



Boat Permits and Moorings Buoys



Boat permits are required for all vessels engaged in recreational activities in the Park. For vessels transiting the park without interruption a boat permit is not required. Within the Research Natural Area (RNA), anchoring is prohibited, day and night. Vessels may use one of the seven visitor use mooring buoys in lieu of anchoring within the RNA. In areas of the park outside the RNA, anchoring is permitted on sandy bottom. Anchoring at night is only allowed within one nautical mile of the Garden Key Harbor Light.

Why Do We Have Mooring Buoys?

Mooring buoys help preserve the fragile coral reef ecosystem by preventing anchors from striking the coral and anchor ropes or chains from chafing or breaking coral. They also provide a convenient way to secure your boat.

Mooring buoys are located adjacent to some of the more popular reefs in the park. Some of these reefs are very shallow so do not attempt to motor across a reef to reach a mooring buoy.

Why Are Permits Necessary?

The permitting process allows the Park to gather information regarding activities taking place in the RNA and the park overall. The intent is that the information will be used by park management for park planning and evaluation of the RNA. Information requested on the permit includes timely information which may be used to assist with search and rescue activities which may occur inside and/or outside the park in this remote ocean setting.

The permit allows the Park an opportunity to provide visitors with park information and regulations to help protect the visitor and the park resources. Even more valuable, it provides the visitor a chance to ask questions which will enhance their visit the the park and the protection of the park.

How and Where To Obtain a Permit

Boating permits are free and are valid during your entire stay. If you are a returning visitor, you will be required to obtain a new permit for each visit. A visitor can obtain a permit in person upon arrival at Garden Key. Boaters are required upon arrival to locate a park employee on Garden Key. If you are not met at the dock,

you can locate an employee at Park Headquarters inside the fort. If you arrive outside normal business hours, please contact an employee the next morning. Bring your vessel documentation or registration information with you. Rangers monitor VHF marine channels 16 and 10.

Mooring Buoy Locations and Approved Activities

LMBSE: N24° 37.833 W82° 55.187

Use for access to Loggerhead Key, Visit Historic Structures, Swimming, Research, Education

LMBSW: N24° 37.8031 W82° 55.546

Use for access to Loggerhead Key, Visit Historic Structures, Snorkeling, Swimming, Research, Education

RNAMB1/Windjammer:

N24° 37.413 W82° 56.548

Scuba Diving, Snorkeling, Swimming

RNAMB2/The Maze: N24° 36.600 W82° 56.914

Scuba Diving, Swimming

RNAMB3/Davis Rock: N24° 41.209 W82°

54.440

Scuba Diving, Swimming

RNAMB4/Texas Rock: N24° 40.820 W82°

53.125

Scuba Diving, Swimming

RNAMB5/Off Ramp: N 24 40.156 W 82

54.506

Scuba Diving, Snorkeling, Swimming

How to Properly and Safely Use Mooring Buoys

- Approach slowly from downwind/current
- To properly secure your boat to the mooring, run your line from a cleat on your boat through the loop in the end of the mooring line and back to your cleat. Do not place the mooring line directly to your boat.
- Use sufficient scope (rope length) to minimize pull on the mooring ball anchor. Rule of thumb: If the mooring ball is being pulled underwater, increase the scope and if there is an upward pull on the mooring ball, increase the scope.
- Sailboats should not leave sails up when they are tied to a mooring.
- You are responsible for your vessel. Inspect the mooring. Check that the mooring is holding. Report any problems to a park employee. It is recommended that you leave someone on the boat at all times. Your use of the mooring ball is at your own risk.
- Only vessels 110 feet or less may use the mooring balls.

Additional Information

- A dive flag is required when using a mooring ball whenever anyone is in the water diving, or snorkeling and you must stay within 100 feet of the dive flag.
- Fishing is prohibited within the RNA. No fishing is allowed from the mooring balls.
- Mooring balls are for DAY USE ONLY. No overnight use is permitted.
- Vessels are limited to 2 hours at a time on a mooring ball. If there is a wait, vessels are asked to show courtesy and limit their time.
- Tampering with shipwrecks and other submerged cultural and natural resources are prohibited.
- A more complete collection of information regarding the RNA, fishing regulations, boating regulations and other park information can be found at www.nps.gov/drto and from park employees upon arrival.
- There is 1 government mooring ball at Loggerhead Key and 1 government mooring ball at Garden Key Harbor. They are not for visitor use. They are reserved for government use.

Map

