

National Marine Sanctuaries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

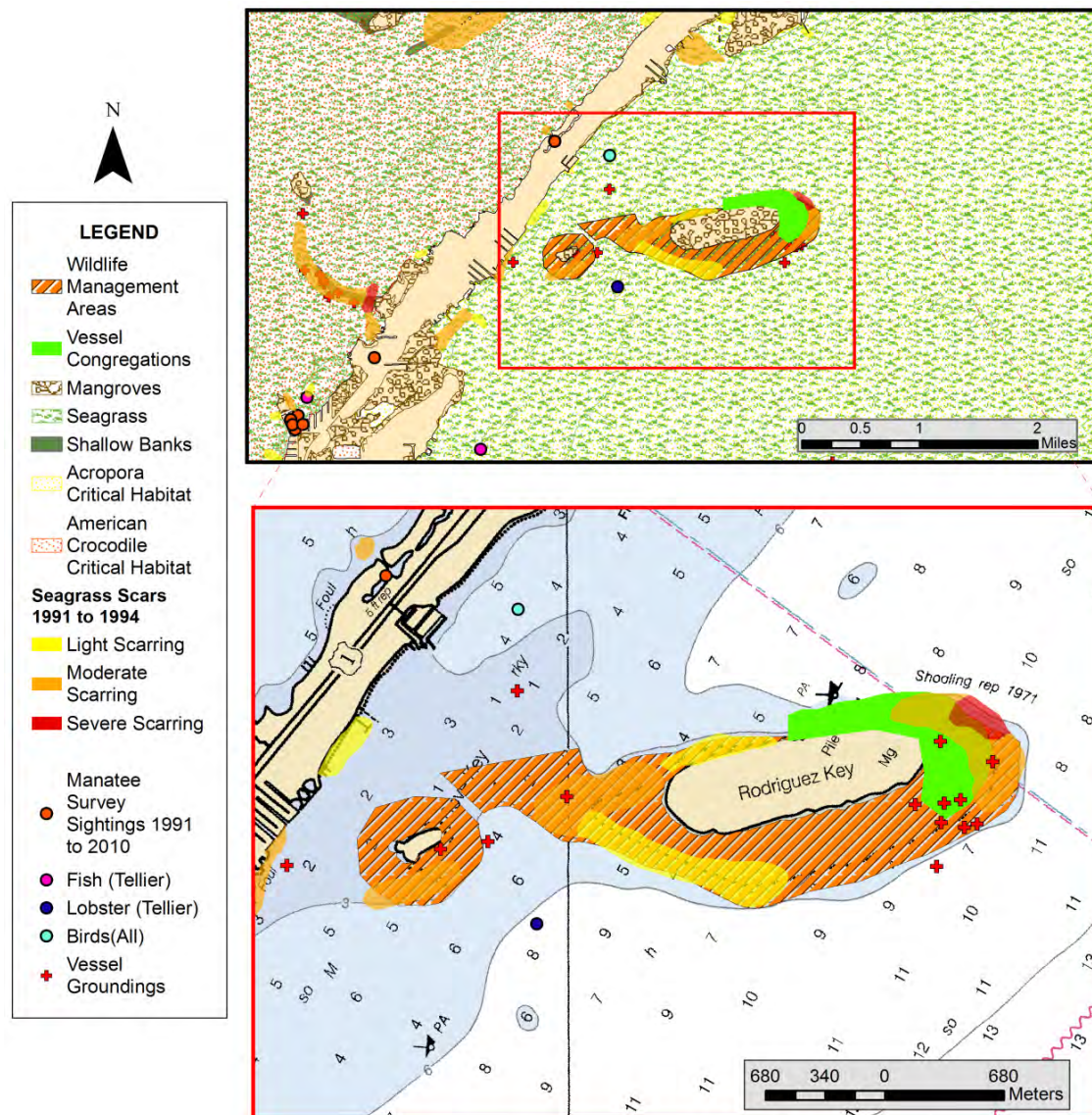


# Shallow Water Wildlife and Habitat Protection Working Group

## Draft Recommendations for Existing Wildlife Management Areas

## UPPER KEYS

## Dove Key Wildlife Management Area



**Dove Key:** Area of very shallow flats that are heavily used by a variety of birds as well as bonefish and other desirable fish species.

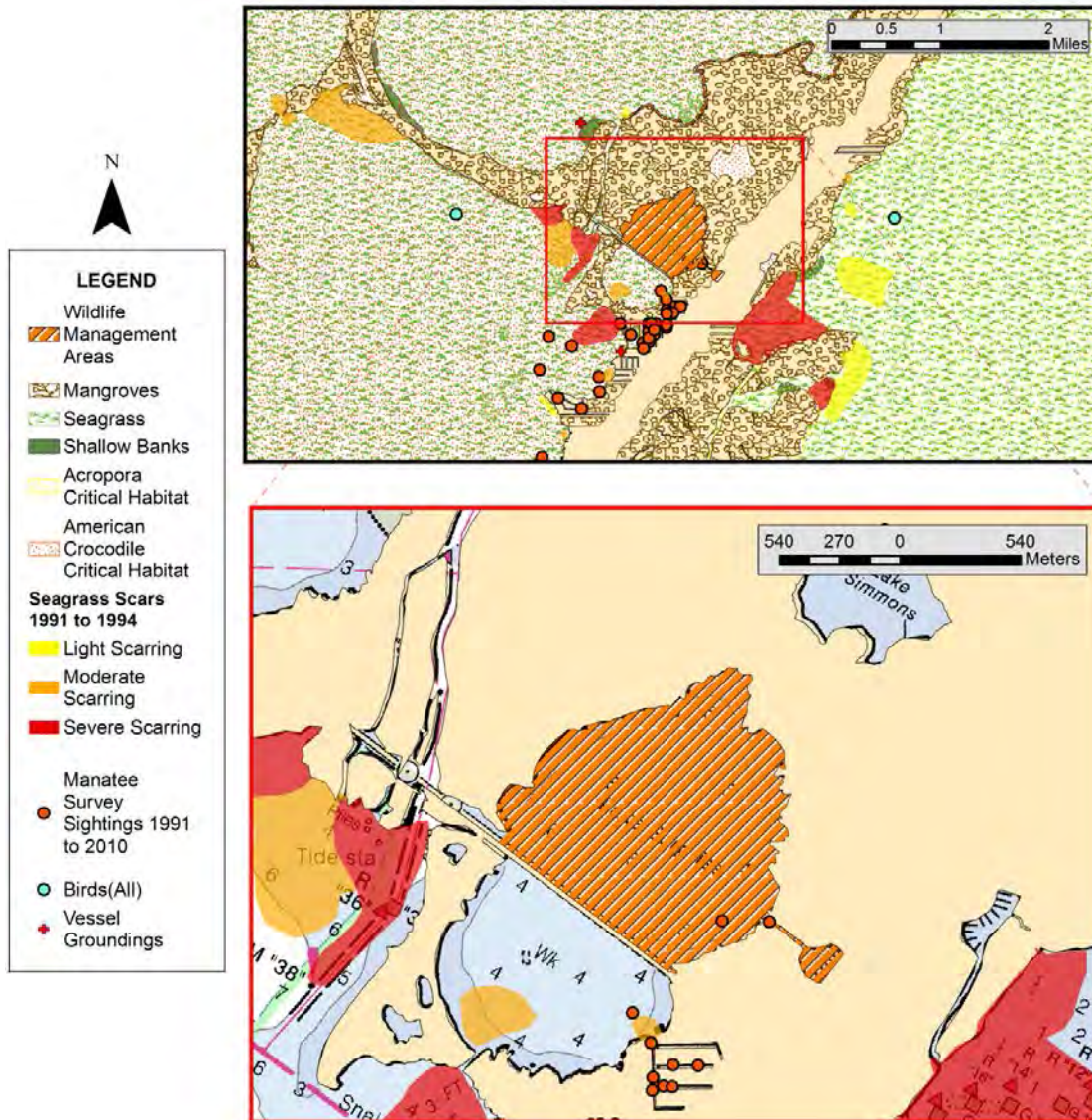
**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone on tidal flats; area around the two small islands closed.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** There are not 2 small islands at Dove Key. Only the single Dove Key and the buoys surrounding Dove Key are "No Motor" buoys. They do not designate a "closed area" as indicated here. Suggest retaining no motor zone around Dove Key but investigate what and where the closed area is.

Area zoning provides adequate protection. Might consider wording as "closed to combustion engines" instead of "no motor" to build continuity with both Biscayne and Everglades National Park as well as Villages of Islamorada markers.



## Eastern Lake Surprise Wildlife Management Area



**Eastern Lake Surprise:** Protect the endangered American crocodile and West Indian manatee that inhabit the area from vessel traffic.

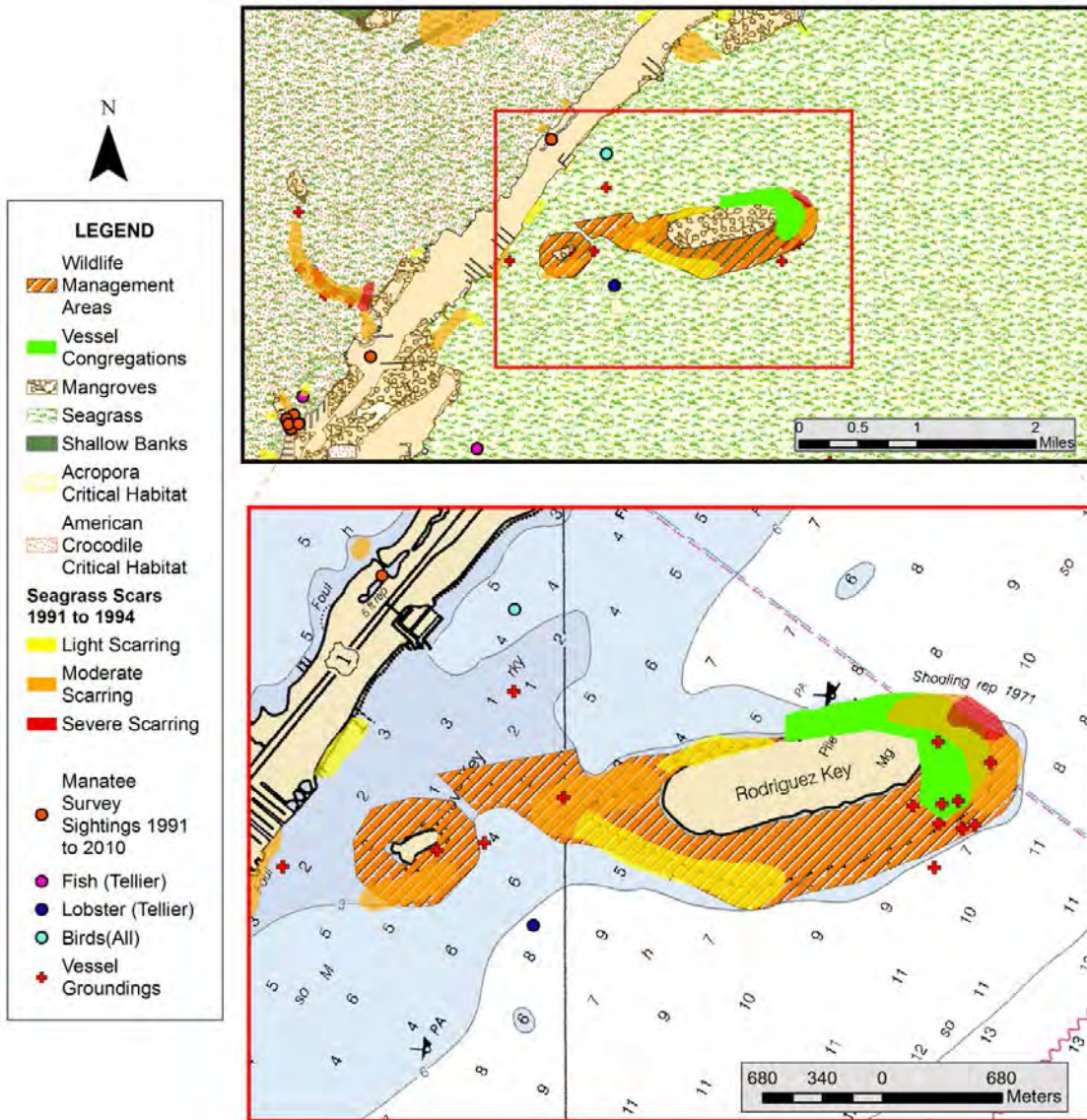
**Access Restrictions:** Idle speed only/no-wake zone east of highway U.S. 1.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Area zoning provides adequate protection.

Retain to decrease disturbance to crocodiles, manatees, and other wildlife.



## Rodriguez Key Wildlife Management Area



**Rodriguez Key:** Area of very shallow flats that are heavily used by a variety of birds as well as bonefish and other desirable fish species.

**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone on tidal flats.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** No party zone or jet skis within 1000 meters of the island.

High use area for new threat to resource as designated "party" zone. Users are trampling sensitive habitat inside current boundary markers. Suggest verbiage to prohibit walking on flats. As well, many vessels anchoring on deeper seagrass causing damage. Perhaps designate "pole/troll/idle" users not to exit craft.

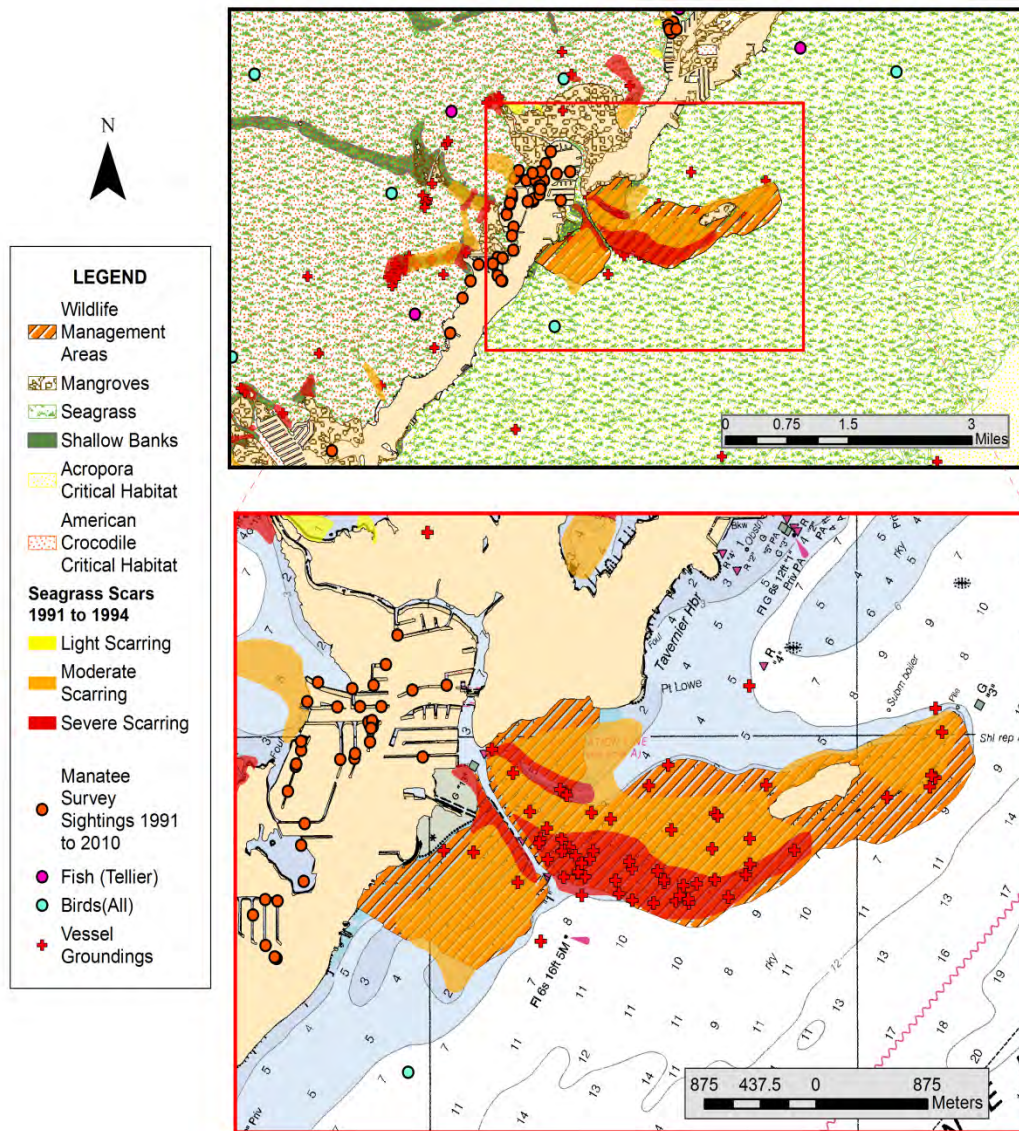
Currently marked well but the 'social gathering' issue needs to be addressed in this WMA. A 'No Anchoring' or 'Getting out of the Vessel' policy would help alleviate this issue.

Add additional no motor zone and idle buffer to limit high impact activities.

Consider no anchor zone.



## Tavernier Key Wildlife Management Area



**Tavernier Key:** Area of very shallow flats that are heavily used by a variety of birds as well as bonefish and other desirable fish species.

**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone on tidal flats.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** No party zone or jet skis within 1000 meters of the island.

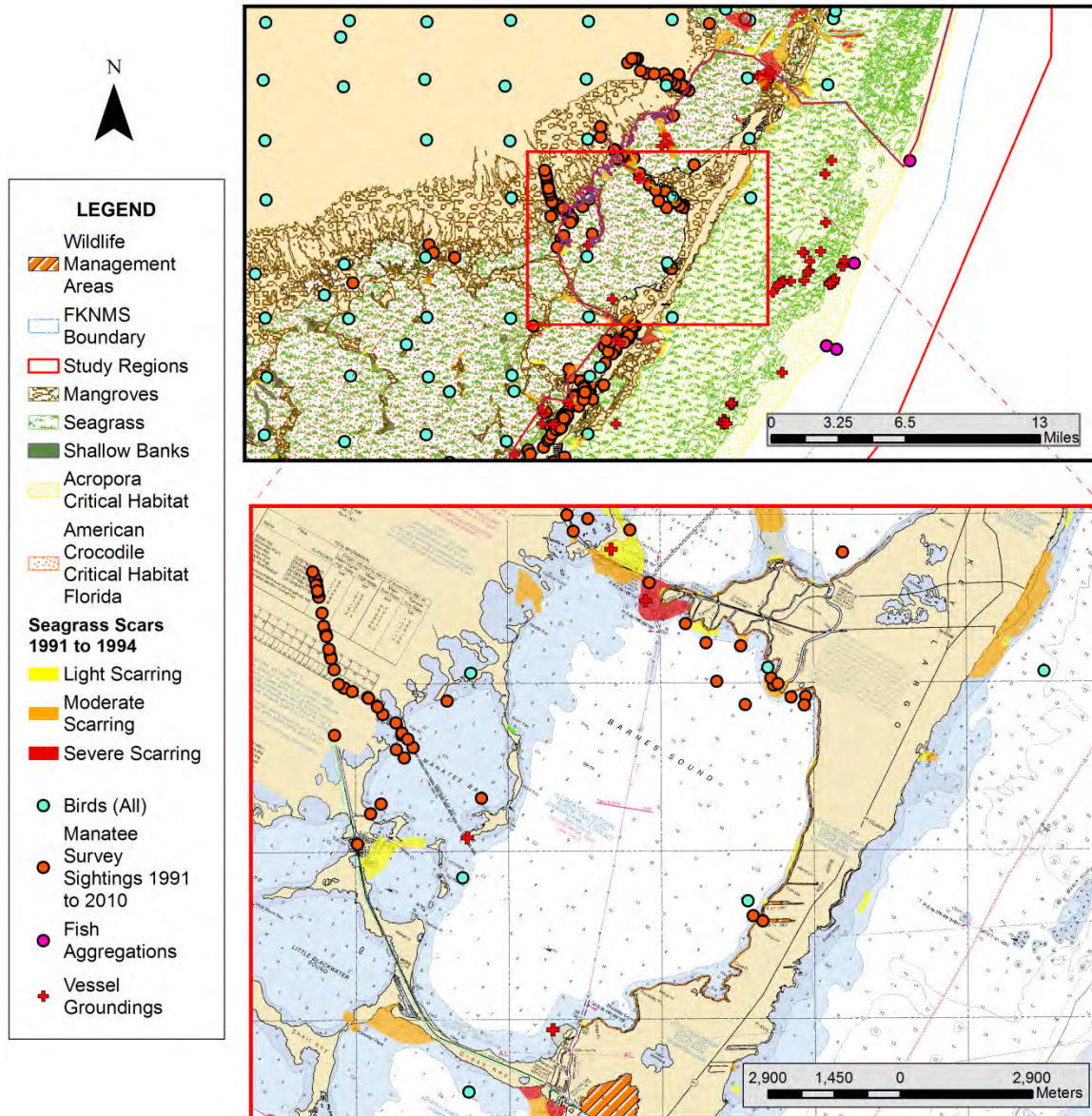
Same issues/concerns/uses as Rodriguez Keys. Recommend same designation as to protect habitat.

The social gathering issue needs to be addressed in this WMA as well. A 'No Anchoring' or 'Getting out of the Vessel' policy would help alleviate this issue. There are currently 6 illegal, non USCG conforming markers and a toilet seat routing illegal channel through WMA. Need better boundary markers.

Add additional no motor zone and idle buffer to limit high impact activities.



## Crocodile Lake Wildlife Management Area



**Crocodile Lake:** This area has the most extensive stands of tropical hardwood hammocks in the United States. It harbors a number of endangered and threatened species, including the American crocodile and the West Indian manatee.

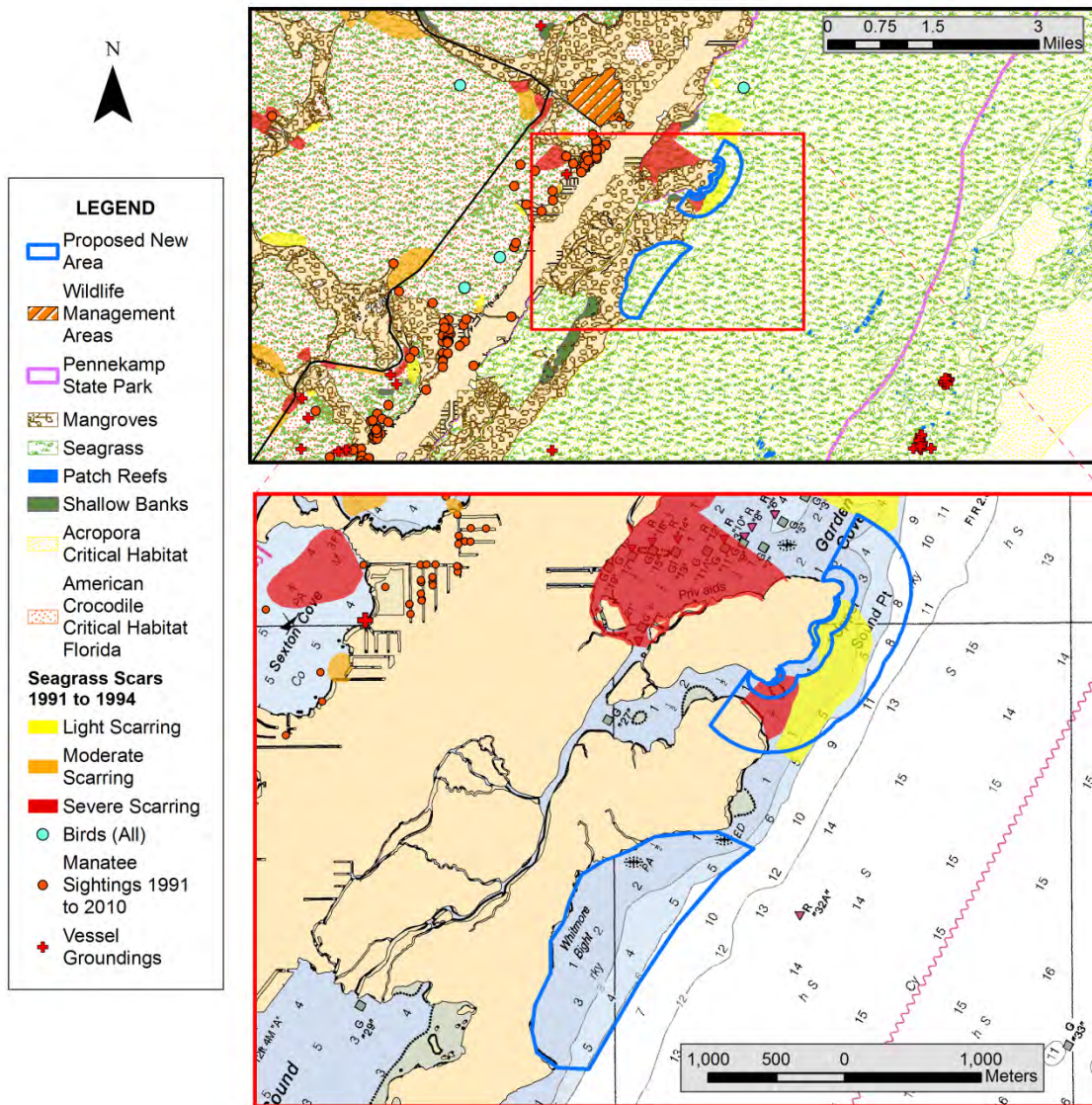
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone (100 feet) along shoreline between March 1 and October 1.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Remove "no access" buffer zone. Crocodiles are flourishing. Recommend 300' idle zone from shoreline. Establish 300' idle zone along shorelines to build continuity with Villages of Islamorada and to protect all shorelines in the FKNMS.

Retain as is for intended original purpose.



## Whitmore Bight (proposed new area)



**Whitmore Bight:** This area has the most extensive stands of tropical hardwood hammocks in the United States. It harbors a number of endangered and threatened species, including the American crocodile and the West Indian manatee.

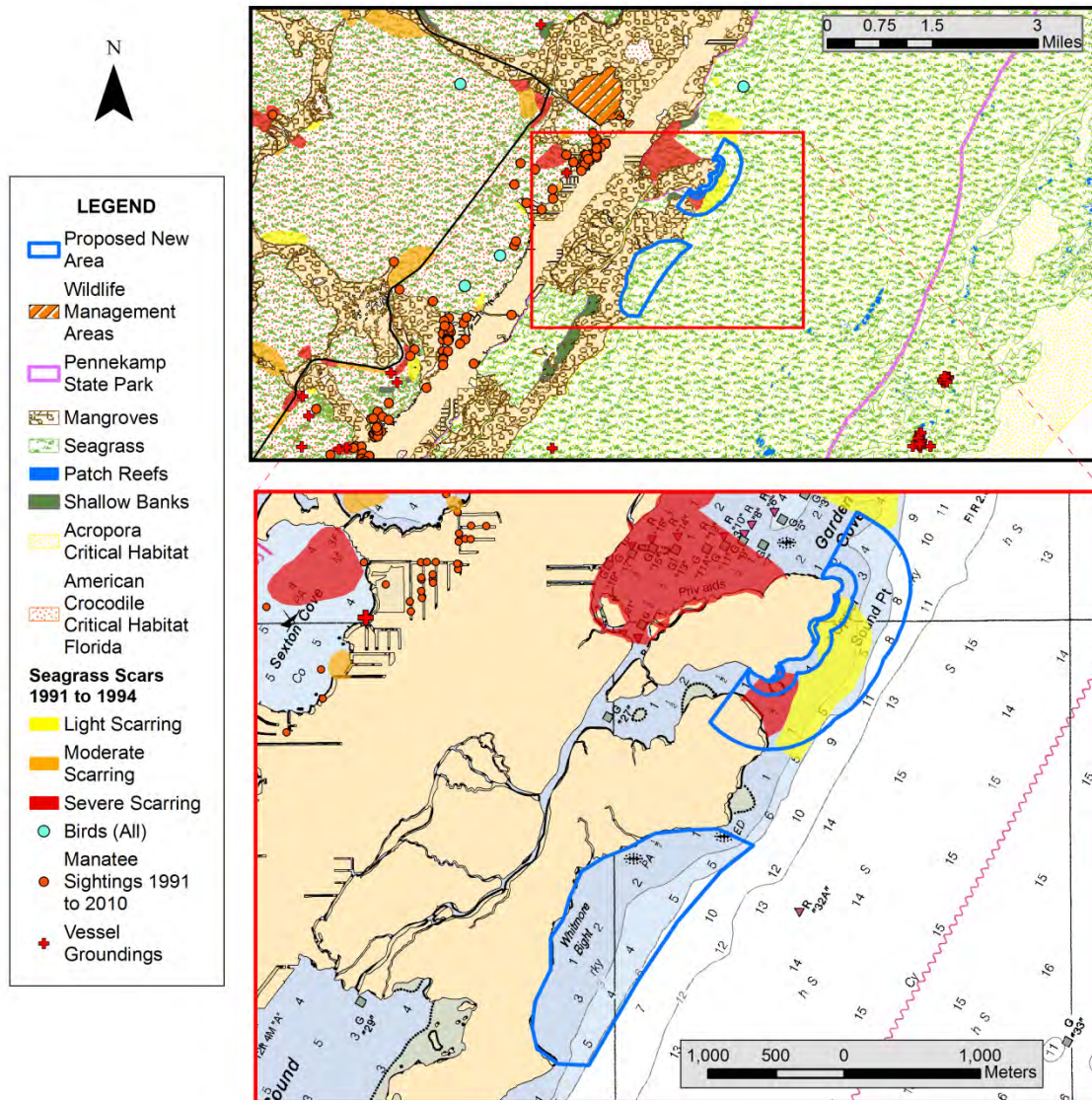
**Access Restrictions:** Limited Access

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance to important hardbottom habitat for juvenile lobster, reef fish and sport fish.

Decrease disturbance to hardbottom area.



## El Rodabob/Rattlesnake Key (proposed new area)

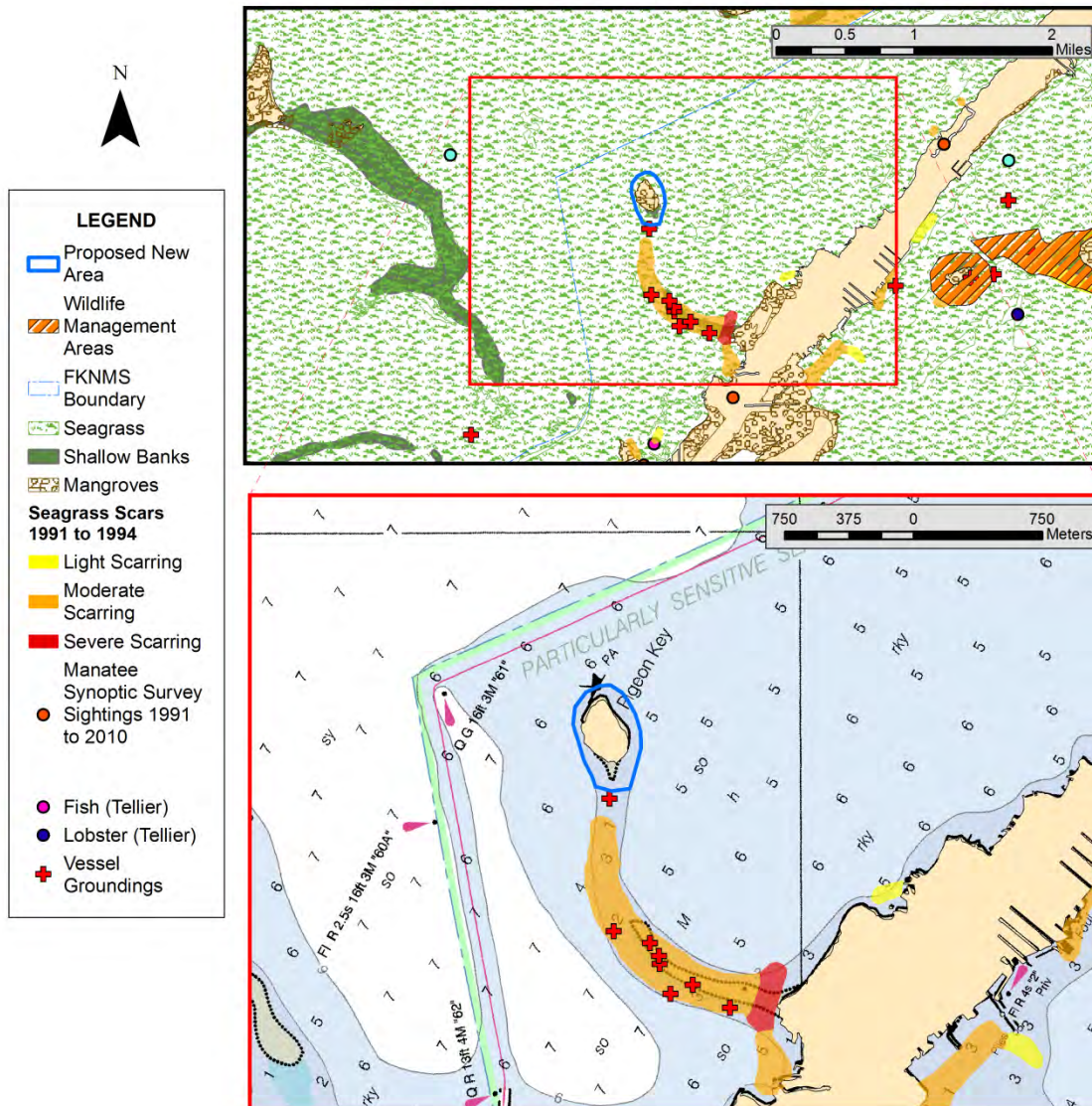


**El Rodabob/Rattlesnake Key:** This area has the most extensive stands of tropical hardwood hammocks in the United States. It harbors a number of endangered and threatened species, including the American crocodile and the West Indian manatee.

**Access Restrictions:** No-Access Buffer Zone (100 or 500 meter)

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance to shallow habitat and a variety of wildlife.

## Pigeon Key – Florida Bay (proposed new area)



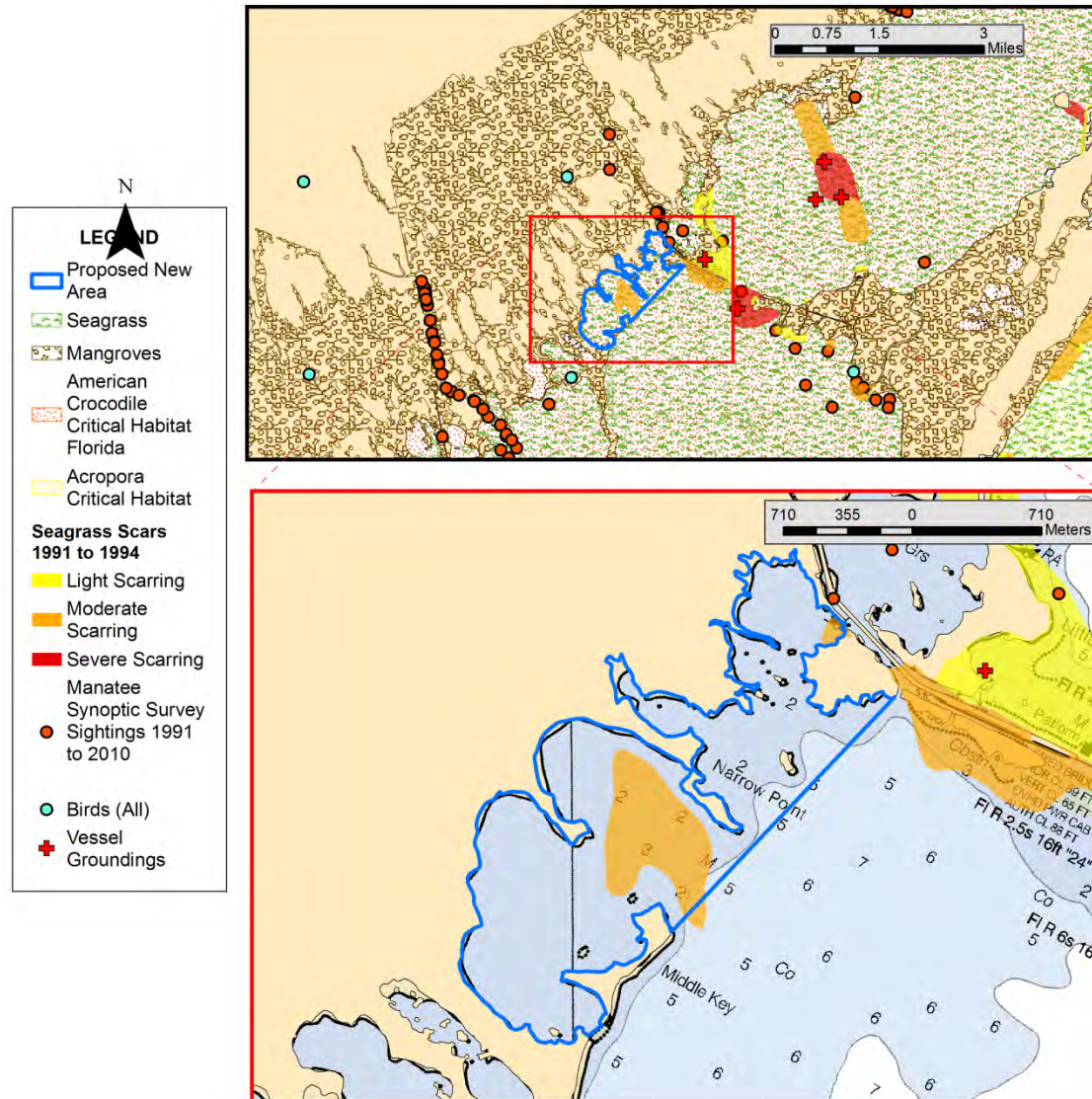
**Pigeon Key:** This is the only island of its kind in the upper keys within the FKNMS that supports high and significant numbers of nesting wading bird species as well as unique reptiles. It is adjacent to the intra-coastal waterway so gets impacted heavily by boaters.

**Access Restrictions:** No-Access Buffer Zone.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance to nesting wading birds, including roseate spoonbills, mangrove terrapins, mangrove salt march snakes, roosting frigatebirds.



## Barnes Sound (proposed new area)



**Barnes Sound:** Shallow Bays in the NW corner of Barnes Sound. Area in blue below is proposed new WMA.

Commercial crab trappers (all of which appears to be done illegally) are destroying the benthic community in segments of this area and are constantly disturbing wildlife. Wading birds nest on an island here. A seagrass and macroalgae monitoring program has existed in this area for 17 years and the research is being jeopardized by all of the prop scar damage. This area would serve the purpose of inclusion as a shallow water habitat area for a research control area.

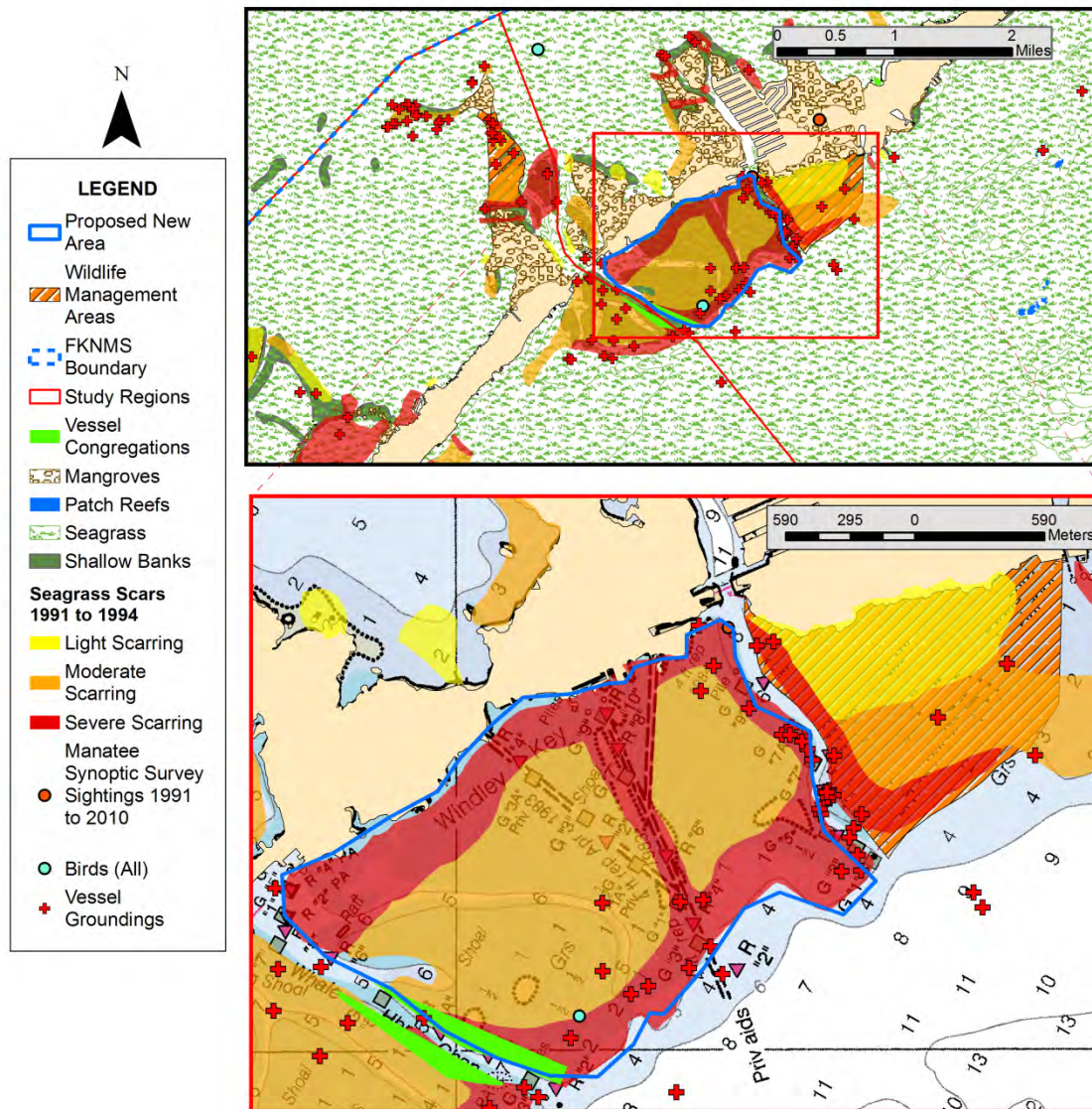
**Access Restrictions:** No-Access Zone

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease impacts and disturbance to nesting wading birds and shallow water gamefish. Decrease damage to seagrass and macroalgae community.

## **MIDDLE KEYS**



## Snake Creek Wildlife Management Area



**Snake Creek:** It is an area of very shallow flats that are heavily used by a variety of birds, as well as bonefish and other desirable fish species.

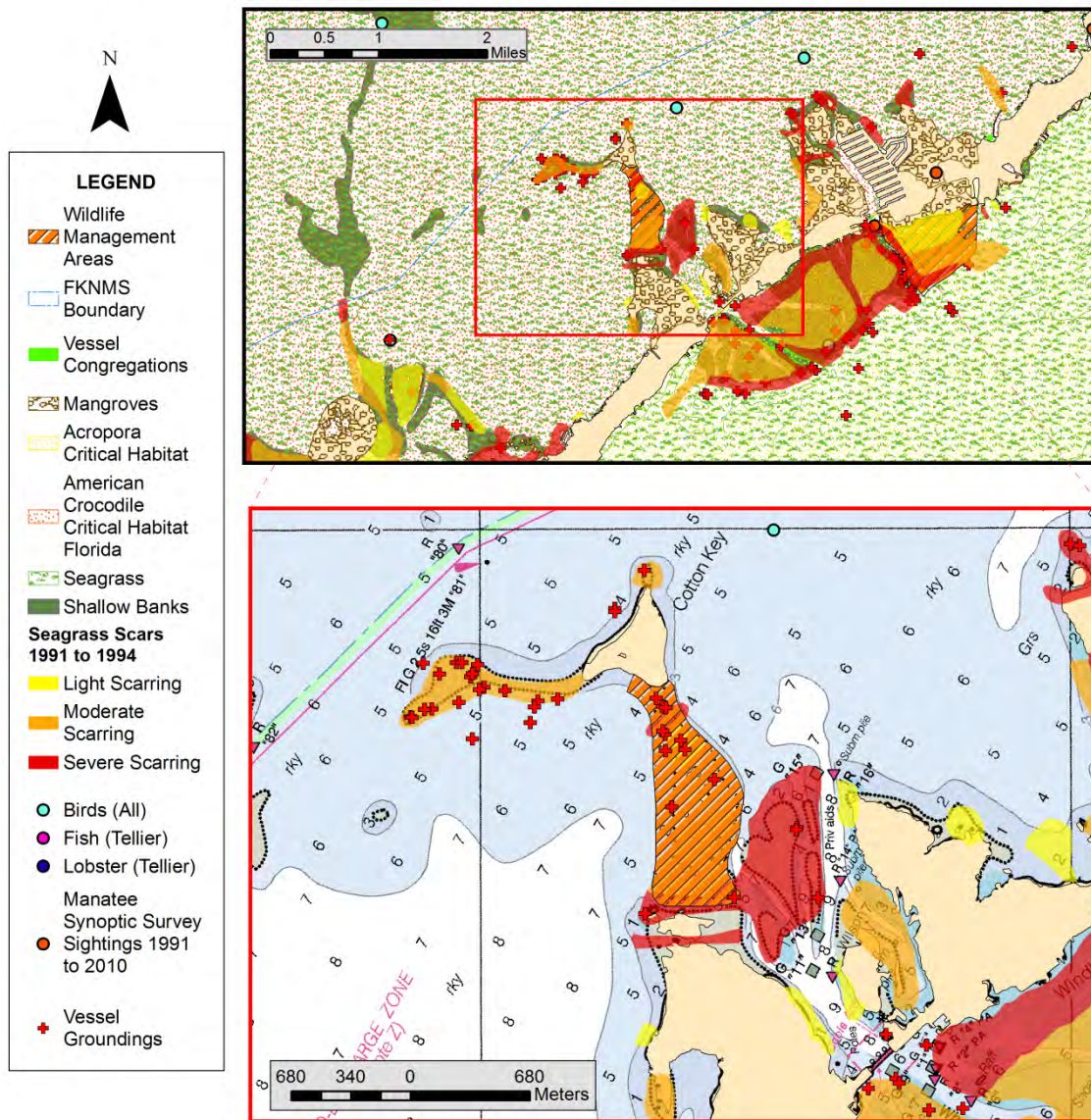
**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone on tidal flat.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Include South side of Snake Creek flat all the way to South Side of Whale Harbor Channel. Recommend 300' of shoreline "idle only" zone. Permit transit at speed between Pelican Cove Resort and Coconut Cove Resort and Marina within 300' of shoreline.

Functioning wonderfully to minimize disturbance to wading birds and a host of shallow water gamefish.



## Cotton Key Wildlife Management Area



**Cotton Key:** It is an area of very shallow flats that are heavily used by a variety of birds as well as bonefish and other desirable fish species. There are also several small mangrove islands that serve as nesting sites for a variety of birds, including pelicans, cormorants, and at least four species of herons. Cotton Key is also a preferred roost for magnificent frigate birds.

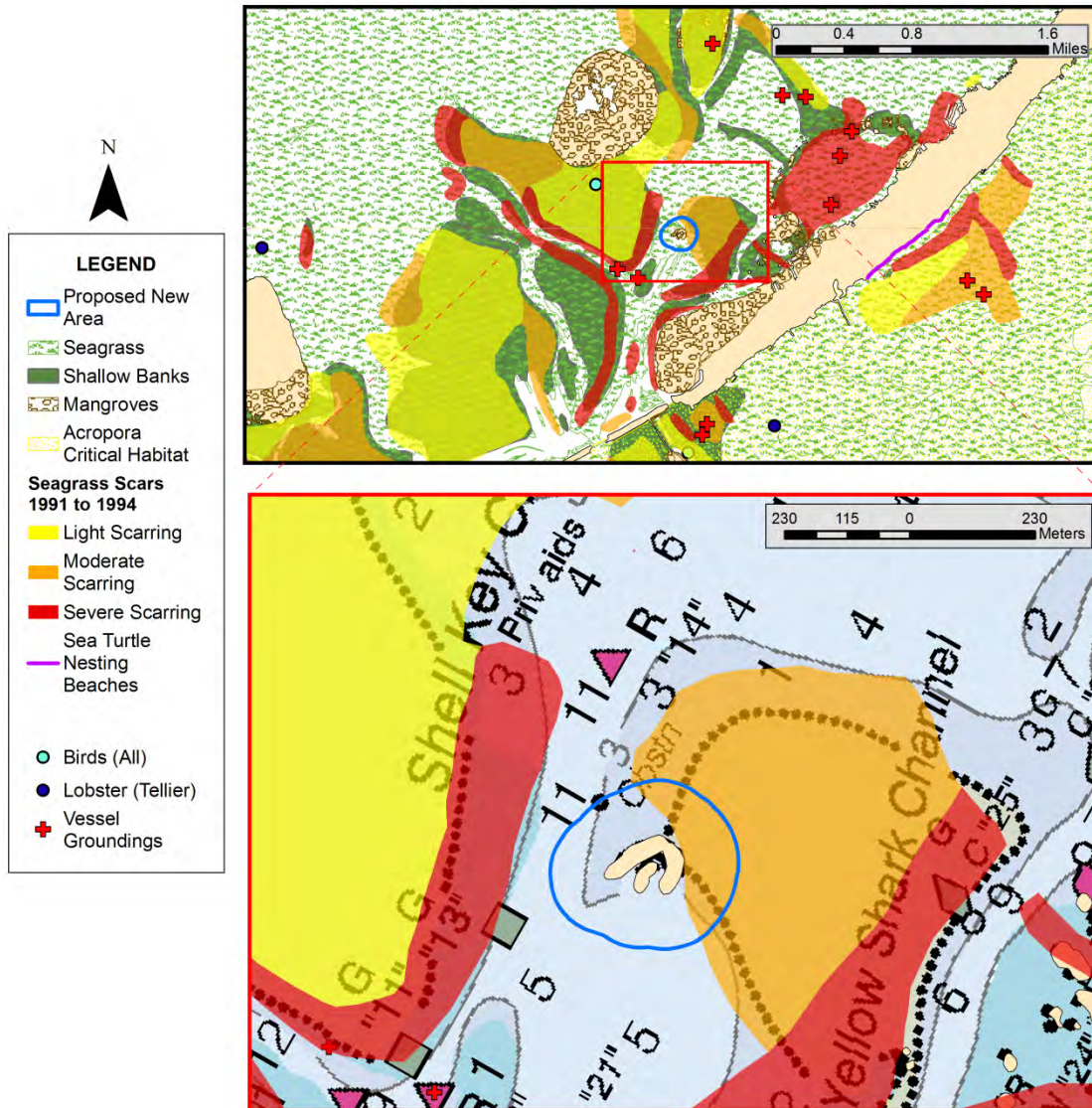
**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone on tidal flat.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** High transit area. Recommend enlarging to include bayside Whale Harbor flats, Islands and deep channels bayside of Whale Harbor Bridge.

Address the issue of neglected enforcement of non-combustion rule within the natural channels on the east and south side of Cotton Key WMA. The mangrove islands support nesting birds, including nearly every local wading bird species, cormorants and pelicans and is a roosting area for frigate birds. Lack of enforcement or buoys around this sensitive area means motorboats are operating on plane through this WMA every day.



## Ashbey/Horseshoe Key (proposed new area)



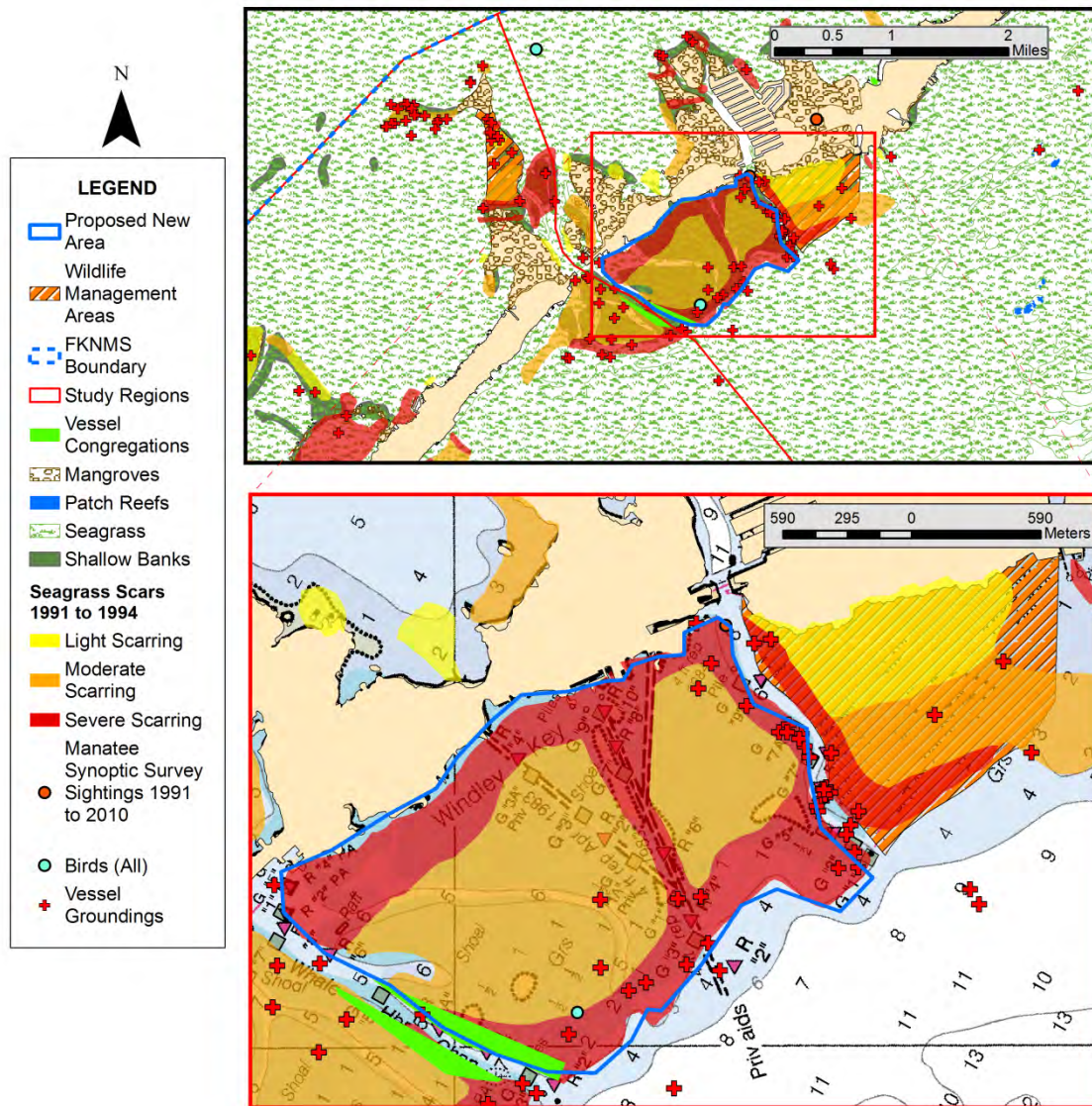
**Asheby/Horseshoe Key:** This is a unique island in the middle keys region that attracts high numbers and high diversity of birds. Many wading bird species nest on this small island including Great White Herons. This is the most important island in the area for roosting frigate birds, brown pelicans, and double crested cormorants. Yellow warblers also nest on this island. It is in a heavy use area and gets a lot of unnecessary boating and fishing pressure. Fishing line and hooks are very frequently left in the mangroves here entangling birds, leading to high bird mortality on this island. I have viewed this personally on many occasions and the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center responds to calls about birds hanging in trees on this island frequently. This is a problem that can be addressed through zoning as a WMA. A no motor zone would reduce fishing impact heavily.

**Access Restrictions:** No-Motor Zone  
Create buffer zone of 100 yards.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance to numerous nesting and roosting water bird species and frigate birds which heavily utilize this small island.



## Snake Creek (proposed new area)



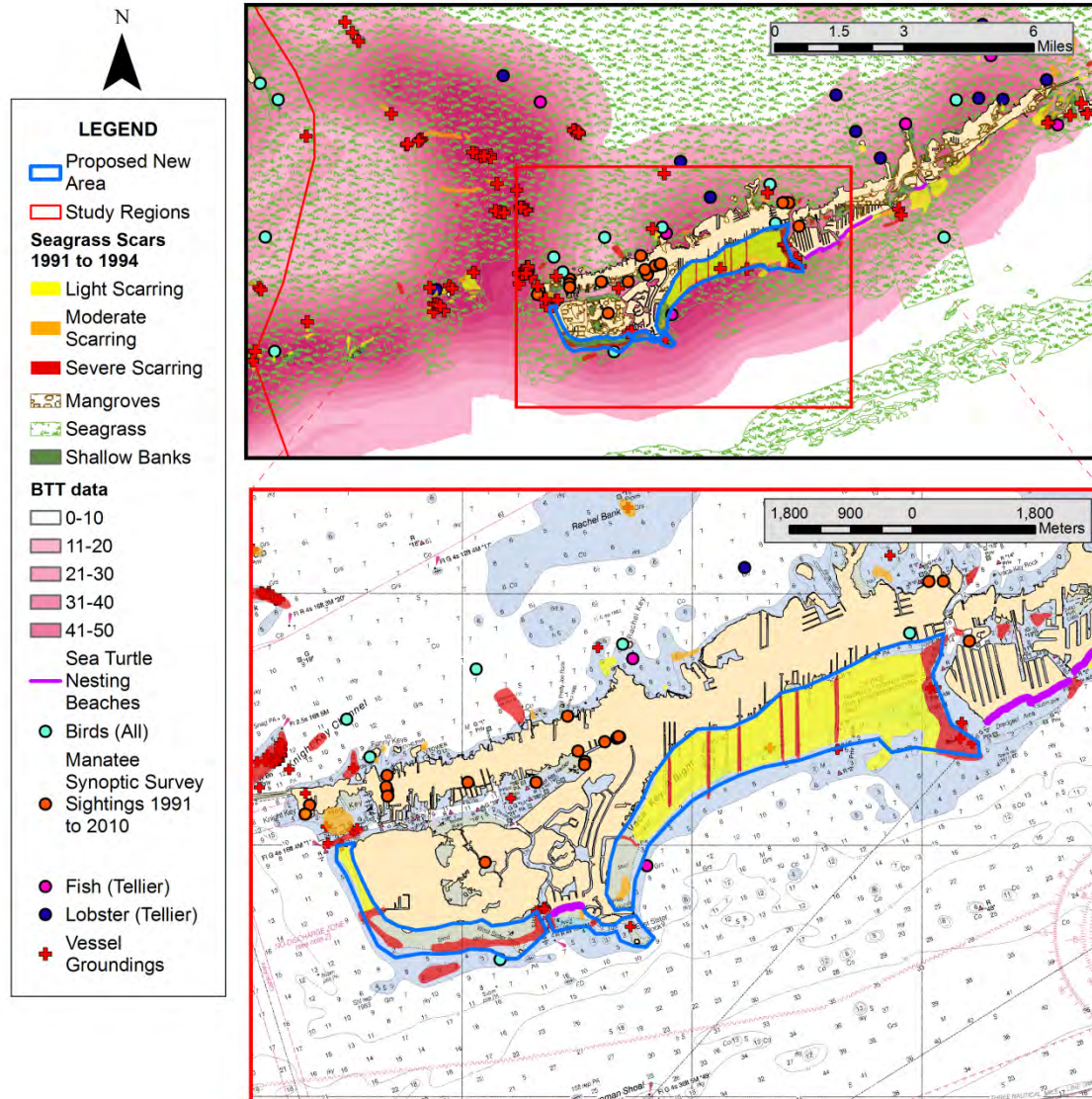
**Snake Creek:** The Snake Creek WMA does such a wonderful job of alleviating motorboat activity over this shallow sea grass habitat that I recommend extension of this WMA across Snake Creek, incorporating all of the shallow, seagrass flat area over to Whale Harbor Channel or at least the channel that runs in toward the Anglers Way neighborhood. This is a very productive flat as well that could benefit wildlife so much more so if it was a no motor zone like the east side of Snake Creek.

**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone on tidal flat.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance to a host of waterbird species that utilize this flat for foraging and bonefish, permit and tarpon which are in bad need of more habitat protection in this area.



## Marathon Oceanside Shoreline (proposed new area)



**Marathon Oceanside Shoreline:** From Vaca Cut southwest to Sombrero Beach and entire ocean facing shoreline of Boot Key.

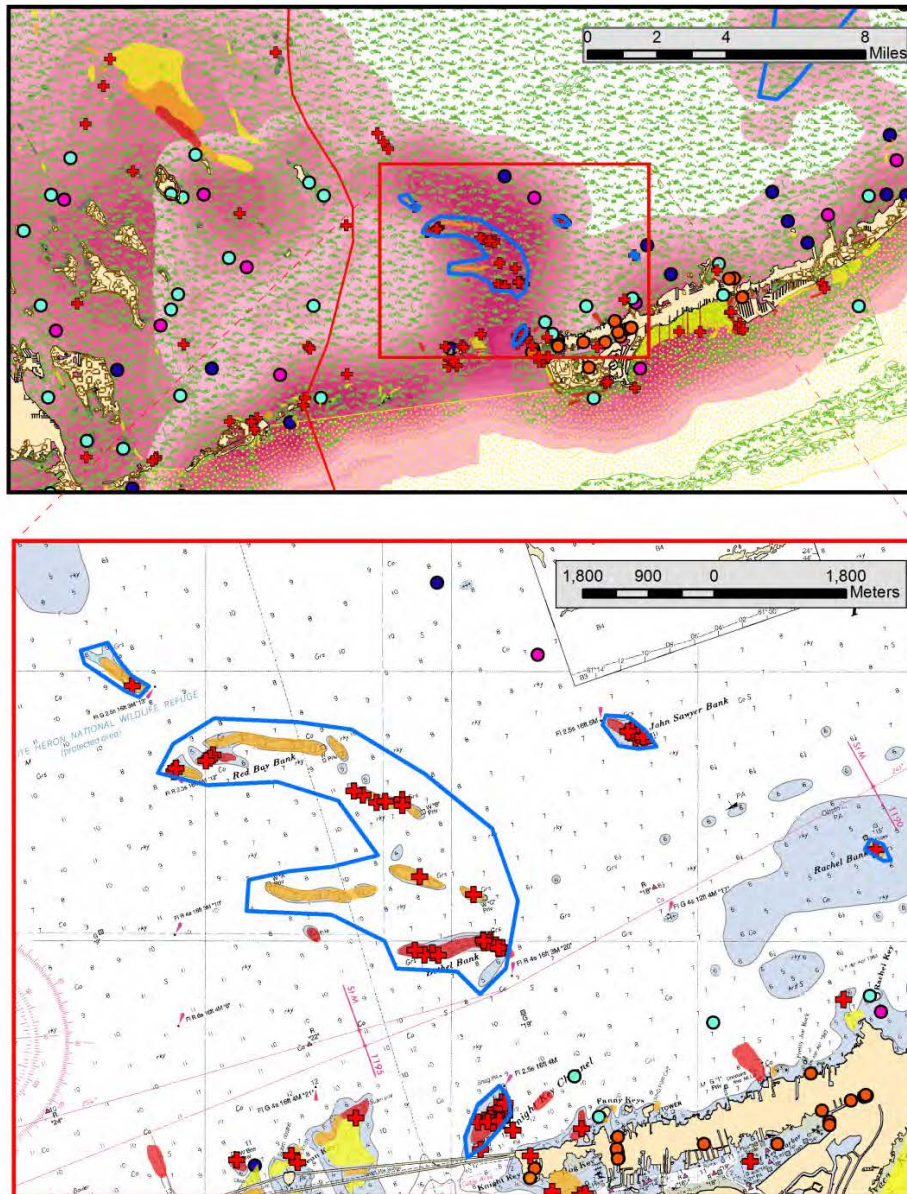
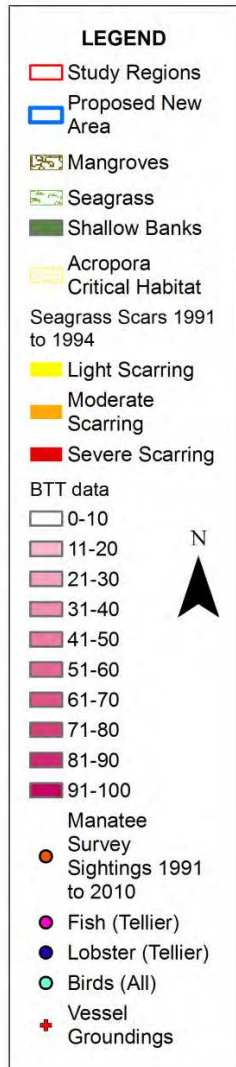
The concept of a WMA in this region was proposed in 2003 by the Marathon Guides Association. The concept was accepted by the County Commission and cities of Marathon and Key Colony Beach.

**Access Restrictions:** Idle Speed Zone

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance to shallow water gamefish species and their forage base through a very high use area.



## Moser Channel Banks (proposed new area)



**Moser Channel Banks:** Due to their location, the lack of navigational features in, and the poorly drawn charts of the area, the banks are hard to locate and are susceptible to boat groundings. Banks also support diverse assemblages of corals, sponges, macro-algae, and seagrasses.

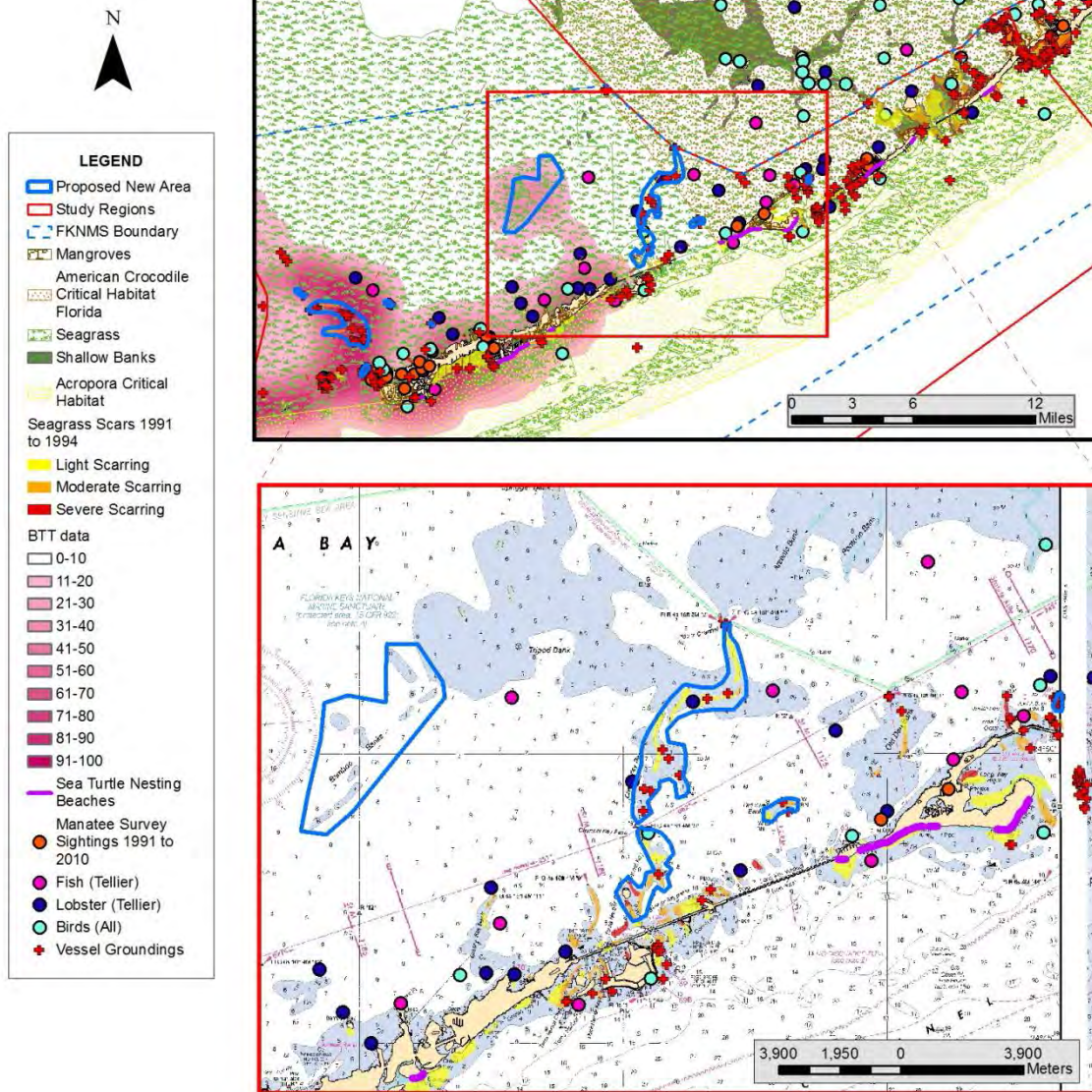
**Access Restrictions:** This should be an idle only zone.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** An Idle only zone would eliminate this problem, while preserving fishing access.

Protect all of Old Sweat Bank, and Red Bay Banks (bayside 7-mile bridge), and consider using a “fence” of spar buoys to encircle Red Bay Bank areas (like that at Rodriguez and Tavernier Key banks)



## Gulfside Banks North Marathon (proposed new area)



### Gulfside Banks North Marathon: NOAA

Fisheries scientists, John Burke and other scientists have studied them in recent years and recommended more protection for a number of reasons: they have been likened to coral reefs in that they support many of the same fish in different life stages (as they grow large and move from the bay to the reef); channels associated with them are important too; they are well defined for experienced boaters, but in high water can be harder to see and have suffered boating impacts; They can be impacted by fishing gear during storms, etc.

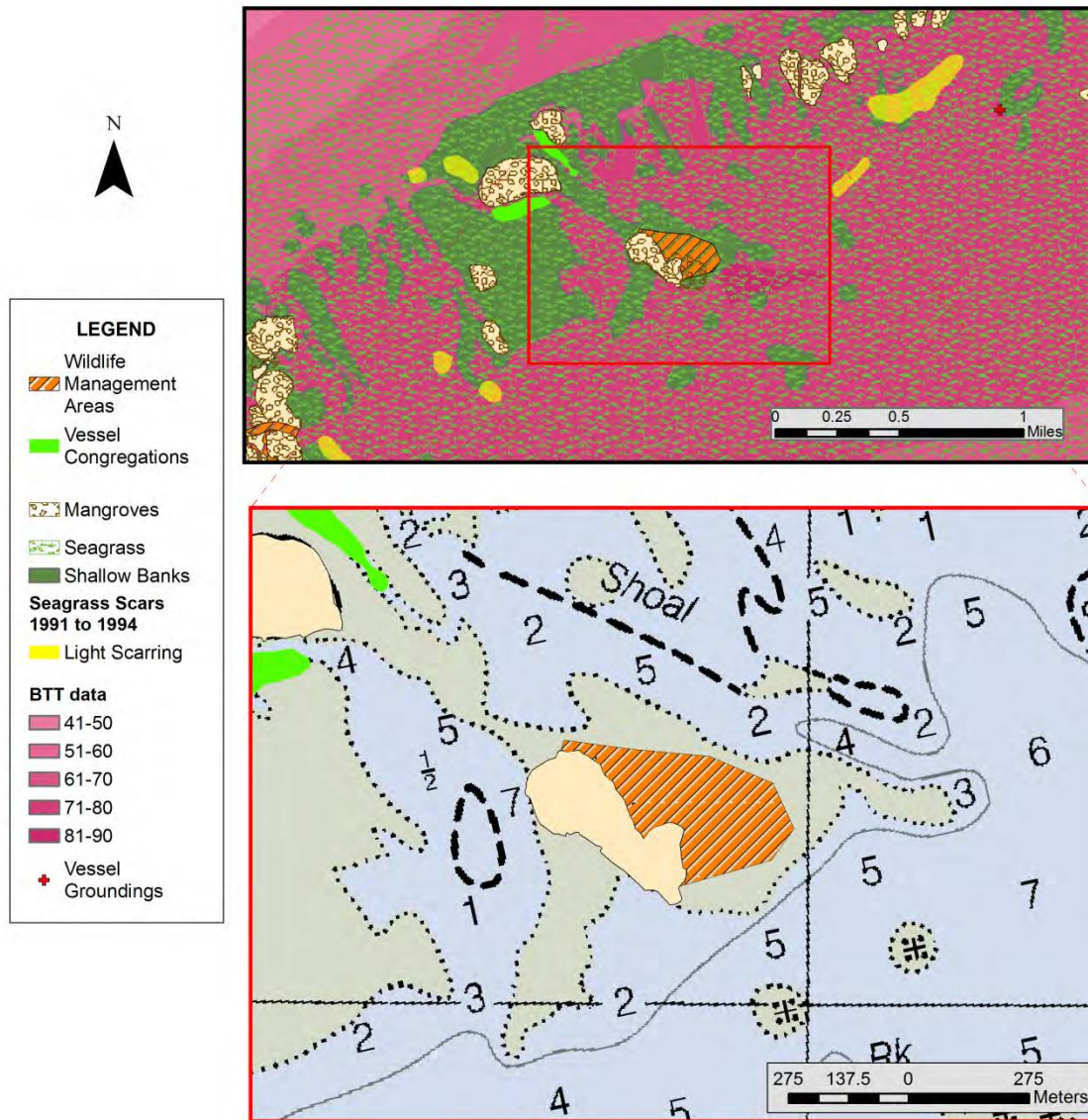
### Access Restrictions:

### Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:



## LOWER KEYS

## Tidal Flat South of Marvin Key Wildlife Management Area



**Tidal Flat South of Marvin Key:** Large numbers of resting shorebirds use the flats.

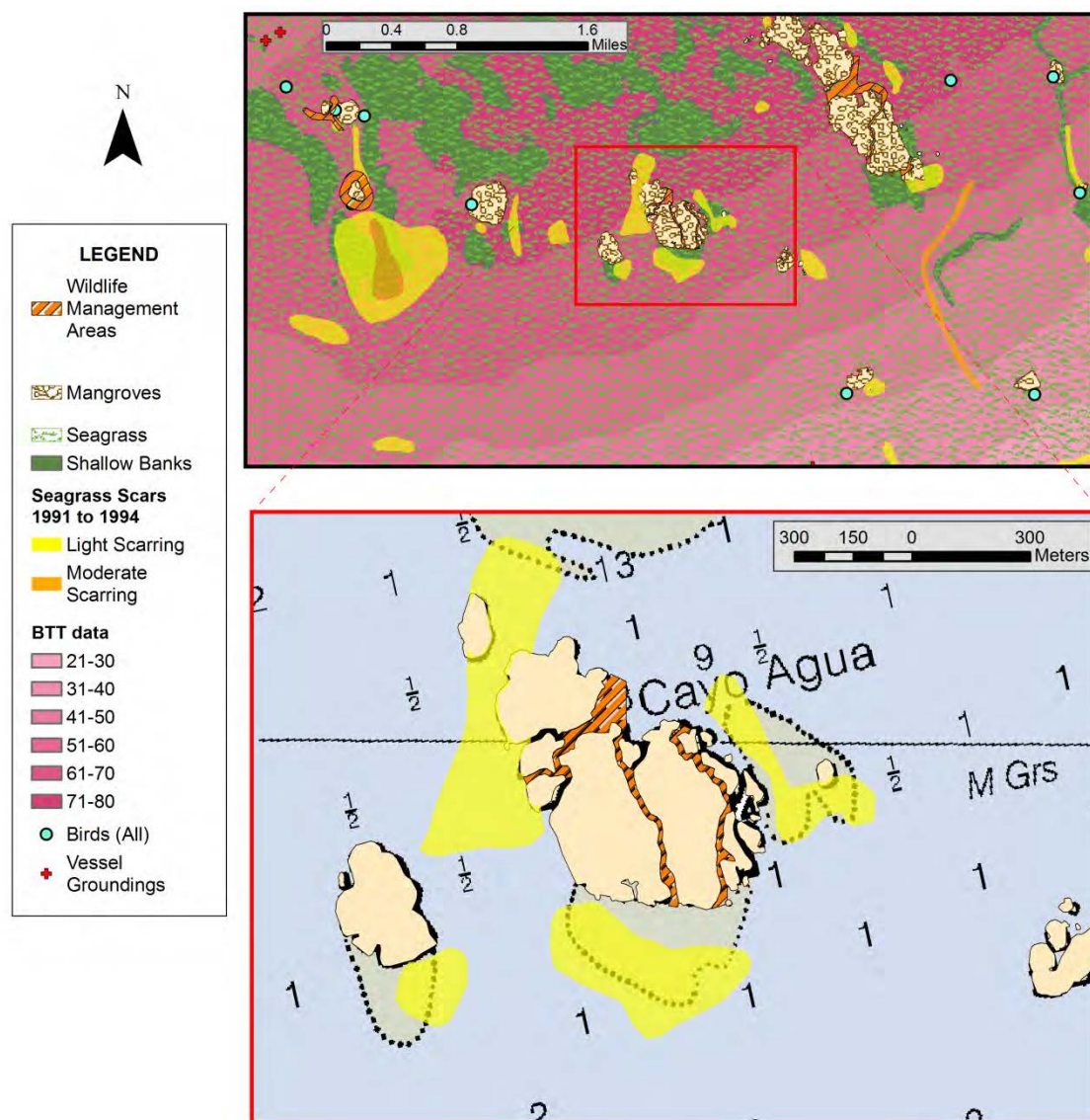
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone on tidal flat.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if resting birds are still present. Remove "no access" buffer zone if appropriate and designate "pole/troll/idle". Allow no obtrusive uses if applicable.

This WMA is still important for protection of foraging areas at low tides for numerous wading bird species and resting shorebirds. However this WMA has never had buoys marking the WMA and it would be beneficial if it did. Recommend installing buoys marking the no access buffer zone.



## Cayo Agua Keys Wildlife Management Area



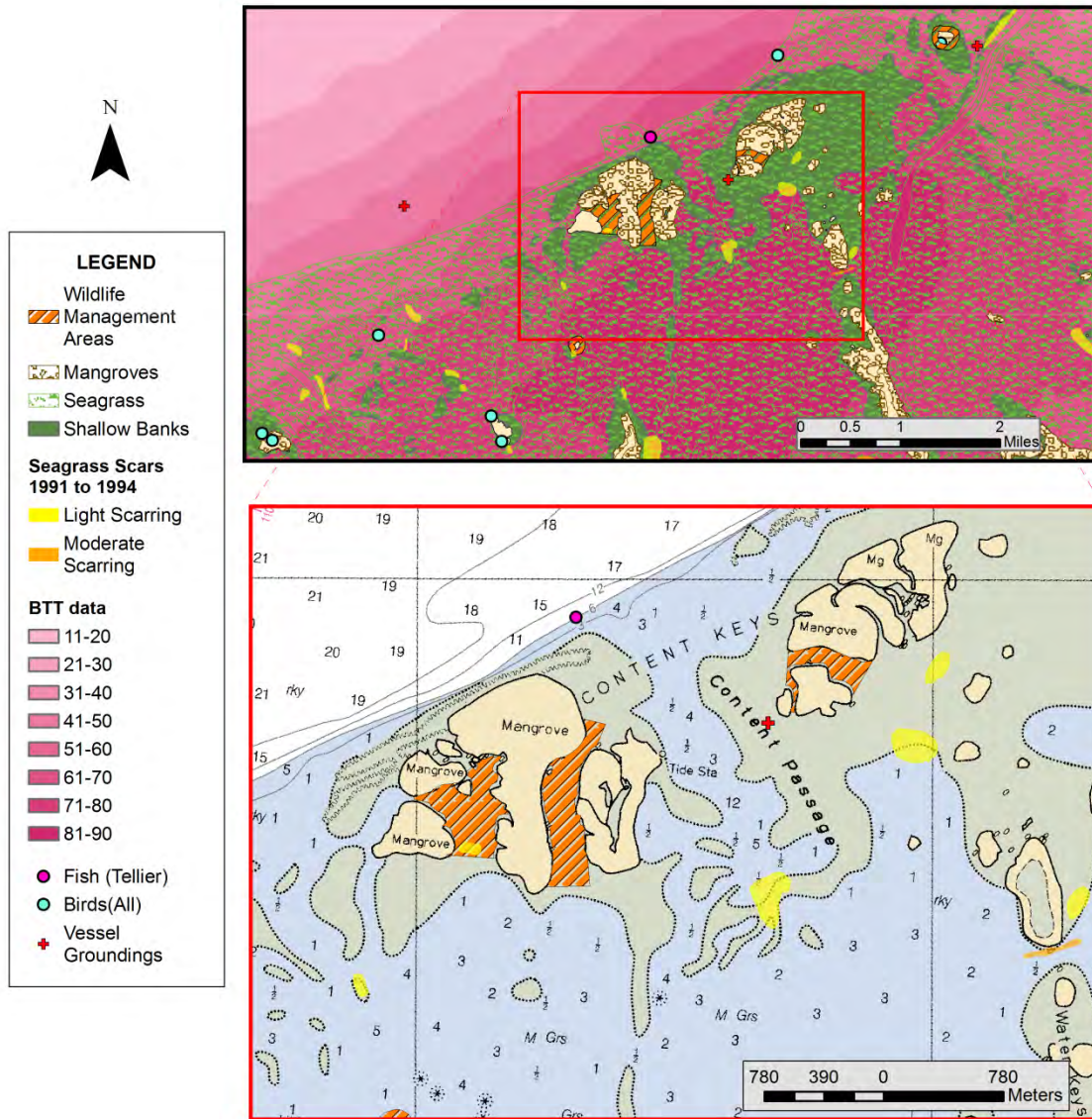
**Cayo Agua Keys:** The Cayo Agua islands consist largely of red mangroves and are used by great white herons and ospreys.

**Access Restrictions:** Idle speed only/no-wake zones in all navigable tidal creeks.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds still using island. If so discuss designating "no access" to protect birds if applicable.

There is essentially no benefit to wildlife to have this as a WMA. There is only really a boating safety issue in the channels. This is not a priority area for a WMA.

## East Content Keys Wildlife Management Area



**East Content Keys:** Herons and white ibises use the interior tidal creeks.

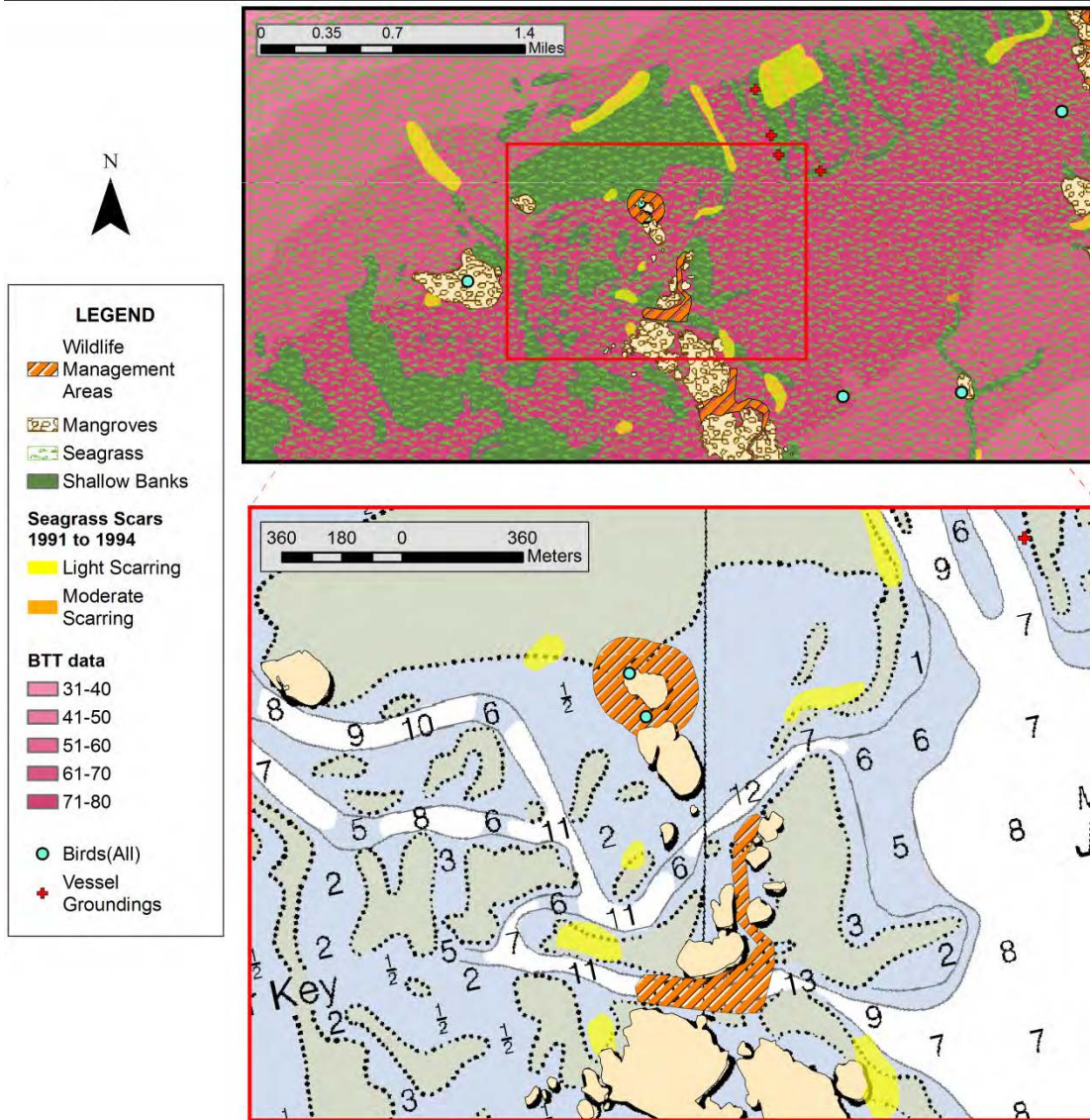
**Access Restrictions:** Idle speed only/no-wake zones in tidal creeks between southwesternmost keys.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds still using island. If so discuss designating "no access" to protect birds if applicable.

The idle speed/no wake zone areas currently designated as the WMA offer very little use as a protected area for wildlife. Do not see a need for this designation here. However the creek and inland water complex on the northern part of East Content Key is a very important foraging area for nearly all wading bird species including roseate spoonbills. This area could be incorporated into the WMA as a no-access zone.



## East Harbor Key Wildlife Management Area



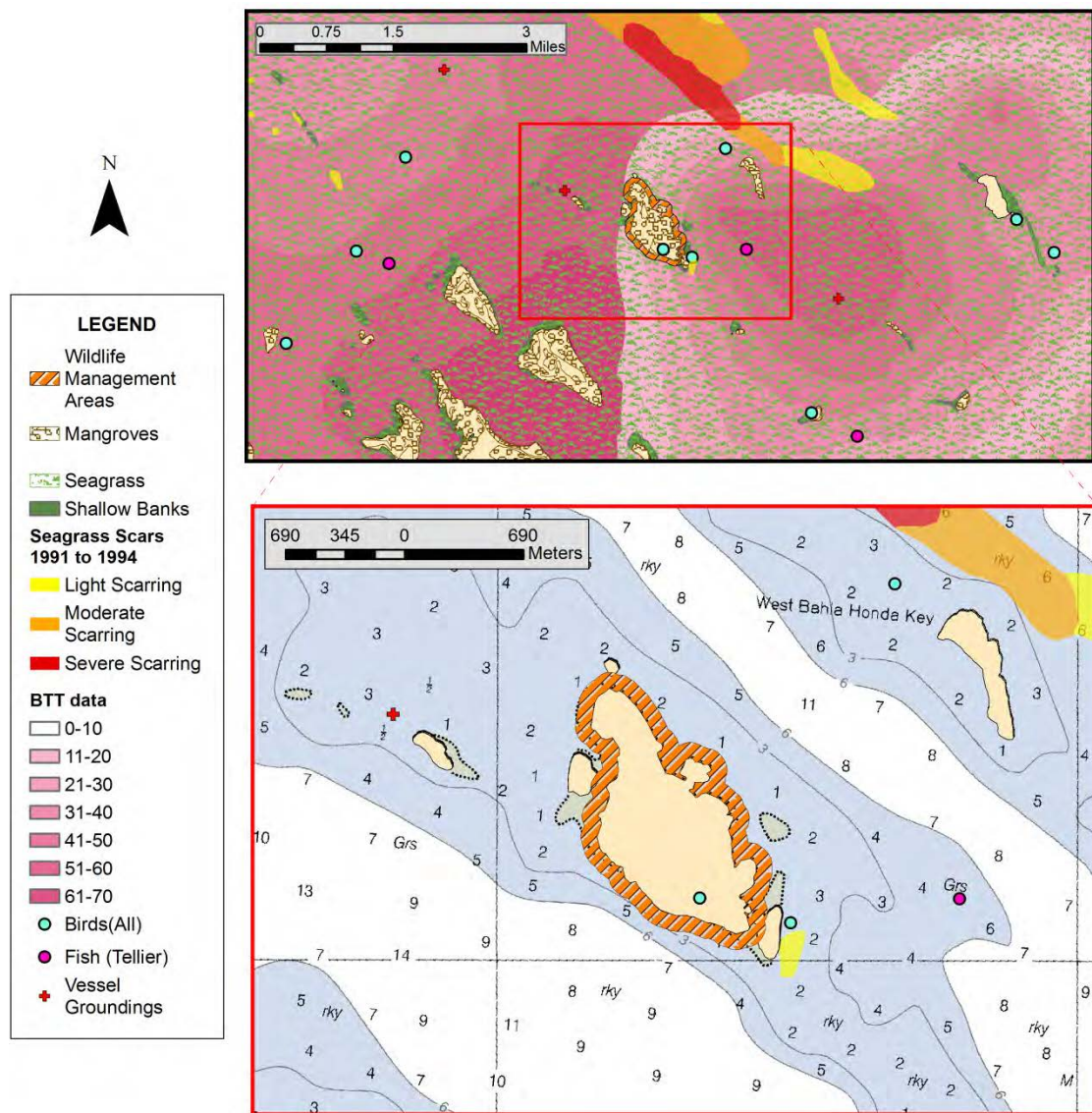
**East Harbor Key:** All but one of the keys are mangrove islands. The islands are heavily used by boaters, especially on weekends.

**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone (300 feet) around northernmost island.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Remove "no access" buffer zone. Designate island and surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone. Designate "no extraction" of flats species.

Retain no access buffer zone as this island is still important to nesting birds including Bald Eagles. However this WMA has never had buoys marking the WMA and it would be beneficial if it did. Recommend installing buoys marking the no access buffer zone.

## Horseshoe Key Wildlife Management Area



**Horseshoe Key:** Heron, willet, and osprey nesting sites have been documented. The island is closed to public access

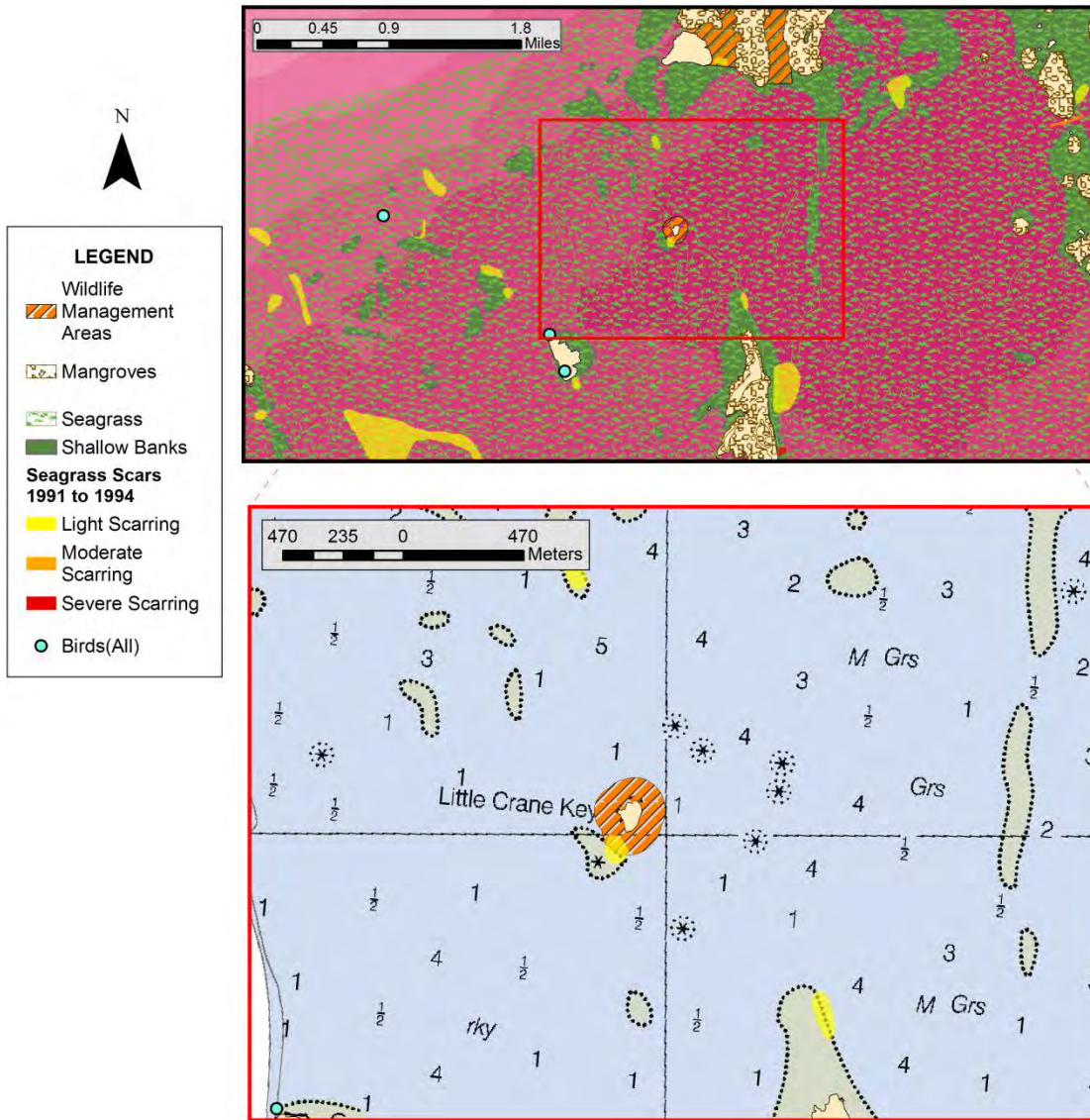
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone (300 feet) around main island (main island closed by Department of the Interior).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds are still using area as designate. If main island still used by birds retain current designation. If birds no longer present remove "no access" buffer and designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" if applicable.

This WMA should be down the list of priorities. There are no longer any issues with wildlife here.



## Little Crane Key Wildlife Management Area



**Little Crane Key:** The island contains a large frigatebird roost and nesting areas for great egrets and double-crested cormorants.

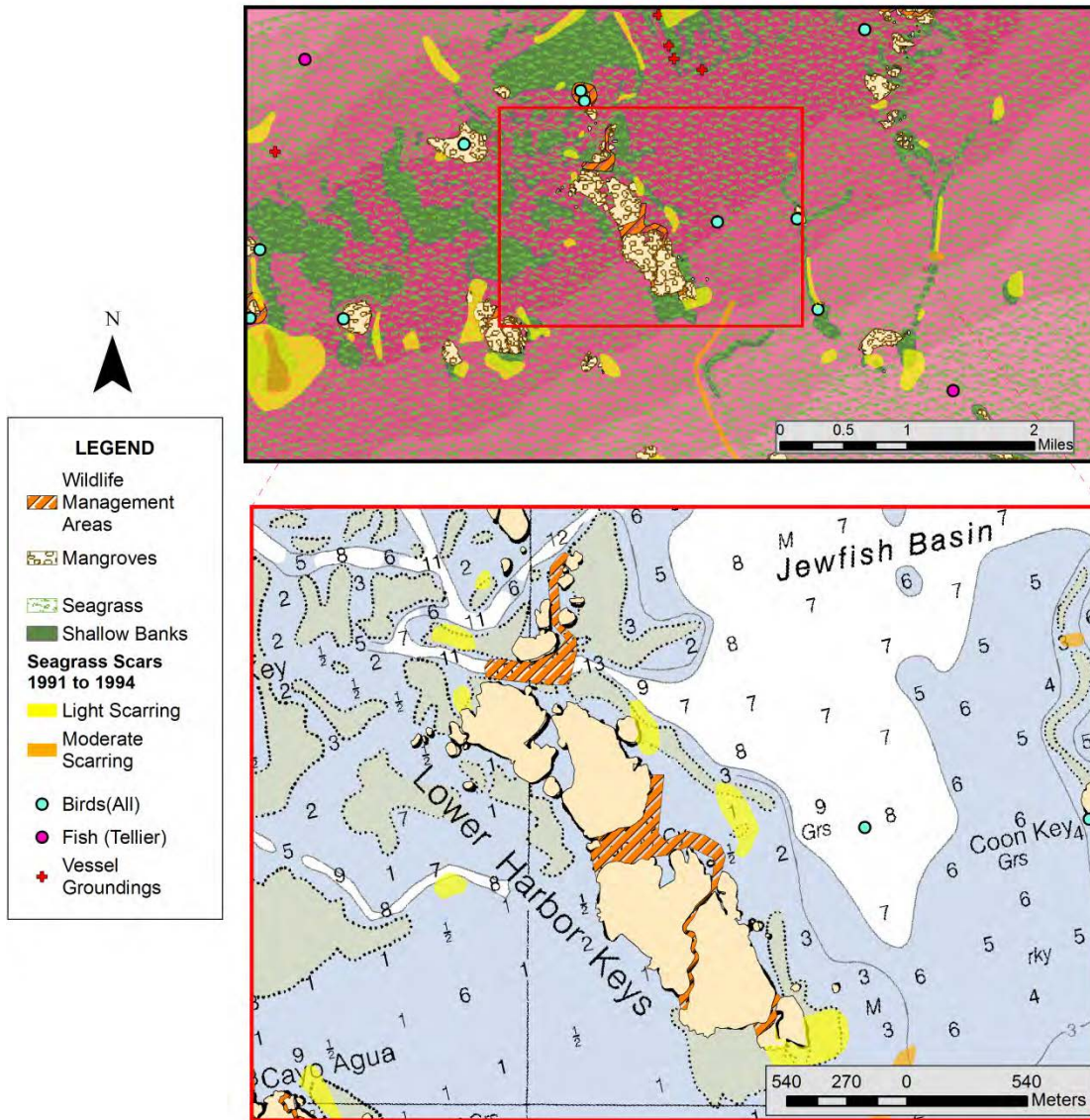
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone (300 feet) around entire key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds still using island as designate. If so, increase protection to extend outward to a discussed and approved distance in order to increase protection. If applicable designate "sensitive" or other distinction to prohibit over flights of personal aircraft.

Remove WMA designation as the island is no longer there.

The island is almost gone and no longer hosts any numbers of birds. Eliminate.

## Lower Harbor Keys Wildlife Management Area



**Lower Harbor Keys:** The islands contain nesting great white herons, double-crested cormorants, and osprey. A variety of other wading birds use the islands as well. Boat traffic is sometimes heavy on weekends.

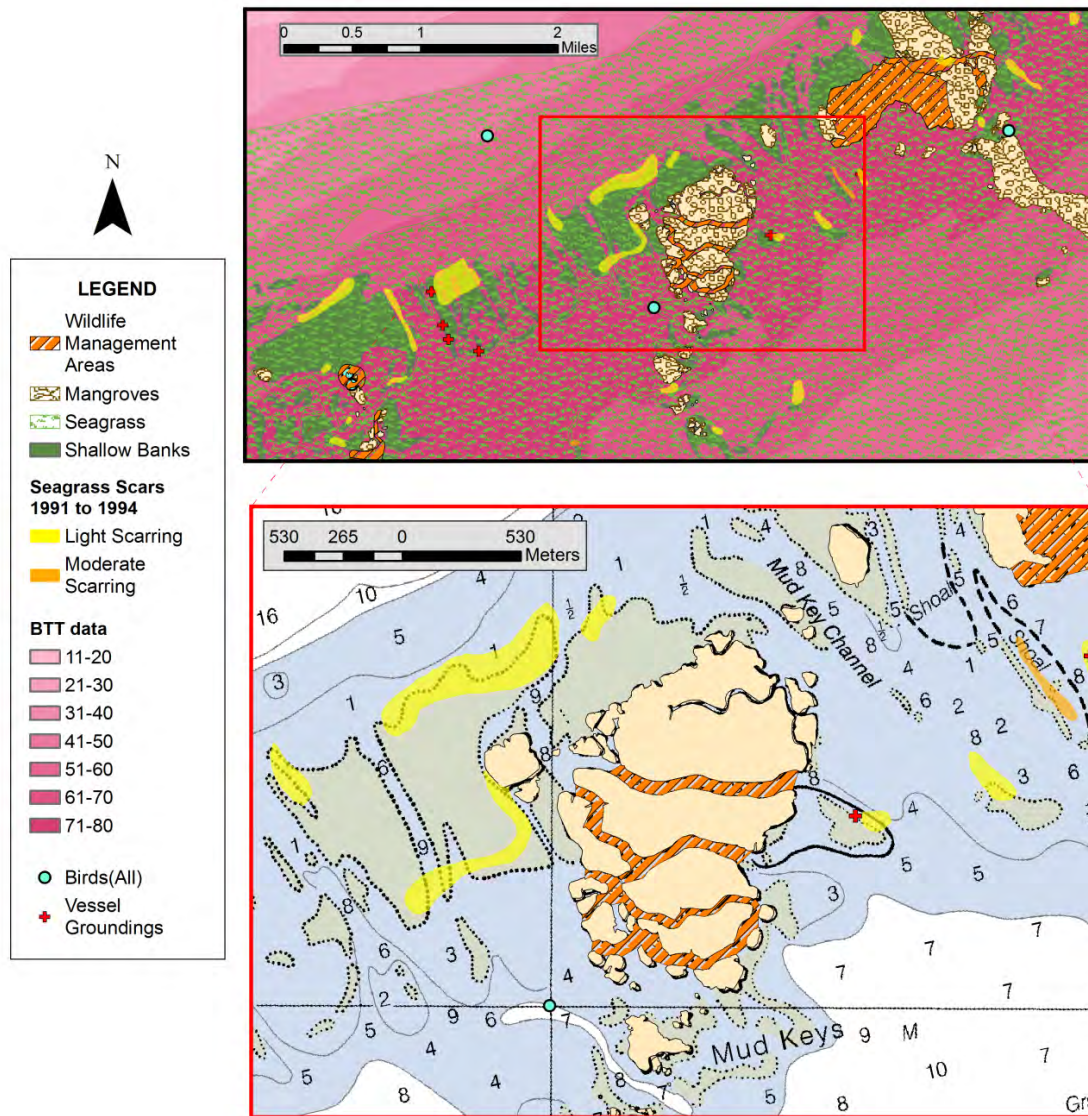
**Access Restrictions:** Idle speed only/no-wake zones in selected tidal creeks.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds are still using area as designated. Retain idle only in creeks and extend "pole/troll/idle" designation to all surrounding flats.

There are no significant wildlife issues at this WMA. This is a low priority WMA. Buoys are in terrible shape at this WMA.



## Mud Keys Wildlife Management Area



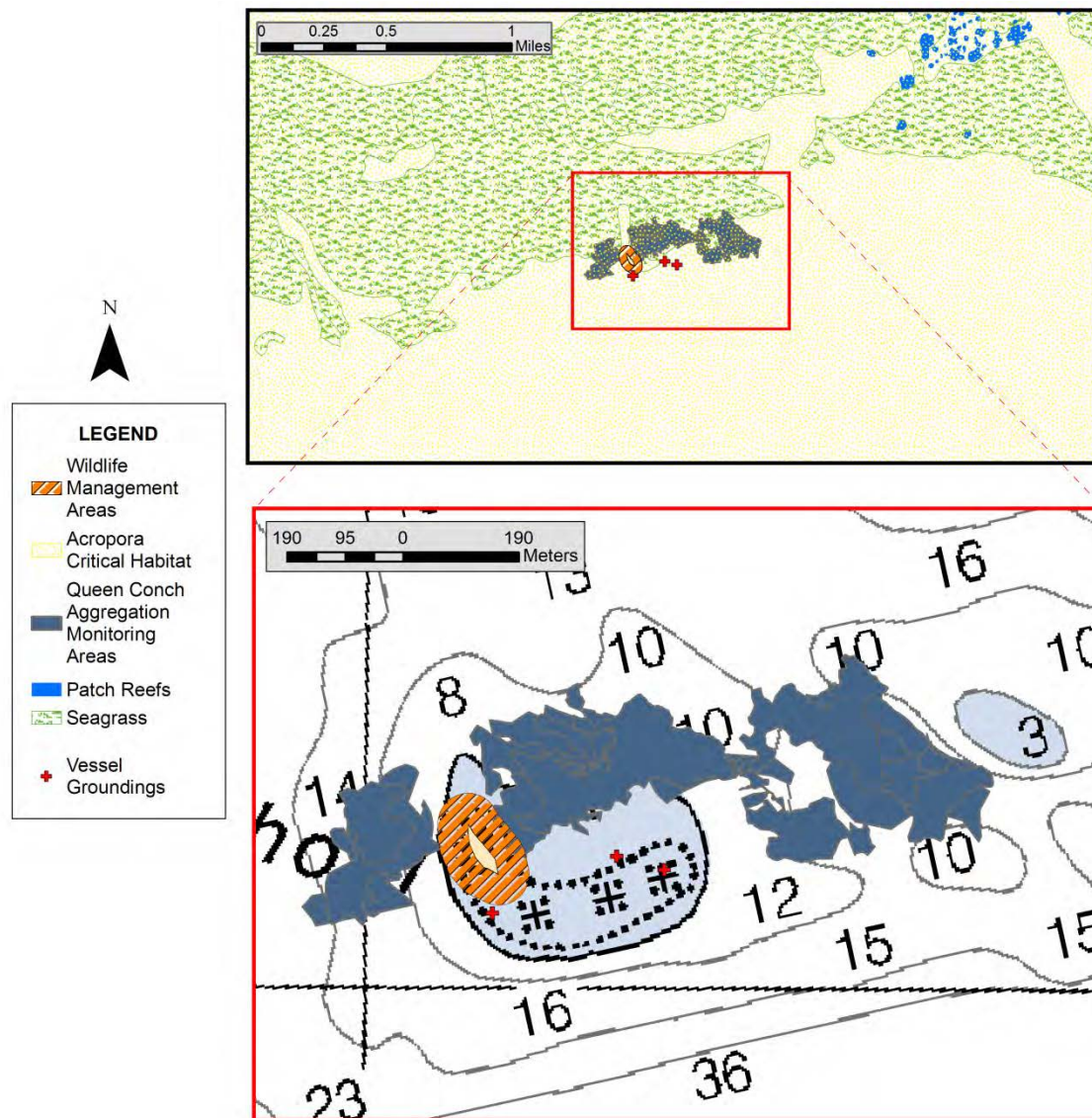
**Mud Keys:** The islands contain nesting ospreys and a small great white heron rookery. Frigatebirds sometimes roost on the islands.

**Access Restrictions:** (i) Idle speed only/no-wake zones in the two main tidal creeks; (ii) two smaller creeks on west side closed.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds are still using as designated. If so extend protection outward to discussed and approved distance to increase protection. If determined to be critical for select species of concern consider designating "no access". Designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle".

Idle speed zones in creeks and closed creeks on west side still serve to minimize disturbance to wildlife.

## Pelican Shoal Wildlife Management Area



**Pelican Shoal:** A small rubble island that provides an important nesting site for birds. Visitor use is low in this area

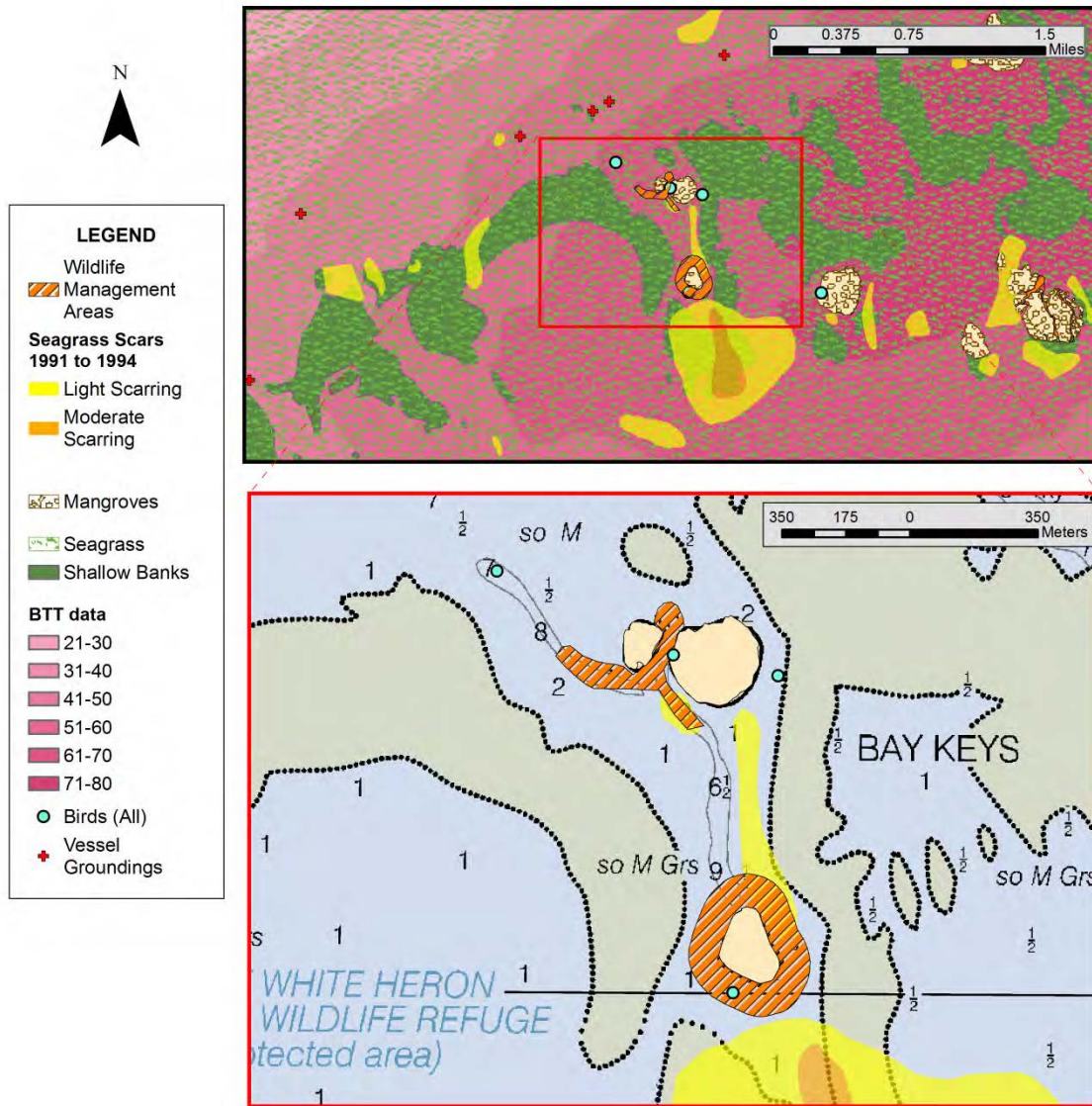
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone out to 50 meters from shore between April 1 and August 31 (shoal closed by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Birds no longer nest at Pelican shoal because it was destroyed by Hurricane Wilma.

Re-designate as "pole/troll/idle" if applicable.



## Bay Keys Wildlife Management Area



**Bay Keys:** The islands are unspoiled and largely composed of red mangroves. The largest key harbors great white herons and a considerable number of tricolored and little blue herons.

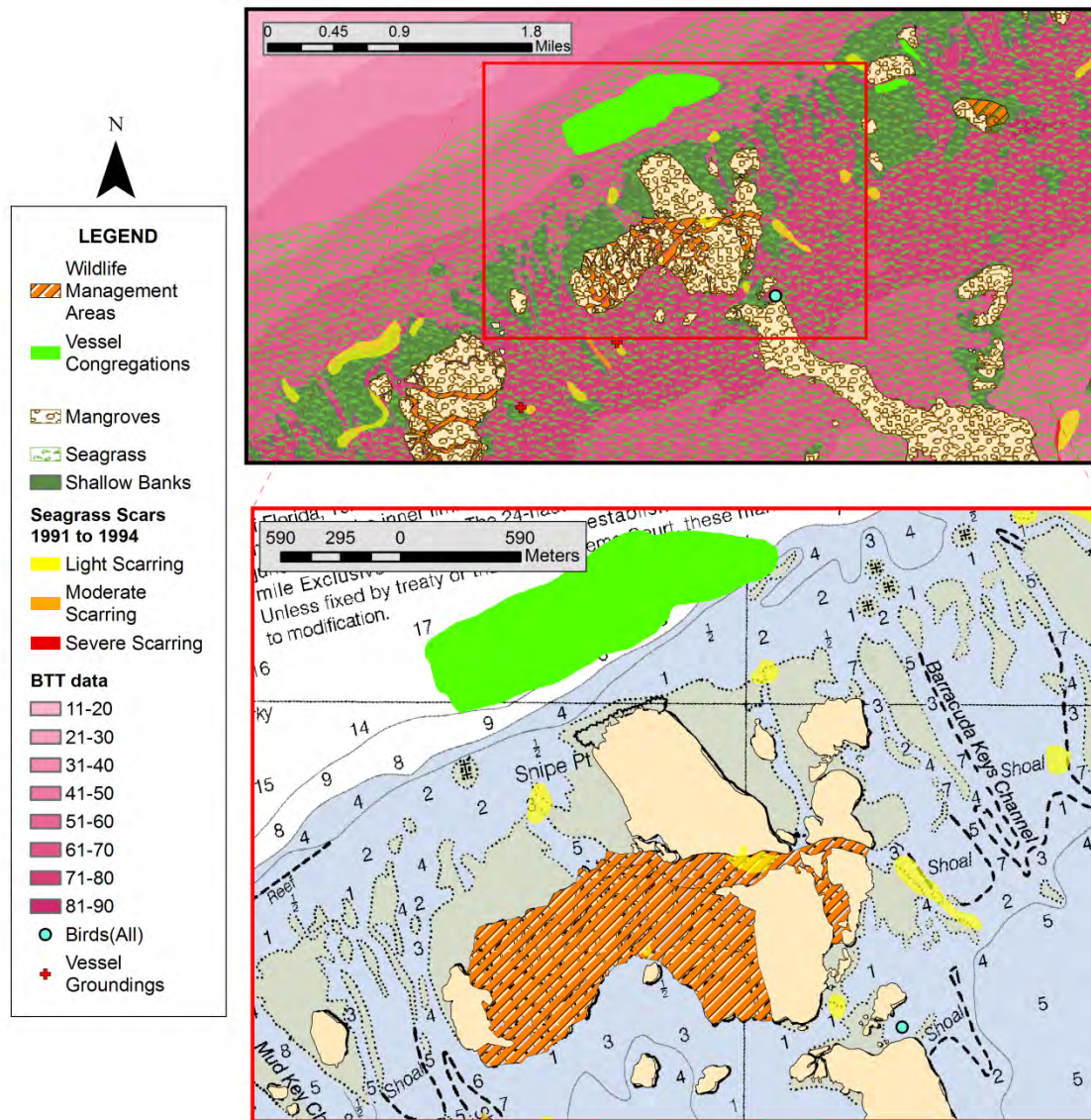
**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone (300 feet) around one key; idle speed only/no-wake zones in tidal creeks.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds are still using area as designated. If need increase "no motor" distance designation. Designate flats around all islands and adjacent areas as "pole/troll/idle" zone.

This WMA still functions well as a WMA to minimize disturbance to nesting wading birds however the buoys marking these areas are in terrible shape and this should be addressed.

Remove the no access zone. Replace with idle only/no wake. The area is lightly used, and no access is too restrictive.

## Snipe Keys Wildlife Management Area



**Snipe Keys:** Groups of little blue herons are present on the tidal creeks. Snipe Point is used by terns and various shorebirds.

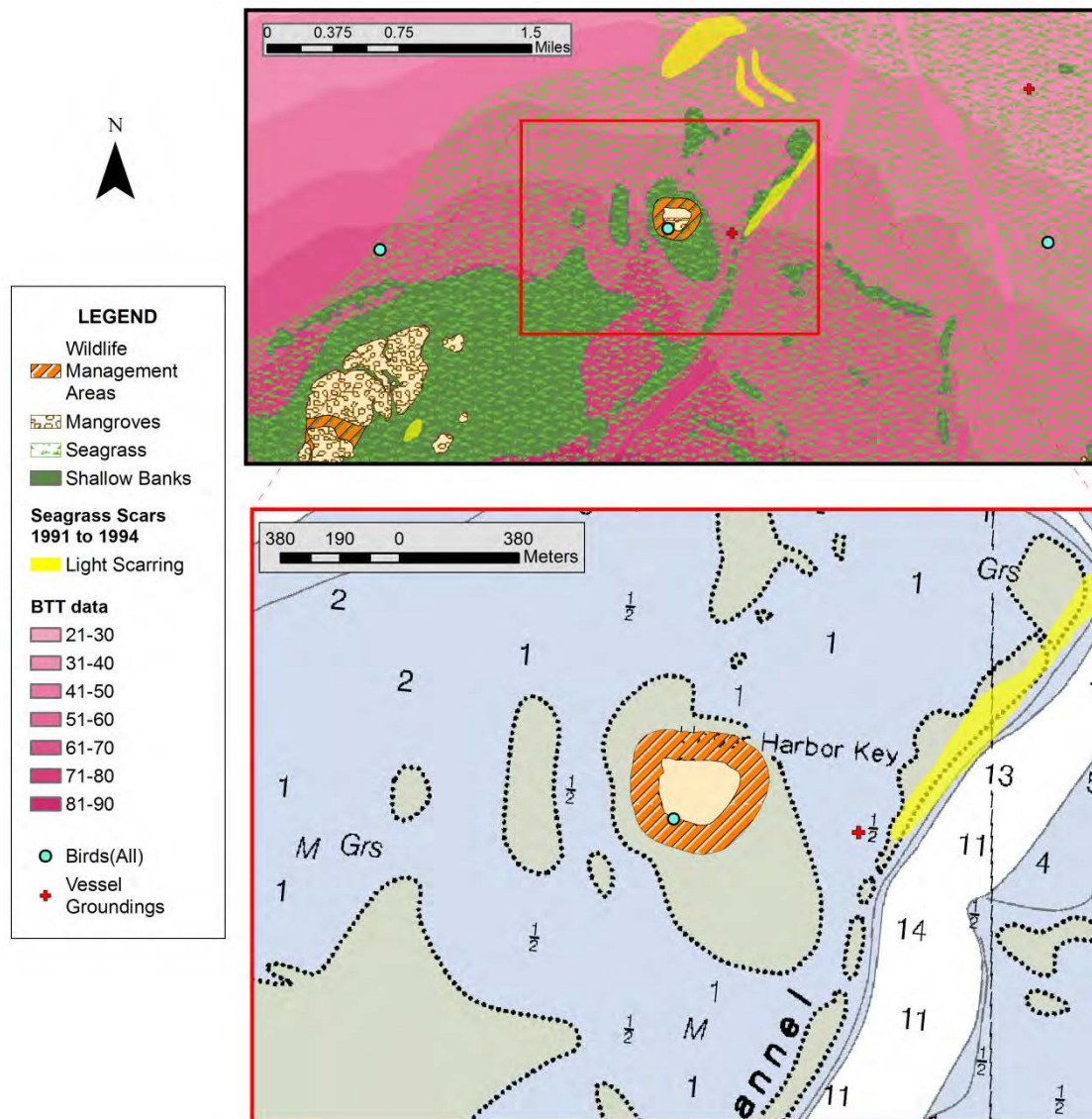
**Access Restrictions:** (i) Idle speed only/no-wake zone in main tidal creek; (ii) no-motor zone in all other tidal creeks.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Provide science if birds are still using area as designated. Retain current tidal creek designation. Designate surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone.

Retain as is to decrease disturbance to wading birds and minimize safety issues with boats.



## Upper Harbor Keys Wildlife Management Area



**Upper Harbor Keys:** It is a premier area for wading birds. The island is used by various bird species including ospreys, frigatebirds, double-crested cormorants, and wading birds.

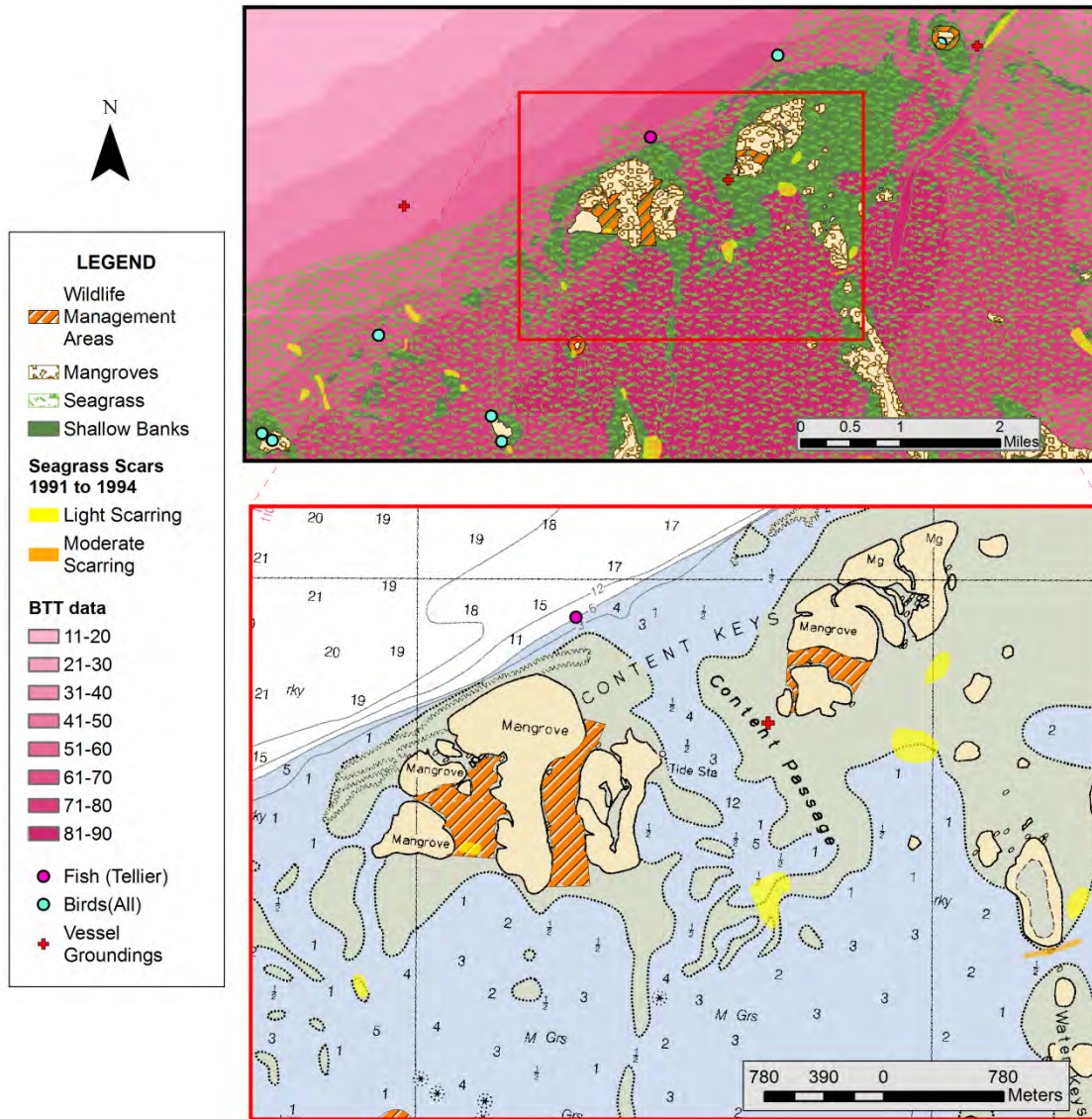
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone (300 feet) around entire key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** If birds still using the island as designated, increase "no access" buffer. Need to discuss and scientist recommend distance to increase protection.

This should definitely be retained as a WMA due to nesting water birds.

Few birds nest/roost here. The buoys attract curious boaters who damage seagrass on the shallow flat. Eliminate.

## West Content Keys Wildlife Management Area



**West Content Keys:** Broad, shallow tidal creeks dissect the area, and nesting ospreys and wading birds inhabit the islands.

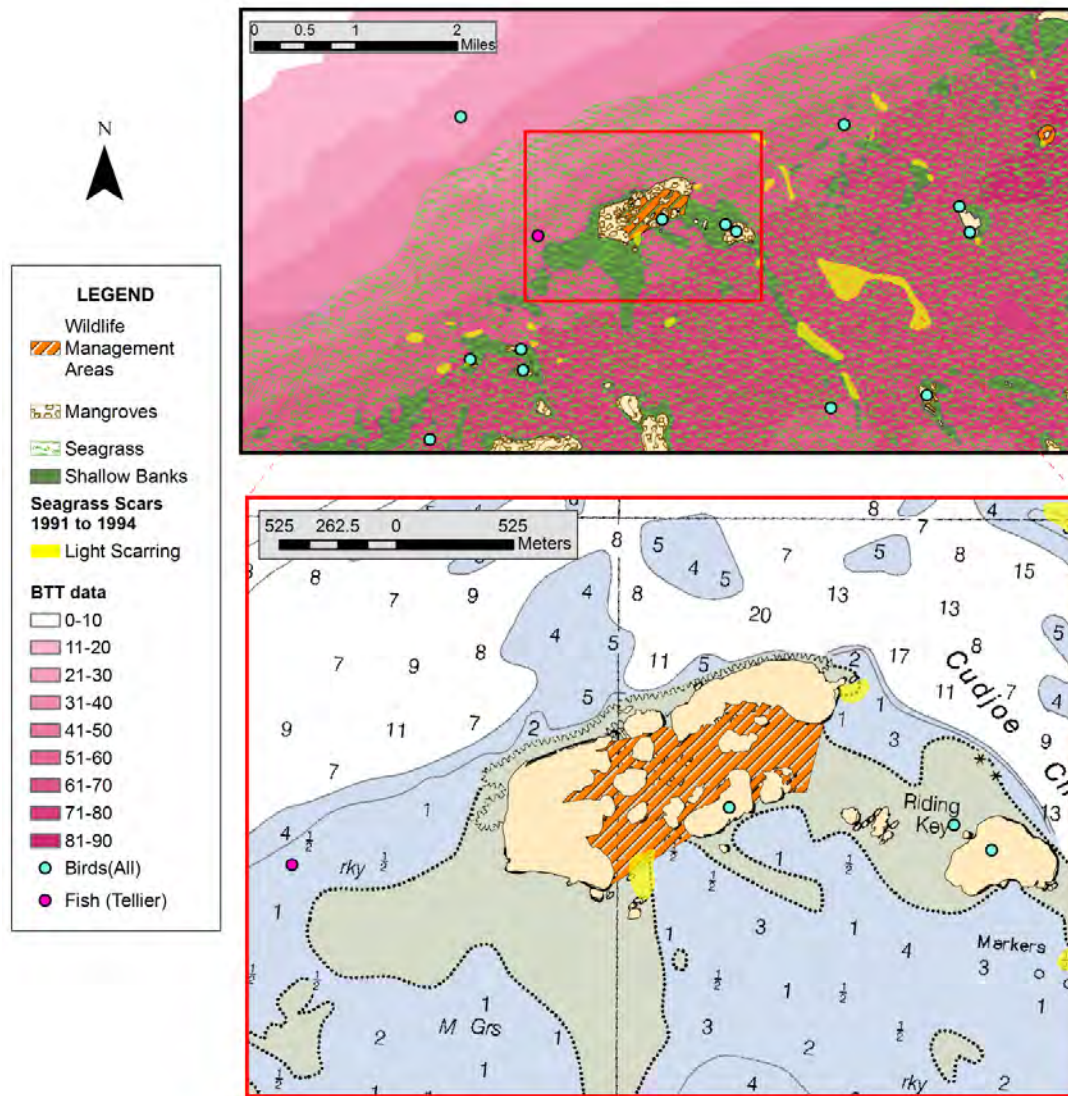
**Access Restrictions:** Idle speed only/no-wake zones in selected tidal creeks; no-access buffer zone in one cove.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Determine if wading birds are still using area as designated. If so determine if more protection is needed. Retain current designation and designate all surrounding flats and creeks as "pole/toll/idle" zone.

The 'social gathering' issue should be addressed on these Keys. While currently not within the WMA, social gathering on the sand and grass flats on the east side of West Contents is increasing. Suggest incorporating a no-motor zone in this area.



## Sawyer Keys Wildlife Management Area



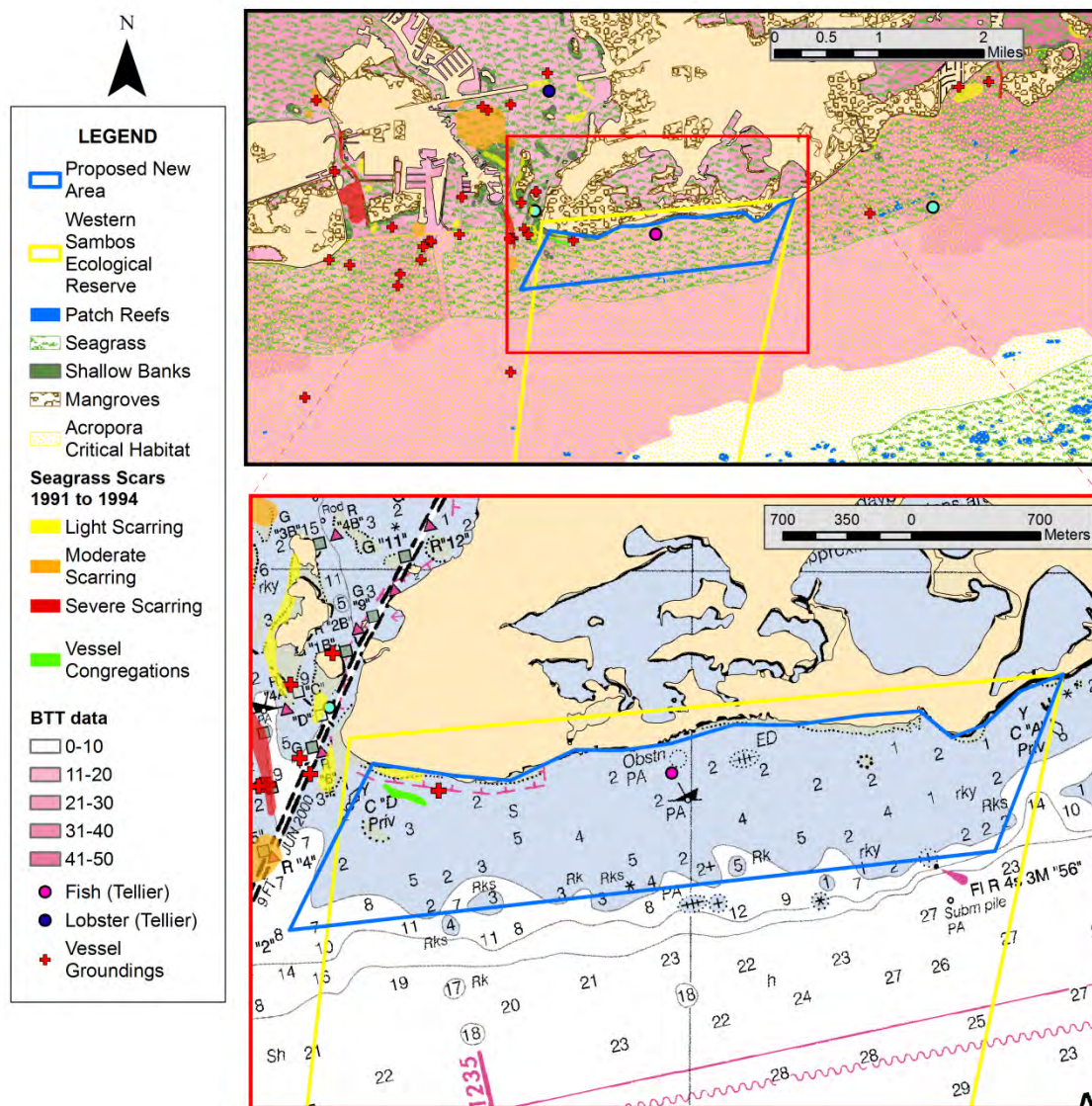
**Sawyer Keys:** The northwest side of the largest island is privately owned. Sawyer Keys harbor nesting ospreys. The area is also used by 11 species of wading birds. The area south of the two largest islands is an important staging area for migrant shorebirds in autumn.

**Access Restrictions:** Tidal creeks on south side closed.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Determine if increased protection is needed. If so establish "no access" buffer zone. Designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone.

Priority to remain as is to minimize disturbance to water birds and gamefish. Accepted by public and buoys are in good shape.

## Western Sambo Ecological Reserve



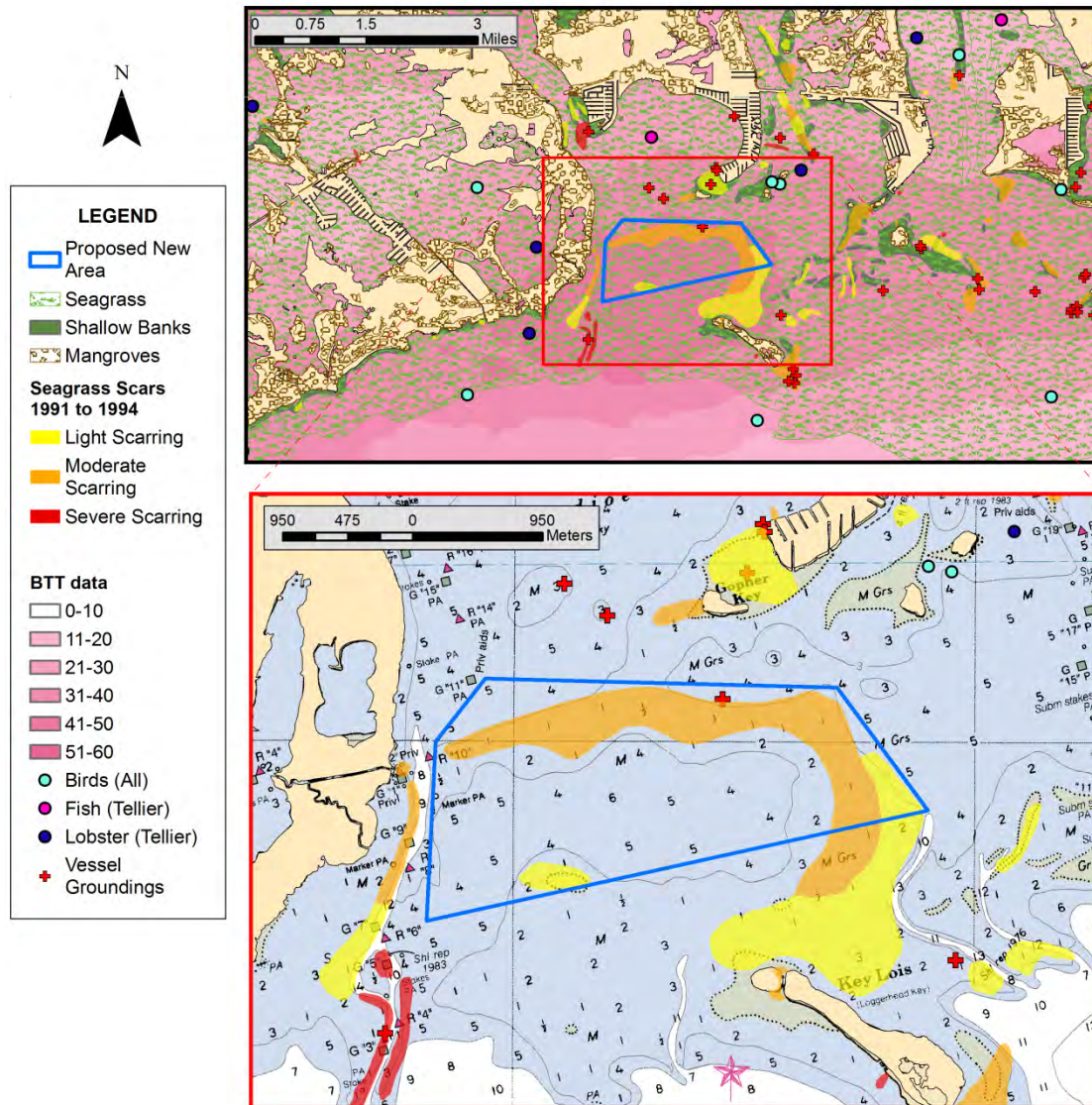
**Western Sambo:** The Western Sambo Ecological Reserve contains the greatest habitat diversity in the Lower Keys. Significant coral features include spur-and-groove formations, bank reefs, and nearshore patch reefs. Western Sambo has one of the last remaining stands of living elkhorn coral in the Lower Keys, a species once abundant throughout the Keys.

**Access Restrictions:** Prohibited activities include: discharging any matter except cooling water or engine exhaust; fishing by any means; removing, harvesting, or possessing marine life; touching/standing on coral; anchoring on coral or attached organisms; anchoring on living or dead coral or any attached organism, anchoring when a buoy is available.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** The northern quadrant (<10ft) of this zone should be idle only and opened up to allow catch and release fishing and bait harvest (with permit).



## Key Lois-Loggerhead Basin (proposed new area)



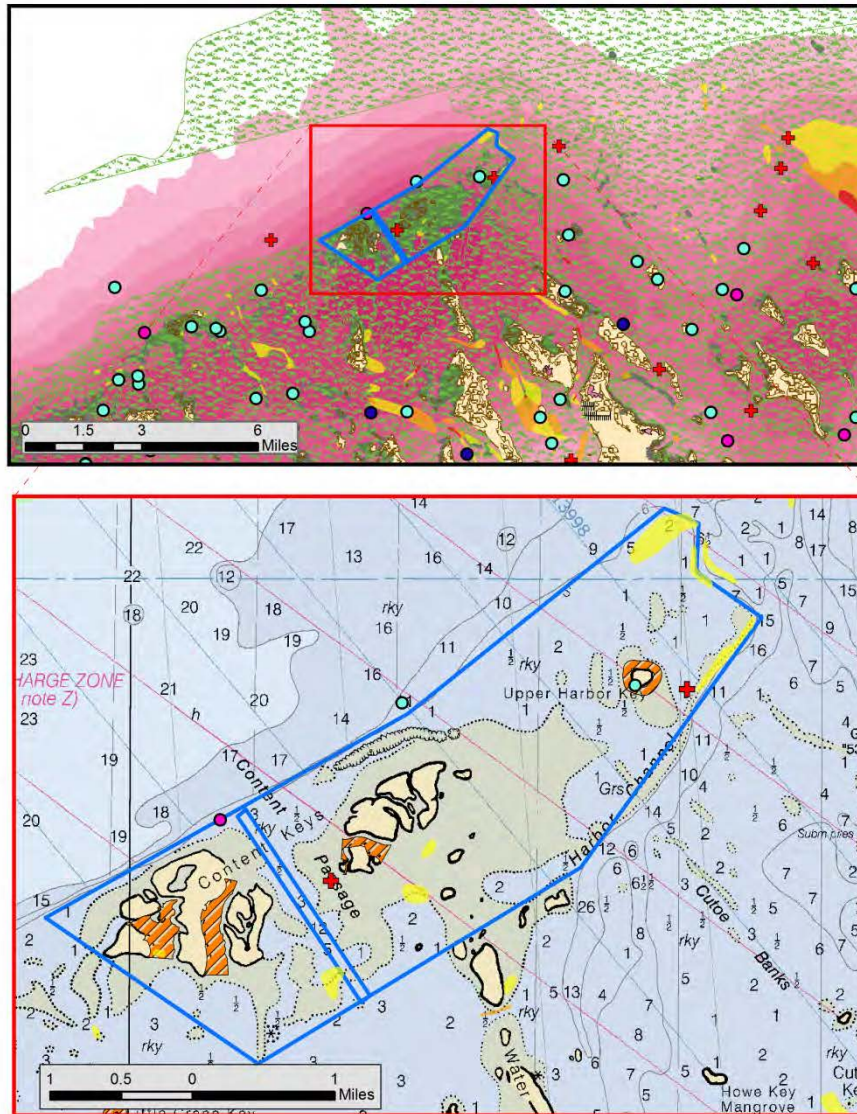
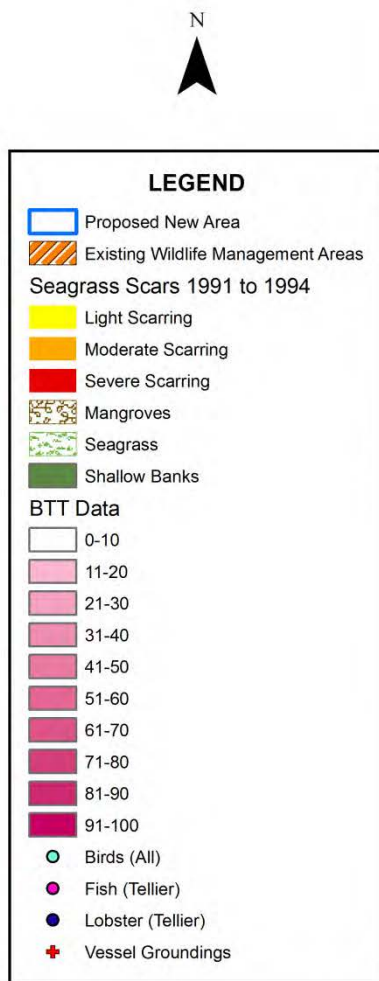
**Key Lois-Loggerhead Basin:** This basin area is highly used by migratory tarpon and flats fishermen from Feb thru the end of June. It is also located near highly populated areas and a heavily trafficked channel (Bow Channel).

**Access Restrictions:** Temporal catch and release pole/troll zone (Feb-June). After June, the area is no longer used by fish and thus is not needed.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** This zone would limit conflict between boaters "cutting corners" thru the basin and flats fishermen targeting tarpon there.



## Content Keys and Upper Harbor Key (proposed new area)



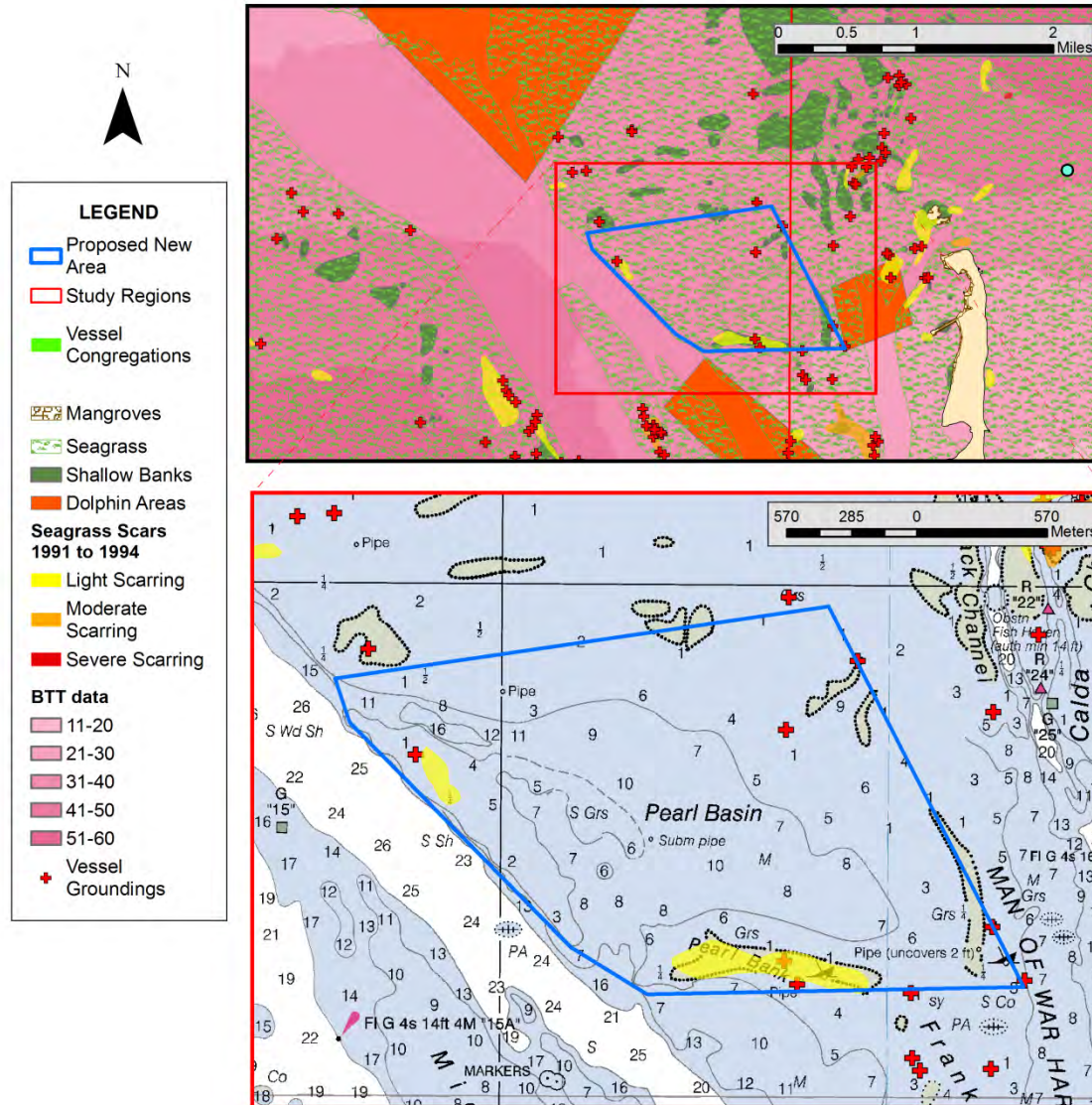
**Content Keys and Upper Harbor Key:** Many non-fishing boaters ignore the channel and "run" the grass flats in order to reach shallow sandy areas or the Gulf.

**Access Restrictions:** This should be a year round, catch and release, pole/troll zone; except for Content Pass which should be marked and remain open use to allow transit between the basin and the Gulf.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** This zone would end this practice, limiting conflict between flats fishermen and boaters while protecting shallow grass meadows.



## Pearl Basin (proposed new area)

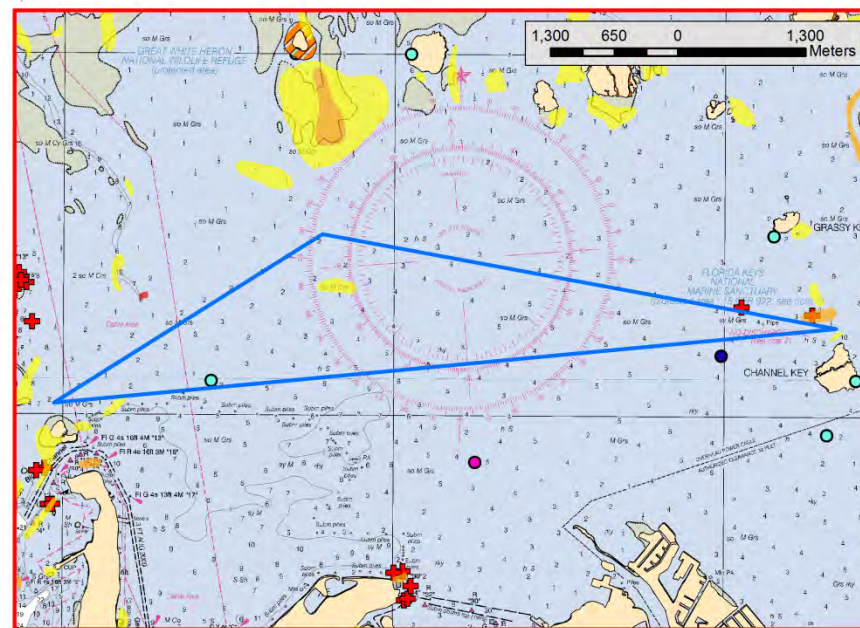
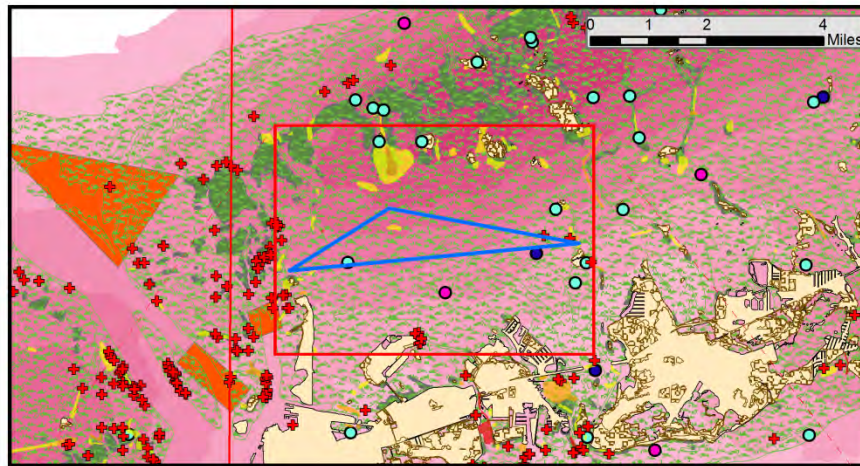
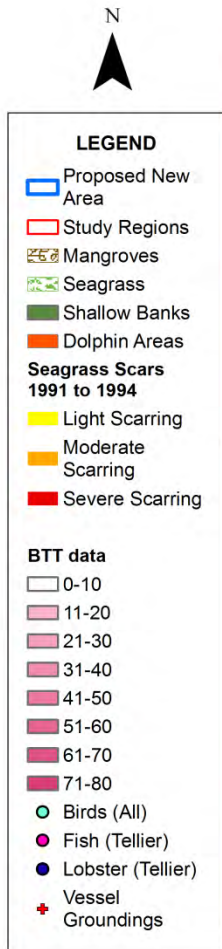


### Pearl Basin:

**Access Restrictions:** This should be a temporal idle only area (Feb-July) from Calda to Pearl Banks and between the NW Channel and Man o' War Harbor.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** This zone would relieve conflict between fishermen and boats transiting the basin headed to the NW Channel.

## Seaplane Basin (proposed new area)



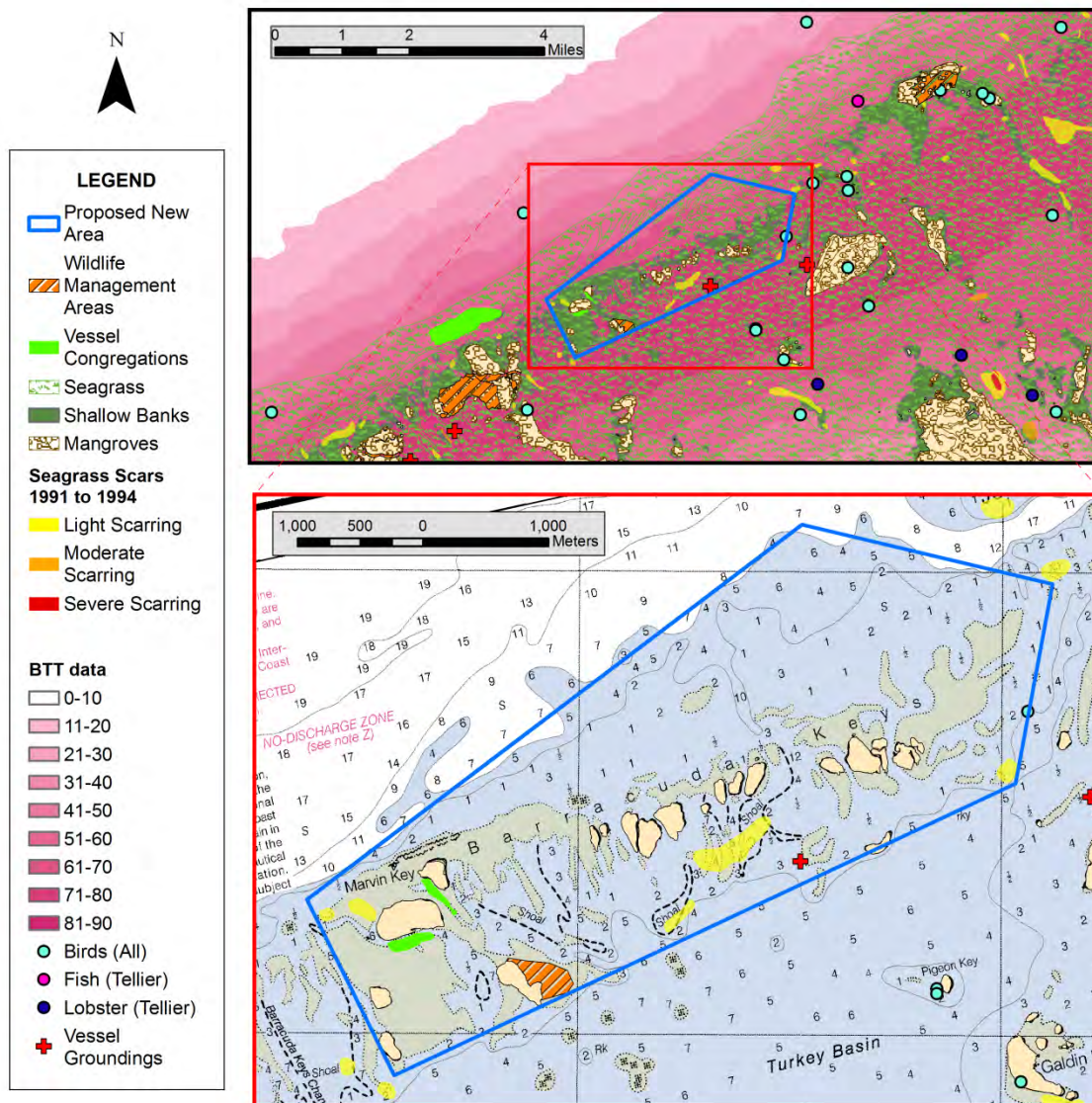
**Seaplane Basin:** Like Loggerhead Basin, this area will seasonally hold large numbers of tarpon and flats fishermen, but is located near a high traffic area.

**Access Restrictions:** This should be a temporal idle only zone (Feb-June).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** The zone would prevent conflict between flats fishermen and other boaters, but would in no way hinder traffic through the area.



## Marvin Key and Barracuda Keys (proposed new area)



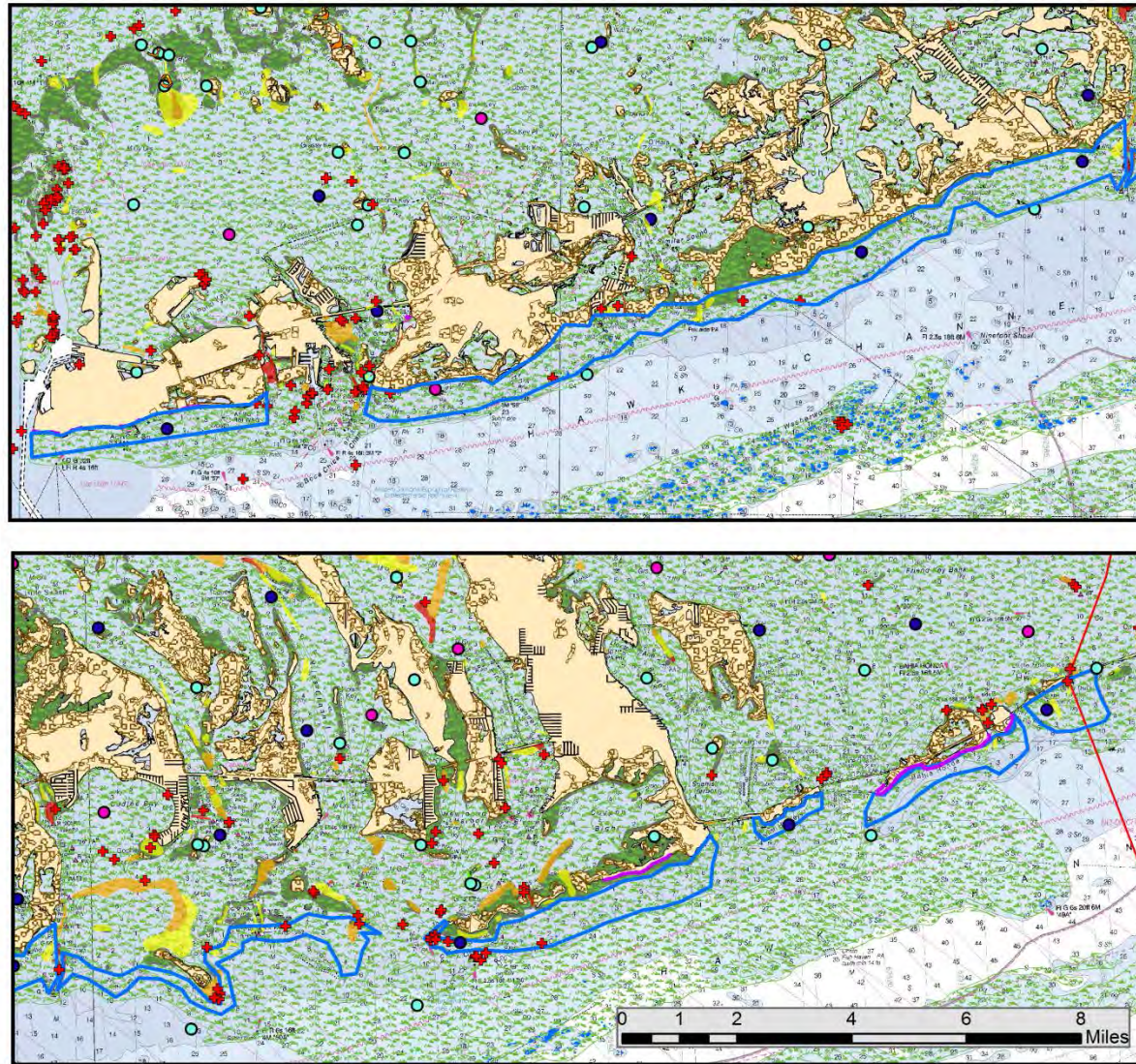
### Marvin Keys and Barracuda Keys:

**Access Restrictions:** This zone should be a year round, catch and release, pole/troll, with idle only alternative in navigable channels.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Like the Content/Upper Harbor zone, this zone will protect shallow fishing areas and relieve conflict between fishermen and other boaters who transit the area to reach "party areas".



## Tarpon Migration Line (proposed new area)



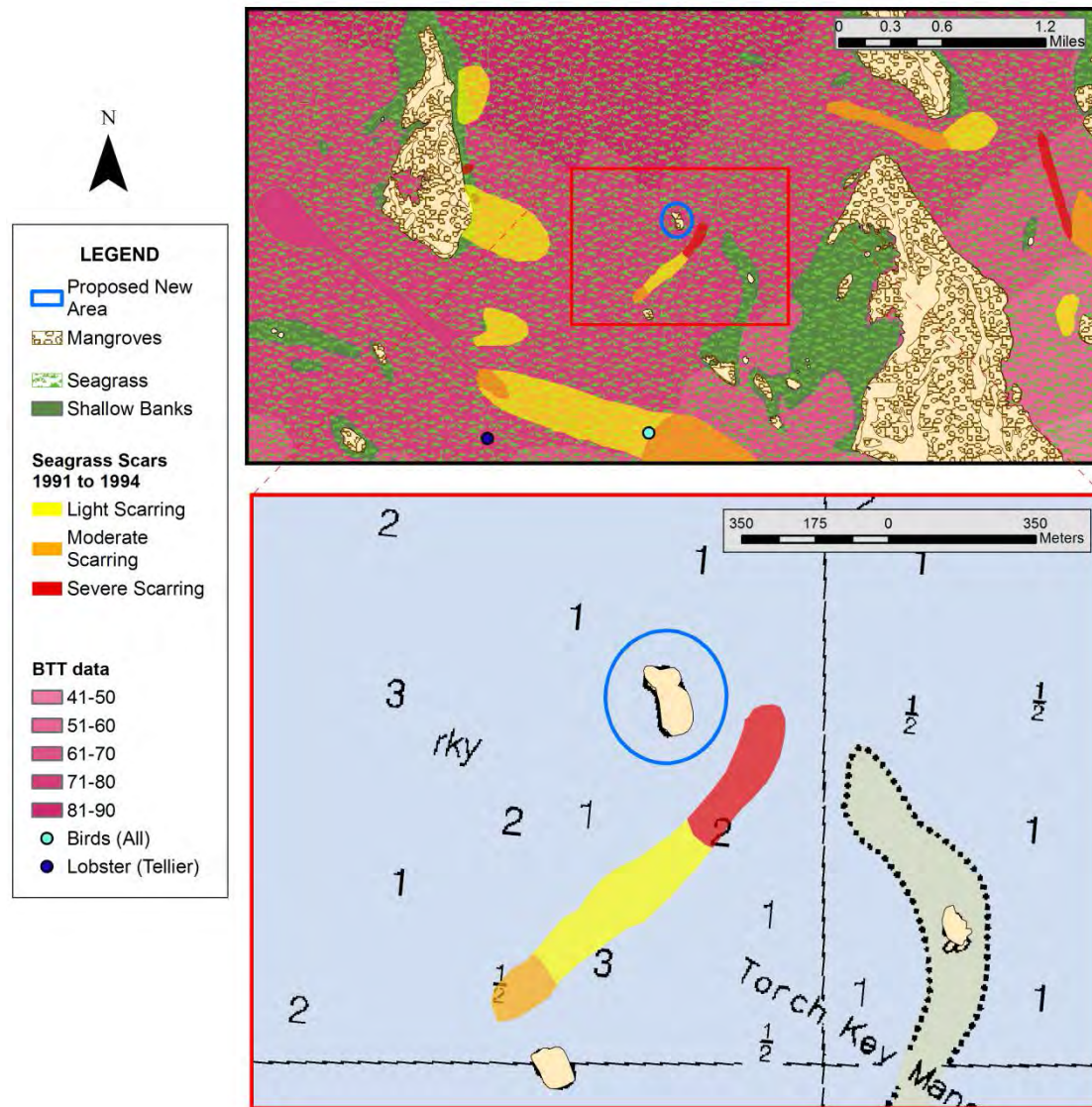
### Tarpon Migration Line:

**Access Restrictions:** Temporal (April-June) idle only zone to protect the Oceanside migratory travel lanes used by Tarpon (*Megalops atlanticus*).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** The water they frequent (<10ft) is heavily used by boaters. This traffic greatly effects this species and generates daily conflict between fisherman and other users.



## Island near Torch Key (proposed new area)

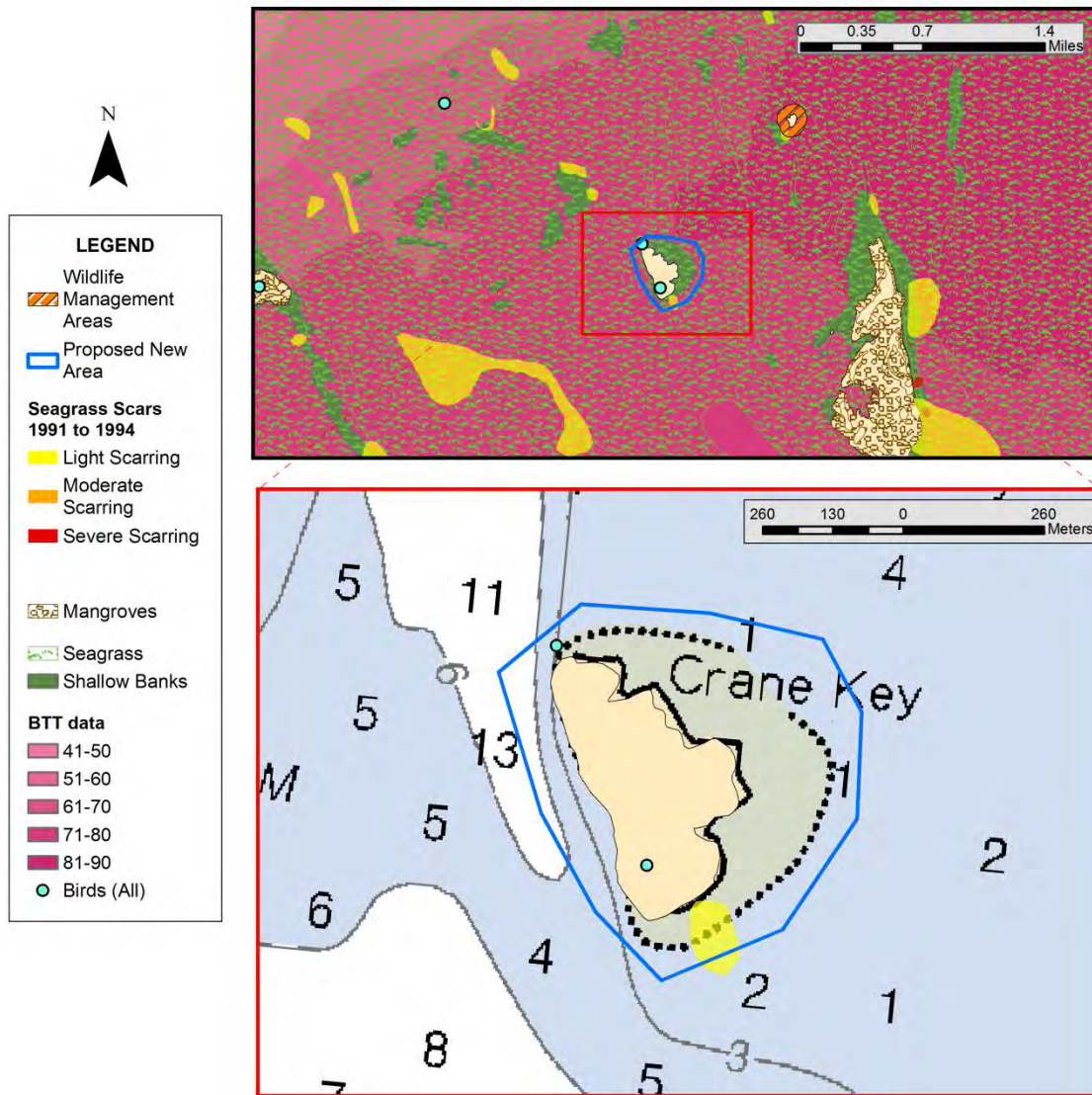


**Island Near Torch Key:** Huge frigatebird roost, and there is also great white heron activity there.

**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:**

## Crane Key (proposed new areas)



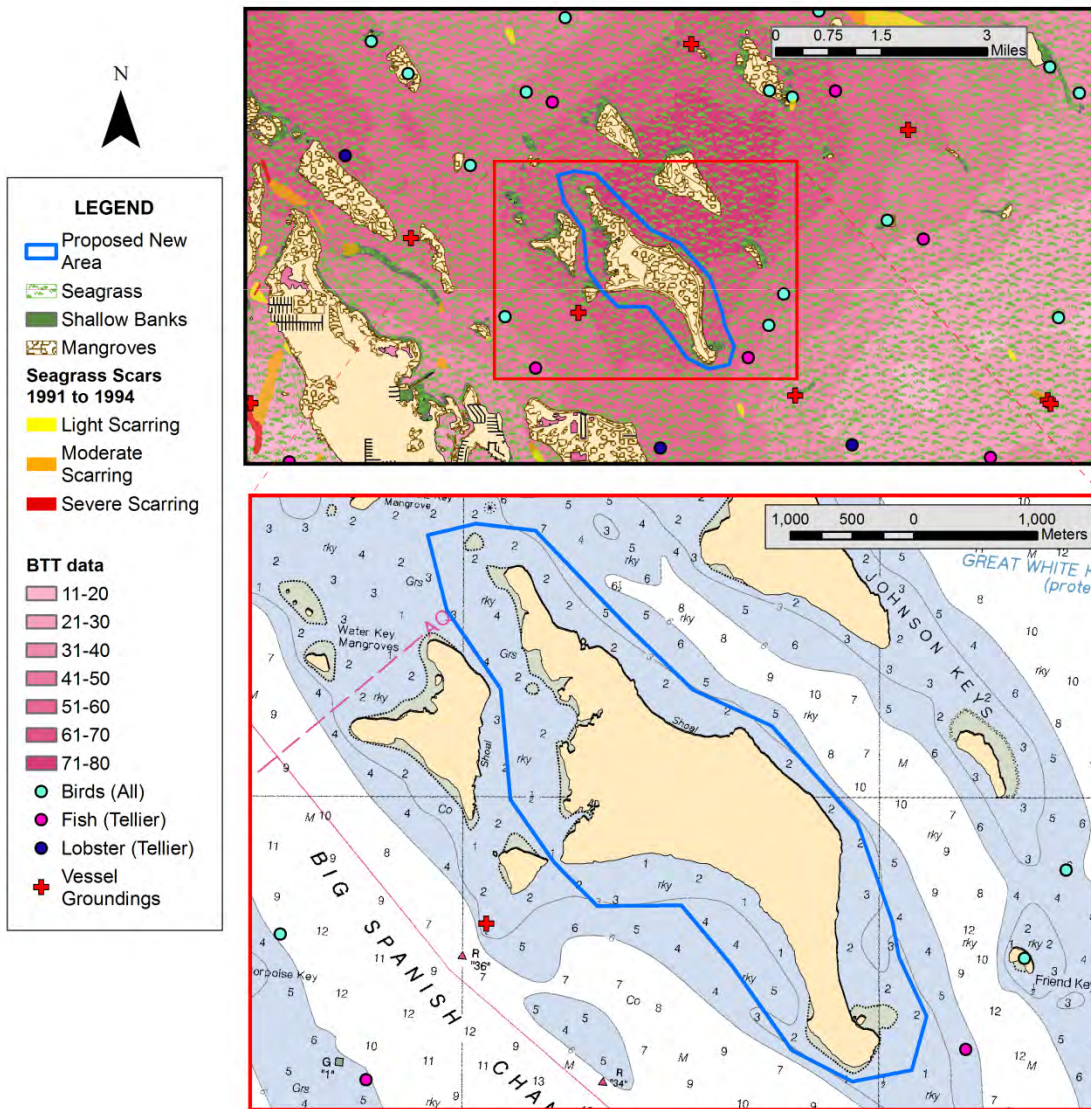
### Crane Key:

**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone around entire key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:**



## Little Pine Mangrove Key (proposed new areas)



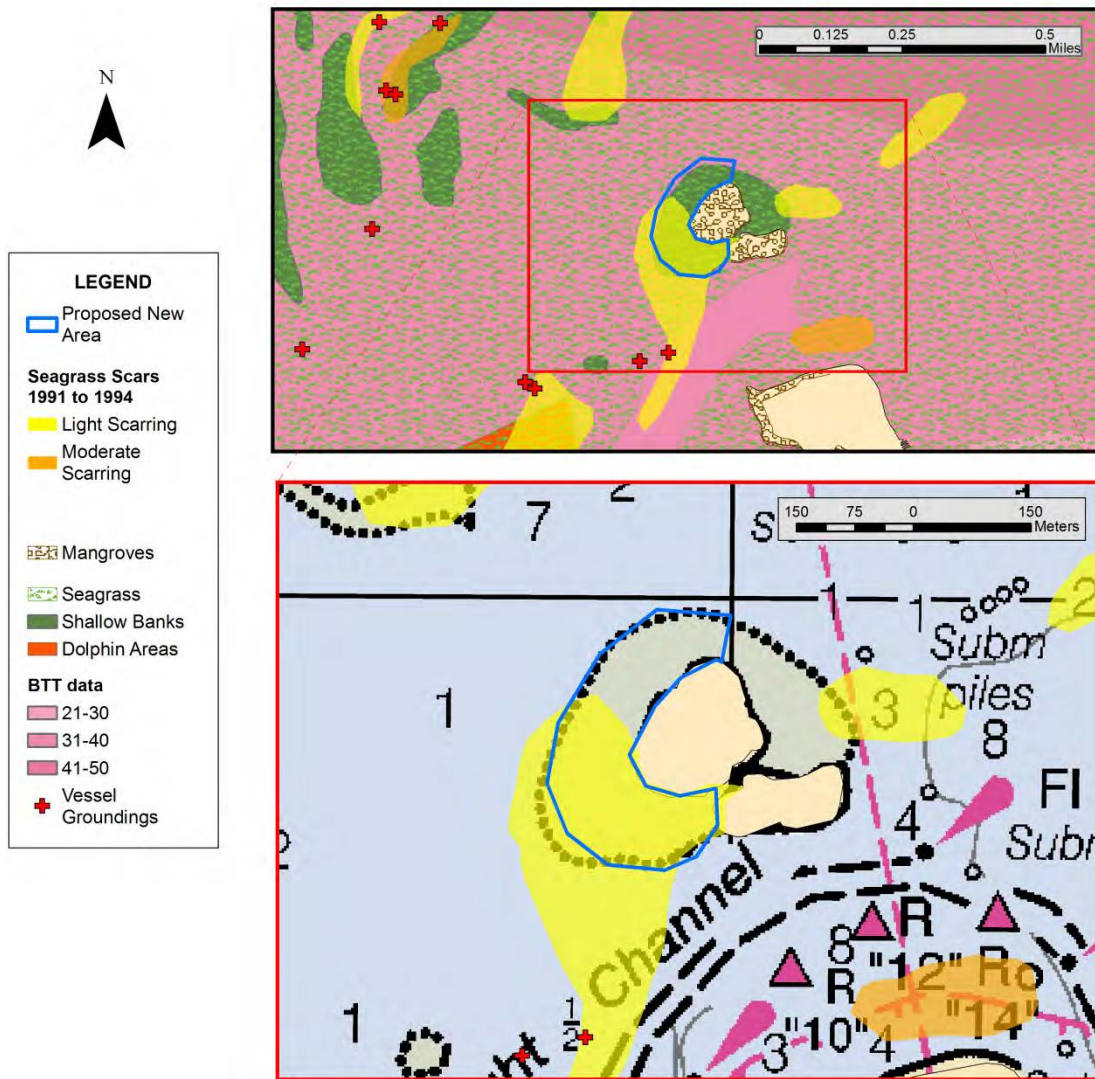
### Little Pine Mangrove Key:

Frigatebird roost, nesting reddish egrets, tri-colored and great white herons.

**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone around entire key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:**

## Demolition Key (proposed new areas)



**Demolition Key:** Island that includes great white heron nests and frigatebirds.

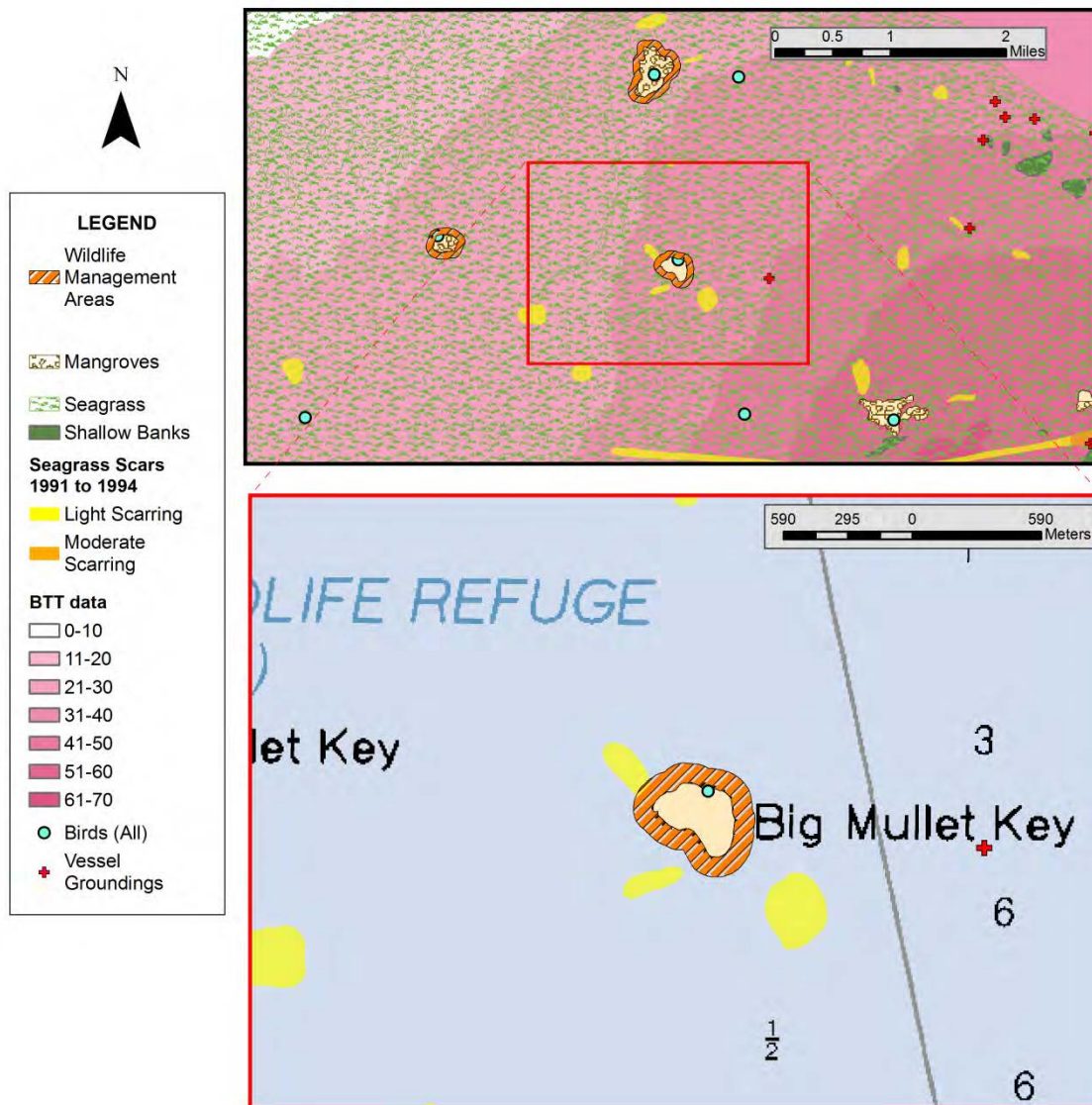
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone around shallow flats.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Commenter is concerned about disturbance by PWC.



# MARQUESAS

## Big Mullet Key Wildlife Management Area



**Big Mullet Key:** The island harbors nesting great white herons and a variety of other wading birds. Mangrove terrapins are also present.

**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone (300 feet) around entire key.

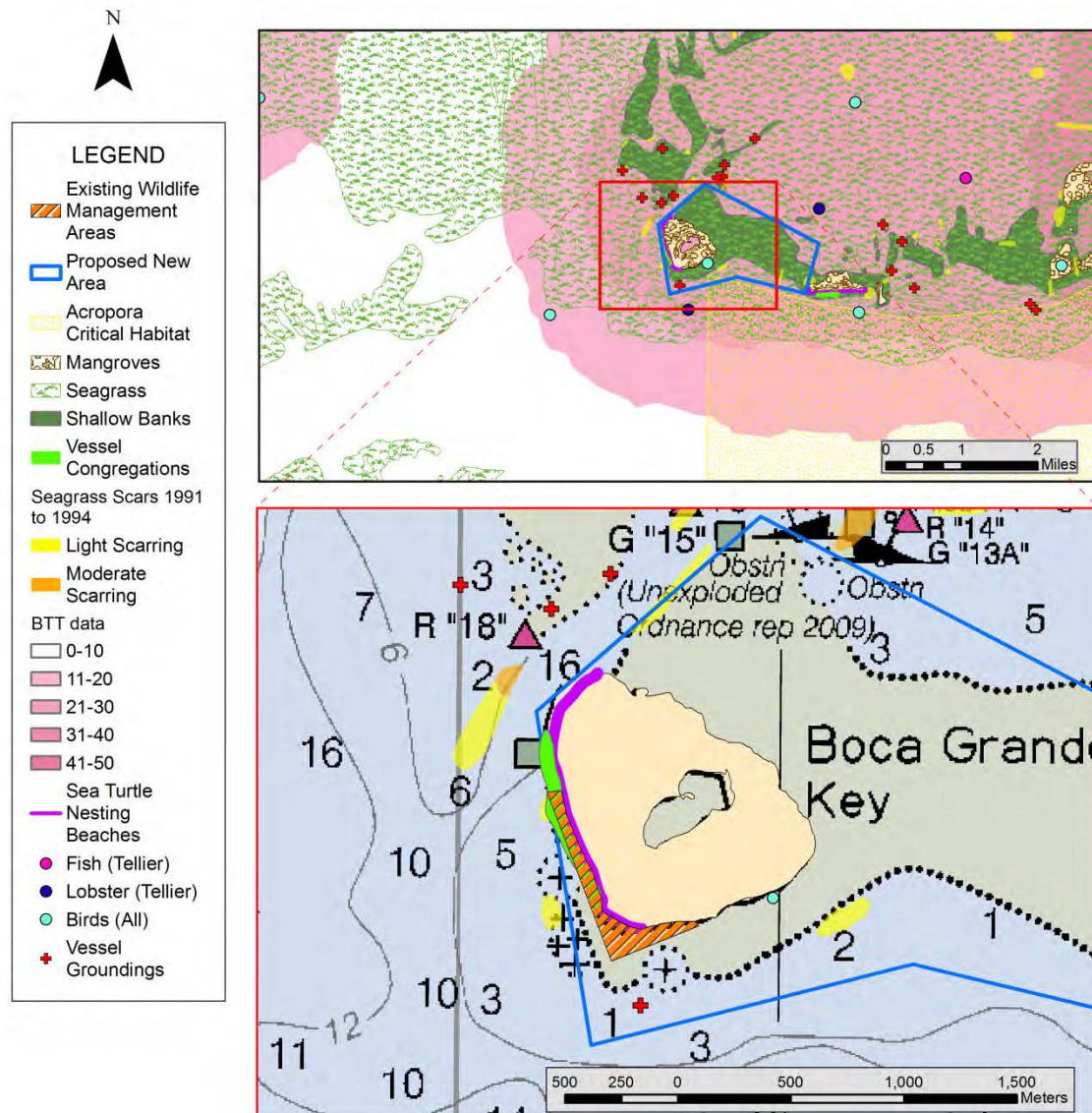
**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Determine if more protection is needed for nesting/wading/migrating birds. Designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone.

This WMA has never had buoys marking the WMA and it would be beneficial if it did.

Replace with idle speed only. The regulations are totally ignored. This might at least get boaters to slow down.



## Boca Grande Key Wildlife Management Area



**Boca Grande Key:** Many species of birds use this area, including some that are listed as federally endangered and threatened. Also turtle nesting.

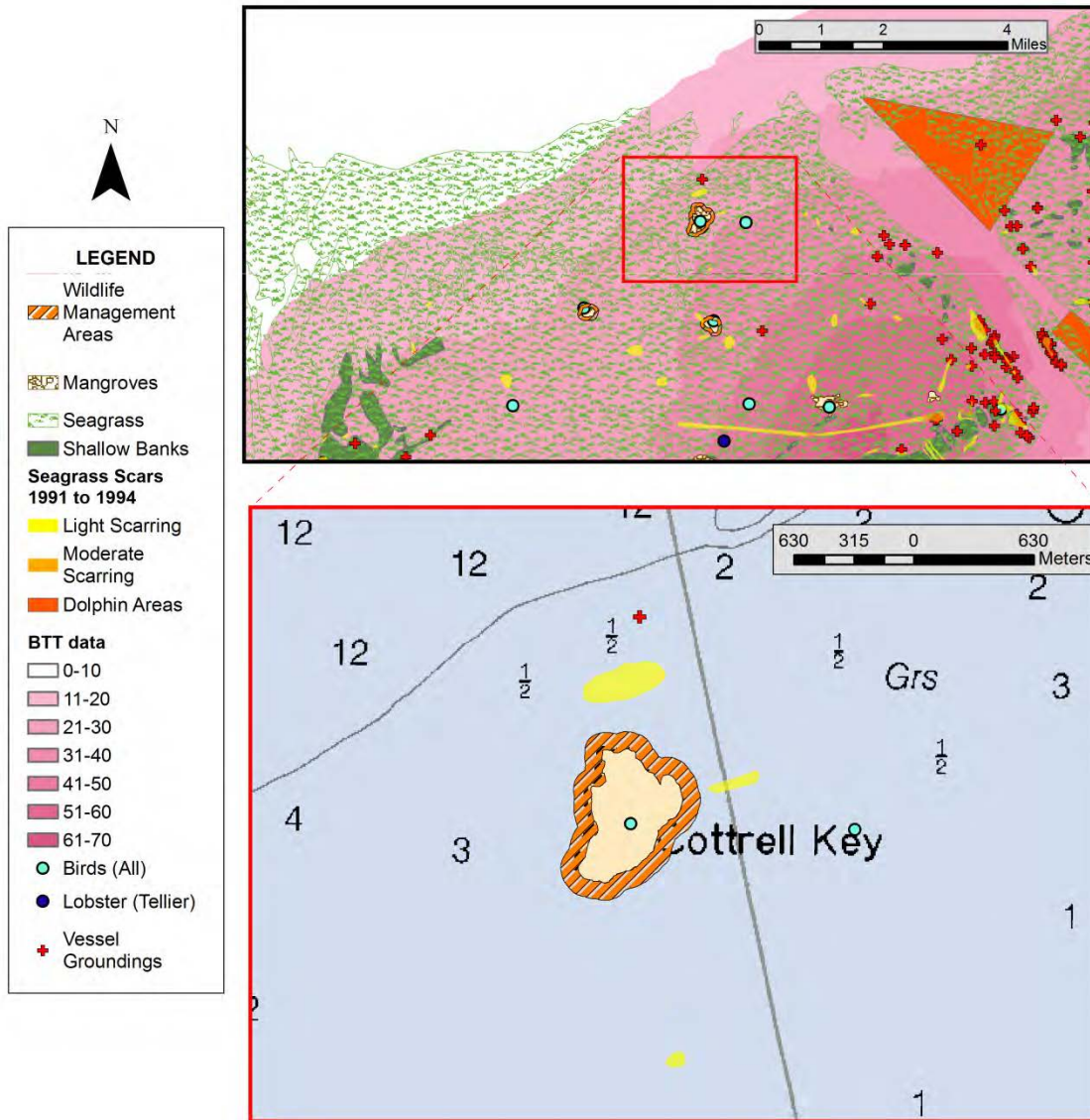
**Access Restrictions:** South one-half of beach closed (beach above mean high water closed by Department of the Interior).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** High use area for "party zone". Anchoring and walking on island is disrupting habitat. Determine if area allow current uses. If not, allow non-obtrusive access, ie: pole/troll/idle/paddle designation and designate island as "no access".

This island is of extreme importance to shorebirds. It also has many species of nesting wading birds including reddish egret. The issue of increasing recreational uses on the beaches should be addressed. Consider closing more or all of the beaches of this island.

Prevent people from throwing anchors on beach, tying to signs post through beach protection regulations. Install mooring buoys.

## Cottrell Key Wildlife Management Area



**Cottrell Key:** Cottrell Key contains a variety of wading birds, and mangrove terrapins.

**Access Restrictions:** No-motor zone (300 feet) around entire key.

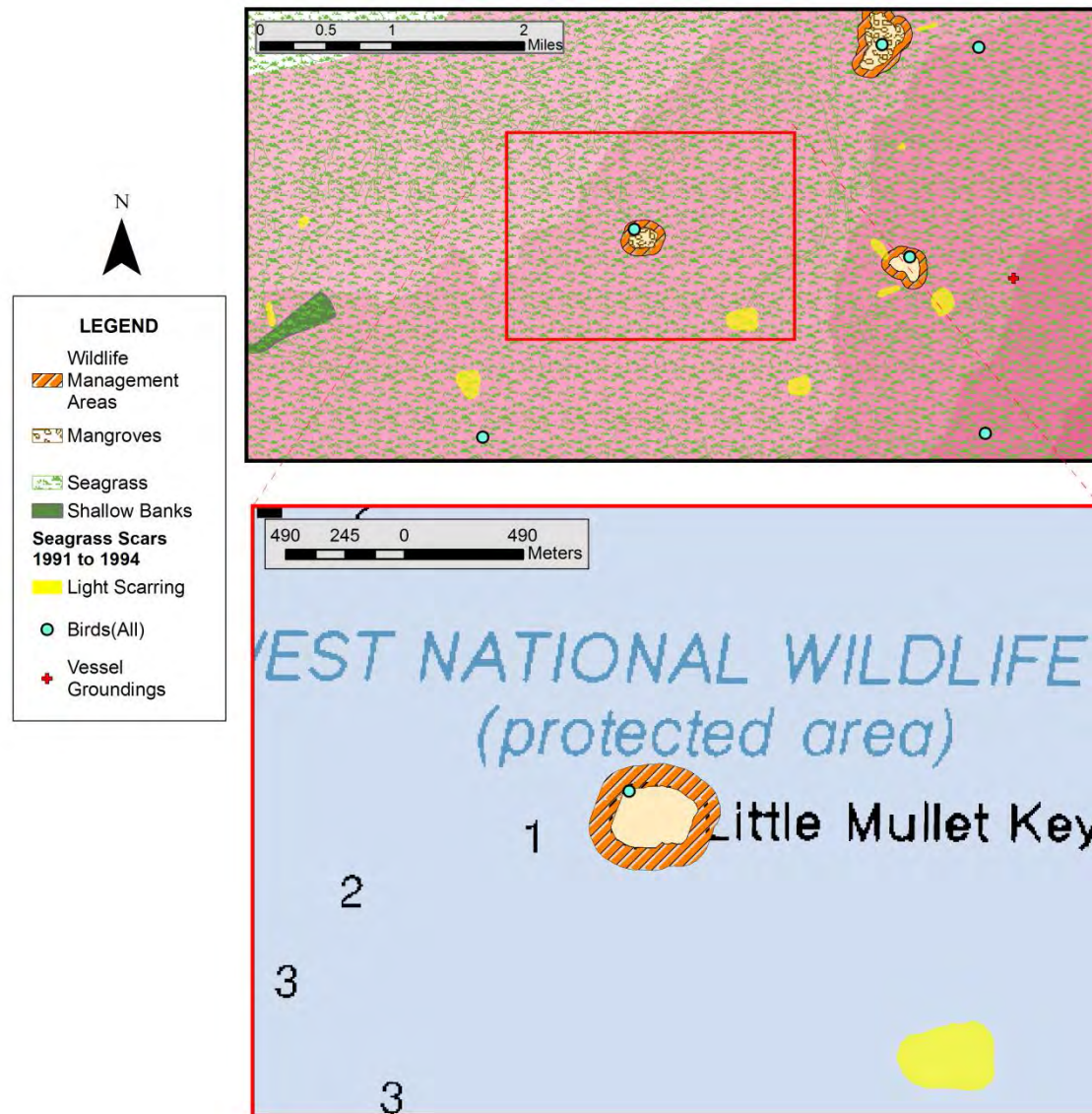
**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Determine if more protection is needed for nesting/wading/migrating birds. Designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone.

This WMA is of high importance as it is used by large numbers of water birds. It is also the only nesting location of brown pelicans in the KWNWR. This WMA needs better marking by buoys. The area receives a lot of human disturbance.

Pole and Troll Zone, would also reduce disturbance to wading birds and terrapins.



## Little Mullet Key Wildlife Management Area



**Little Mullet:** Little Mullet Key is a small mangrove located about 15 kilometers northwest of Key West.

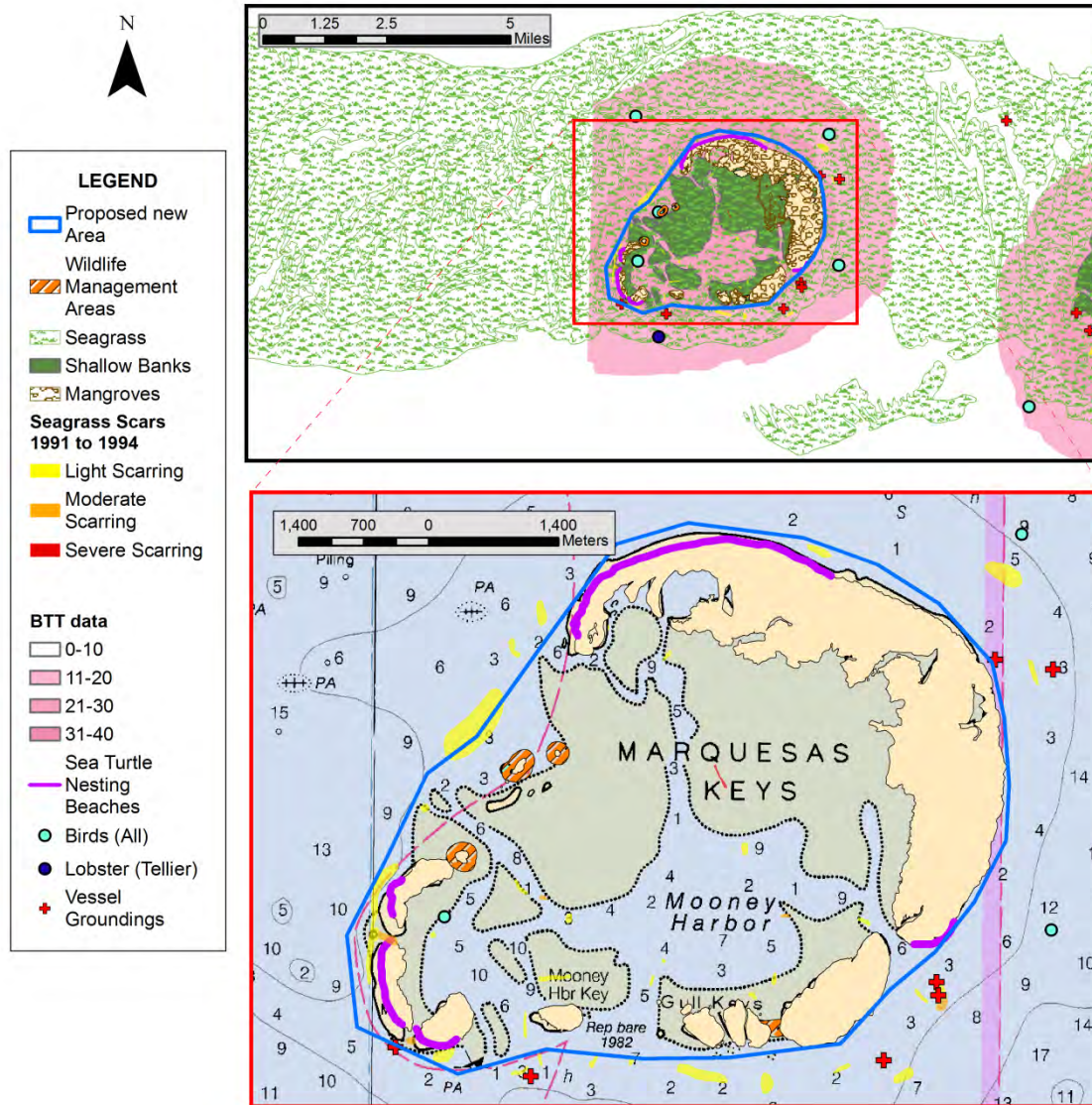
**Access Restrictions:** No-access buffer zone (300 feet) around entire key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone. Remove "no access" buffer if discussed and determined that uses listed about will not disturb wildlife or habitat.

This WMA is also of high importance as it is used by large numbers of wading birds and also has nesting bald eagles. It also is an important location for roosting frigate birds. There are no buoys marking the No Access-Buffer zone and it would be very beneficial if it did. This WMA needs marking surrounding it.

Pole and Troll Zone around (300 ft) of entire Key. Limits access and reduces disturbance to wildlife while protecting seagrass from prop scarring.

## Marquesas Keys Wildlife Management Area



**Marquesas Keys:** The islands are used by sea turtles and birds for nesting, feeding, and roosting.

**Access Restrictions:** (i) No-motor zones (300 feet) around three smallest keys on western side of chain; (ii) no-access buffer zone (300 feet) around one island at western side of chain; (iii) idle speed only/no-wake zone in southwest tidal creek.

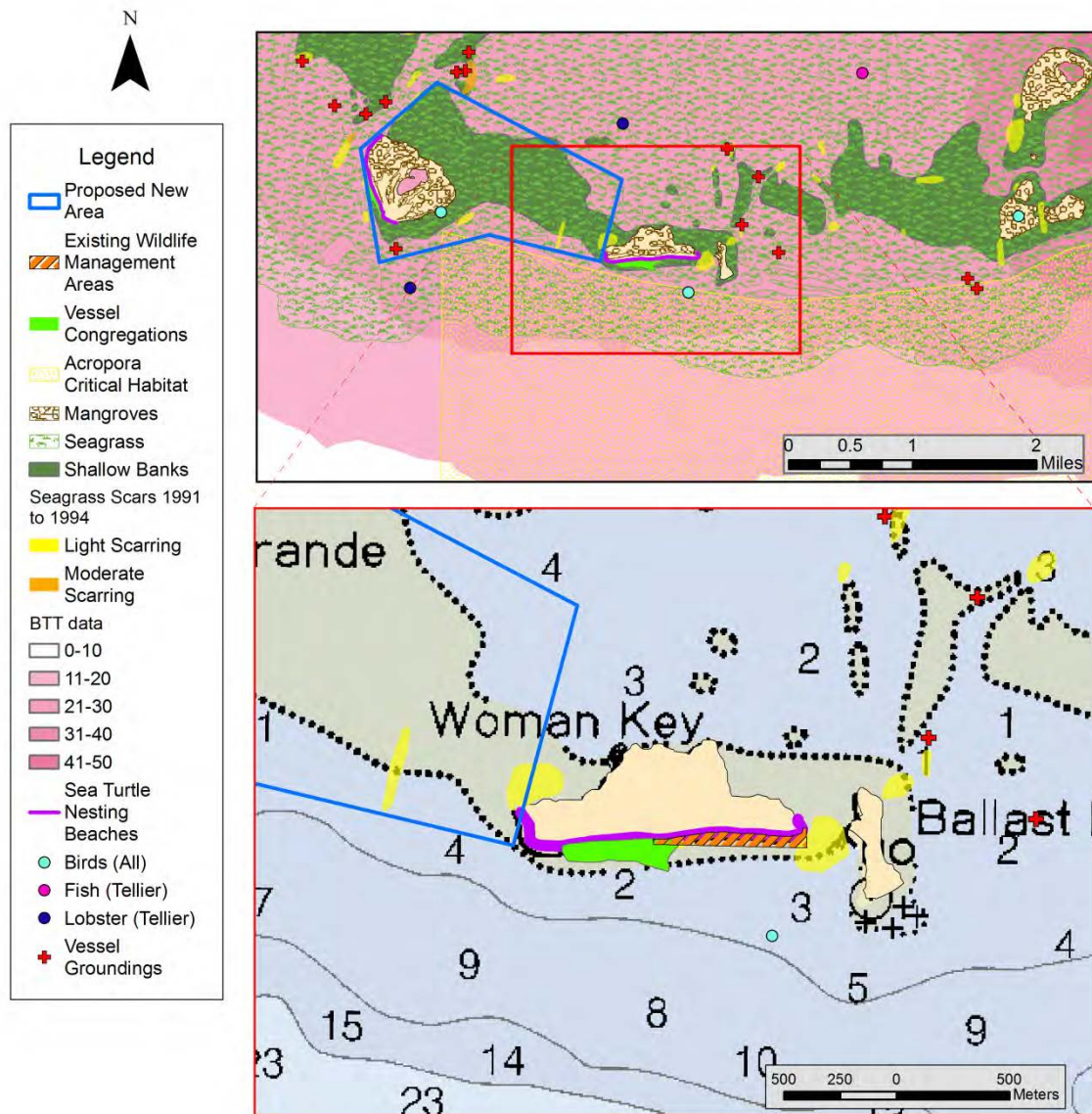
**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Determine if increased buffer zone around small islands in the interior and West side need increased protection. Designate all flats as "pole/troll/idle" zone. Designate all tidal creeks into Mooney Harbor as "idle only" zones. Add Pole and Troll Zones around (600 feet) all other Keys in the Marquesas.

Still important for decreasing disturbance of nesting, feeding, and roosting sea turtles and birds.

(iii) Eliminate the idle only/no wake restriction in se tidal creek. This same restriction should be moved to the next tidal creek to the west. A roost for frigate birds is present there and is not protected.



## Woman Key Wildlife Management Area



**Woman Key:** Half of the beach and sand spit on the southeast side is closed. Loggerhead turtles and several species of wading birds nest in the area and a large number of shorebirds use the sand spits on the southeast side of the island.

**Access Restrictions:** One-half of beach and sand spit on southeast side closed (beach and sand spit above mean high water closed by Department of the Interior).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Designate all surrounding flats as "pole/troll/idle". Consider seasonal "no access" expanding outward from island during turtle nesting and birthing months.

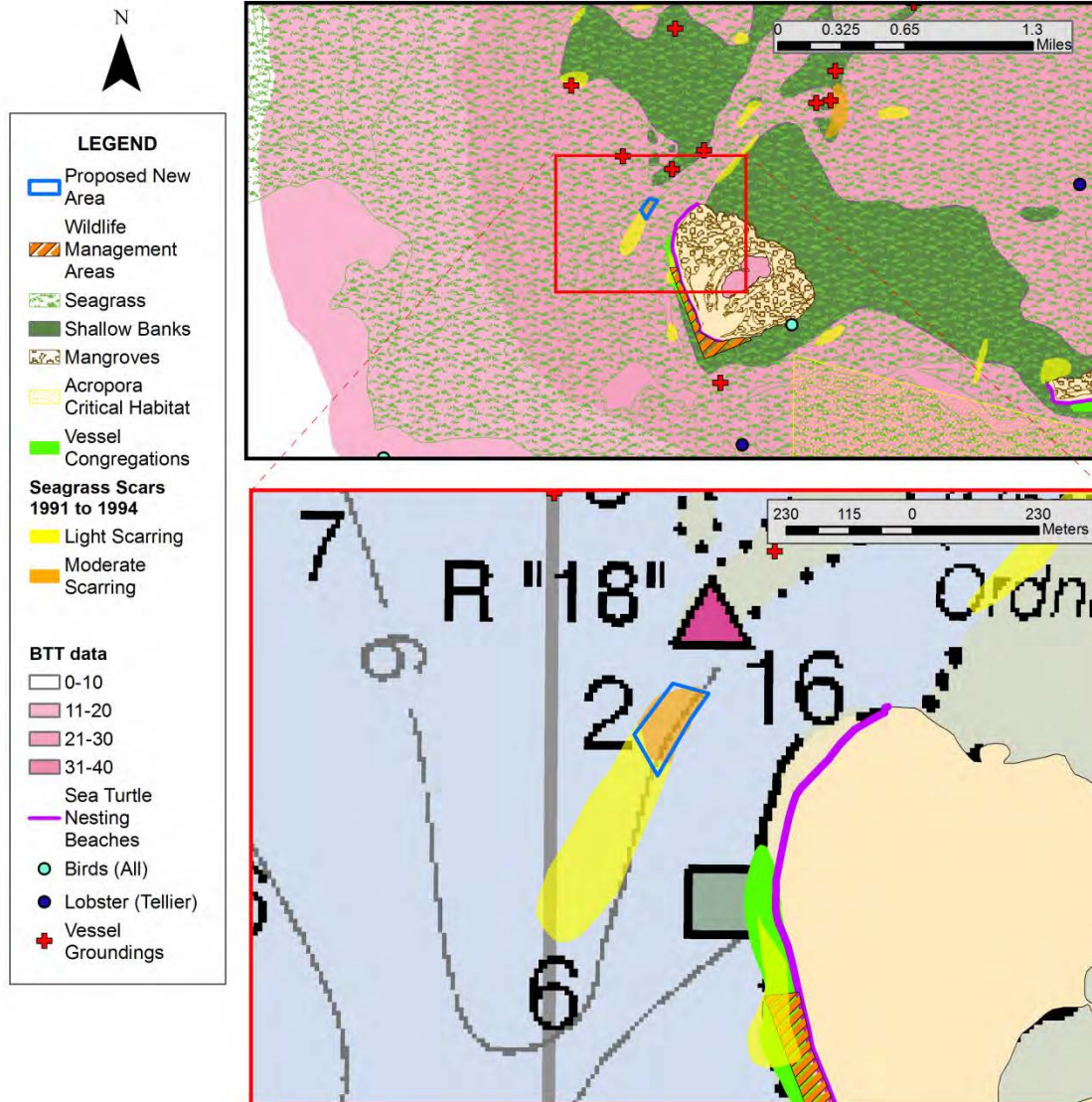
The buoys are in poor shape here.

The beach is only lightly used, when compared to Boca Grande. Recommend that the entire beach be closed to protect this valuable habitat. It would be largest protected Atlantic beach in the keys.

Close entire beach on Woman Key to more effectively decrease disturbance.

Open beach to high water mark.

## Wilma Key (proposed new area)



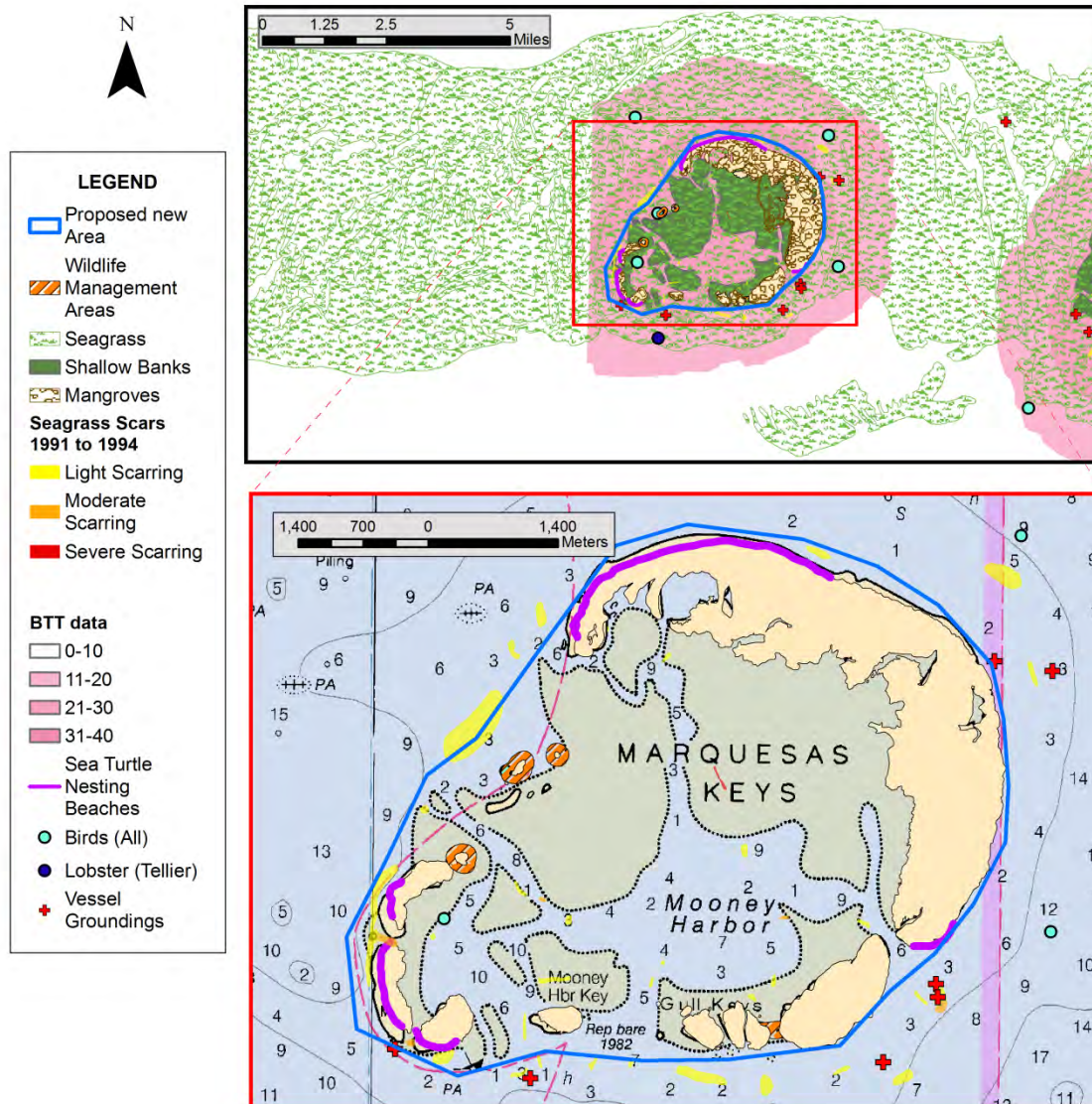
**Wilma Key:** Despite its changes it is still worth zoning as a WMA to minimize disturbance to nesting terns and plovers and resting water birds of many species.

**Access Restrictions:** No access buffer zone.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Decrease disturbance of nesting/roosting birds.



## Marquesas (proposed new area)



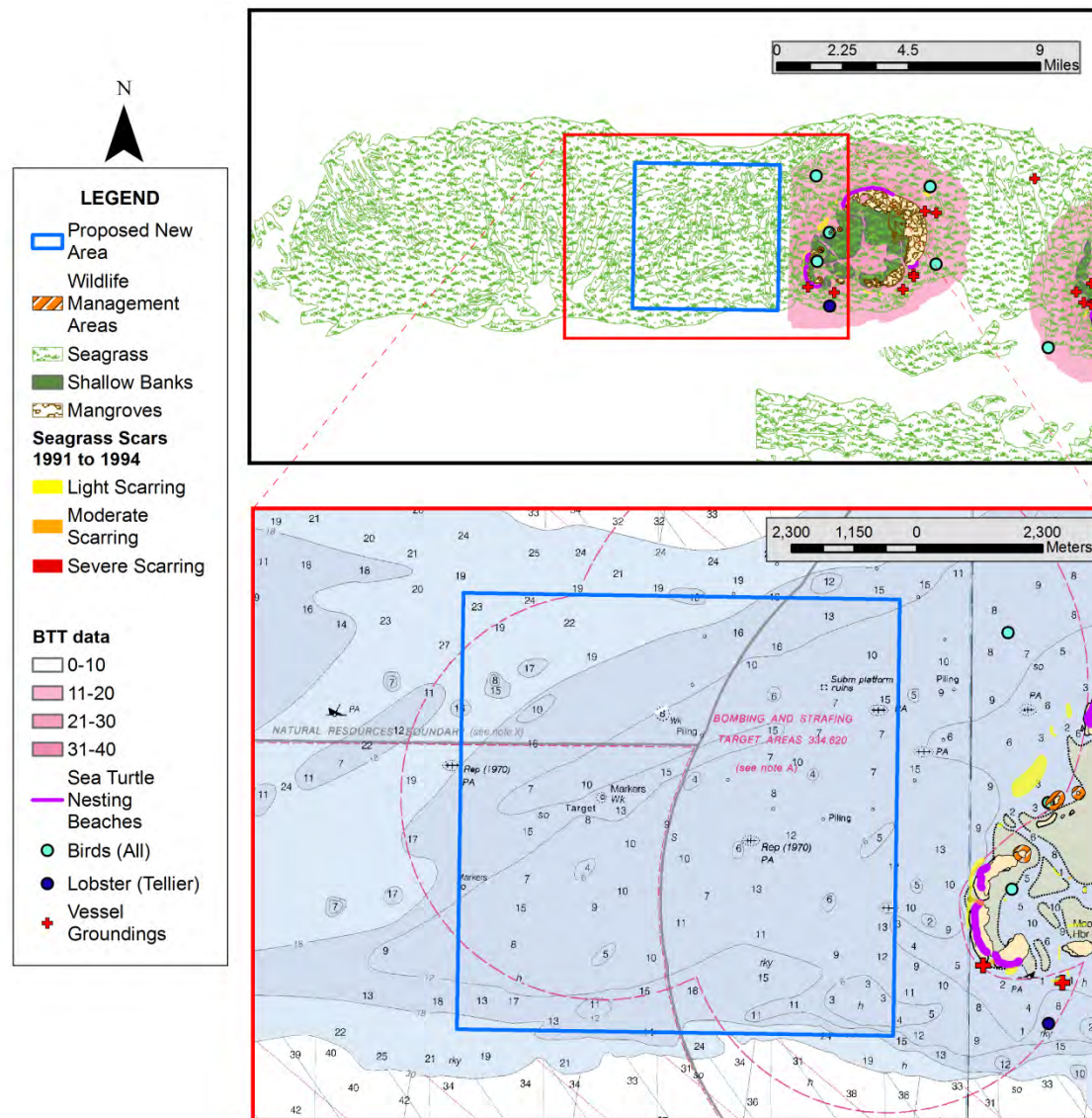
### Marquesas:

**Access Restrictions:** This area should be protected as a catch and release only zone. The only exception to this is that bait harvest should be allowed (with permit).

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** This area, most frequently utilized by flats guides could benefit from catch and release regulations.

Change current no motor zones to no access zones.

## Marquesas Keys (proposed new area)



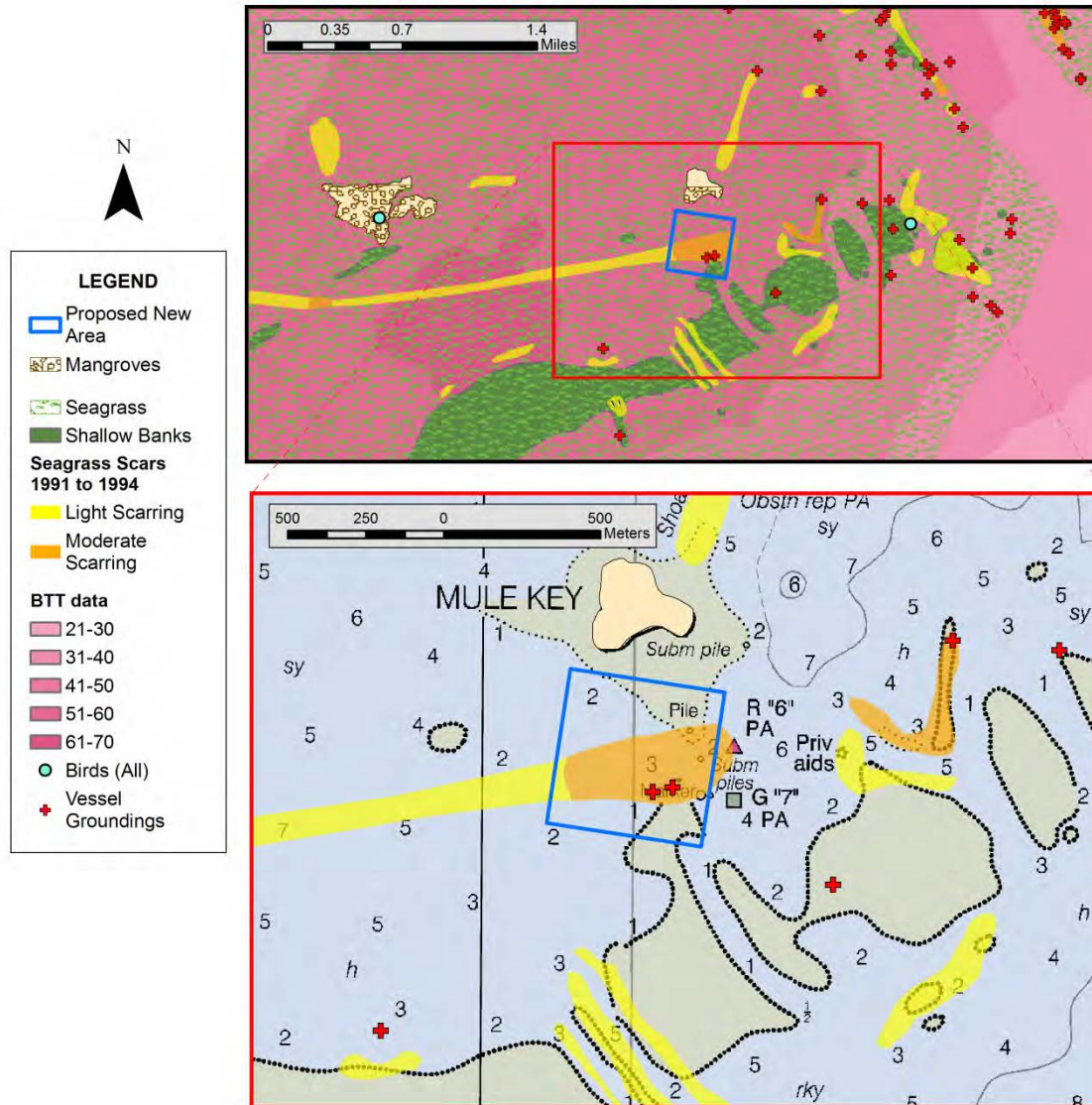
**Marquesas Keys:** Protects green turtles on an internationally important foraging ground from boat strikes and fishery interactions. Also, allows for important research on green turtles and their importance to the seagrass ecosystem.

**Access Restrictions:** Research Only Zone, 5 mile x 5 mile area 1 mile due west of the Marquesas Keys for 10 years.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Reduce disturbance to endangered green sea turtles on a rare foraging ground while allowing critical research on this species.



## Mule Key (proposed new area)

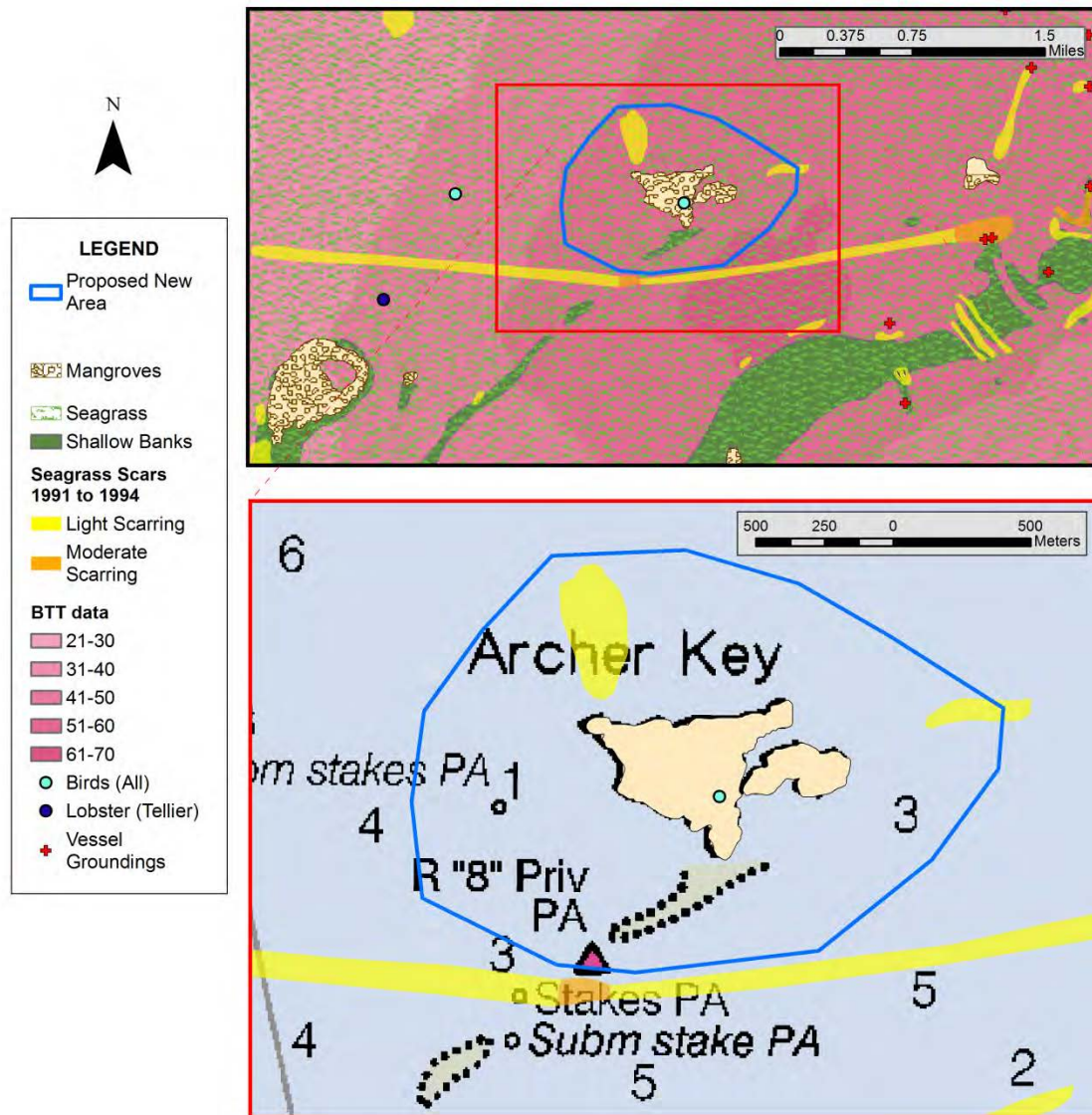


**Mule Key:** Protects sea grass from prop scarring in an area that has seen continued seagrass damage from boat traffic.

**Access Restrictions:** 500 yard idle speed only zone at entrance of Lakes Passage.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Reduce seagrass damage from prop scarring.

## Archer Key (proposed new area)



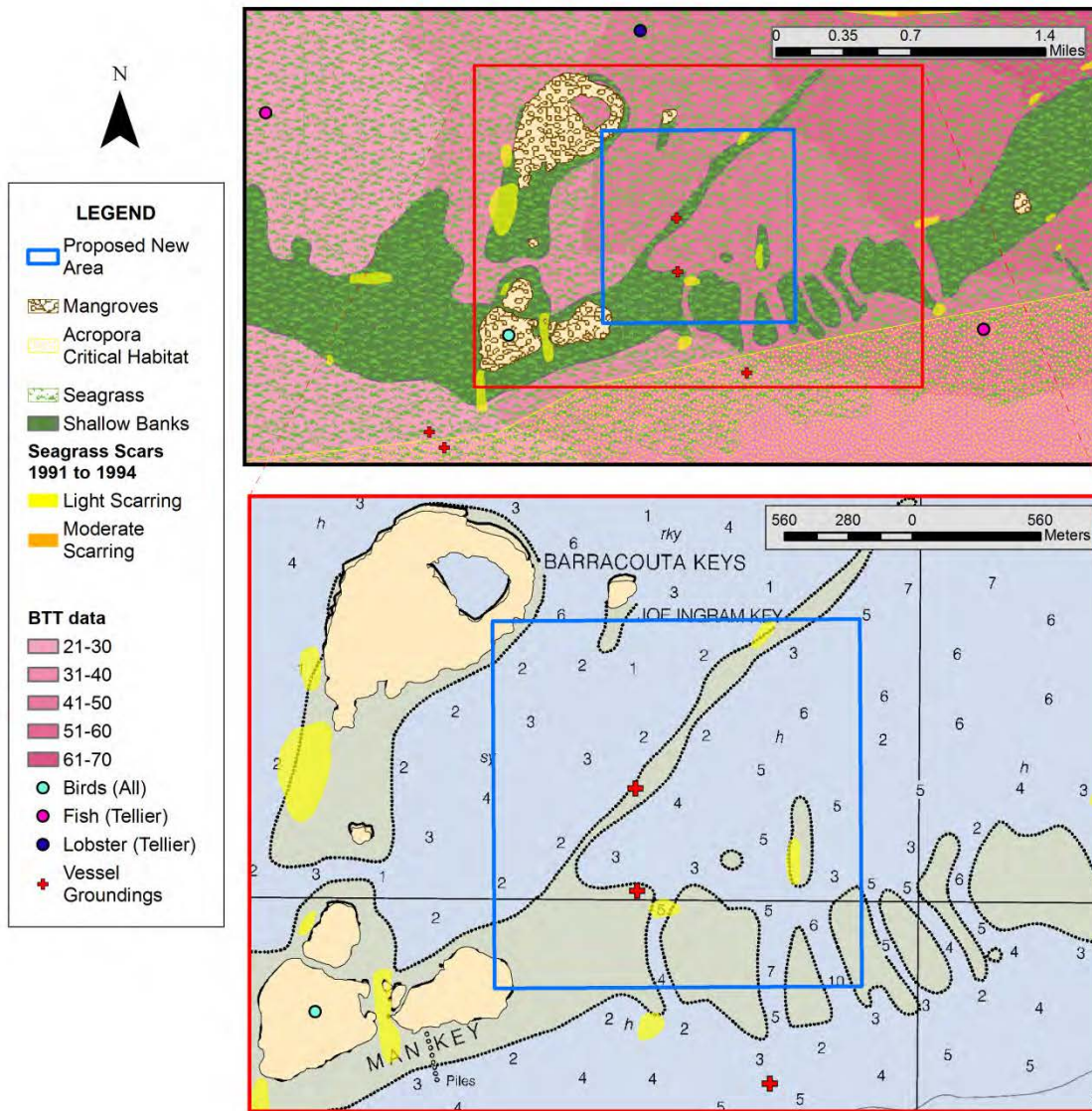
**Archer Key:** Reduces disturbance to nesting and roosting birds and protects seagrass habitat.

**Access Restrictions:** Pole and Troll Zone around (500') entire key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Reduce disturbance to nesting and roosting birds and protect sea grass habitat.



## Barracouta Keys (proposed new area)

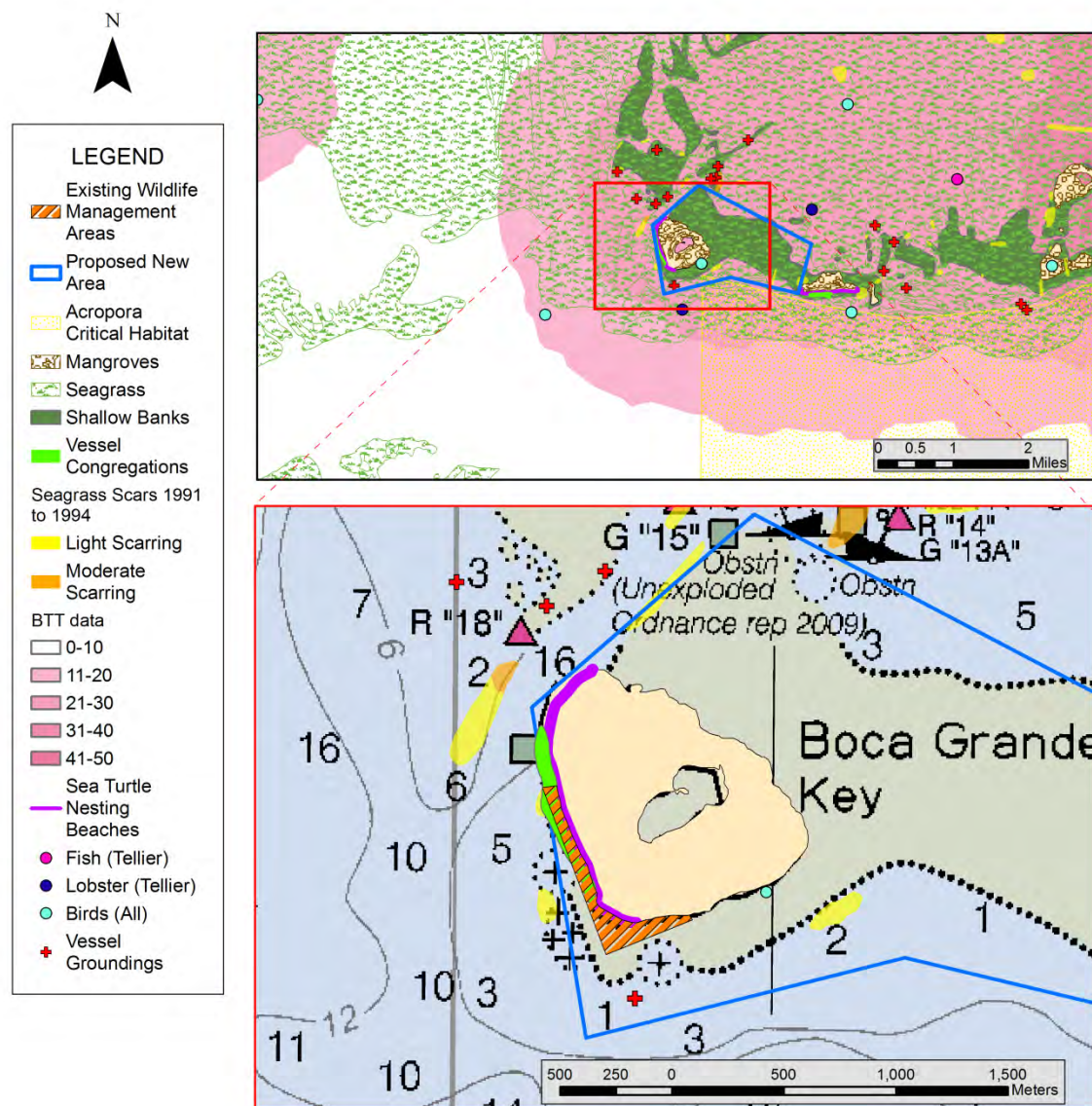


**Barracouta Keys:** Protects sea turtle and important hard bottom habitat.

**Access Restrictions:** 1 mile x 1 mile  
Non extraction Zone southeast of Baracouta Key.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Reduce disturbance to sea turtles and protect important hard bottom habitat.

## Boca Grande and Woman Key Shallow Bank (proposed new area)



**Boca Grande and Woman Key Shallow Bank:** Due to their location, the lack of navigational features in, and the poorly drawn charts of the area, the banks are hard to locate and are susceptible to boat groundings.

**Access Restrictions:** This should be an idle only, catch and release zone, with a bait harvest exception (permit required).

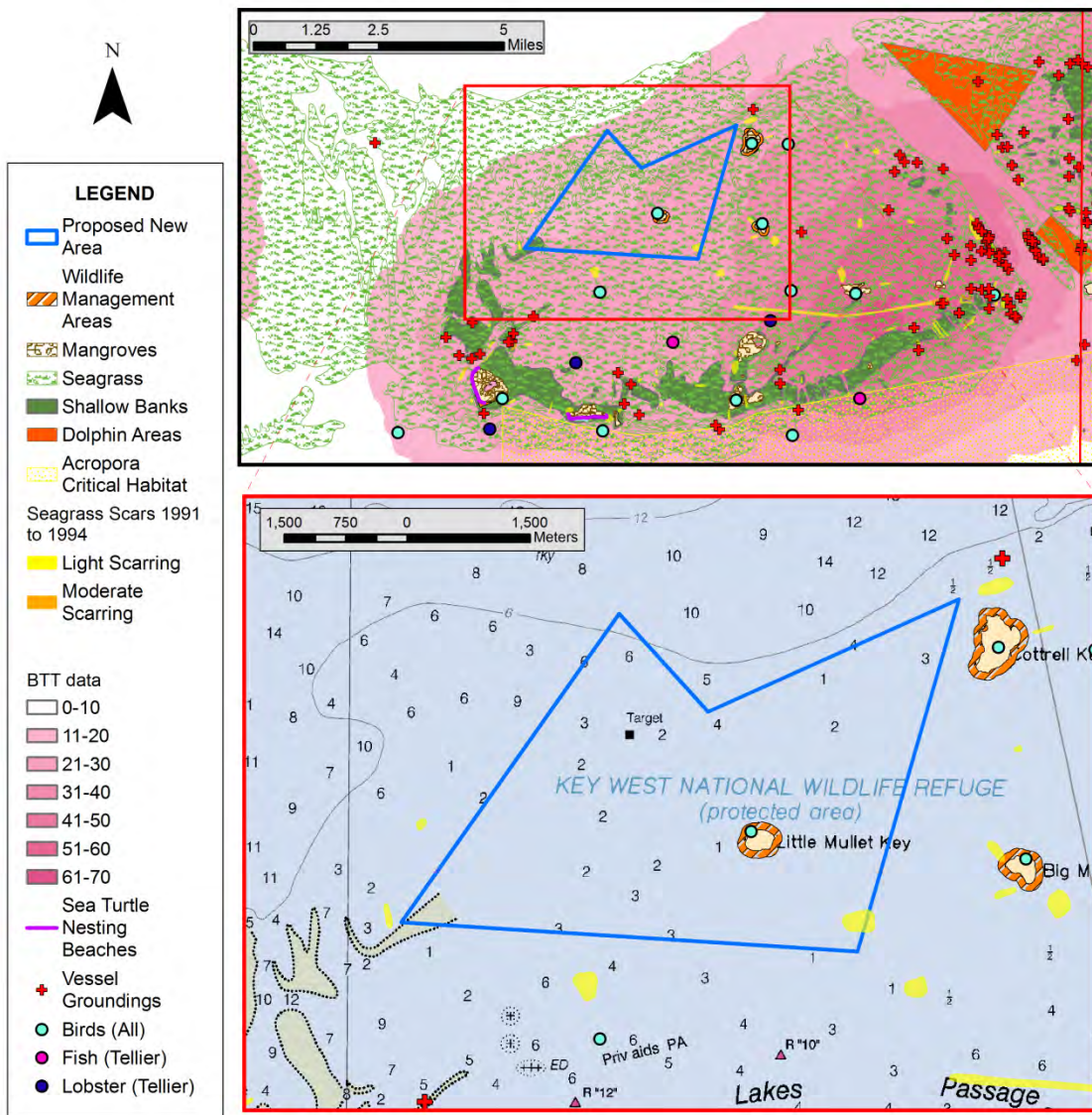
**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** Such zoning would help to protect grass flat from grounding and limit user conflict in a high traffic area.

Open all of Woman Key with a “no motor” zone because of its shallow flats.

Open south beach side of Woman Key for all public and commercial activities.



## Lakes Area–LaVina Bank (proposed new area)



### Lakes Area-LaVina Bank:

**Access Restrictions:** This zone should be a year round idle only area, with the Little Mullet channel remaining normal use.

**Proposed New Area, Comments, or Recommendations:** This zone will protect grass flats/fishing areas from damage by unknowledgeable boaters in what is a poorly marked and poorly mapped area.

# **DRY TORTUGAS**

**(no recommendations)**