

HISTORY & NATURE

The park was created to protect and preserve a portion of the only living coral reef in the continental United States. The park extends three miles into the Atlantic Ocean, is approximately 21 miles in length and is adjacent to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

John D. Pennekamp was one of the early proponents for the preservation of the park's reef and the park was named in his honor. Pennekamp was a Miami newspaper editor who also helped establish Everglades National Park.

The coral reefs are among the most beautiful and diverse of all living communities. Coral reefs are made of tiny animals called polyps. Stony corals, such as star coral and brain coral, secrete a limestone skeleton around their bodies. These skeletons remain after death and provide the foundation for new polyp growth. Octocorals, such as sea fans and sea plumes, are flexible and sway gracefully in the ocean current as they feed on plankton.

Sponges, shrimps, crabs, turtles, lobsters and hundreds of species of fish live among the corals. These reefs occur only in shallow oceans having clear, warm waters. It took approximately 5,000 years for this coral reef to form.

At the reef, snorkelers may delight in seeing many colorful tropical fish and corals, and anglers can fish for a wide variety of species in diverse habitats.

Touching or standing on corals may kill them and is therefore prohibited. Anglers will need a saltwater fishing license and spearfishing is prohibited. Collection of tropical fish is not allowed and no lobster may be harvested from or within any coral formation.

JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK

U.S. 1 Mile Marker 102.5/P.O. Box 370487
Key Largo, Florida 33037
305-676-3777

PARK GUIDELINES

Please remember these tips and guidelines and enjoy your visit:

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida saltwater fishing license is required unless exempt by law. Snorkelers and scuba divers should always use Diver-Down flags when in the water.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at 800-326-3521 or 866-I CAMP FL or TDD 888-433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact staff at any ranger station or call 850-245-3076 (Voice) or 711 (Florida Relay Service).

FloridaStateParks.org

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JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK

*Explore Gorgeous Coral Reefs
and Lush Sub-Tropical Ecosystems*

Photo by Matt Hetman

John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

EXPERIENCES & AMENITIES

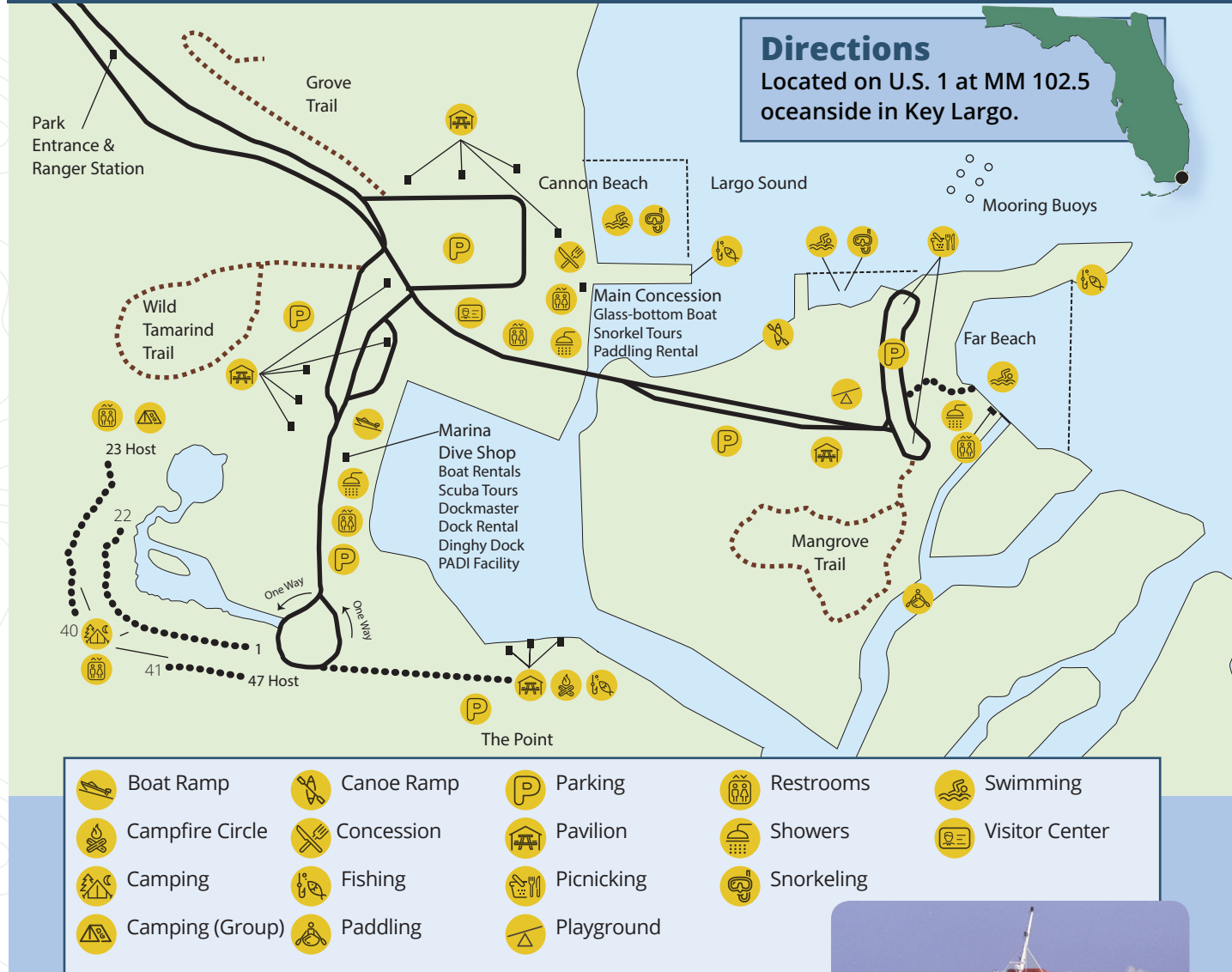
John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park is the first undersea park in the United States and encompasses approximately 70 nautical square miles. Located in the fabulous Florida Keys, the park's upland areas offer visitors a unique experience in the mangrove swamps and tropical hammocks. Most visitors are drawn to the park to experience the coral reefs and their associated marine life. Many enjoy the view from a glassbottom boat tour, but visitors can get a closer look by scuba diving or snorkeling.

The Visitor Center features a 30,000 gallon saltwater aquarium, nature exhibits and a theater showcasing nature videos. Nature walks are available along the Mangrove, Wild Tamarind and Grove trails. Seventeen miles of paddling trails wind through the mangrove swamp. Stand-up paddleboards and kayaks rentals are also available.

Underwater at Cannon Beach, artifacts from a 1715 Spanish shipwreck, featuring an anchor and cannons, can be viewed. Marine life, including crabs and fish, may be seen in the seagrass beds.

Picnic tables and grills are located throughout the park. Pavilions are available on a first-come basis, but may be reserved by paying a fee at least 24 hours in advance. Contact the ranger station at 305-676-3777. Refreshments, gifts and snorkeling equipment may be obtained at the concession.

Reservations are strongly recommended for RV and tent campers who wish to stay in the campground. Contact Reserve America at 800-326-3521 or visit ReserveAmerica.com. A group campsite may also be reserved by contacting the ranger station.



Trips to the coral reef are conducted daily aboard a high-speed, stable, air-conditioned, glassbottom catamaran. Snorkeling boat trips are also offered daily. Daily scuba dive trips and certified diver instruction are also available.

A boat ramp and motorboat rentals are available at the marina. Marina slips, and Largo Sound moorings may be rented overnight. To protect the coral, day-use moorings are provided as an alternative to anchoring at the reef. For additional information, please call 305-451-6300. Reservations can be made for all boat trips at www.PennekampPark.com.

