



The 65-foot lighthouse on Boca Chita Key provides outstanding views of Biscayne Bay.



Seafan
JOHN HALAS

Whether on the reefs, the keys, the bay, or the mainland, you leave behind what is familiar and become acquainted with another world that is strange and wild. Biscayne is a different sort of national park. Expect the unexpected.

Reef

Exploring Biscayne

On the Mainland

Convoy Point Park headquarters and Dante Fascell Visitor Center are at Convoy Point. The visitor center has exhibits, theater/gallery, a bookstore, and schedules of activities. Convoy Point has a picnic area with tables, fire grills, restrooms, and a short trail with views of birds and marine life. Call 305-230-7275.

Boat Tours A concessioner offers glass-bottom boat tours, snorkeling and scuba diving trips to the reefs, and occasional island excursions for picnicking and hiking. All tours leave from Convoy Point. The concessioner rents snorkeling and scuba equipment, kayaks, and canoes. For information and reservations contact: Biscayne National Underwater Park 9710 SW 328th Street Homestead, FL 33033 305-230-1100

Accommodations and Services Homestead, Miami, and the Florida Keys have hotels and motels; reservations are recommended. They also have restaurants, service stations, groceries, and other stores. Nearby public marinas have boat launch ramps and fuel, and often charter or rent sail and motor boats (see map below).

Camping There are no campgrounds on the park's mainland. See "On the Keys" (below right) for information about island camping; these campsites are reached only by boat. Nearby private mainland campgrounds and trailer parks in Homestead, Florida City, and South Miami have spaces for tents, mobile homes, and trailers. Everglades National Park, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, and other area parks have campgrounds, open year-round.

General Information

Climate Biscayne has warm, wet summers (May through October) and mild, dry winters (November through April). Expect sunshine and high humidity year-round. High temperatures average in the high 80s to low 90s°F in summer and mid-70s to low 80s°F in winter. Annual rainfall fluctuates, but 85 inches or more is common. Most rain falls in summer in brief afternoon thunderstorms. Summer and fall are seasons for hurricanes and tropical storms.

Safety and Regulations • The park is a wildlife and historical preserve—do not disturb or remove natural or historical objects. • Loaded firearms, explosives, and other weapons are prohibited. • Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet and are restricted to certain areas of the park. • Fires are allowed only in campstoves or designated grills.

• Be careful wading; coral rock is sharp. • There are no lifeguards; do not swim alone. • Mosquitoes and biting insects are here year-round but are fewest January to April. Use insect repellent. If camping, be sure your tent has bugproof netting. • Wear waterproof sunscreen. • Emergencies call 911.

For More Information Biscayne National Park 9700 SW 328th Street Homestead, FL 33033-5634 305-230-7275 www.nps.gov/bisc/

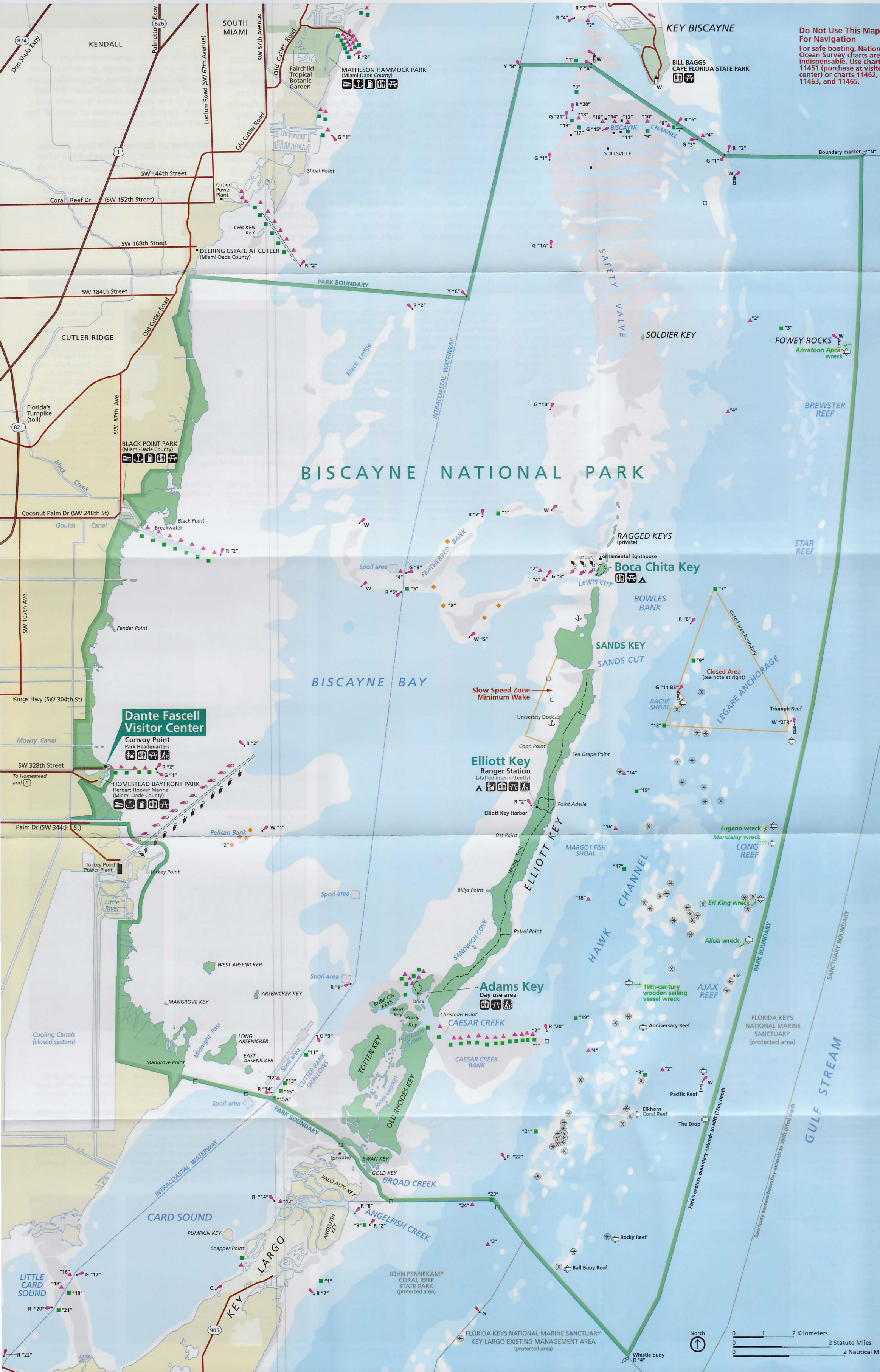
Información en Español Las llamadas locales requieren marcar el código de área (305) más el 230-7275.

Getting to the Park

The main north-south highways approaching Biscayne are Florida's Turnpike and U.S.1. The most direct route to Convoy Point is via SW 328th Street, which intersects U.S.1 in Homestead. Driving south on the turnpike, you can reach SW 328th Street by taking Speedway Blvd. south (SW 137th Avenue), then follow signs. The rest of the park is accessible only by boat. See map for boat launches.



Biscayne National Park is one of over 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places so that all may experience our heritage. To learn more about national parks visit www.nps.gov.



Map Key to Facilities

Ranger station	Boat launch	Self-guiding trail
Restrooms	Gas dock	Primitive campground
Picnic area	Marina	Popular anchorage

Map Key to Water Features and Landmarks

Water Depths

0-6 feet (0-1.8 meters)	6-12 feet (1.8-3.6 meters)	Over 12 feet (Over 3.6 meters)
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Shallows and Reefs

Shoal or spoil area	Coral reef near water surface	Coral reefs also lie deeper below water surface
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Channel Markers (entering from seaward)

Red starboard daymarker (even numbered)	Starboard buoy	Other buoy
Green port daymarker (odd numbered)	Port buoy	Daymarker

Other Aids and Landmarks

Light	Danger Shoal	Lighthouse
Light color: R Red G Green W White Y Yellow	Mooring buoy	Tower

Boating Markers and Flags

Know these common buoys, signs, and flags. They are essential to safe navigation.

Channel Markers (entering from seaward)

Port (odd numbered) Lights flash green	Starboard (even numbered) Lights flash red	Diver's Flag
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Regulatory Markers

Keep out	Danger	Speed Limit (No wake-5mph)
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Storm Warning Flags

For up-to-date weather forecasts, phone 305-229-4522 or monitor marine radio reports on VHF channels 1, 2, or 3. Channel 16 broadcasts special weather warnings.

Small craft advisory (20-38 mph winds)	Gale (39-54 mph winds)
Storm or whole gale (55-73 mph winds)	Hurricane (74 mph winds or higher)

On the Water

The Florida Straits and Biscayne Bay offer great year-round recreation. You can enjoy saltwater fishing in all seasons. Marlin and sailfish are popular ocean catches. Snapper and grouper are caught in the bay; Florida fishing licenses required—obey regulations on size, number, season, and method of take.

You can take stone crabs in season and blue crabs year-round. Lobsters are protected in the bay and tidal creeks but may be taken on the seaward side of the keys in season. Waterskiing is allowed; avoid mooring sites and watch for swimmers and divers.

Rules and Safety Tips Caution: navigating the shallow waters of Biscayne can be tricky. Water depths on nautical charts represent the average depth at low tide—levels may be lower or higher. In Biscayne Bay low and high tides occur later than the times listed in the tide tables for Miami harbor entrance. In the southern part of the bay, low tide occurs as much as 3½ hours later and high tide as much as 2½ hours later.

Safety Afloat Stay alert! Watch weather closely. Storms move quickly, bringing rough seas and the danger of lightning. Monitor marine weather radio broadcasts. If a storm breaks seek the nearest safe harbor.

Caution Shallow Water • Use caution if boating near shallow areas or reefs. Striking the bottom with your propeller can kill corals or grassbeds and may damage your propeller or engine cooling system or hull. • Look out for manatees; propellers cause injury and death to these endangered mammals. • Watch for swimmers and divers near moored boats or in an area where they might be expected. Stay 300 feet away from a diver's flag. If you leave your boat to swim, anchor it securely. Don't let currents, which are strongest on the outer reefs and in cuts between the keys, carry you or your boat away.

Presailing Checklist You must take this gear when boating: U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) for each passenger, fire extinguisher, and signaling equipment. Take enough fuel for a round-trip. Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return. Before leaving shore, check weather forecasts, sea conditions, and tides.

On the Keys

The keys can be reached only by boat. Developed recreation areas and services are limited to a few islands. Boat fuel, supplies, and food are not sold on any island, but they are available at mainland marinas. Only Elliott Key has drinking water.

Adams Key A free boat dock, a picnic area, restrooms, and a trail are available for day use.

Boca Chita Key A cleared seawall, picnic area, hiking trail, and restrooms are available. A campground with grills and tables operates on a first-come, first-served basis. An ornamental lighthouse is open intermittently.

Sands Key Overnight anchorage sites are located offshore.

Rules and Safety Tips The entire park is a wildlife refuge. Do NOT FEED WILDLIFE. Raccoons become pests when humans feed them. Arsenicker Keys are particularly important as a bird nesting area; do not disturb these keys. West Arsenicker Key, Arsenicker Key, and the islands in Sandwich Cove are closed to the public. Pack out all trash on the keys. Some private property still exists on the keys; please respect owners' rights. A few tropical plants can cause painful itching; do not touch any plants that you don't recognize as harmless.

Fees There is a \$15 per night overnight dockage fee at Boca Chita Key and Elliott Key harbors, which includes a \$10 camping fee. Group campsites are \$25.

Pets Leashed pets are permitted only in the developed areas of Elliott Key and Convoy Point.

On the Reefs

Reef exploring is best on calm, sunny days. Both the outer reefs, along the park's eastern boundary, and the patch reefs, closer to shore, offer good snorkeling and diving.

Strong currents can occur on the outer reefs. Unless you are experienced, stay on calmer patch reefs. Reef guidebooks are sold at Dante Fascell Visitor Center. Mooring buoys are available on some of the patch reefs. Check with a ranger for buoy locations. Ask at the visitor center about the Maritime Heritage Trail.

Protecting Yourself and Safety Tips Use caution when you visit the reefs.

All snorkelers and divers must display the standard diver's flag to warn boaters of their presence. Be aware of other boats in your area; propellers have injured divers. Never swim alone—always have another person stay on board.

Reef animals generally will not harm you if you leave them alone. It is good practice not to touch anything, even if it looks harmless. Coral can cause deep, slow-healing cuts. Attacks by barracuda or sharks rarely occur, but both are considered dangerous and should be watched carefully. Ask a ranger about hazards before you venture out.

Protecting the Reef A coral reef is alive. If your boat hits a reef, it will damage your boat, scar the reef, and kill coral animals. You are subject to a fine and may be liable for the cost of restoring the damaged resource. Watch for coral heads near the surface if boating near patch reefs. Anchors can damage reefs; anchor in a sandy bottom or use a mooring buoy. Standing or sitting on coral or grasping it can cause injury. Do not disturb reef inhabitants. Resist the temptation to take home a souvenir—this is illegal and diminishes the beauty of the reef. Cultural artifacts are also protected; do not remove them.