

Biscayne Bay

AQUATIC PRESERVE

“A reflection of both sky & skyline; a home for countless fish, mammals, & invertebrates; the people’s source of a good time & a living; and what makes southeast Florida a special place.”

Marsha Colbert, Aquatic Preserve Manager

Key Accomplishments

- Forming partnerships to assess and protect the aquatic resources within the preserve, including seagrasses and manatees. This provides an improved capacity for staff to better manage these resources.
- Participation in a nationally recognized youth challenge program to provide training; “hands on” activities include measuring water quality, observing weather conditions, and sampling plankton. In addition to enhancing community awareness, some of the participants have reported greater interest to pursue a scientific career.
- Active involvement in community-wide special events; outcomes range from challenging people to “name that animal and how it lives” to “getting them involved” in removing marine debris from the environment, including monofilament line which entangles sea birds and marine life.



ICC participants share the discovery of a “sea heart”

Project Spotlight

International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) Site Host

For the past three years, Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve has partnered with the Ocean Conservancy’s ICC on the third Saturday in September. Almost one ton (approximately 1700



Kathryn Wanless

Volunteers cleaning up the bay

pounds) of trash has been collected, cataloged, and removed from the shorelines of Pelican Harbor marina where our office resides. Over 100 volunteers have participated, including high school and university students and adults with a commitment to community service. The most unusual items found so far include

a child’s bike and a shopping cart, but sea beans from plants as far away as South America are a treasure to keep. Much of the trash was plastics, whether bottles or bags, which are degrading the nursery grounds of the red mangrove prop roots on the bay islands’ margins.

Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve



Location:

Miami-Dade and Monroe counties

Acreage:

67,000 acres of submerged lands



Local Contact:

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Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- The bay is unusual because it was not formed by sea level rise at a river's mouth. It is a depression between two different types of limestone.
- Miami Beach, Virginia Key, Key Biscayne, and Key Largo are underlain by coral reef limestone formed by marine life.
- The mainland is composed of oolitic (tiny spheres) limestone, formed by the physical and chemical conditions within shallow waters.
- The aquatic preserve shares the bay with Biscayne National Park, which was expanded from Biscayne National Monument in 1980.
- The bay supports Johnson's seagrass, a threatened species under federal law (the first marine plant species to be listed), found only in southeast Florida.
- Submerged habitats also include hardbottom areas of algae and sponges, soft sediments of sand or mud, and seagrasses.
- Florida manatees inhabit the bay and are more often observed in the winter time when they gather in warm water areas during cold fronts.

Crystopher Boykin



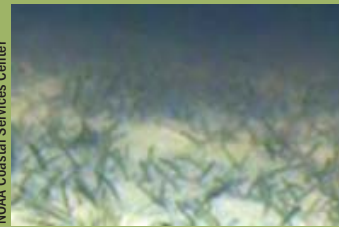
Canoeists enjoy contrasting settings - mangrove shorelines

Crystopher Boykin



... and over seagrass beds with an urban skyline.

NOAA Coastal Services Center



Johnson's seagrass

Crystopher Boykin



Florida manatee surfaces for air

