



Boat Permits and Mooring Buoys



Boat permits are now required for all vessels in the park, including within the RNA. The only vessels exempt from this rule are those transiting the area without interruption. Vessels may only anchor overnight on sandy bottom within one nautical mile of the Garden Key Harbor Light. Within the RNA, vessels may use one of seven recreational mooring buoys for day use only. See information below on how to obtain a permit and how to use a Dry Tortugas mooring buoy.

Why are Boat Permits Necessary?

Permits are necessary to provide increased protection to the visitor, the Research Natural Area (RNA), and other marine resources outside of the RNA.

They also allow park staff to provide reliable information to the public about appropriate RNA visitation, provide park managers with reliable information about public use, increase the safety of the boating public by providing increased staff contact, and assist in monitoring recreational mooring buoy use to evaluate carrying capacity.

Boating permits are required for all recreational vessels including kayaks, paddleboards, dinghies, vessels operating under a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA), and commercial fishing vessels.

Vessels greater than 50 meters are required to obtain a Special Use Authorization in addition to the boating permit. Please contact Dry Tortugas National Park for more information.

NOTE: A permit is not necessary for vessels simply transiting through the park.

How and Where to Obtain a Boat Permit

Boating Permits are free and can be obtained in person at the Garden Key Visitor Center or at Dry Tortugas National Park Headquarters Office, both located within Fort Jefferson.

Visitors will receive information about park rules and regulations, as well as information about things to do at the park.

How to Properly and Safely Use Mooring Buoys

Approach slowly from downwind/current.

To secure your boat to the mooring, run your line from a cleat on your boat through the loop in the end of the mooring pick up line and back to a cleat on your boat.

Use sufficient scope (rope length) to minimize pull on the anchor. Rule of thumb, if the buoy is being pulled underwater increase the scope. If there is an upward pull on the mooring, increase the scope.

Sailboats should not leave sails up when they are tied to a mooring.

You are responsible for your vessel, inspecting the buoy, and checking that the buoy is holding as intended. Report any problems to NPS staff.

It is recommended to leave someone on the vessel at all times.

The mooring is designed to hold up to a 100 foot recreational vessel.

It is intended to be used when weather and sea conditions are appropriate for the intended recreational use such as diving or snorkeling. It is not intended for use in all weather and sea conditions nor as a long term mooring.



Mooring Ball

Mooring Buoy, Dive and Snorkel Locations

Loggerhead Key Access

LMBSE: N24° 37.833 W82° 55.187

Located on the east side of Loggerhead Key, use for access to the island's beaches, swimming, snorkeling, and visiting the historic structures.

LMBSW: N24° 37.8031 W82° 55.546

Located on the west side of Loggerhead Key, use for access to the island's beaches, swimming, snorkeling, and visiting the historic structures.



Diving at Dry Tortugas National Park

Scuba and Snorkel Sites

Avanti (Windjammer) Wreck: N24° 37.4162 W82° 56.574

Built in 1875, this three-masted 261.4 foot vessel sank in 1907. Portions of the ship at the surface with depths down to 21 feet. Please refer to the Windjammer brochure for more information.

Offramp: N 24 40.156 W 82 54.506

Isolated reef outcroppings with staghorn coral on the western side. Depths 25 feet and shallower.

Scuba Sites

The Maze: N24° 36.532 W82° 56.969

Coral caverns, swim-through pinnacles and straight up vertical relief. Depth 20-60 feet.

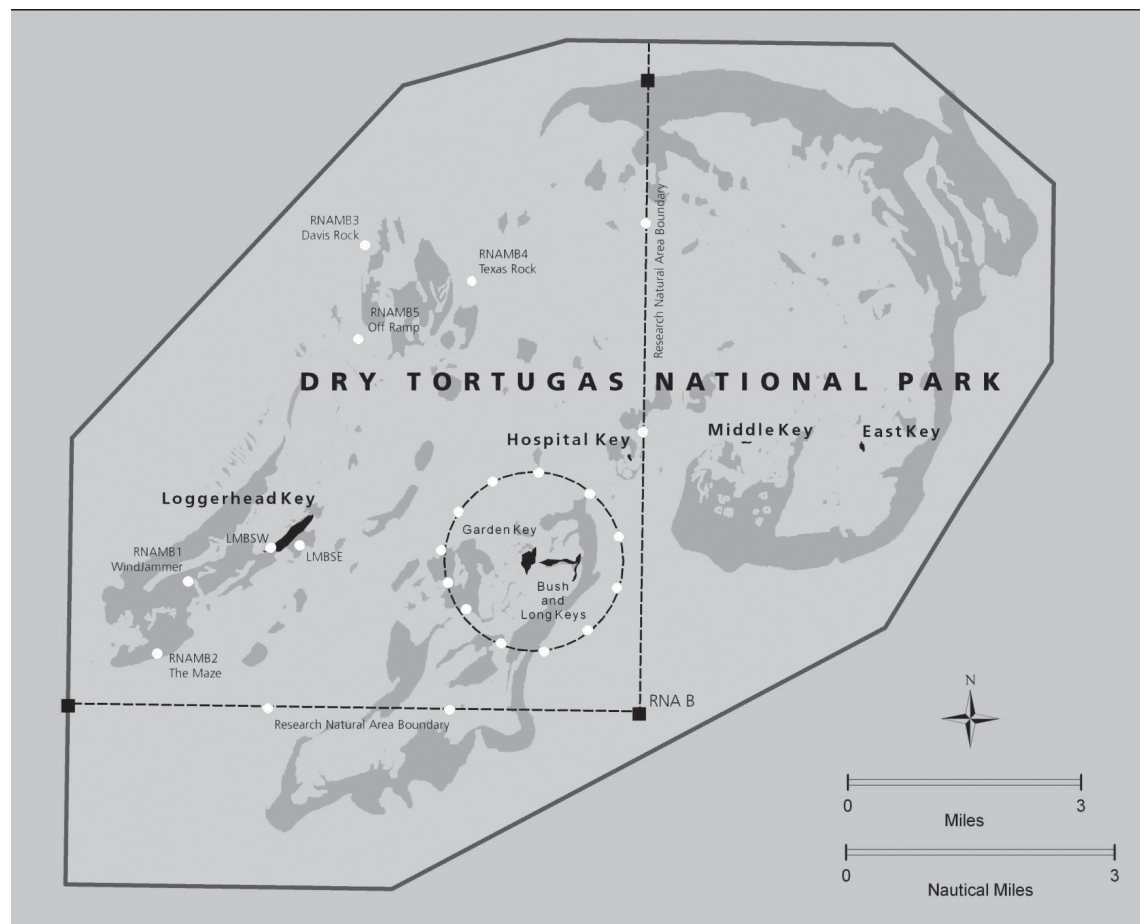
Davis Rock: N24° 41.209 W82° 54.440

Large crevices run through the middle of this pinnacle reef. Depths from 20-45 feet.

Texas Rock: N24° 40.820 W82° 53.125

Plan on 2 dives to explore the entire reef. Large crevices, caves, swim-through, cracks, pinnacles and lots of vertical relief. Look for the giant anchor. Depth 20-60 feet.

Additional dive and snorkel sites can be found around the park that do not have mooring balls. Please consult with a Ranger for more information.



Location of Mooring Balls at Dry Tortugas National Park

Contact Information

John Fuechsel
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Dry Tortugas National Park
33 East Quay Rd
Key West, FL 33030