



Everglades Coalition

1000 Friends of Florida
Angler Action Foundation
Audubon Florida
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Audubon of the Western Everglades
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Backcountry Fly Fishers of Naples
Calusa Waterkeeper
Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife
Center for Biological Diversity
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Everglades Trust
Florida Bay Forever
Florida Conservation Voters Education Fund
Florida Defenders of the Environment
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Oceanographic Society
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
International Dark-Sky Association,
FL Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League Florida Division
Izaak Walton League Florida Keys Chapter
Izaak Walton League Mangrove Chapter
Lake Worth Waterkeeper
Last Stand
League of Women Voters of Florida
Martin County Conservation Alliance
Miami Pine Rocklands Coalition
Miami Waterkeeper
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
North Carolina Outward Bound School
Ocean Research & Conservation Association
Peace River Audubon Society
Reef Relief
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Florida Chapter
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Calusa Group
Sierra Club Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
South Florida Audubon Society
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
The Florida Wildlife Federation
The Institute for Regional Conservation
The National Wildlife Federation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Tropical Audubon Society

A Resolution of the Everglades Coalition in Support of Sustainable Fish Populations in Biscayne National Park

WHEREAS, Biscayne National Park is a national treasure, protecting part of the third-largest coral reef system in the world and the longest stretch of mangrove forest remaining on Florida’s east coast, providing habitat and nursery grounds for important commercial and recreational fish, shellfish, and crustaceans, and offering refuge to many endangered species;

WHEREAS, Biscayne is the largest marine park in the National Park System, established by Congress to protect “a rare combination of terrestrial, marine, and amphibious life in a tropical setting of great natural beauty” for present and future generations;

WHEREAS, Biscayne Bay is closely linked to the Greater Everglades ecosystem, directly connected to the waters of Florida Bay and receiving much-needed freshwater inflows from the Everglades;

WHEREAS, coral reef health and fish populations in Biscayne National Park have been on the decline for decades due to many cumulative stressors, including acidification, warming seas, over-fishing and over-use, leaving some species populations on the verge of collapse;

WHEREAS, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the National Park Service are in the process of implementing Biscayne National Park’s Fishery Management Plan (FMP);

WHEREAS, the FMP lays out a number of fishery management tools that can be used to improve fisheries in the park, including decreasing bag limits, increasing size limits, implementing seasonal or spatial closures (i.e. no-fishing marine reserves), placing restrictions on spearfishing, eliminating mini-lobster season, and establishing Coral Reef Protection Areas;

WHEREAS, the FMP states that park resources and values must remain unimpaired and to that fishing activities occurring within the park must be managed in a sustainable manner;

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WHEREAS, science¹ indicates that current proposals are not strong enough to achieve long-term sustainability for Biscayne's fisheries;

WHEREAS, designated no-trawl zones have been proposed that will prevent the use of commercial roller frame trawls, which are extremely damaging to benthic habitat and result in significant bycatch of juvenile reef fishes;

WHEREAS, marine reserves are a science-based tool used to protect coral reef ecosystems and fish populations, reducing impacts from marine debris and damage to coral reefs, and providing areas where different types of recreational users can enjoy marine resources without interference from extractive activities, yet decisionmakers have not considered implementing marine reserves as a tool to help improve Biscayne's fisheries;

Therefore, be it resolved:

The Everglades Coalition, with 62 organizations dedicated to protecting and restoring America's Everglades, urges decisionmakers to develop fisheries management policies for Biscayne National Park that will lead to sustainable fish populations and to consider implementing a no-fishing marine reserve in a small portion of the park to help protect and restore fisheries and coral reef habitat. We also support creating no-fishing Coral Reef Protection Areas to protect critical coral reef habitat, an expansion of proposed no-trawl zones, and increased investments in education and enforcement.

Sincerely,



Mark Perry
Co-Chair



Marisa Carrozzo
Co-Chair

¹ Ault, Jerald S. 2019. *Analysis of Biscayne National Park Fishery Management Plan Draft Reef Fishery Regulations Proposed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and National Park Service*. To be published by National Parks Conservation Association.

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