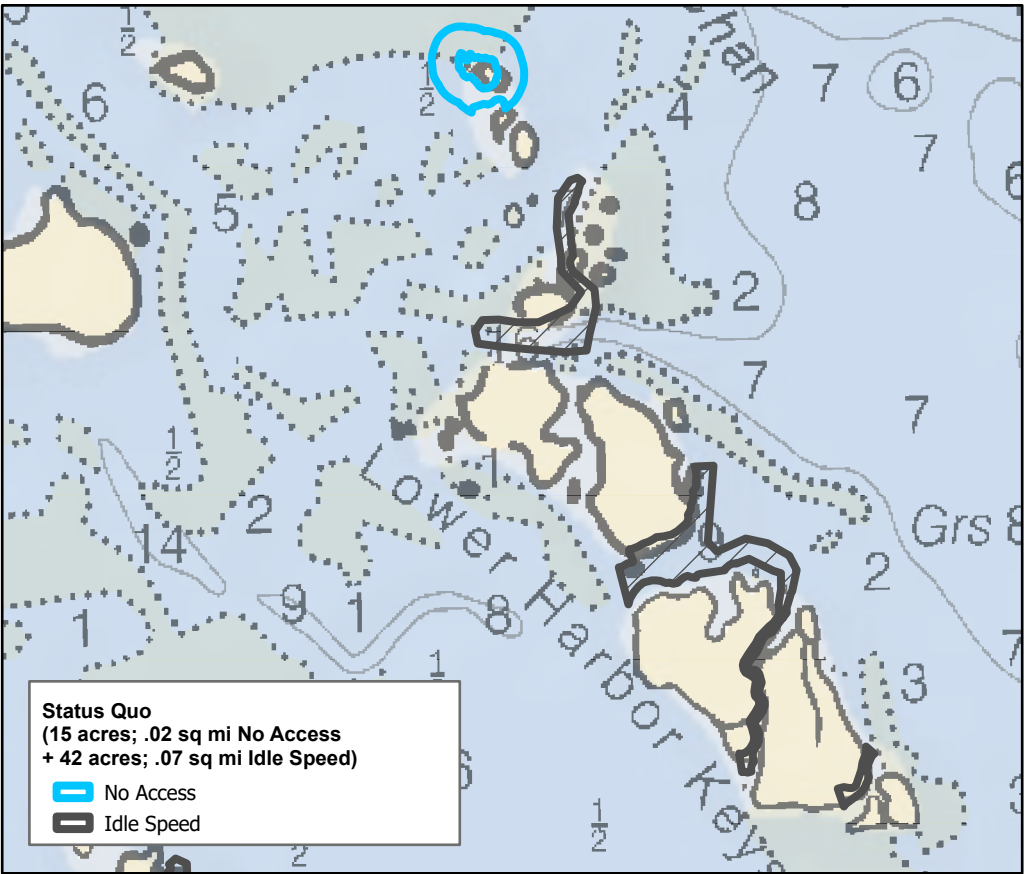
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting birds including osprey, magnificent frigatebird, and great white heron. Many of the surrounding flats exhibit light-to-severe prop scarring.

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Lower Keys Region

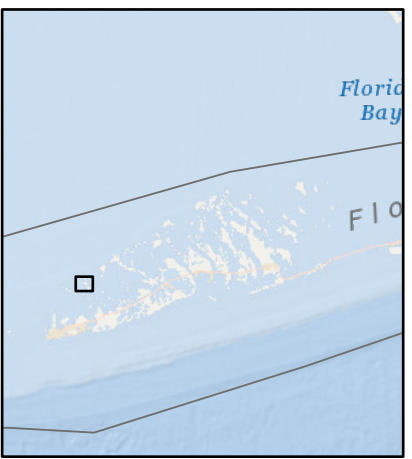




East Harbor Key and Lower Harbor Keys Wildlife Management Areas

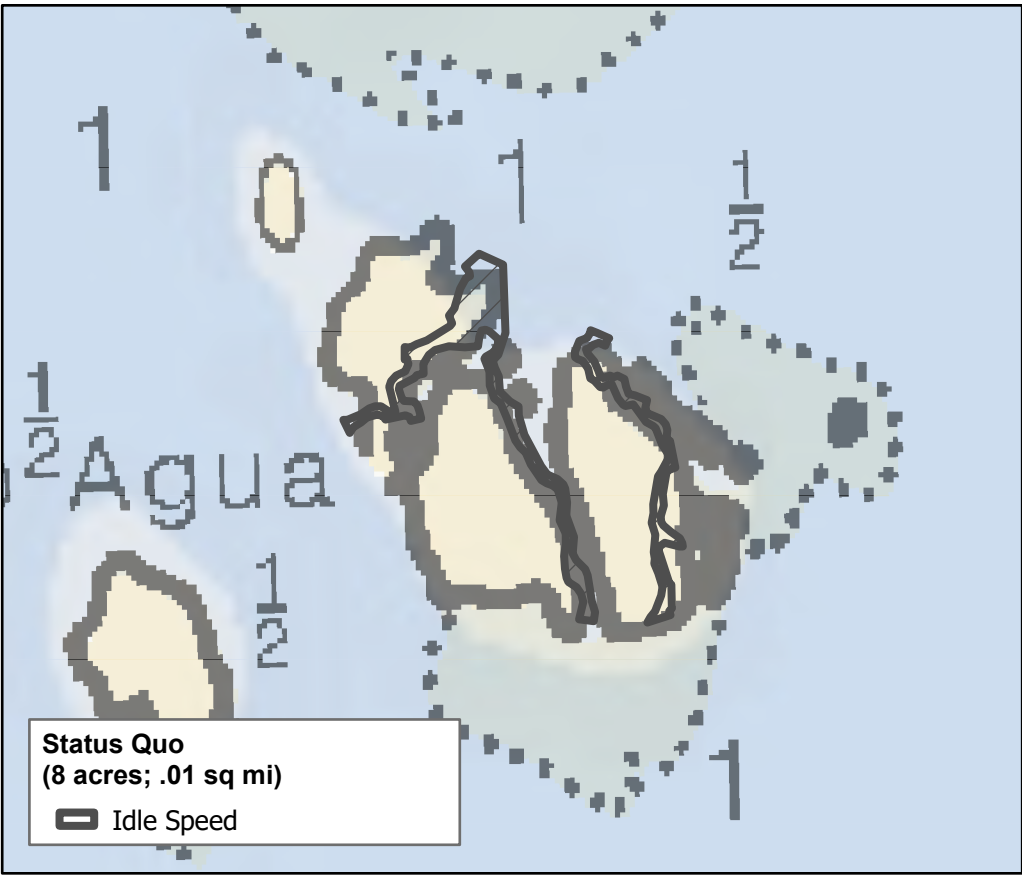
East Harbor Key WMA: Decrease disturbance to various resting shorebirds.
Lower Harbor Keys WMA: Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting birds including great white heron, little blue heron, double-crested cormorant, osprey, and other wading birds. Many of the surrounding flats exhibit light-to-moderate prop scarring.

Lower Keys Region

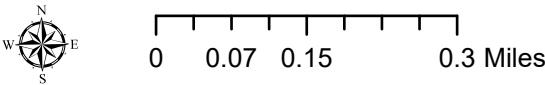


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**Draft Rule is the same
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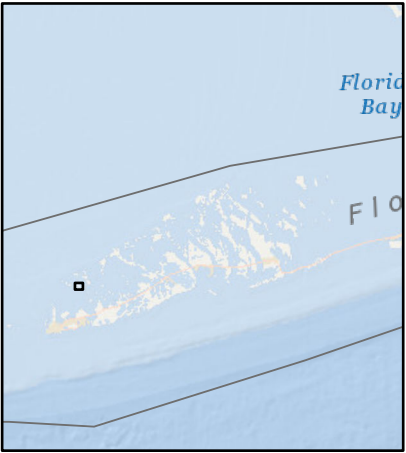
Cayo Agua Keys Wildlife Management Area

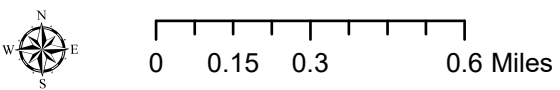
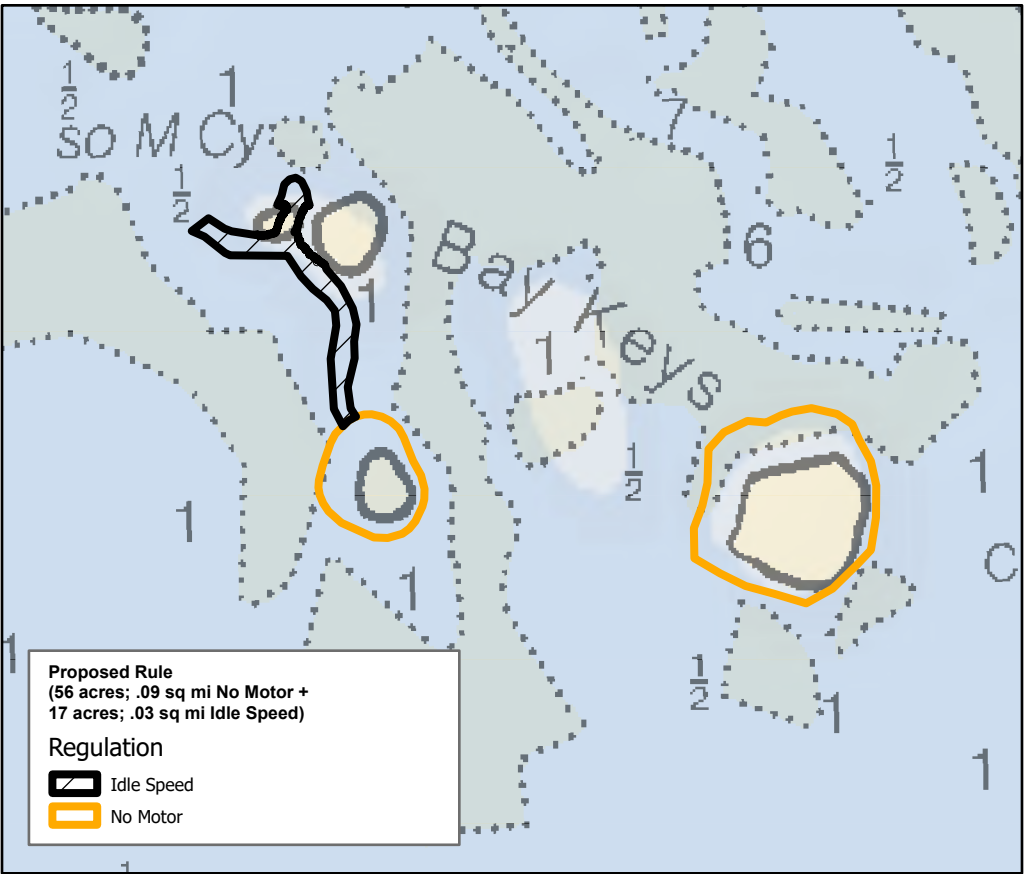
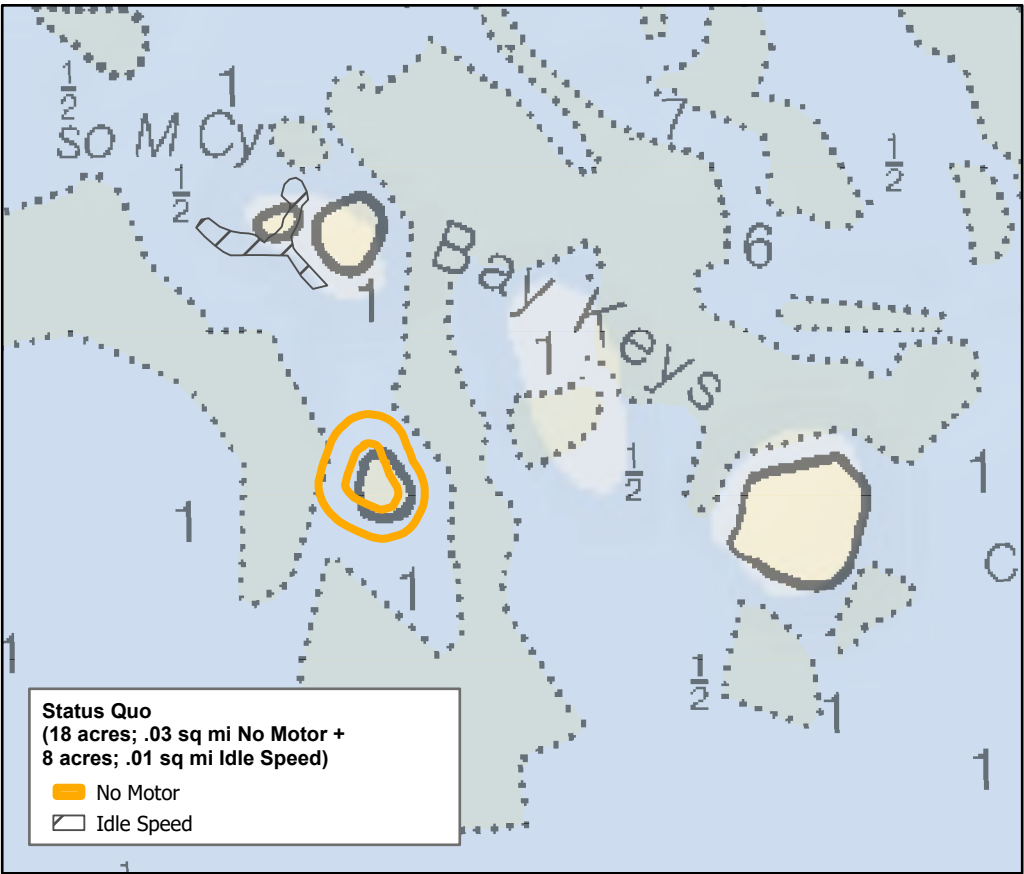
Decrease disturbance of foraging birds that use the shallow seagrass flats.

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Lower Keys Region





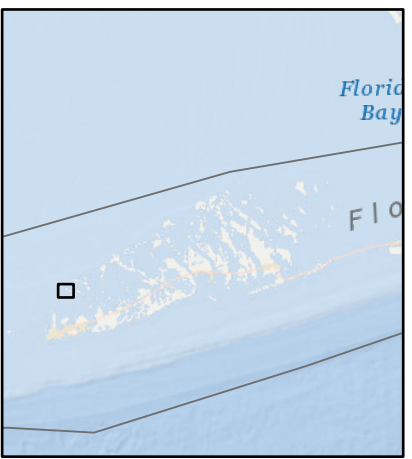
Bay Keys Wildlife Management Area

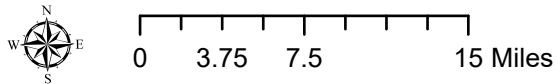
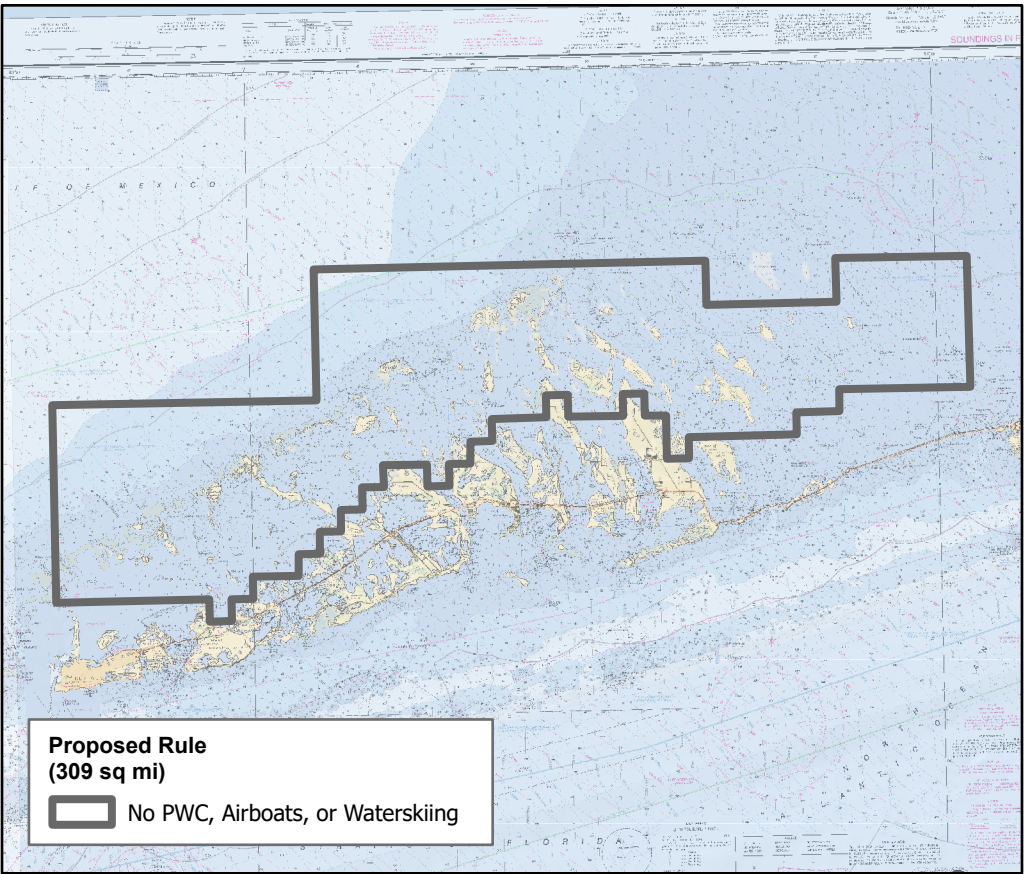
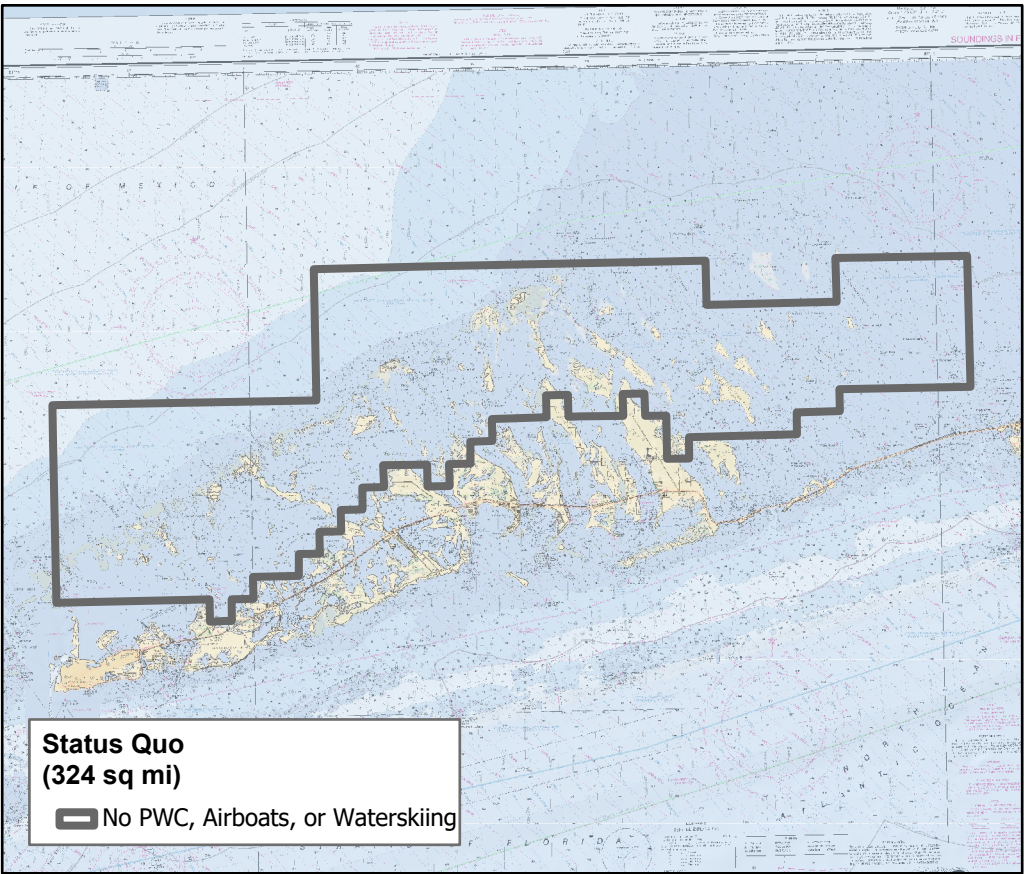
Decrease disturbance of nesting and roosting birds including magnificent frigatebird, great white, tricolor, and little blue heron, cormorant, osprey, and various other small birds. Southwest Bay Key is used as a roosting area by magnificent frigatebird, a species that is highly disturbed by boater use. Southwest and Southeast Bay Keys are also used by great white herons and little blue herons for nesting. Shallow seagrass flats around the island exhibit light prop scarring.

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Lower Keys Region



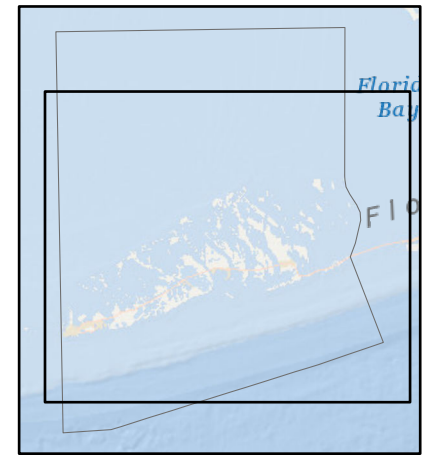


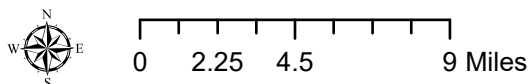
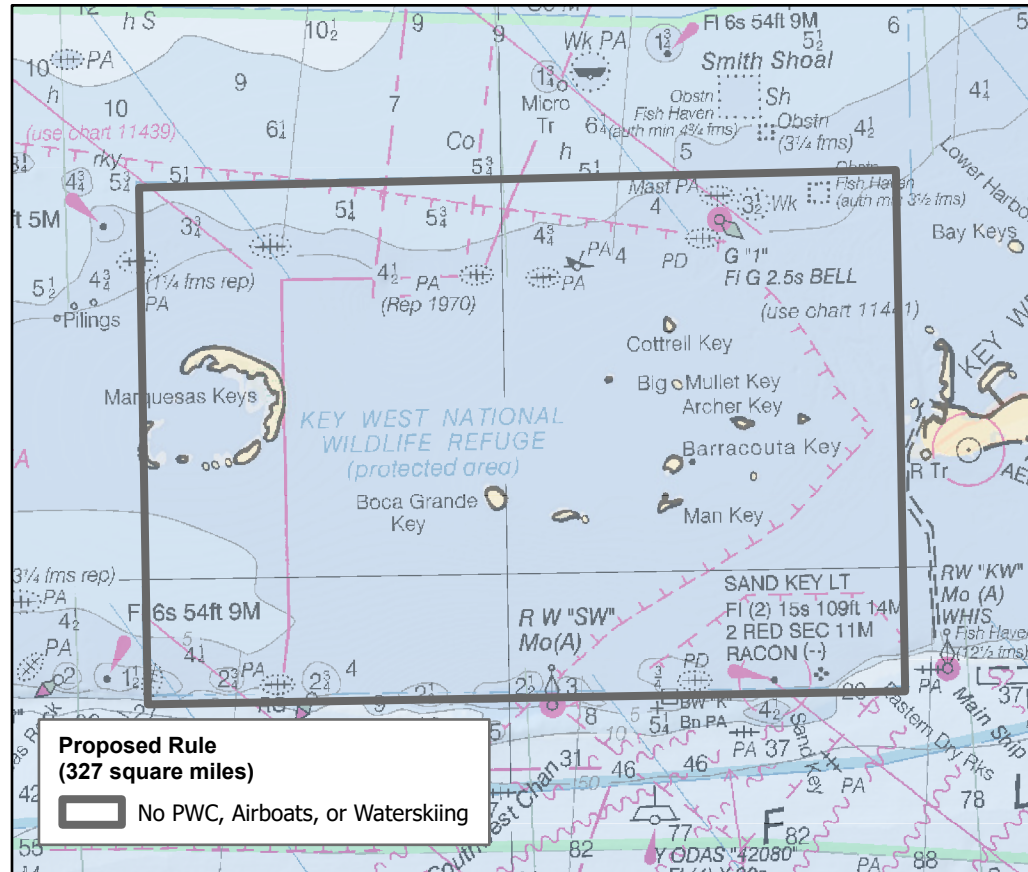
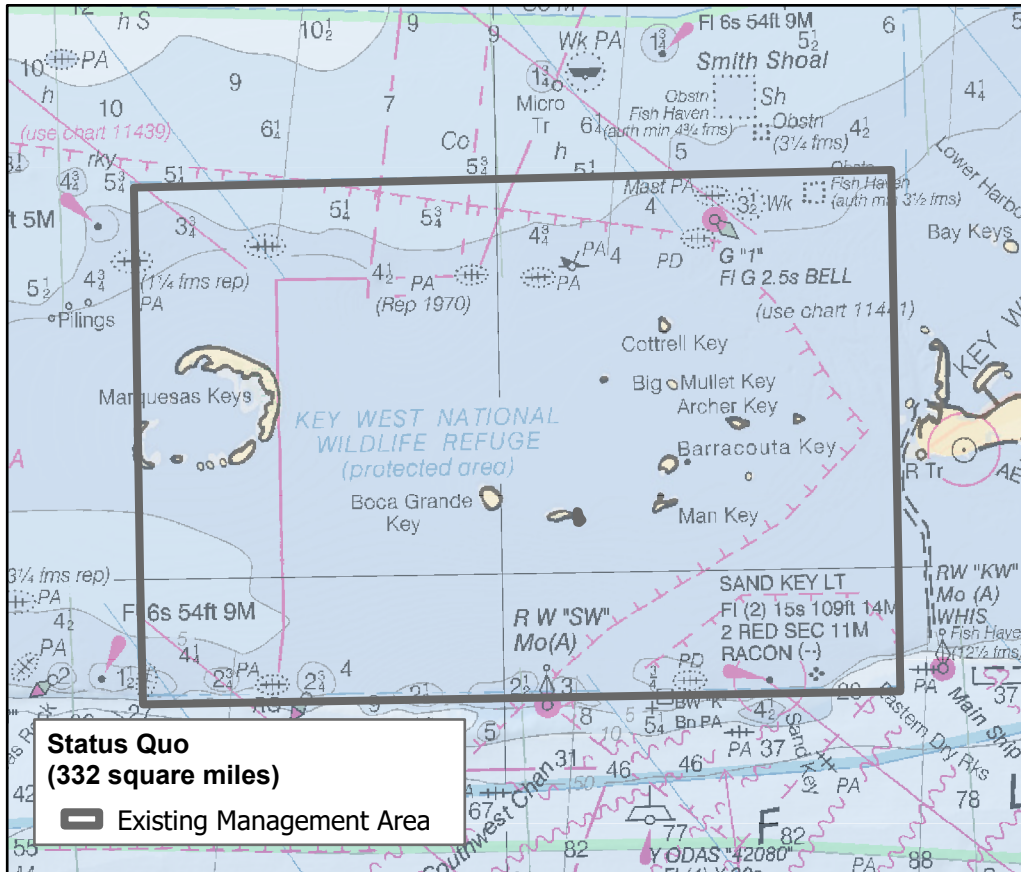
Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge

Designated in 1938 as a haven for great white herons, migratory birds, and other wildlife. The refuge provides nesting, feeding, and resting areas for hundreds of species of birds and sea turtles. The National Wildlife Refuge boundary does not change, only the area in which personal watercraft are restricted.

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Lower Keys Region

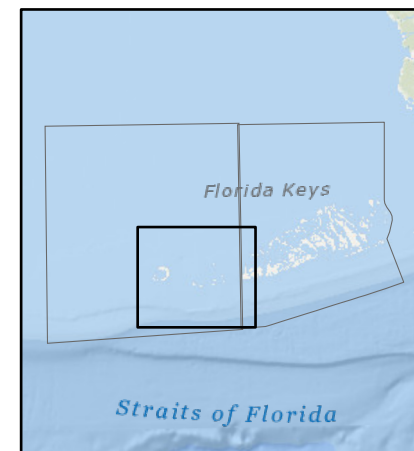




Key West National Wildlife Refuge

Designated in 1908 as a preserve and breeding ground for colonial nesting birds and other wildlife. Key West NWR provides habitat and protection for federally-listed species, including piping plover and roseate terns. The refuge harbors the largest wintering population of piping plovers and the largest colony of white-crowned pigeons in the Florida Keys. It is a haven for more than 250 species of birds, including 10 wading bird species that nest in the refuge. Other notable threatened species include the Miami blue butterfly and sea turtles. Waters within the refuge's administrative boundaries are important developmental habitat for green, loggerhead, and hawksbill turtles. More loggerhead and green sea turtle nests are found each year in Key West NWR than any area of the Florida Keys except for the Dry Tortugas. Note that the National Wildlife Refuge boundary does not change, only the area where personal watercraft are allowed.

Marquesas & Lower Keys Regions



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NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

AMERICA'S UNDERWATER TREASURES