



## Remote park is rich in history and nature

FOR THOSE SEEKING ADVENTURE, Dry Tortugas National Park has much to offer. The Tortugas lie at the farthest end of the Florida Keys, closer to Cuba than the American mainland. To reach this remote ocean wilderness one must travel by boat or plane over 68 nautical miles of open sea. Visiting such an isolated place means that you need to be prepared, not only for rough seas, but for primitive conditions. All power is generated on site, cisterns collect rainwater, and waste must be hauled away by boat. There are no public phones, restrooms or snack bars. Even cell phones are useless here. Make sure to bring anything that you may need, such as protective clothing, sunscreen, or medication (especially for motion sickness). You will not be able to purchase these items in the park.

### *A place like no other*

Dry Tortugas National Park, home to history and natural wonders above and below the water's surface, has long been an inspiration to visitors. The park's coral and sea grass communities are among the most vibrant in the Florida Keys. The Sooty Tern finds its only regular U.S. nesting site on Bush Key, adjacent to Fort Jefferson. Large sea turtles lumber onto the park's protected beaches each summer to bury their clutches of eggs. These and other wonders make Dry Tortugas National Park truly a one-of-a-kind place.

### *An undersea wonderland*

Underwater creatures whirl in a kaleidoscope of bright, gaudy colors. Here creatures like the queen conch, the aptly-named



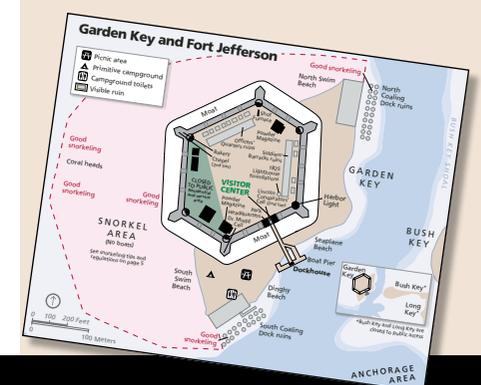
Many coral reefs in the park are protected in the Research Natural Area - see page 7 for details.

brain coral, and endangered sea turtle coexist, interconnected in their plight to survive. Coral formations shelter dozens of colorful fish just a short swim from Dry Tortugas beaches. A walk along the fort's moat wall provides ample opportunity to see an assortment of marine creatures thriving in sea grass meadows. Sea grasses are vital to the neighboring corals as they block polluting sediments from reaching these living animals. This community is also a haven for conches, sea stars, clams, stingrays, and many kinds of young fish that find shelter and food among the long fleshy blades of grass.

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# Fort Jefferson - 'Guardian of the Gulf'

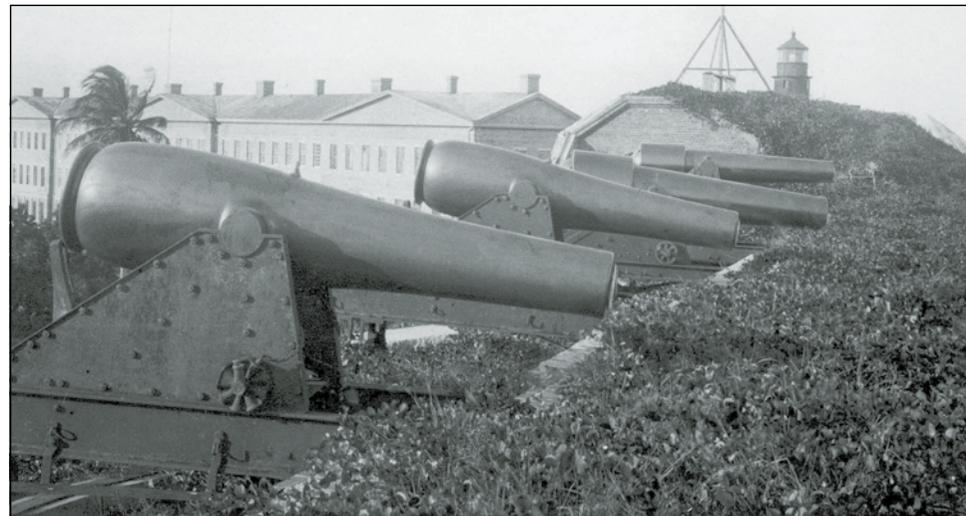


The Garden Key lighthouse was built atop Fort Jefferson in the 1870s. It is made of iron, as a brick lighthouse would become a vulnerable target during enemy bombardment.

Fort Jefferson was built to protect one of the most strategic deepwater anchorages in North America. By fortifying this spacious harbor, the United States maintained an important advance post for ships patrolling the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida. Nestled within the islands and shoals that make up the Dry Tortugas, the harbor offered ships the chance to re-supply or seek refuge from storms.

The location of the Tortugas along one of the world's busiest shipping lanes was its greatest military asset. Though passing ships could easily avoid the largest of Fort Jefferson's guns, they could not avoid the warships that used its harbor.

In enemy hands, the Tortugas would have threatened the heavy ship traffic that passed between the Gulf Coast (including New Orleans, Mobile and Pensacola) and the eastern seaboard of the United States. It could also serve as a potential staging area, or springboard, for enemy forces. From here they could launch an attack virtually anywhere along the Gulf Coast.



Rodman cannons on terreplein level of Fort Jefferson, 1890s.

Poised to protect this valuable harbor was one of the largest forts ever built. Nearly thirty years in the making (1846–1875), Fort Jefferson was never finished nor fully armed. Yet it was a vital link in a chain of coastal forts that stretched from Maine to California. Fort Jefferson, the most sophisticated of these, was a brilliant and undeniable symbol that the United States wanted to be left alone.

Though never attacked, the fort fulfilled its intended role. It helped to protect the peace and prosperity of a young nation.

Abandoned by the Army in 1874, the fort was later used as a coaling station for warships. Though used briefly during both world wars, the fort's final chapter as 'Guardian of the Gulf' had long since closed.

## Remote park is rich in history and nature *continued from page 1*

### A bird's eye view

The seven tiny islands of Dry Tortugas are a vital layover for migrating birds traveling between South America and the U.S. and Canada. Here you may find a ruby-throated hummingbird, broad-winged hawk and white-eyed vireo all in one tree! Nearly 300 species of birds have been spotted here. Spring is the optimal time to view birds, but any season offers the chance to see something unique. Even the untrained eye is easily impressed by the seven-foot wingspan of the magnificent frigatebird, often

seen riding the thermals above the fort's harbor light.

Visitors between the months of February and September will also have the opportunity to watch in awe as thousands of sooty terns soar above Bush Key. Their raucous calls warn outsiders to stay clear of guarded chicks.

### Paradise lost?

The view of this subtropical landscape can be deceptive. While its beauty

is stunning, some of the park's most treasured wonders are at risk. Fragile coral formations, displaying hundreds of years of growth, can be destroyed in seconds by a carelessly placed boat anchor or snorkel fin. Water pollution and sediments, from land or boats, muddy the clear waters that sustain the reefs. Non-native plants and animals interfere with natural processes. Gulls that once migrated seasonally are now sustained year-round at Garden Key, only to prey on sooty tern nests and chicks.

### What you can do to help

We invite you to join us in the challenge to protect the great marine wilderness of the Dry Tortugas. Here's what you can do to help your national park:

- Please abide by all park regulations.
- If you snorkel, do not touch or stand on corals or seagrasses.
- Stay out of closed areas.
- Remove all trash, and protect your food from wildlife.
- Be safe - it's a long way to a hospital!

## Park history



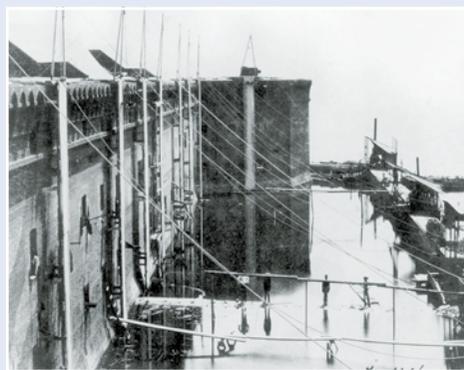
1513

Spanish explorer Ponce de León discovers and names the Tortugas (Spanish for "turtle")



1832

Naturalist John James Audubon observes bird and marine life in the Dry Tortugas



1846

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers begins construction of Fort Jefferson on Garden Key



1861

Start of the Civil War; Union soldiers stationed at Fort Jefferson for first time

# Things to do

## Visitor Center

Information, exhibits, an orientation video, and educational sales items are available. The Visitor Center is open daily.

## Touring Fort Jefferson

One of the great pleasures of any visit to the park is the chance to explore Fort Jefferson. Daily 45-minute guided tours are offered by the commercial ferry operators. You can also take a self-guiding walking tour by following the signs featuring a Civil War soldier.

## Junior Ranger

A Dry Tortugas National Park Junior Ranger program is available. Recommended ages 8-13. Stop by the Visitor Center for your free copy of the Junior Ranger Handbook.

## Snorkeling

A designated snorkel area is located near the campground. Snorkeling along the outside of the moat wall or around the pilings of the south coaling dock is recommended.

Before snorkeling, make sure that all equipment fits properly. There are no life guards on duty, so swim at your own risk. Sea urchins and some jellyfish can sting - beware! No swimming or snorkeling is permitted inside the moat.

Make sure never to touch or stand on coral. Carelessness can destroy years of coral growth in seconds. Seagrass beds are a nursery for small fish and marine life. Please keep off. Stand in the sand - never on coral or seagrass!

## Fishing

Sport fishing is permitted in certain areas of the park - see "Park Regulations" site bulletin and p. 7 for more information. Lobstering and spear fishing are prohibited in the park. Florida state fishing laws and regulations also apply. Florida fishing license is required (available in Key West).



JAY YOUNG

## Walking the moat wall

The moat wall offers an easy hike (0.6 miles) around the fort. Walking the moat wall is a great opportunity to view coral, fish, and other marine life.

## Boating

Private boaters can visit the park. Nautical charts are sold at the park's Visitor Center and in Key West. Information is obtainable from the Key West U.S. Coast Guard Station, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Charter Boat Association. Boaters should be aware of the possibility of very rough seas. Check with a ranger for rules on docking and mooring.

## Bird watching

The Dry Tortugas are renowned for spring bird migrations and tropical bird species. Stop by the Visitor Center for a free Dry Tortugas Bird Checklist.

# Things to know

## Getting started

When you first arrive, place your towel and personal gear beneath a tree or near a picnic table. A limited number of picnic tables are available outside of Fort Jefferson. Please be considerate and share these tables with others. No food, drinks or trash are permitted inside Fort Jefferson. It is illegal to feed or harass wildlife.

## Restrooms

All fresh water at Dry Tortugas is created through a combination of rainwater and desalination. Due to the resources required to create fresh water in this remote area, drinking water and public restrooms are not available. All park visitors are required to use the facilities on the commercial ferry boats. After 2:30 PM, composting toilets are available in the campground. These specially designed toilets require no water or chemicals, and can only take a small number of users. They are very fragile - don't put trash in them.

## Collecting is prohibited

Please help us protect the park. Do not remove seashells, coral, sand, brick, glass, stone, metal, or any other natural or historic objects. Never move or disturb artifacts. If you find an artifact, contact park staff.

## Closed areas

There are clearly marked areas in the park that are closed to the public. For your safety, please abide by all park regulations. The interior of the fort is open during daylight hours only.

Hospital, Bush and Long Keys are closed year round. East Key (open only as posted) and Loggerhead Key are open during daylight hours only.

**Please help us protect the park. Do not remove seashells, coral, sand, brick, glass, stone, metal, or any other natural or historic objects.**

## Pets

Pets must be on a leash and under physical control at all times. Pets are not allowed inside Fort Jefferson or on the swim beach.

## Do the rangers live at the fort?

Yes! National Park Service personnel living and working at the fort include rangers, maintenance workers, and their families—enough to provide for the basic support and protection of the 100-square-mile park.

Employees have their own living quarters, complete with kitchen and bathroom. Most staff live within the casemates of the fort. To help maintain their privacy, the housing area is closed to the public.

Rainwater provides employees with some of their fresh water. Using parts of the historic rainwater collection system (first used in the 1850s), water is stored in a large cistern in the parade ground. A process known as reverse osmosis also converts saltwater into freshwater. Electricity is provided by diesel generator. The generator runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, creating enough electricity to power employee residences, offices and public areas.

Job vacancies are filled through competitive hiring. Employees can remain as long as they choose; the typical length of stay is three years.

Park staff normally work ten consecutive days, followed by four off days. When not working the staff may choose to stay at the fort to catch up on sleep, clean house, write letters, or do laundry. Occasionally a trip to town becomes necessary for running errands or just to see the latest movie!



1865

Nearly 2,000 people (soldiers, prisoners and some civilians) at Fort Jefferson



1898

USS Maine anchors at Dry Tortugas before sailing to Cuba; Spanish-American War



1935

Fort Jefferson National Monument established; rededicated as Dry Tortugas National Park in 1992



2007

Research Natural Area sets aside 46 square miles of park as no-take ecological preserve

# Exploring Garden Key: a walk through history

Though remote, the Dry Tortugas have been an important landmark for passing ships since their first recorded discovery by Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León in 1513. He named the islands Las Tortugas (the turtles) because of the area's abundance of large sea turtles. The word "dry" was added later to warn mariners of the lack of fresh water on these small coral islands.

Beginning in 1825, a lighthouse was established on Garden Key to warn ships of treacherous reefs. Even today the area remains a busy crossroads or gateway for ships entering and leaving the Gulf of Mexico. Shipwrecks, too, are commonplace—and a tragic reminder of the risks associated with navigating the Straits of Florida. Today the park possesses one of the richest concentrations of shipwrecks in North America, with a few dating to the early 1600s. Ironically, the same reefs that threatened the safety of passing ships helped to form one of the most strategic harbors in U.S. history. Construction of Fort Jefferson was begun in 1846 to help fortify this natural anchorage.

## Touring Fort Jefferson

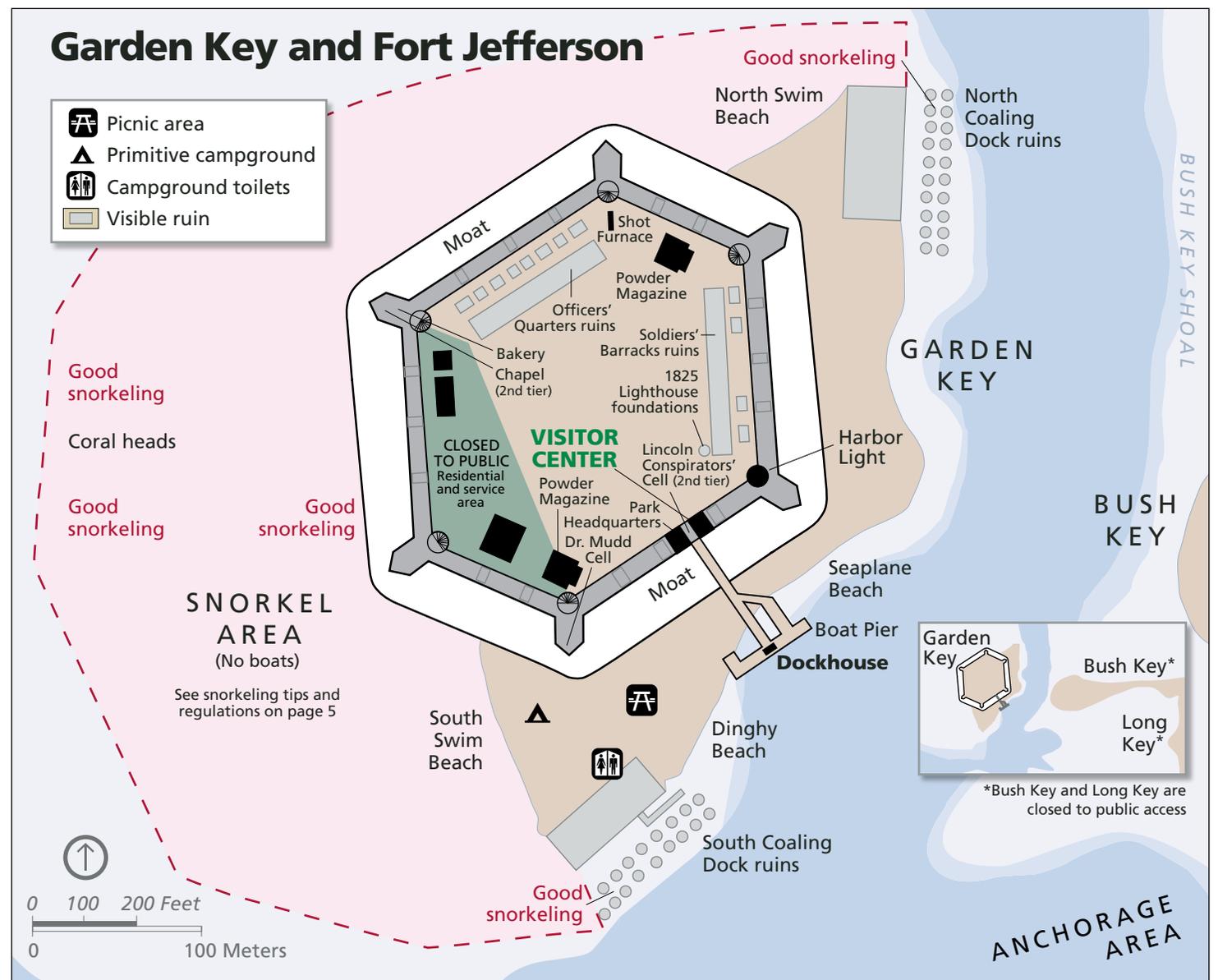
A self-guiding trail begins near the Visitor Center. The easy to moderate trail (0.8 miles) includes all three levels of the fort and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete.

As you explore the fort, imagine life here during the hectic 1860s. At its height, nearly 2,000 people lived within this remote city on the sea. Crowded onto the island were long walkways flanked by lush trees, impressive brick buildings, large wooden storehouses, and many tents. Soldiers marched and trained in the broiling sun. Laborers, slaves, and prisoners hauled bricks and supplies to the masons who continued their never ending task of building the fort. Women and children, though fewer in number, were a welcome sight here. Surrounded by disease, suffering, and death, one wife described the fort as "a dark, mean place."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faced many challenges during the fort's lengthy construction. Shifting sands, storms, and harsh conditions were common obstacles. The remote location hampered the shipment of supplies and skilled workers. Meanwhile, sections of the fort started to sink. In an effort to limit the fort's weight and slow subsidence, the second tier was intentionally left incomplete.

## 16 million bricks

Large quantities of brick, stone, cement, iron, and lumber were shipped



JOHN L. DENGLER

*Fort Jefferson's interior walls were painted white to reflect light and brighten the dark casemates.*

here from around the United States. Most of the bricks were made in the Pensacola area, a four-day journey by sailing schooner. When Florida left the Union in 1861, bricks could no longer be obtained from these brickyards. Instead they had to be shipped from as far away as Maine. These dark, red-colored Northern bricks are easily visible along the top of the fort's walls.

## Casemates

Casemates, or gunrooms, form the backbone of the fort. In essence, they are the fort. Large cannons mounted inside these rooms could fire through special openings known as embrasures. To construct these rooms, carpenters first built heavy wooden arches or

frames. Next, skilled masons laid brick and mortar on top of the frames, creating the brick arches that are common throughout the fort.

## 16 traverses

Imagine standing on top of the fort's walls—exposed to enemy fire—during a battle. Feeling a little vulnerable? Thick masonry mounds, or traverses, were designed to help protect men and guns along this exposed part of the fort. Small powder magazines were located inside the traverses.

## 420 heavy guns

To protect the Tortugas anchorage, Fort Jefferson featured some of the largest and most advanced weapons of its age. The fort's largest guns, known as 15-inch Rodman smoothbores, weighed 25 tons apiece. With a crew of seven men, they could fire a 432-pound projectile a distance of three miles. Advances in technology eventually made even these guns obsolete.

By 1900, these aging relics were sold to a Philadelphia scrap dealer and later melted down. Fortunately for us, a few of the original guns still remain on top of the fort's walls, left there, no doubt,

due to their enormous size. Their new owner was unable (or unwilling) to move them!

## Soldiers barracks

This once impressive building was designed to house ten companies of soldiers, or 1,000 men. More than a football field in length, the barracks were destroyed by a fire in 1912.

## 37 powder magazines

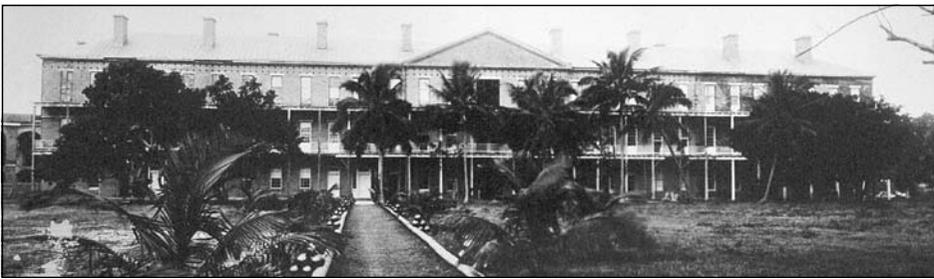
By design the fort's gunpowder would be stored in 37 different magazines, spread out to reduce the risk of a catastrophic explosion and to make the powder more accessible. Thick walls kept dangerous sparks and flames out, while narrow openings allowed fresh air to enter (to help keep their contents dry). Five of the fort's magazines were designed to be "detached," free-standing buildings.

## Stealth bomber of its day

As you walk around the fort, remember that Fort Jefferson is not just an old fort - it was the stealth bomber of its day, incorporating the latest military technology to protect this valuable piece of real estate. Do you think it was a good investment?



A fully trained seven-man crew could reload a 15-inch, 25-ton Rodman cannon (above, on its original carriage) in just 70 seconds! The 15-inch Rodman could fire a 330 pound cannonball three miles, or the distance between Garden Key and Loggerhead Key. Six 15-inch Rodman guns remain on the terreplein (top) level of the fort, making this the largest collection of 15-inch Rodmans in the world. Restoration work has begun on these cannons through park entrance fees and generous donations from the South Florida National Parks Trust.



Outlines of the three-story Officers Quarters (above) and Soldiers Barracks are still visible throughout the fort. Never fully finished, these massive buildings were damaged by hurricanes and fire, and finally were torn down by the National Park Service in the 1960s.

## Is there a doctor in the fort?

Dr. Samuel Alexander Mudd, known in history as one of the “Lincoln Conspirators,” was born in Charles County, Maryland, roughly 25 miles southeast of Washington, D.C. In 1865, a military court found Mudd guilty of conspiracy to assassinate the president, sentencing him to life imprisonment.



Make sure to visit Dr. Mudd’s cell on the bottom level of Fort Jefferson, just past the Park Headquarters. Another area recently opened to the public is located just above the fort’s entrance. Climb the stairs of the lighthouse bastion to the second tier, then turn right. Dr. Mudd spent nearly three years in this dark, damp case-mate. Watch out for holes in the floor.

Mudd arrived at Fort Jefferson in July, 1865, along with three other Lincoln Conspirators. Mudd played a key role in treating victims of a yellow fever epidemic during his imprisonment. He was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson in 1869, and allowed to return to his family in Maryland.

Mudd explained the need for these unusual modifications in a letter to his wife. “We have a hole dug in the floor and little trenches cut. After every rain, our quarters leak terribly, and it’s not unusual to dip up from the floor ten and twelve large buckets of water daily.”

## Where is a good place to snorkel?

A good place to start is along the outside of the moat wall. Some large coral heads are located in the western edge of the designated Snorkel Area, approximately 75 yards from the moat wall. More experienced snorkelers may want to explore the metal pilings of the old coaling docks.

Patches of healthy coral reef, some easily accessible from shore and in shallow water, are snorkeling havens.



JOHN L. DENGLER

Brain corals are a type of hard coral. These reef-forming corals take decades to grow to full size. A Christmas tree worm has found a welcome home, encased in living coral.

## Rules for a safe adventure



- An approved dive flag must be displayed at all times when snorkeling outside of the designated snorkel area.
- For your safety never snorkel alone - always use the “buddy system.”
- If you need to stand up, stand on the sand! Never stand on coral or seagrass, as standing can kill these valuable resources.
- Shipwrecks and all historic artifacts are protected by law.
- Do not disturb coral or shells. All coral, living and dead, is protected from collection.



JOHN L. DENGLER

Many types of coral can be seen in just a short snorkel around the moat wall, including brain corals and sea fans.

# The view from above

*“I felt for a moment as if the birds would raise me from the ground, so thick were they all round, and so quick the motion of their wings. Their cries were indeed deafening. . .”*

John James Audubon, 1832

*“Wherever we went there was a fresh eruption of black and white birds, billowing skyward and sweeping down upon us like a tornado. I believe the sooty tern colony of Bush Key to be the number one ornithological spectacle of the continent.”*

Roger Tory Peterson, 1948

Such extraordinary comments have inspired birding enthusiasts from around the world to visit the Dry Tortugas. In fact, the bird life of the Tortugas has attracted the attention of visitors since Spanish explorer Ponce de León discovered these islands in June 1513. To help protect these important species, the area was transferred to the Department of Agriculture in 1908, and maintained as a National Wildlife Refuge. In 1935, the Dry Tortugas were transferred to the National Park Service.

Several species—rarely seen elsewhere in the United States—choose to nest in the Dry Tortugas. The sooty terns and magnificent frigatebirds, for example, have selected the Tortugas as their only significant nesting area in the Continental United States. Many other bird species, however, are simply passing through. Migrating birds are a common sight in the spring and fall as they briefly pause to rest and nourish themselves before moving on. With so many birds crowded onto these tiny islands (299 different species have been identified in the Dry Tortugas), things can get pretty exciting! How many bird species can you identify during your visit? Listed below are some of the more commonly seen birds:



**Sooty Tern**  
(*Sterna fuscata*)

About 80,000 sooty terns nest annually on Bush Key (February through September), the only significant breeding colony in the Continental U.S. Most adult birds spend their off season in the Caribbean. Young birds migrate to the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Africa, remaining in flight for up to five years.



**Magnificent Frigatebird**  
(*Fregata magnificens*)

Long Key contains the only nesting colony for the magnificent frigatebird in the Continental U.S. Their remarkable wingspan (6–8 feet) is the longest in proportion to weight (less than 3 pounds) of any bird. Their light weight allows them to soar effortlessly for hours like a hang glider. Frigatebirds often feed by harassing other birds in flight, forcing them to drop or disgorge their catch.



**Brown Noddy**  
(*Anous stolidus*)

About 4,500 nest annually on Bush Key, which ranks as the only important breeding colony in the Continental U.S. They arrive with the sooty terns, but tend to stay longer, sometimes as late as October.

**Masked Booby**  
(*Sula dactylatra*)

Present year-round in small numbers (up to about 40). Hospital Key is their only important nesting area in the Continental U.S.



**Ruddy Turnstone**  
(*Arenaria interpres*)

Aptly named, these colorful shorebirds energetically patrol beaches, constantly using their bills to flip over rocks and debris in search of food. Remember, feeding or harassing wildlife in the park is prohibited by law.



**Brown Pelican**  
(*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

A common sight year round in the Dry Tortugas, pelicans forage in shallow waters or near shore. These large birds weigh about eight pounds, yet can fly gracefully just inches above the water. They eat small fish, normally captured during spectacular plunge-dives.



# New ecological preserve is a living laboratory

The Research Natural Area, or RNA, adds a new layer of protection for the marine resources of Dry Tortugas National Park. Established in 2007, the RNA is a 46 square-mile no-take ecological preserve that provides a sanctuary for species affected by fishing and loss of habitat in this region of the Gulf. The RNA also provides boaters, divers, snorkelers, and researchers the opportunity to explore and study the significant marine environment protected within Dry Tortugas National Park.



WES PRATT

Researchers return to the park every year to study nurse sharks. National Geographic sponsored this "Critter Cam" on one of the park's nurse sharks to learn more about their mating behavior. The Research Natural Area sets aside a Special Protection Zone for nurse sharks near Long Key.

In 1992, Congress created Dry Tortugas National Park "to protect and interpret a pristine subtropical marine ecosystem, including an intact coral reef community" that is generally regarded as one of the most well-preserved marine areas in the Florida Keys. The park's founding legislation also stated that the park would protect fish and wildlife and provide opportunities for scientific research.

While commercial fishing has long been off-limits in the park, scientific studies have documented significant declines in the size and abundance of important gamefish, including grouper, snapper, and grunts. Closure of this portion of the park to fishing provides a refuge for both juvenile and mature fish that ultimately fuel the commercial and rec-

reational fishing industries in the Florida Keys.

Fish are not the only species facing trouble. Corals have declined precipitously in recent decades; staghorn corals in particular have declined by 99% since 1977. The RNA will provide a living laboratory for scientists to study the reasons for these declines.

While the natural resources have been declining, visitation to the Dry Tortugas has quadrupled since 1994. More visitors has meant more impacts

on the park's resources. The RNA will significantly reduce impacts to this area.

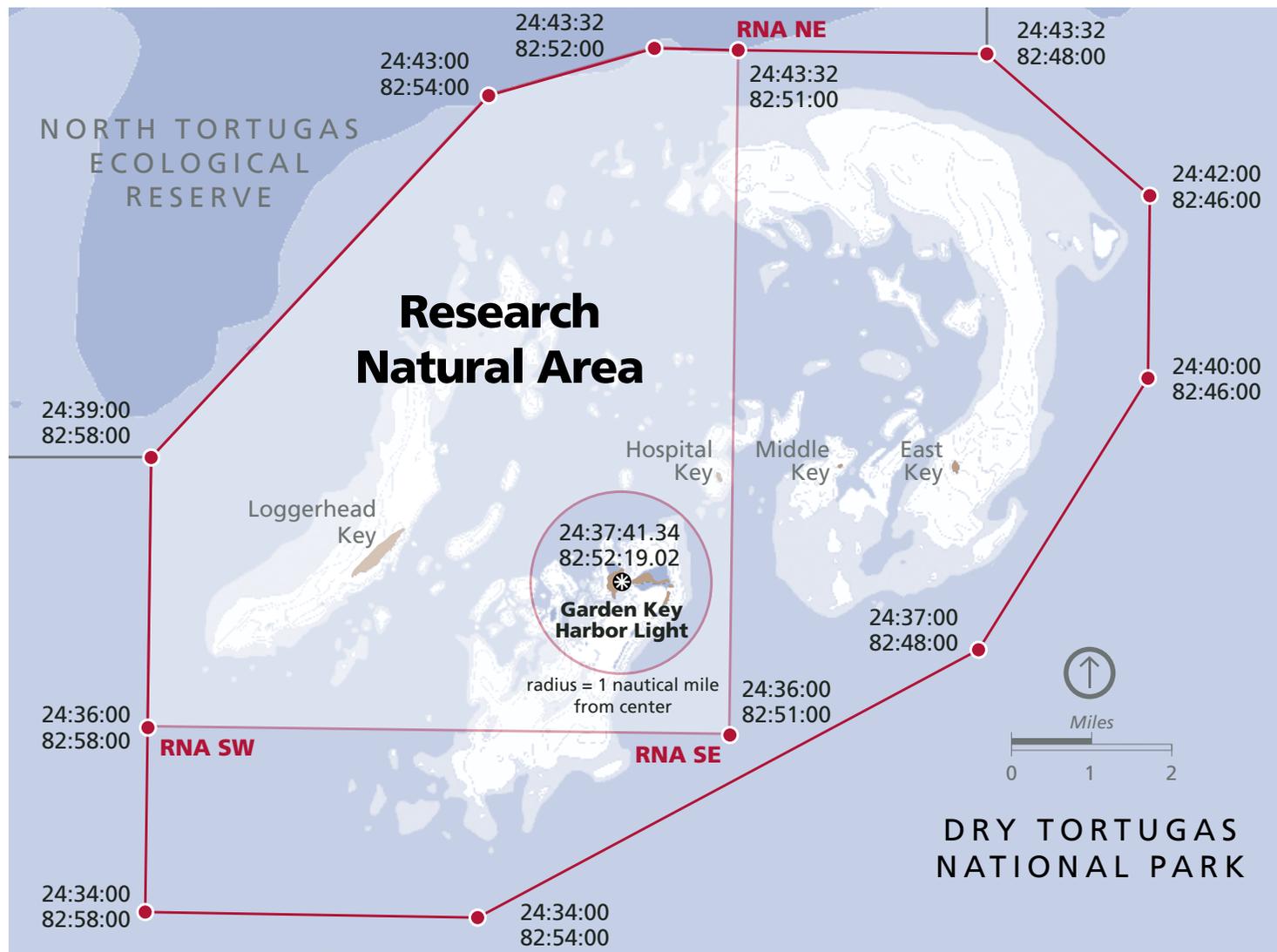
The need for the RNA can be compared to hurricane preparation. You don't wait until the storm hits to put on your hurricane shutters; you prepare in advance to protect your home and property. The National Park Service has chosen a management method of preventive maintenance and monitoring to ensure the health of the park's ecosystem.

The RNA will not succeed without your help. When visiting the RNA, follow the



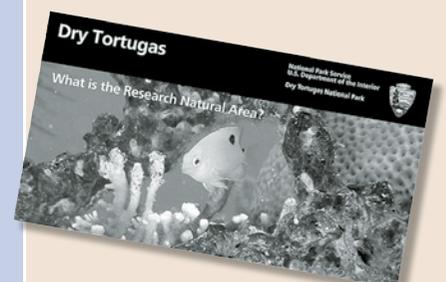
The Dry Tortugas have long been recognized for their pristine marine ecosystem. The scene above is the interior of the Laboratory for Marine Ecology which was operated by the Carnegie Institute on Loggerhead Key from 1905 to 1939. Among the Carnegie Laboratory's significant scientific contributions include the first underwater marine photography. Destroyed by hurricanes, a monument remains to the lab's founder, Alfred Mayor.

regulations, and if you are confused by them, ask a ranger in advance of your visit. For more information, pick up the "What is the Research Natural Area?" site bulletin, visit the park website at [www.nps.gov/drto](http://www.nps.gov/drto), or contact the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center at 305-809-4750.



## Where is the Research Natural Area?

The Research Natural Area is a 46-square mile area in the northwest portion of the park. Not included in the Research Natural Area is the area within one nautical mile of the Fort Jefferson Harbor Light and the developed areas of Loggerhead Key. Before boating in the park, please key the Research Natural Area coordinates into your GPS system.



For more detailed information about the Research Natural Area, consult the separate park brochure on the area.

## Dry Tortugas National Park



### Information Inquiries:

40001 State Road 9336  
Homestead, FL 33034-6733  
(305) 242-7700

Website: [www.nps.gov/drto](http://www.nps.gov/drto)

### EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

For information on boat and seaplane trips to Dry Tortugas, call the park or one of the companies listed below:

**Seaplanes of Key West**  
(305) 294-0709

**Sunny Days Catamarans**  
(305) 292-6100

**Yankee Fleet**  
(305) 294-7009



Dry Tortugas National Park News is published as a service to park visitors by the Everglades Association.

### Mailing Address

10 Parachute Key #51  
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### Website

Visit the mail order bookshelf website at [www.evergladesassociation.org](http://www.evergladesassociation.org)

Phone and fax orders accepted with Visa, Mastercard, or Discover.

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## Discover the Eco-Discovery Center

Visit the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center in Key West and take a journey into the native plants and animals of the Keys, both those that live on land and underwater.

The Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center inspires students, local residents and visitors to become good stewards of the unique Florida Keys ecosystem. The Center's goal is to help all visitors develop an appreciation and personal responsibility for protecting the Florida Keys and South Florida ecosystem. The Eco-Discovery Center features 6,000 square feet of interactive and dynamic exhibits depicting the terrestrial and underwater habitats of the Florida Keys, as well as a high-definition film.



The Center features all aspects of the biodiversity of the Florida Keys, and also focuses on human interaction with the environment, the management of marine protected areas, and the maritime culture and history of the area.

The Eco-Discovery Center is made possible through a joint venture by the National Park Service; U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and, the South Florida Water Management District. The Center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and located at the Truman Annex - 35 East Quay Road, Key West, FL 33040. Call for more information at 305-809-4750.



Fort Jefferson's exterior walls are being repaired under a long-term contract.

## Entrance fees at work

Visitors to Dry Tortugas National Park play a key role in helping to maintain this national treasure. If you travel to the park via a commercial ferry or seaplane, a \$5.00 entrance fee is automatically collected in Key West when you purchase your ticket. For other visitors to Garden Key, such as those arriving on their own boat, the entrance fee is collected in the park (a self-service fee station is located on the dock). The fee is valid for seven days.

Entrance fees are designed to recapture part of the park's operating costs. Important ways in which your money is spent include:

- Coral reef protection
- Replace picnic tables and grills
- Maintenance projects
- Update park exhibits

Other proposed projects include:

- Develop a new visitor center
- Open a historic powder magazine
- Develop a self-guiding audio tour

## Support your National Park - visit the bookstore

The Everglades Association is a National Park Service cooperating association dedicated to increasing public understanding of the natural and historic values of south Florida's national parks. A wide variety of educational books, videos, and related park theme items may be purchased at park visitor center bookstores or by mail. Proceeds from sales support educational programs in south Florida national parks.

### Books

**Pages from the Past: A Pictorial History of Fort Jefferson** by Albert Manucy... The history of Fort Jefferson comes alive in this comprehensive portfolio of historic photos, color illustrations, and fascinating text. 32 pp. paper. \$7.95

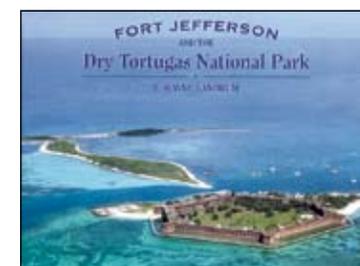
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