In a very real sense, many of the plants and animals exist here because of the coral reefs that provide them with a place to hide and rear their young. The great variety of life in the coral reefs provides sustenance for all—those that prey and those that are preyed upon.

Reefs owe their existence to groups of animals and plants which deposit calcium around themselves as a protective shell. The reef’s reefs are predominantly of coral, both living and dead. Lime building activities trails, and interpretive exhibits and programs, which have been relatively undeveloped.

At times small numbers of hardy settlers occupied the keys, fishing the waters and farming the land. But the park’s lands include the few keys which are exceedingly fragile resources.

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SAFETY ON BOARD
If you explore the park by boat, know and practice water safety rules and be aware of potential dangers. Every boat must be equipped with a U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejacket for each passenger. Remember, you are safest with an experienced guide, and navigational charts of the area (National Ocean Survey Charts 1249 and 141-SC) are indispensable. You should read and comply with U.S. Coast Guard, State, and National Park Service boating regulations and navigational aids.

Small boat operators should be cautious of rough sea conditions which can develop quickly in the open waters seaward of the keys. Although small boats can go almost anywhere within the park, all boaters should be wary of shallow banks, shoals, and coral reef patches which can pose a hazard to even the smallest boats.

SAFETY IN THE WATER
There are no protected swimming areas within the park. Snorkelers and scuba divers should prominently display the regulation diver's flag. Swimmers and divers should be wary of other boats and should be cautious when swimming in areas noted for especially strong tidal currents, such as the narrow cuts and channels between keys. Boaters should always exercise caution in approaching any moored boats or other areas where swimmers or divers may be expected to be in the water.

Snorkelers are cautioned that cuts from coral and punctures from the common spiny sea urchin may be painful and slow to heal. A good practice is to enjoy the reef by looking only; touch nothing unless you are sure of it. All water life should be treated with respect.

Snorkelers are strongly advised to observe the basic rules of their sport. NEVER SWIM ALONE. Inexperienced snorkelers are urged to study a good manual and learn well the rules of snorkeling and scuba diving.

PLEASE DO NOT—
—Litter the water or the land. Keep your trash on board your boat until you reach land and can put it in a trash receptacle; use them also when you are on land.
—Pick, remove or injure any plant or animal life on the islands, in the bay, or on the ocean reef. Remember, all corals, seafans, seafeathers, and other marine organisms are protected and should not be collected or disturbed.

PLEASE DO—
—Respect private property. Some lands within the park are privately owned.
—Keep all pets under restrictive control.
—Observe fishing regulations. Fishing is permitted in accordance with Florida laws. No license is required for salt water sport fishing.
—Practice good boating manners and respect the right of others to enjoy their visit.
—Explore this park and rejoice in the beauty of form and of life that is here. It is all protected for you and the thousands of people who will come after you and who will want to see what you have seen and enjoyed.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Facilities at Elliott Key include a small boat marina, primitive campground, picnic area, restrooms, and saltwater showers. Fresh water is not available. There are public and private campgrounds in the general area, including Homestead Bayfront Park. Meals, lodging, gasoline, and other supplies can be obtained in nearby Homestead. Numerous well-supplied marinas are located along the mainland coast and in the Upper Florida Keys.
ADMINISTRATION
Biscayne National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Temporary headquarters for the monument are at Homestead Bayfront Park, which is operated by the Dade County Park and Recreation Department. The superintendent of Biscayne National Monument, whose address is P.O. Box 1369, Homestead, FL 33030, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR