

Appendix E

Everglades Park Maps and Regulations



EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
DRAFT

FLAMINGO COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



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Everglades Boating Regulations

Navigable waters cover one third of the park, creating excellent fishing and boating opportunities. Please remember to exercise caution while boating in the Everglades. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Know Florida State Boating Regulations.
- Carry all United States Coast Guard required items, including personal flotation devices, on board your boat.
- Always carry a nautical chart and compass as it is easy to become lost or to run aground in park waters.
- Check weather and tide predictions before leaving shore and always be prepared for mosquitoes.
- The bottom of Everglades waterways are protected wilderness. Propeller damage to seagrass beds is harmful to the marine ecosystem and is illegal. Use caution when navigating in shallow waters. Push-poles and paddles are a necessity.
- Avoid propeller damage by using marked channels and other navigational aids.
- Remember that collecting plants and animals is prohibited. This includes orchids, air plants, sea horses, starfish, conch, tropical fish, lobster, coral, sponges and driftwood.
- One quart of non-occupied shells may be collected per person per day.

Boat Ramps

Boat ramps within Everglades National Park are located at West Lake and Flamingo.

Several commercial boat ramps are located in Everglades City and Chokoloskee.

Closed Areas

(Closed areas represent less than one percent of the total park area.)

Florida Bay Keys

- All keys (islands) in Florida Bay are closed to protect bird nesting areas (see exceptions below).
- Wading within 100 feet of any closed area is prohibited.
- Moats and internal creeks associated with Buchanan Keys.
- Exceptions: Landing and camping is permitted on North Nest Key, Little Rabbit Key and Cape Sable. Carl Ross Key is open for summer day use. Bradley Key is open for day use all year. Permits are required for camping.

Creek, Mud Creek, Mud Bay, Davis Creek, Joe Bay and its easternmost portion

- Snag Bay, and all creeks and bays inland from the northern shoreline of Long Sound to US I.

Other Areas

- Rodgers Bay Rookery
- The small groups of islands at the southeast entrance to Gaskin Bay, known as Indian Key Rookery.
- Cuthbert Lakes and Rookery
- Other areas may be posted by order of the Park Superintendent

Northeast Florida Bay

- Little Madeira Bay, Taylor River, East

Motor Prohibited

(In all No Motor areas engine must be removed from transom)

- All freshwater lakes, including Paurotis and Nine Mile Pond.
- Noble Hammock and Hells Bay Canoe Trail (from the road to Lard Can).
- Long Lake to the mouth of Garfield Bight. *Note * Watercraft with engines of 6 hp or less are permitted on West Lake, but not beyond.
- Little Henry, Henry, Monroe, Middle and Seven Palm Lakes.

- All inland creeks and lakes north of Long Sound, Joe Bay and Little Madeira Bay except for the ponds and lakes associated with Taylor River.
- Coot Bay Pond, Mud Lake and Bear Lake.
- The Homestead Canal and all small lakes along the canal.
- All associated small lakes on Cape Sable inland from Lake Ingraham.

Motor Restrictions

(Operation of a vessel in excess of 5 mph prohibited)

Everglades City Area

- Alligator Creek, Plate Creek, Halfway Creek, Gopher Key Creek where marked, and between Wilderness Waterway Markers 86 & 87.

Key Largo Area

- Marker 42 Creek, the Boggies, Shell Creek, Nest Key as posted and McCormick Creek.

Flamingo Area

- Florida Bay and Whitewater Bay boat basins.
- Tarpon, Avocado, and North Prong Creeks.
- Buttonwood and East Cape Canals were marked.
- Shoreline of Florida Bay east of the marina as posted.

Prohibited Craft

- Water skis: The towing of persons by vessels utilizing water skis, hydra slides, knee boards, or other similar types of equipment.
- Personal Watercraft: The operation of

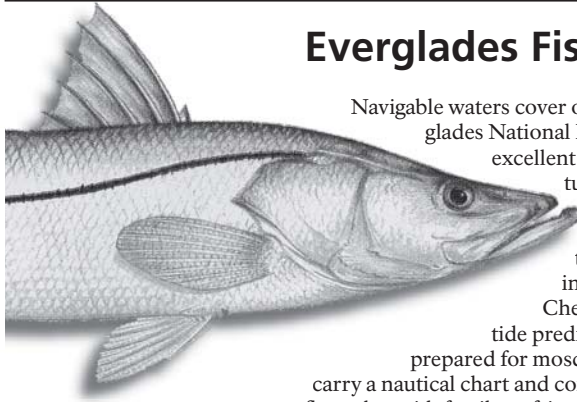
personal watercraft, also known as "Wet Bikes", "Jet Skis", and other trade names.

- Submersibles: The use of manned and unmanned submersible watercraft.

Remember...

Unprepared boaters risk getting lost, running aground, damaging their boats, expensive

towing fees, and hefty fines for damaging park resources!



Everglades Fishing Regulations

Navigable waters cover one third of Everglades National Park, creating excellent fishing opportunities. Please remember to exercise caution while fishing in the Everglades. Check weather and tide predictions and be prepared for mosquitoes. Always carry a nautical chart and compass and leave a float plan with family or friends.

Please remember that collecting plants and animals in the Everglades is prohibited. This includes orchids, air plants, sea horses, starfish, conch, tropical fish, lobster, coral, sponges, and driftwood. One quart of non-occupied sea-shells may be collected per person per day.

The following regulations are intended to supplement the Florida Saltwater Recreational Fishing Regulations. Visitors must be aware of Florida state laws, rules, and regulations. For more information on licensing and state fishing regulations, visit www.marinefisheries.org.

Fishing Regulations

Freshwater or Saltwater?

All waters from and including, Nine Mile Pond northward, along the Main Park Road are considered fresh water.

Prohibited Fishing Gear

Seines, nets, and lobster snares are prohibited. The use and possession of spear guns, spear poles, and firearms are prohibited. Dip nets, cast nets (10' or less) and landing nets are allowed.

Filleting Fish

Anglers may have four (4) fillets per person for immediate consumption at designated campsites or on board vessels equipped with cooking facilities. All other fish must remain whole while in the park.

Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing is prohibited in Everglades National Park.

Freshwater Fishing

License

A Florida freshwater fishing license is required for park visitors 16 years or older to fish in freshwater or to possess freshwater species.

Bait

Live or dead fish (including minnows and shiners) or amphibians, and non-preserved fish eggs or roe are prohibited. Digging for bait inside the park is not permitted.

Closed To Fishing

No fishing is allowed in the Ernest F. Coe (Main) Visitor Center lakes, Royal Palm Visitor Center area and trails, Chekika Lake, along the first three miles of the Main Park Road, including Taylor Slough, or along the Shark Valley Tram Road.

Saltwater Fishing

Saltwater

Saltwater fishing in Everglades National Park is almost entirely in Monroe County.

License

A Florida saltwater fishing license is required for park visitors 16 years or older to fish in saltwater or possess saltwater species. Florida residents fishing from shore do not need a license.

Bait

Bait, except for mullet and shrimp, is not included in bag limits. Saltwater bait includes shrimp, minnows, pilchards, pinfish, mullet, mojaras (shad), or ballyhoo. Bait may be taken with hook and line, dip net (not wider than three feet), and cast net (not larger than ten feet from horn to lead line).

Closed To Fishing

No fishing is allowed in Eco, Mrazek, or Coot Bay Ponds at any time. No fishing is allowed from the boardwalk at West Lake, or at the Flamingo Marina during daylight hours.

Manatee Etiquette

Areas frequented by manatees have been posted. Keep an eye out for manatees. Slow to an idle if observed, but do not approach.

Shrimp

Shrimp may be taken by dip net (not wider than three feet) or cast net (not larger than ten feet from horn to lead line), for personal use only.

Aquatic Life

With the exception of finfish, shrimp, crabs, and bait, the possession or disturbance of any fresh or saltwater aquatic life is prohibited.

Flats Etiquette

Propeller damage to seagrass beds is harmful to the marine environment. Be extremely careful when navigating in shallow waters and use a pushpole whenever possible. Use the channels in Florida Bay to navigate around flats.

Recreational Crabbing

Stone crabs, during open state season, and blue crabs may be taken by recreational fishermen using attended gear (for example: star trap, baited line, landing net, etc.). Crabbers are limited to five (5) traps. Crabbing with unattended gear is prohibited.

Warning!

High levels of mercury have been found in Everglades bass and in some fish species in northern Florida Bay. Do not eat bass caught north of the main park road more than once a week. Children and pregnant women should not eat any bass. The following saltwater species caught in northern Florida Bay should not be consumed more than once a week by adults, or once a month by children and women of child-bearing age: Spottail Seatrout, Gafftopsail Catfish, Bluefish, Creville Jack, or Ladyfish.

Everglades National Park Catch Limits

(F) Fork Length: Fish is measured from the tip of the nose to the rear center of the fork of the tail.

(T) Total Length: Straight line distance from the most forward part of the head with the mouth closed to the farthest tip of the tail with the tail compressed and squeezed together while the fish is lying on its side.

Species	Size Limit	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit	Remarks
Black Drum	14" - 24" (T)		5/person/day	Only one fish over 24" per person.
Blue Crab	None		10 gal whole/person/day	Egg bearing crabs may not be taken.
Bluefish	12" (F)		10/person/day	
Bonefish	18" (T)		1/person/day	
Cobia	33" (F)		1/person/day, or 6/vessel, whichever is less	
Flounder	12" (T)		10/person/day	
Grouper (Black, Gag)	24" (T) Monroe 22" (T) Gulf (excluding Monroe)		2/person/day (Monroe) 5/person/day (Gulf, other than Monroe County)	Included in the daily Grouper aggregate limit of 5 per person per day.
Grouper (Red)	20" (T)		1/person/day (Gulf)	
Grouper (Scamp)	20" (T) Monroe 16" (T) Gulf (excluding Monroe)		5/person/day	
Grouper (Warsaw, Speckled Hind)	None		1/vessel/day	
Grouper (Yellowfin, Yellowmouth)	20" (T)		5/person/day	
Hogfish	12" (F)		5/person/day	
Largemouth Bass*	Less than 14" (T)		5/person/day	No more than one fish over 14" per person.
Mackerel (Spanish)*	12" (F)		10/person/day	
Mullet* (Black, Striped)	Less than 8" (T) (bait fish)		None	More than 8" in length: limit is 10 per person.
Permit/Pompano	11" - 20" (F)		6/person/day	No more than one fish over 20" per person. Aggregate bag limit of 10 per person per day.
Redfish	18" - 27" (T)		1/person/day	Cannot buy or sell native Redfish.
Sea Trout	15" - 20" (T)	Nov. 1 - Dec. 31	4/person/day	No more than one trout over 20" per person.
Shark	None		1/person/day or 2/vessel/day, whichever is less	See list below for protected species.
Sheepshead*	12" (T)		10/person/day	
Shrimp	None		5 gallons, head on, per person or vessel per day, whichever is less	Must be landed in whole condition.
Snapper (Gray, Mangrove)	10" (T)		5/person/day	No more than 10 Snapper of all species combined can be possessed at any one time.
Snapper (Schoolmaster)	10" (T)		10/person/day	
Snapper (Lane)	8" (T)		10/person/day	
Snapper (Mutton)	16" (T)		10/person/day	
Snapper (Red)^	16" (T) Gulf	Nov. 1 - Apr. 14	4/person/day (Gulf)	
Snapper (Yellowtail)	12" (T)		10/person/day	
Snapper (Vermilion)	10" (T)		10/person/day	Not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snook*	28" - 33" (T) Gulf, Monroe, ENP	Dec. 1 - Feb. 28, May 1 - Aug. 31	1/person/day	Fishing guides cannot possess. Cannot buy or sell. Snook stamp required.
Stone Crab Claws	2 3/4" forearm	May 16 - Oct. 14	1 gal/person/day or 2 gal/vessel, whichever is less	Legal claws may be taken but crab must be returned to water.
Tarpon	None		2/person/day (2 fish possession limit)	Cannot buy or sell. Requires \$50 Tarpon tag to possess or harvest.
Tripletail	15" (T)		2/person/day	Hook and line only.

Notes

* Indicates species with more restrictive regulations than those listed in Florida Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations. For additional information on licensing and fishing regulations visit www.marinefisheries.org or www.myfwc.com, or call 888-FISHFLO (347-4356).

^ Other size and bag limits may apply outside the Everglades National Park and Gulf waters. See the Florida Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations.

• Licensed anglers are limited to possession of 20 fish per person at any time, but may possess only 10 fish of any one species. There is no possession limit for non-native fish species.

• Harvest, landing, and sale of the following species is prohibited: Goliath Grouper (formerly known as Jewfish), Nassau Grouper, lobster, oysters, scallops, Smalltooth Sawfish, Large-tooth Sawfish, Basking Shark, Whale Shark, and Spotted Eagle Ray.

• Using live or dead natural bait on a multiple hook (such as a treble hook) while fishing for Black Drum, Pompano, Redfish, Sea Trout, or Snook is prohibited. Snagging the above species is also prohibited.

This information is correct as of July 2007. You are responsible for knowing any revisions.

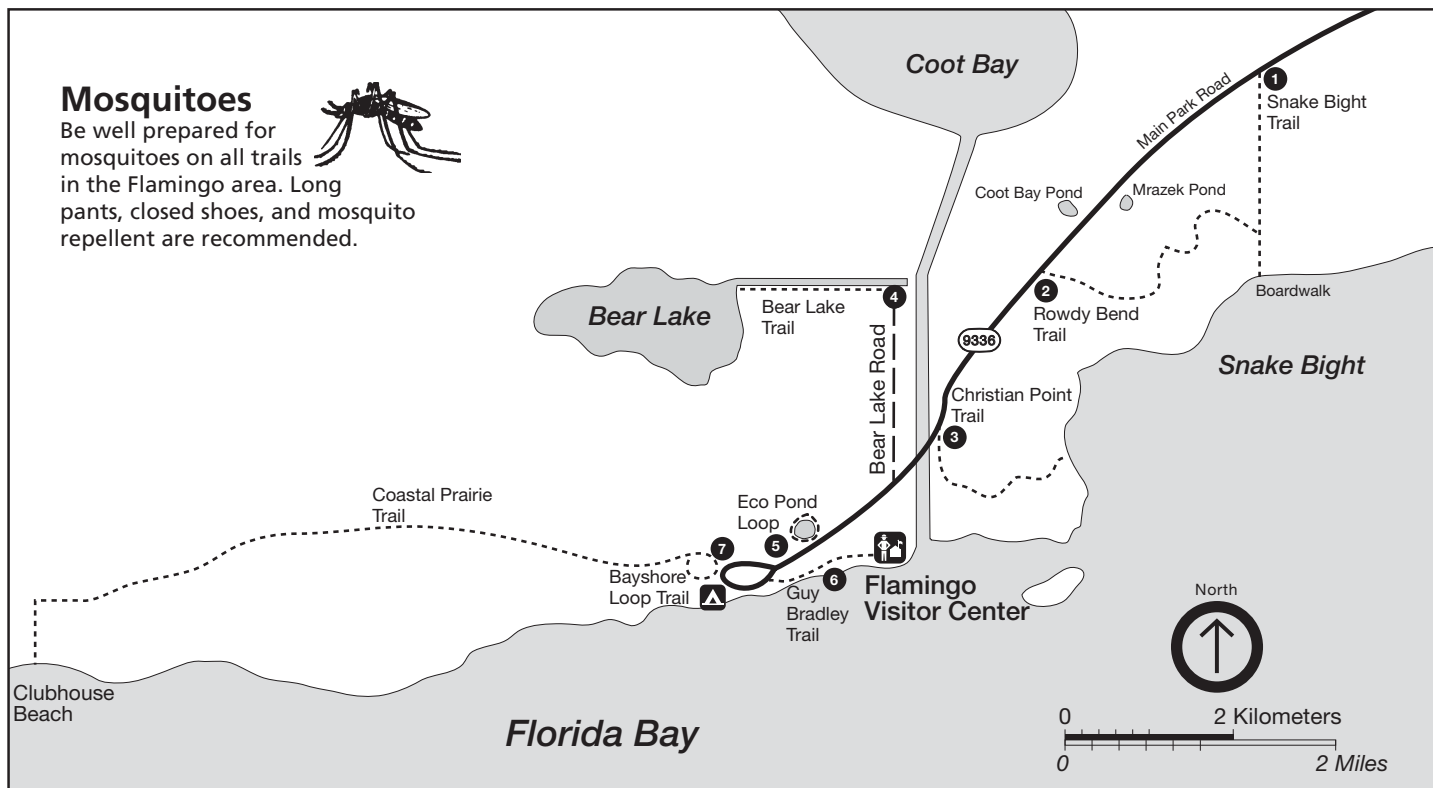
Everglades

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Flamingo Hiking Trails



Mosquitoes

Be well prepared for mosquitoes on all trails in the Flamingo area. Long pants, closed shoes, and mosquito repellent are recommended.



1 Snake Bight 🚶

1.8 miles one way

Don't let the name deter you! In this play on words, a "bight" is actually a bay (Snake Bight) within a larger bay (Florida Bay). Enter another world as you travel through a tropical hardwood hammock, with dozens of tropical tree species. There is excellent bird watching from the boardwalk at the end of trail if you plan your hike or bike ride to arrive near high tide (tide charts available at the visitor center).

2 Rowdy Bend 🚲 (mountain bike)

2.6 miles one way

Explore an overgrown old road bed through shady buttonwoods and open coastal prairie. This is an opportunity for good woodland bird watching. Combine this trail with the Main Park Road (use caution!) and the Snake Bight Trail for a 12.6 mile round-trip bike ride from the Flamingo Visitor Center.

3 Christian Point

1.8 miles one way

Wander a rustic path through a wide diversity of habitats. The trail begins in dense mangroves and buttonwoods full of bromeliads, or airplants. Next, investigate the unusual, salt-loving vegetation of open coastal prairie. Dead buttonwood snags interrupt these

expanses that were shaped by hurricanes. Finally, you'll end-up along the shore of Snake Bight, best viewed near high tide.

4 Bear Lake

Trail: 1.6 miles one way

Road: 2 miles one way 🚲 (road only)

Journey through a dense hardwood hammock mixed with mangroves. The trail follows the old Homestead Canal, built in 1922, and is an excellent area for woodland birds. There are more than 50 different tree species. Bike, drive, or walk to the end of Bear Lake Road to begin this trail, which ends at Bear Lake.

5 Eco Pond

½ mile loop

A must-see while in Flamingo! Eco Pond is famous for its bird watching opportunities. Stroll around this freshwater pond and enjoy a wide variety of wading birds, song birds, ducks, and other wildlife. Alligators and even Florida softshell turtles often cruise the pond. The ramped viewing platform is especially nice near sunrise and sunset, when flocks of wading birds fly to and from the pond.

6 Guy Bradley 🚲

1 mile to campground amphitheater

Mingle with a variety of birds and butterflies,

as you amble along the shore of Florida Bay. Old pier pilings are a reminder that Flamingo was once a small fishing village. The trail was named for Audubon warden Guy Bradley, murdered in 1905 by plume hunters while trying to protect a bird rookery in Florida Bay. This is a scenic shortcut between the campground day-use area and the visitor center.

7 Bayshore Loop

2 mile loop

Meander along the shore of Florida Bay, watching for remnants of an outpost fishing village. Begin at the Coastal Prairie trailhead at the back of Loop "C" in the campground. Veer left at the trail junction to the bay.

7 Coastal Prairie

7.5 miles one way

Step back in time as you walk this old road once used by cotton pickers and fishermen. Open prairies of succulent coastal plants dotted with shady buttonwoods surround you as you journey towards the shore of Florida Bay. Begin at the rear of Loop "C" in the campground. A backcountry permit is required for camping at Clubhouse Beach.

🚲 Bicycles permitted, but always be cautious for hikers on these sometimes winding trails.

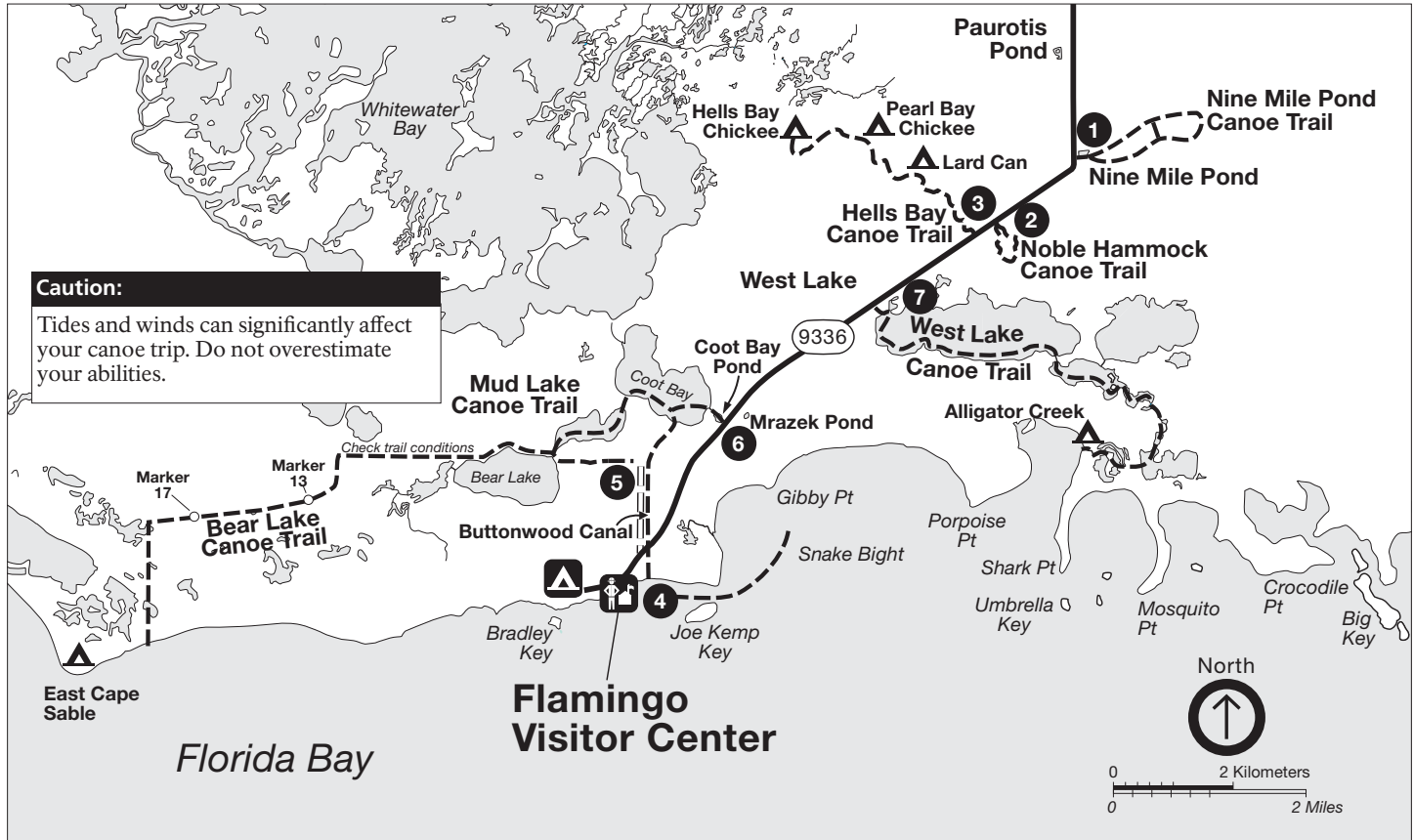
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Flamingo Canoe Trails



① Nine Mile Pond

5.2 mile loop

This scenic trail passes through shallow grassy marsh with scattered mangrove islands. Watch for alligators, wading birds, and an occasional endangered snail kite. The trail is marked with numbered white poles. A more detailed trail map is also available. Motors prohibited.

② Noble Hammock

2 mile loop

Winding through a maze of shady mangrove-lined creeks and small ponds, the sharp turns and narrow passageways require good maneuvering skills. Enjoy a "crash" course. Check for low water levels during the dry season. A calm trail on a windy day. Motors prohibited.

③ Hell's Bay

3.0 miles to Lard Can Campsite

3.5 miles to Pearl Bay Chickee

5.5 miles to Hells Bay Chickee

"Hell to get into and Hell to get out of," or so the old timers claimed. This sheltered route weaves through mangrove creeks and ponds to a series of small bays beyond Lard Can.

The trail is marked with more than 160 poles. A more detailed trail map is also available. Motors are prohibited from the trailhead to Lard Can. A wilderness permit is required for overnight camping.

④ Florida Bay

Distance varies

Opportunities for fun abound! Watch mullet jump and birds feed (particularly in Snake Bight during medium to high tide), do some fishing, or just enjoy the scenic bay. Explore Bradley Key (during daylight hours only), the only nearby key open to landing. The open waters of Florida Bay are relatively mosquito-free, even in the summer. Not recommended on windy days due to open, rough waters.

⑤ Bear Lake Canal

1.6 miles to Bear Lake

11.5 miles one way to Cape Sable

Travel along this historic, tree-covered canal. Abundant tropical plants and trees are visible along the trail. Check trail conditions first as this trail is often impassable due to shallow water. Trail begins at the Bear Lake Trailhead.

⑥ Mud Lake Loop

6.8 mile loop from Coot Bay Pond

Venture inland through the mangroves on this loop connecting the Buttonwood Canal, Coot Bay, Mud Lake, and the Bear Lake Canoe Trail. Birding is often good at Mud Lake. Accessible from the Bear Lake Trailhead or Coot Bay Pond. Motors are prohibited on Mud lake, Bear Lake, and Bear Lake Canal. Note: There is a 200-yard portage where the Bear Lake Canal portion of the trail meets the Buttonwood Canal. Check trail conditions first as Bear Lake Canal is not accessible during parts of the year.

⑦ West Lake

7.7 miles one way to Alligator Creek

Paddle through a series of large open lakes connected by narrow creeks lined with mangroves. Look for alligators and crocodiles. West Lake is closed to vessels with motors greater than 6 h.p. Motors are prohibited from the east end of West Lake through Alligator Creek. Not recommended on windy days due to open, rough waters. A wilderness permit is required for overnight camping.



Hell's Bay Canoe Trail

DESCRIPTION

This sheltered route weaves through mangrove lined creeks and ponds to a series of small bays. You will see two backcountry chickees and a ground site along the way. A backcountry permit is required for overnight camping.

LENGTH

5.5 miles one way to Hells Bay Chickee. This is an in-and-out trail, marked by more than 160 numbered white PVC pipes

TIME

Allow 6-8 hours to leisurely paddle the entire trail and back.

SEASONS

Low water levels in late February through May can make the trail difficult or impassable. Check with a ranger.

SAFETY & COMFORT

The mangrove tunnels through which much of the trail winds can be buggy, particularly during the summer and fall months.

WHAT TO BRING

Recommended supplies include water, sunscreen, sunglasses, insect repellent or bug jacket, rain gear, snacks, PFD for each canoeist, an extra paddle, and a waterproof bag for gear. Any further navigation beyond the marked canoe trail requires Nautical chart #11433.



Backcountry chickees provide paddlers a way to experience the mangrove swamp overnight.

“Hell to get into, and Hell to get out of” is what old timers claimed about the mangrove maze leading into Hells Bay. Here, near the headwaters of the mangrove swamp, a confusing and seemingly infinite series of ponds, islands and narrow creeks becomes the landscape’s dominant theme. Whether you complete the whole trail or just paddle for an hour or two, your experience will expose you to the complex and distinctive mangrove ecosystem.

The Mangrove Swamp

A tangled web of reddish, arching roots rises out of the tea-colored water. The red mangrove, stunted due to thin soil over the limestone bedrock, dominates the landscape here. It’s stilt-like prop roots hold the tree upright in the soft mud and water, and aerial roots drop down from the branches to lend further support.

The red mangrove’s ability to grow in soil that is mostly submerged by saltwater affords them the luxury of not having to compete with other plants for light, nutrients, and space.

Green beans, anyone?

As you paddle along, you may notice what appear to be giant green beans floating in the water or dangling from the mangrove branches. These are the red mangrove’s young offspring, called propagules. After a propagule falls from a tree, it either anchors in the soft mud, or, if it falls into water, drifts along until it becomes waterlogged and sinks to the bottom. Tiny roots will sprout from the tip of the propagule, anchoring it into the mud. A new mangrove is born!

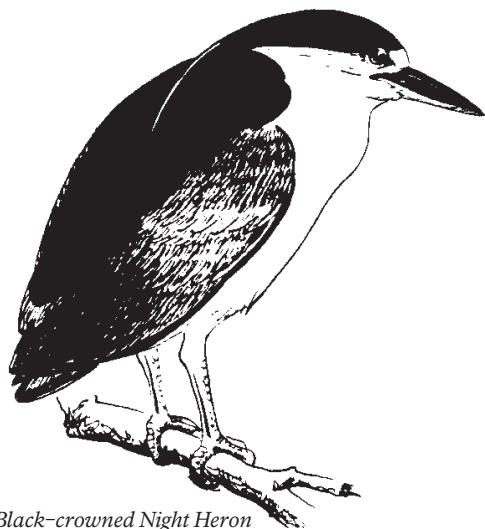
Squatters

Bromeliads, often called “air plants”, perch regally upon mangrove branches all along the trail. Rainwater is captured and stored by the plant’s vase-like base. Mosquitoes and other insects deposit eggs and reside in the bromeliads, attracting tree frogs, lizards, and birds. Decaying leaves, animal droppings and other ingredients mix with captured water to form a nutrient base for the plant. These plants are nonparasitic squatters using the host tree only as a perch from which to gather sunlight and nutrients.

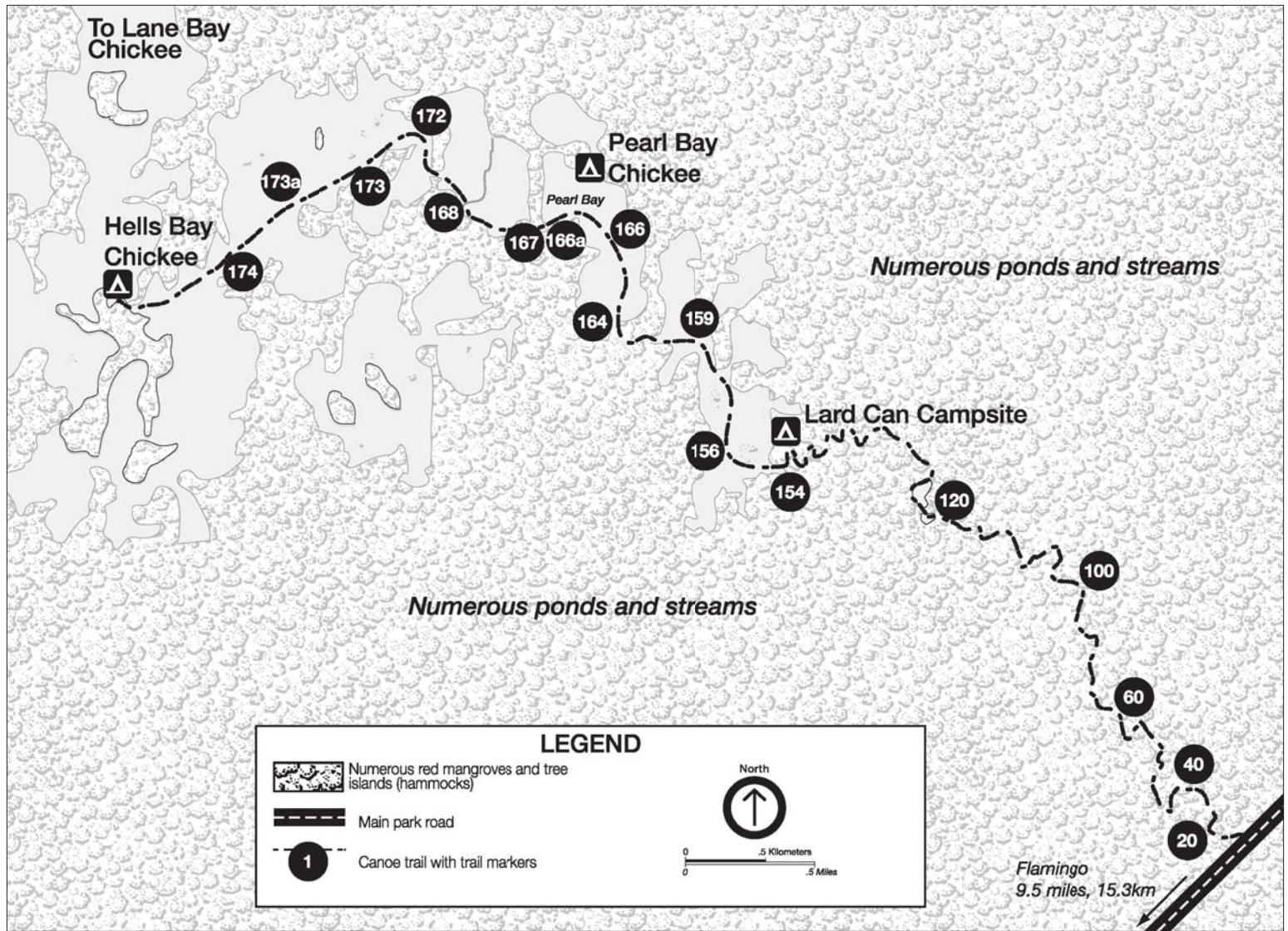
Wildlife alert!

You’ll need to look carefully for wildlife as you wind through the mangroves. A few resident alligators haul themselves onto exposed clearings along the creek bank. Watch for these “roadside pullouts”. Alligators normally don’t nest in the mangrove environment, but an abundance of fish provides them with plenty of food.

A closer look into the maze of arching roots might be rewarded with a glimpse of mangrove crabs, snails, and anoles.



Black-crowned Night Heron



Underwater nurseries

The mangrove swamp offers juvenile marine life—such as fish, crabs, and shrimp—an ideal nursery ground. The tangle of arching red mangrove prop roots is a suitable hiding place from predators. Also, decomposing mangrove leaves, coated with tiny bacteria and fungi, are high in protein and form the basis for food chains upon which these creatures depend.

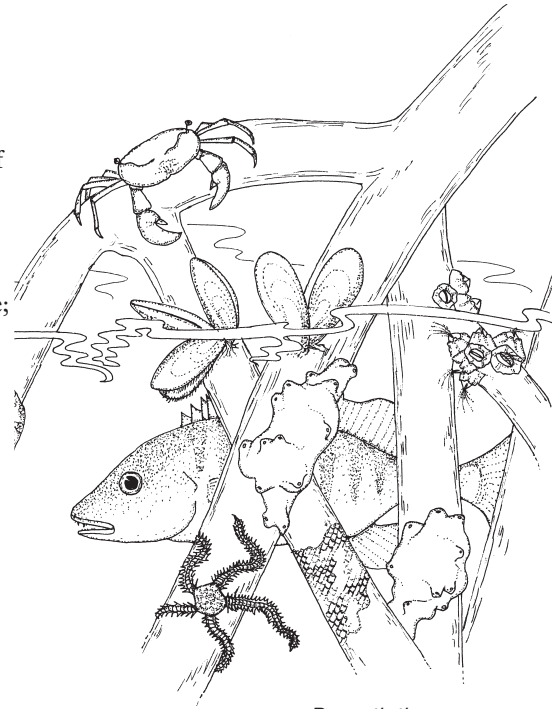
As the fish, crabs, and shrimp mature, they move into the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean. It may be hard to believe, but most of the sport fish, food fish, and shellfish that are captured off our tropical coasts depend on the mangrove as a nursery or feeding ground for at least part of their lives.

Wilderness camping opportunities

3.5 miles into the canoe trail, you will discover the first of two backcountry chickees, Pearl Bay. Chickees are elevated wooden platforms constructed over open water, and allow canoeists the opportunity to stay in the mangrove swamp overnight! A permit is required for any backcountry camping. Permits and Wilderness Trip Planners are available at the Flamingo Visitor Center.

Hells Bay and Beyond

Trail markers end at the Hells Bay Chickee. But before beginning your return trip, take a moment to float on the open water. Open your ears to the songs of birds, the splashes of fish, and the choruses of frogs. The mangrove swamp through which you have just traveled serves not only to house, feed, and protect these and many other creatures, but it also provides us with a true wilderness experience; one that can't be replicated anywhere else in the world.



Beneath the mangroves



Nine Mile Pond Canoe Trail

DESCRIPTION

A meeting ground of marsh and mangrove environments. You may see alligators, wading birds, turtles, and fish.

LENGTH

A five mile loop, marked with 116 numbered white PVC pipes. You can take a short cut at marker #44, which will shorten the trip by 1½ miles.

TIME

Allow 4 to 5 hours to leisurely paddle this loop.

SEASONS

Low water levels in late February through May can make the trail difficult or impassable. Check with a ranger.

SAFETY & COMFORT

Use care when crossing the deep, open water of the pond. Insects are generally not a problem in the open marsh through which the trail weaves. Avoid tree islands in the summer and fall months as they harbor mosquitoes in and around them.

WHAT TO BRING

Recommended supplies include water, sunscreen, sunglasses, bug spray, rain gear, snacks, PFD for each canoeist, an extra paddle, and a waterproof bag for gear.



Crossing Nine Mile Pond can be the most rigorous part of the five mile trail. Strong winds frequently ripple the pond's surface. Head directly across the pond from the parking area (eastward) toward a single white marker, #1. Scan the water and edges of the pond for anhingas, cormorants, herons, great egrets, and other feathered feeders. Look for floating "logs" with eyes; often, shy alligators are spotted amongst the cattails.

Marker #1 The portal

The water is fresh to slightly brackish, depending on the time of year and abundance of rain-fall. The narrow channel you navigate is the portal to Nine Mile Pond Trail. The red mangrove is predominant throughout the marsh. It grows as a shrub, with arching roots and long, waxy leaves, with central roots rotting. The round stemmed "grass" in the open areas is spike rush.

Marker #3 Tree islands

The rounded leaves of the cocoplum are directly behind this marker. To the right is the buttonwood tree, home for a miniature forest of air plants. High, relatively dry ground in the island's interior permits these and other trees to flourish.

Markers #11 & #12 Bedrock

The mosaic of light and dark on the bottom of the pool indicates the limestone bedrock of south Florida. Red mangroves grow as stunted shrubs here rather than as the taller trees found along the shoreline of Florida Bay.

Marker #39 Worlds within worlds

Air plants, or bromeliads, perch regally upon mangrove branches all along the trail. Rain-water is captured and stored by the plant's

vase-like base. Mosquitoes and other insects deposit eggs and reside in the bromeliads, attracting tree frogs, lizards, and birds. Decaying leaves, animal droppings and other ingredients mix with captured water to form a nutrient base for the plant. These plants are nonparasitic squatters using the host tree only as a perch from which to gather sunlight and nutrients.

Marker #44 Optional shortcut

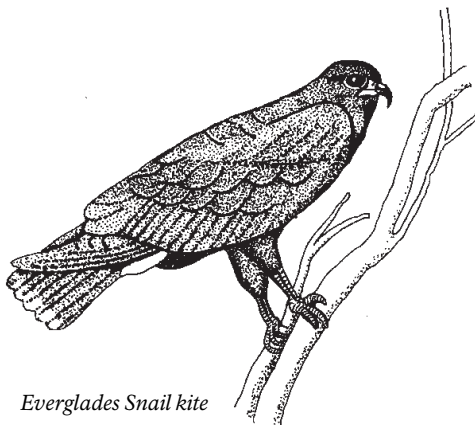
You can shorten your trip by following the trail to marker 44A. At this point bear to your left where two markers say "SHORTCUT" and cross the open marsh to marker #82. Paddle to the deeper water near marker #82 before heading to marker #83.

Markers #46 & #47 Sea of "breadsticks"

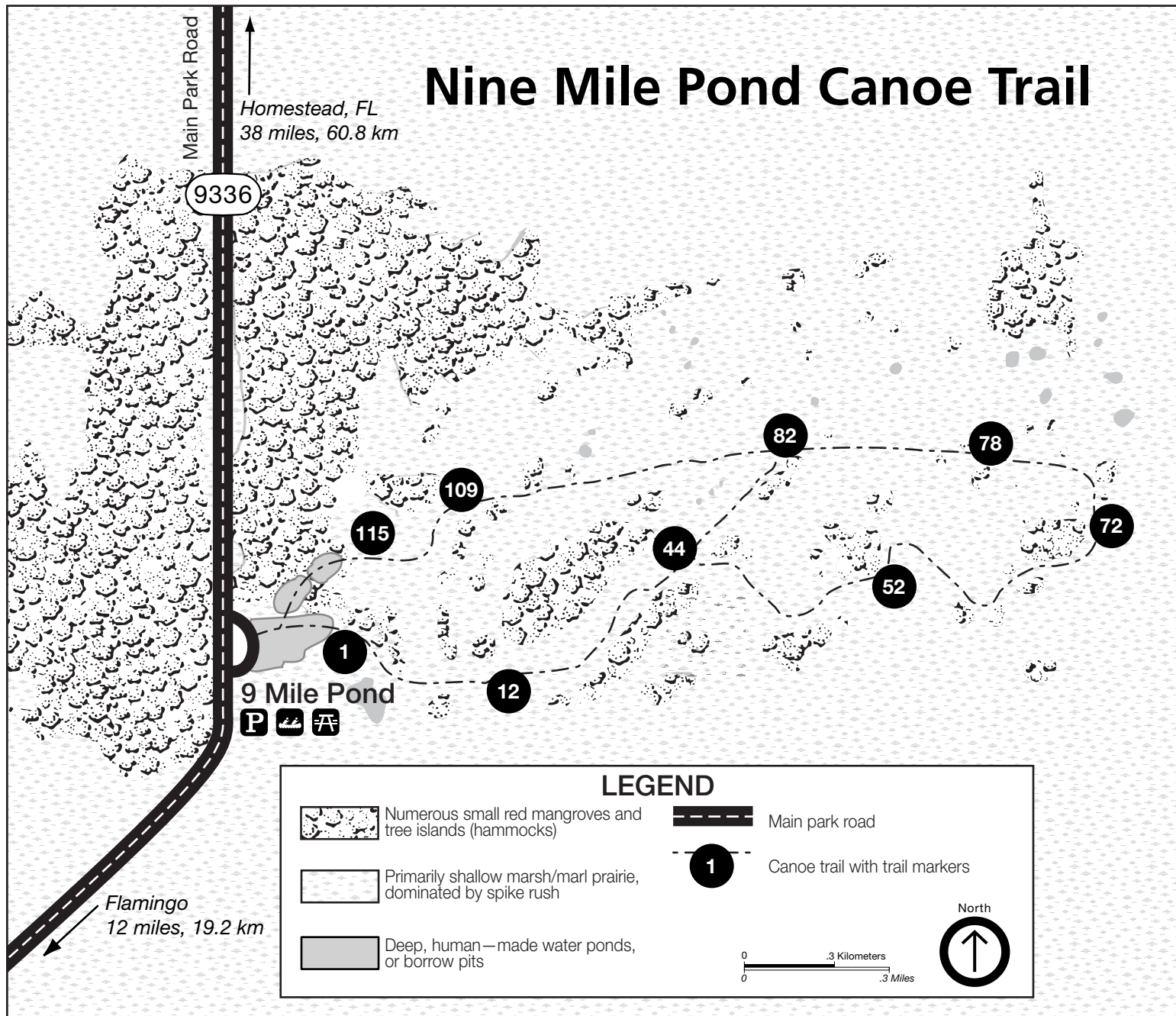
A beige colored algae mat, periphyton, surrounds many of the rushes, creating a rich supply of food for apple snails, small fish, and tadpoles. During droughts, the "breadstick" algae can store water and provide refuge to the eggs and larvae of a new generation of Everglades dwellers.

Marker #49 String of living pearls

Bear left passing marker #49. Scan the mangrove roots and spike rush for splotches of



Everglades Snail kite



white or pink just above the water line. What looks like a mass of pearls are actually the fragile eggs of the apple snail, the largest fresh water snail in the Everglades. As with all life, the apple snail is a vital part of its marsh habitat. The survival of the endangered Snail kite, a hawk-like bird of prey, is dependent upon this shelled animal as its only source of food. Apple snails are also a favorite of the alligator!

Marker #67 to #68 The meat-eater
Bladderwort, a free-floating, fern-like plant, grows in these waters. This aquatic plant produces a small yellow bloom just above the water's surface. Using its tiny, submerged bladders, it feeds on minute aquatic life, including mosquito larvae.

Marker #72 Wilderness
This is as far as the loop trail takes you. Close your eyes for a moment, and allow your ears to

absorb the symphonies of the wild, and breathe deeply of the sultry, fresh air. You have found a world of gentle order.

Marker #76 Paurotis palm
Fans of greens rays, a shock of orange fruit, and numerous slender trunks grouped together clearly identify the beautiful and rare paurotis palm which grows on high ground.

Markers #92–#100 A slow recovery
Here your route follows an old airboat trail. The bottom vegetation is sparse compared with most of the trail. Because of their impact on plants, animals, and solitude, airboats are not used within Everglades National Park other than for limited research and emergency functions.

Markers #115 & #116 The best for last
The two smaller ponds you travel through

toward your journey's end can provide some of the best opportunities for wildlife viewing in this area of the park. Watch the birds and take some time to enjoy the breeze. The sun reflecting on the water is a reminder of the original meanings of the word "glades": 1) an open, sunny, grassy area in the forest; and 2) an open place of shining light. How peaceful and subtle is this wilderness of shining light and how "forever" this glade!