

FLORIDA KEYS

ANCHORAGES AND SNORKELING SITES

15 May 06



OCEAN SNORKEL SITES

East to West

SAN PEDRO SHIPWRECK

24° 51.79N/80° 40.78W, depth 12-15 feet, 1733 Spanish shipwreck, ballast pile, cannons, anchor, snapper, grouper, reef fish and moray eels.

Large ballast pile with replica cannon and an original anchor make up this Florida State Underwater Park. Six mooring balls surround the site. An interesting historical site that is well documented and interpreted in several pamphlets and books. This ship was part of the 1733 Spanish Plate Fleet that was sunk in the Keys during a vicious hurricane that year. This site is part of the FKNMS Shipwreck Trail and is protected. Take only pictures not artifacts. For a nearby night anchorage see Indian Key under NIGHT ANCHORAGES.

ALLIGATOR REEF

30-50.79N/80-37.35W, depth 12-30 feet, hard and soft corals, reef fish

A one half mile long spur and groove coral reef stretching west from Alligator Lighthouse. There are 6 mooring buoys including one at the site of an old rock ballast shipwreck just south of the lighthouse. This area is a no take FKNMS Preservation Area.

SEA BASE REEF BALL PROJECT

24° 45.392N/80° 49.119W, depth 15-20 feet, sandy bottom, juvenile reef fish.

About 100 hollow concrete reef balls are grouped in three main clusters. Between 1993 and 1998, Scuba participants at Sea Base would make then place these artificial reef balls in an area approximately 2.1 NM NE of Tennessee Reef lighthouse. Some of the reef-ball clusters have lines tied between them, making it easier to find the next set of reef balls. It is a good juvenile nursery and you can often find lobsters inside the reef balls.

OLD CANNON REEF

24° 43.37N/80° 51.75W, depth 10-12 feet, hard and soft corals, reef fish.

An elongated coral patch reef 400 yards long surrounded by sand and grass. This is a popular Duck Key snorkel and dive site. It was named for its cannon shape from the air. Anchor anywhere along the length north or south of the reef in white sand.

ADELAIDE BAKER SHIPWRECK

24° 42.10N/80° 53.54W main wreckage site, 24° 42.18N/80° 53.69W, main mast site, depths 18-20 feet, 19th century shipwreck, ballast, iron deck and rigging parts, hard corals, reef fish, nurse sharks.

Scattered remains of a 250 foot wood hulled, iron reinforced sailing vessel lie in the coral canyons here. This ship, a bark, sank in a winter storm in early 1889. Visible wreckage includes four large tubular mast sections, a water tank (now collapsed), wire rigging, iron ribs, and rock ballast. The wreckage is scattered over a large area almost 500 yards long. This site is part of the FKNMS Shipwreck Trail and is protected. Take only pictures not artifacts. Moor to the buoy over the main mast when available or anchor in white sandy areas at either site. Ensure your anchor and rode do not disturb the site.

ELBOW REEF

24° 41.54N/80° 56.81W, depth 8-10 feet, hard soft corals, reef fish.

This is an elbow shaped coral reef stretching generally east and west about 200 yards. It is a picturesque east Marathon snorkel spot with lots of live hard coral and fish. Anchor along the south edge in the sand.

COFFIN'S PATCH STAKE

24° 41.12N/80° 57.81W, depth 8-10 feet, hard and soft corals, reef fish.

This is another popular and beautiful east Marathon snorkel spot. It is a fairly large reef area 300 yards wide marked by a single iron stake (part of an old marker). Coffin's Patch is said to be the graveyard of numerous ships lost in centuries past including one bearing coffins. Moor to a buoy if available or anchor in the sand along the southern edge. Coffin's Patch is a no take FKNMS Sanctuary Preservation Area.

TRIDENT REEF

24° 41.05N/80° 57.97W, depth 8-10 feet, live hard and soft coral, reef fish.

This spot is just west of Coffin's Patch stake about 200 yards. It's name is derived from it's trident shape facing north. It is a smaller reef 200 yards long, oriented generally east-west. It is much less known and visited but just as interesting as the Stake. Anchor in sand along the north or south edge of the reef. Trident Reef is within a FKNMS no take Sanctuary Preservation Area.

MARKER 48 PATCH REEFS

24° 41.57N/81° 01.49W, depth 8-15 feet, patch coral with lots of hard and soft corals and reef fish.

Several nice areas of patch coral stretching to the east of the marker. There is both hard and soft corals with caves and canyons between. Lobster in season. A nice spot if visibility is good in Hawk's Channel and winds and seas prevent snorkeling on the ocean reefs. Some interesting large diameter pipes provide homes for many fish and crustaceans. There are also several historic shipwrecks inshore of this area.

DELTA BARGE SHIPWRECK

24° 38.64N/81° 04.31W, depth 15-20 feet, 20th century iron barge, soft corals, a large Goliath Grouper, nurse sharks, Moray Eels, lots of schooling reef fish, and a large population of barracuda.

A dark rectangular shape (35X100 feet, oriented NE/SW) in white sand marks wreck of a 1950s steel work barge. There are lots of schooling fish, an occasional nurse shark inside the wreck and barracuda above. It is mostly intact but also has large open sections giving an eerie glimpse to the interior of the wreck. Anchor in the sand anywhere around the barge. A good range is the pink condo on the west end of Knight's Key just visible over the west tangent (end) of Boot Key. A Goliath Grouper used to frequent the western end of the barge interior.

DELTA SHOAL REEF AND DELTA D SHIPWRECK

24° 37.95N/81° 05.37W, depth 5-20 feet, 19th century shipwreck, spur and groove hard coral formations, lots of reef fish.

This site is a quarter mile long spur and groove formation running east-west. At least three shipwrecks are within the coral formations. The most visible wreckage is from a 19th century wooden sailing vessel with iron rigging. Not much remains of the other two earlier vessels except some rock ballast. The western most site was the subject of at least one book and a great deal of treasure hunter activity in the 1950's. Because of the slave shackles and elephant ivory tusks recovered it is believed to be a slave ship sunk in the early nineteenth century. There are lots of interesting cliffs and overhangs among the coral fingers. Anchor carefully in sand between the fingers so that your anchor rode does not touch the coral. Also it is possible to anchor close to the reef on the north side in about 8' in sand. Do not try to cut across the top of the reef as it is only about 4' at low tide.

DELTA B NORTH AMERICA SCHOONER SHIPWRECK

24° 38.27N/81° 05.61W, depth 12-15 feet, 19th century sailing vessel, large rock ballast pile, soft corals, moray eels.

This site is marked by a large mound of rock ballast (35 X 120) feet oriented NE-SW. It is surrounded by grass and sand which look much like the ballast from the surface. This ship, probably the North America, sank in 1842. It's massive timbers are still visible beneath the ballast pile in spots that were moved by treasure hunters before it became protected. Look for several moray eels that live in the bilge wale timbers on the east side. North America's story is part of the Florida Keys maritime historical lore (see the Key West Maritime Historical Society literature) . It is part of the FKNMS Shipwreck Trail and is protected. Take only pictures, no artifacts. Moor to the mooring buoy if available or anchor anywhere around the ballast pile in the sand. Ensure your anchor does not disturb the site.

SOMBRERO LIGHT REEF

24° 37.57N/81° 06.59W, depth 5-25 feet, massive spur and groove coral formations, hard and soft corals, pelagic and reef fish.

A large and very popular mid Keys diving and snorkeling area. Spectacular reef formations abound here. The Sombrero light tower dates from 1858 when a string of light houses were built along the Keys to help prevent accidental and wrecker induced ship groundings. Some of the northern/inshore buoys have less than 5 feet under them so moor to outermost/southern buoys to be safe. Look for an 8 foot swim through arch by lining up the highest point on the 7 Mile bridge with the left edge of the light tower structure. Sombrero is a FKNMS no take Sanctuary Preservation Area.

MUNSON ROCKS, NEWFOUND HARBOR

24° 36.95N/81° 23.63W, depth 5-8 feet, small area of large coral heads, hard corals.

This area lies one mile east of the entrance to Newfound Harbor. It consists of large coral heads on a flat sand bottom. There are 3 mooring buoys. It is a FKNMS no take Sanctuary Preservation Area. It offers good snorkeling if it is too rough on the reef but still clear here. Approach from the outside (south of) the near by marker 20.

LOOE KEY REEF

24° 32.80N/81° 24.20W outer reef buoys, 24° 33.16N/81° 24.60W and 24° 32.93N/81° 24.41W to approach inner/northern buoys, depths 5-20 feet, massive spur and groove coral formation, hard and soft corals, pelagic and reef fish, sea turtles, Goliath Grouper.

One of the premier diving and snorkeling areas in the Keys. It is situated only 40 sailing minutes from Newfound Harbor. It is named for H.M.S. Loo, a British Man-of-War that ran aground and sank here on 5 Feb, 1744. Little remains of the Loo due to extensive treasure hunting in the area in the 1960/70s, but the scattered wreckage of other shipwrecks and an old light are still visible. There are spectacular reef formations here and large fish as it has been a protected area for many years. Moor to outer/southern buoys in deeper water or approach shallower northern buoys in 5-7 feet as indicated above. See Reef Relief's Mooring Buoy guide for chart and mooring buoy information. LOOE Key is a FKNMS no take Sanctuary Preservation Area.

AMERICAN SHOAL LIGHT REEF

24° 31.50N/81° 31.25W, depth 10-15 feet, mostly low profile hard corals, small reef fish, crustaceans.

The large shallow grass and sand area north of the light is a good area for lobster in season. Also there is some wreckage and wire cable among the low profile coral. It is an easy snorkel. Anchor in any white sandy area.

MARYLAND ISLAND

24° 31.40N/81° 34.82W, depth 0-10 feet, hard corals, reef fish, crustaceans, conch.

This is a small shoal that bares at low water forming a sandy coral island. It has good snorkeling all around the shoal including behind it easterly winds. There are shallow soft corals and sand to the east, north and west and hard coral canyons and ledges to the south. Anchor carefully in the white sandy areas in 6-10 feet to the north and east. This is a good place to see conch and other sand and grass dwellers close up.

PELICAN SHOAL REEF

24° 30.25N/81° 37.42W, depth 5-20 feet, awash coral reef surrounded by spur and groove hard corals, reef fish, crustaceans and nurse sharks.

This is a very picturesque area with high profile coral ledges and canyons on the south side. The hurricanes of 2005 have washed away the sand island. There are nurse sharks in many of the caves under the coral fingers and lobster nearly everywhere. Also, the scattered rock ballast in the area is evidence of at least 1 shipwreck. Use the five mooring buoys or anchor in the white sandy areas just to the west of the reef. It is also possible to anchor in the shallower sandy area to the northeast and northwest of the island. See Reef Relief's Mooring Buoy Guide for a chart and buoy information. Do not stand on the shallow coral or sand.

MIDDLE SAMBO REEF

24° 29.52N/81° 40.53W, depth 5-15 feet, large coral formation with spur and grooves to the south and sandy grass flats to the north, lots of conch, reef fish and lobster in season.

An out of the way reef formation little visited by locals. The northern side provides an easy anchorage and snorkel opportunity to see many endangered conch and other shallow reef fish close up. No mooring buoys.

WESTERN SAMBO REEF

24° 28.80N/81° 43.20W western end buoys, 24° 29.00N/81° 42.91W northeastern buoys,

24° 28.97N/81° 42.18W, southeastern buoys, depths 5-25 feet, extensive spur and groove formation, pelagic and reef fish, hard corals, nurse sharks and turtles.

This is a large popular Key West diving and snorkeling area stretching almost 1/2 mile east and west. The south and west sides are a beautiful spur and groove formation while the north side is shallow sandy grass and small coral patches. The north side is somewhat protected in strong east and southerly winds and you can find coral channels through the reef after a swim south across the shallows. There is a large deep cut through the coral toward the eastern end with mooring buoys that makes a great snorkel area. Western Sambo is a FKNMS no take Ecological Reserve. See Reef Relief's Mooring Buoy Guide for a chart and mooring buoy information.

SAND KEY

24° 27.19N/81° 53.00W, depth 10-20 feet, hard and soft coral spur and groove formation, large Goliath Grouper, reef fish, crustaceans, nurse sharks, moray eels.

This mooring buoyed former key has a large red light house built in 1860. It has extensive and dramatic spur and groove coral formations. It is visited by several Key West charter boats. The several large Goliath Groupers that frequent the area make it an exciting snorkeling spot. This is a FKNMS no take Sanctuary Preservation Area. See Reef Relief's Mooring Buoy Guide for a chart and mooring buoy information.

GULF SNORKEL SITES

East to West

BOWLEGS CUT

East end 24° 54.47N/80° 43.69W, West end 24° 54.06N/80° 44.03W, depth just over 5.0 feet at 0.0 low tide.

Provides access to the Hatteras Wreck and mooring buoys north of Lignumvitae Key.

HATTERAS WRECK

24° 54.74N/80° 42.47W, depth 7-9 feet, small 25' inboard boat, snapper, lobster in season, schooling reef fish.

This shallow wreck site lies on flat grass covered hard pan bottom. It is covered by a large school of snapper and other schooling fish. The wreck is mostly collapsed. There are mooring buoys available for an overnight stay just off Lignumvitae Key to the South.

QUARRY

24° 51.94N/80° 43.04W, depth 3-15 feet, snapper, sting rays, crustaceans, nurse sharks.

This site is actually a steep sided quarry, about 15 feet deep, located between a small island and the shore to the south east of the anchorage spot in the small bay. Snorkeling the site requires a swim of about a hundred yards from the boat and then around the island and back. Also to be found in the deep water are a small boat and an old truck frame. It is a nice location for a slow calm water snorkel. Anchor to the northeast of the quarry either side of the small channel marked by PVC pipe in 5-7 feet of water.

BAY TRASH PILE

24° 52.62N/80° 44.42W, depth 7-9 feet, snapper, schooling reef fish, lobster in season.

This is nothing more than a junk pile of household equipment including pipes, gratings washing machine parts, etc deposited here by locals probably as an attraction for lobster and fish. There are many interesting things to look at

underwater close up including fish and lobster. This and nearby similar spots make a good final snorkel before heading into FSB.

BAY TRASH PILE TWO

24° 52.59N/80° 44.97W, depth 7-9 feet, snapper, schooling reef fish, lobster in season.

Another collection of junk but in a smaller area, including truck tires, steel gratings, and a large concrete block provide homes for many fish and crustaceans in an otherwise barren sea floor.

BURNT POINT CHANNEL

24° 45.66N/80° 59.14W, depth 2-8 feet, hard and soft corals, small reef fish, crustaceans, stone crab, octopus.

This spot is a small boat channel leading south along the eastern side of the Burnt Point peninsula. It is marked by a stake at the north entrance in 5 - 7 feet of water. Anchor northeast of this stake. Reasonable snorkeling can be had along the edges of this channel. Look for lobster, octopus, and hard and soft corals. You may see schools of snapper under the dock. Do not go ashore as it is a private residence. This site makes a good snorkel if you are forced to take the Gulf route to or from Marathon.

BAMBOO KEY

24° 45.40N/81° 00.20W, depth 2-8 feet, stingrays, small crustaceans and shallow water reef fish.

This small island has a long seafaring history. Although no longer populated it was the site of a family owned ship construction business during the mid 1800s. It was occupied while Key Vaca and Grassy Key were not because the island was relatively mosquito free. Snorkeling around the island or exploring ashore makes an interesting experience. Anchor as close in as possible along the north shore of the island in about 7 feet.

NO NAME KEY

Midway along the north coast of this island there is an entrance into a canal with houses. By anchoring near the entrance, you can snorkel over an extensive trash pile just northeast of the canal entrance that harbors many fish and lobster. This makes a good stop along the Gulf route to Key West

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24° 47.57N/81° 30.00W and 24° 48.22N/81° 28.71W, depth 2-15 feet, rocky ledges, hard corals, reef fish, crustaceans.

If you are travelling the Gulf route between Key West and Marathon this is a reasonable stop to snorkel and in settled weather, anchor for the night. Anchor off the north shore in 8-10 feet and snorkel toward the island along the ledges that run NE/SW. Even the really shallow areas, 2-4 feet, closer in have lots of undercuts and caves. This is a great lobstering area in season. Look for lobster in the shallow caves and deeper large brain coral heads. The north end of Big

Spanish Channel just south of Big Spanish Key is only 5 feet deep at a 0.4 low tide. Plan your transit here accordingly. Also see Sawyer Key anchorage for a better overnight stop.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- The Teall's Guides to the Middle Keys and Marathon to Key West are excellent free updated charts of these areas.
- SPAs are no take (including lobster), no fishing, no discharge zones.
- Do not stand on or touch any living coral.
- Do not disturb or take anything including fish and lobster from the historical shipwreck sites.
- Use the mooring buoys whenever available.
- Use an intermediate line between mooring buoys and your deck cleat, do not take the yellow poly pro line aboard.
- Mooring buoys have been known to break free under heavy loads, beware in stronger winds and seas.
- When necessary, anchor only in white sandy areas, not on the coral.
- Ensure your anchor and rode do not foul any living coral or shipwreck sites.

NIGHT ANCHORAGES

East to West

INDIAN KEY

24° 52.51N/80° 40.80W

Moor to one of four white mooring buoys in 5-8 feet or anchor to the southwest in sand and grass. This area is protected in all but south east through westerly winds. Most days there is a very interesting ranger guided tour of the historic island at 0900 and 1300 for a \$1 each fee. You will learn much about the history, animal and plant life of the Keys. Swim to and from the cleared area along the northwest shore or in calm weather the south side of the dock. The SAN PEDRO shipwreck under OCEAN SNORKELING SITES is nearby this anchorage and makes a convenient snorkeling stop enroute.

LOWER MATECUMBE

24° 51.65N/80° 44.32W

About a half mile east of the entrance marker to FSB there is good holding in 7-9 feet along a mangrove wooded section of the north shore of Lower Matecumbe Key. This makes a good last night's stop if you are in the area and the wind is northeast through southwest. To avoid mosquitoes anchor further out in light winds.

LONG KEY BIGHT

24° 49.84N/80° 47.08W

Anchor in 6-10 feet of water in soft sand and grass. The holding is excellent. The further into the bight you proceed the more sheltered but shallower it gets. Proceed with caution as there are shallow but usually visible banks scattered around in the bight. The bight is protected from all directions but the further east you anchor there is more current running perpendicular to the bridge.

GRASSY AND CHANNEL KEY BANKS

There are good anchorages behind/west of the three banks in this area on the north side of the Keys. Good protection can also be found behind/west of Channel Key in Toms Harbor Channel. Anchoring here would protect you in northeast through southwest winds. Depths are 7-8 feet with a mostly sand and grass bottom. Anchor carefully as there is some hardpan bottom here.

DUCK KEY/HAWKS CAY MARINA

24° 45.83N/80° 54.65W

South entrance to the Duck Key channel leading to Hawks Cay Marina. Call on VHF 16 before entering. It is also possible to anchor in settled weather in the bight of Toms Harbor Cut .5 miles east of Duck Key or a bit further east in the bight southeast of Conch Keys. Shallow draft boats can also enter the narrow Duck Harbor Channel which is just west of Duck Key.

BAMBOO KEY

24° 45.41N/81° 00.19W

This area close behind on the west side of the key provides good protection and fair holding in strong northeast through southeast trade winds. Drafts of 5' can approach within about 100 yards of the key and 6' drafts within about 300 yards. Depths are sufficient for most boats to also anchor further south to just north of Fat Deer Key with even more protection. Set your anchor carefully as most of this area is hard pan but open to the west if you drift. Also see Bamboo Key under the Gulf Snorkel Sites section.

KEY COLONY BEACH

24° 43.00N/81° 01.00W

Proceed east of marker G1 to the west and then north in the channel west of Key Colony Beach to the area between markers G5 and G5A. Anchor in sand on the west side of the channel between the two markers in 8-10'. This area is well protected in any winds due the proximity of land to the east and north and shallows to the south and west. There is another area suitable for anchoring further north on the east side of the channel just before the Vaca Cut bridge. Both these areas are relatively mosquito free if there is any wind. The only problem here is the frequent boat traffic which does subside during hours of darkness. There is at least 6' feet at marker G1 at low tide and deeper in the channel.

VACA KEY BIGHT

24° 41.55N/81° 04.20W

Anchor in 6-10 feet of water off the eastern shore of Sombrero peninsula. Holding is good in sand and grass but there are several hardpan areas so check your anchor. This site is mosquito free but only sheltered in southwest through northeast winds. The water is usually very clean here and snorkeling is good in the grass flats and the hardpan/patch reef areas. There are some nice visible shallow coral patches with reef fish and lobster in season indicated on the chart.

BOOT KEY / MARATHON / SISTER'S CREEK

24° 41.80N/81° 07.20W

Anchor in 6-10 feet of water off the western shore of Boot Key. Strong currents may cock you against the wind here, but the holding is good in sand and grass and it is relatively mosquito free. If there is no wind and you are not free of mosquitoes move further out. You can also anchor almost anywhere east of the bridge inside Boot Key harbor or take a mooring buoy for \$10 per night for a more cosmopolitan Marathon experience. If you anchor in the harbor set your anchor carefully in the mud or better yet use a fluke type anchor. Also, plan on having to wash your anchor and rode thoroughly as you retrieve it. The south entrance to Sister's Creek has 5' of water at a .5 tide if you stay in the middle of the channel all the way out. The limiting height under the phone wires just west of the Boot Key bridge is 65' at high tide. If your height is close check with the bridge tender on VH F channel 9 for clearance information.

SOMBRERO GOLF CLUB LAKE

24° 42.5N/81° 04.9W

By turning east at the round white house on Sister's Creek you can wind your way to the northeast through manmade canals to this tranquil lake. The bottom and holding is similar to Boot Key Harbor but there will be no other boats and complete protection in any wind. It is a calm quiet place to spend the night in any weather or clean your bottom. Ask someone who has been there before trying to find this as the chart is misleading and the canal route is circuitous.

BAHIA HONDA

Inside the bridge 24° 39.00N/81° 17.00W, outside east of the small island 24° 39.30N/81° 16.33W

Swing well south of the small island before approaching the old bridge gap from the south southwest. The anchorage has been used by the Spanish since the 16th century. If only staying for the day anchor in 6-8 feet of water just west or southwest of the swim area so your crew may swim ashore. Plan their swim for any current you observe. Bahia Honda is a state park and there is much to see and do. If staying overnight in the summer move a little further out to keep away from mosquitoes in calm conditions. Set your hook(s) carefully and strongly as you will swing with the changing current overnight. Best to snorkel check your anchor(s) at slack tide as there is some hardpan here. This is a good place to keep a sharp anchor watch. The further you get away from land the more

mosquito free however there is also more hard pan. It is not protected in strong south /southwest or northerly winds. Outside and to the east of the small island there is a good anchorage for west through northeast winds in 6-10 feet if there is no swell. This area is mixed hard pan and sand pockets but often very clear and good snorkeling. This is a good place to be in a north wind because it is well protected from the north and if you do drag you only end up in Hawk's Channel. It is also mosquito free.

NEWFOUND HARBOR

24° 37.50N/81° 24.25W just across the channel from Little Palm Island, 24° 37.53N/81° 25.04W north of marker R4 leading into Niles Channel, 24° 39.2N/81° 25.9W in Niles Channel near the US1 Bridge, 24° 38.34N/81° 22.94W between markers R4 and R6.

This is a very well protected area with many anchoring possibilities. If there is a good wind to keep the mosquitoes away, you can go East of Little Palm Island and stop almost anywhere on the east side of the channel where there is room enough to anchor out of the boat traffic. One of the better places is half way between red markers 4 and 6 where there is a large area of 6-9 feet of water. If there are light or no winds you will have mosquitoes here. Another spot, good in all but strong southwest winds, is east of marker R4 and west northwest of Little Palm Island on the north side of the channel. There is a large area here with 6-8 feet of water and good holding in sand. It is well protected by the surrounding islands and the shoals to the south, is relatively mosquito free and provides quick and easy access. A strong current flow will swing you 180 degrees during the night. Another similarly protected spot in reasonable conditions is just north of the same marker R4 leading into Niles Channel. Proceeding further up wide Niles Channel you can also anchor between Ramrod and Summerland Keys south of the US1 bridge in 9-11 feet. All these anchorages have good holding in a mix of sand, grass and mud. The disadvantages to anchoring in the Newfound Harbor area are substantial boat traffic in the channels and in the case of the eastern anchorage mosquitoes in calm weather and the additional time to get there and back.

KEY LOIS (LOGGERHEAD KEY or MONKEY ISLAND)

West side 24° 36.50N/81° 28.50W, east side 24-36.98N/81-27.99W

This isolated spot on the west side of the island has good holding and is well protected in winds west through just south of east. It is mosquito free unless you anchor too close to the island. If the wind shifts to the west or south, move to the east side of the island, where there good holding off the island and several small deep channels. It has the added attractions of a tranquil anchorage with no people, boat traffic or road noise and an easy, quick entry and exit along your route to Key West. Be sure to swing wide of the shoal off the southeast corner of the island if you approach from the east. Anchoring here instead of the Newfound area on your way west leaves you an easy 3.5 hour trip to Key West.

BOCA CHICA

24° 32.7N/81° 43.5W channel entrance, 24° 34.3N/81° 43.3W anchorage

This area is between Stock Island and Boca Chica. Proceed northeast up the Boca Chica Channel between Boca Chica Key and Stock Island and then turn north between markers G1B and R2B. Here you can find several suitable anchorage spots in the side channels in 6-10 feet among the local boats anchored here year round. There is good protection all around but a mostly hard coral bottom. Anchoring here is not good in strong winds. Proceed in good light and watch your depth in order to remain in the channels. There is some current here flowing along the channels as the tides change so take that into account as you select your anchorage. From here you are just over an hour to Key West harbor.

TARPON BELLY

24° 46.80N/81° 33.50W, 24-45.80N/81-33.50W entrance, 24-45.00N/81-32.50W anchorage, 24° 43.7N/81° 31.5W anchorage off Tarpon Belly Keys.

The first two way points mark the northern entrance to two long channels, including Cudjoe Channel, leading southeast. The entrance east of Sawyer and Riding Keys is wide but does have some shallow areas, so proceed slowly in good light. This is a large area of 7-20' deep channels in the otherwise shallow back country providing some interesting anchorages. There is a long string of coral heads providing good snorkeling along the western edge of the channel leading to Tarpon Belly Key anchorage. The bottom has good holding in sand and grass. Proceed with caution and in good light for a unique Keys back country experience. Tarpon Belly Key has interesting remains of an old shrimp farming operation and a reasonable beach.

SAWYER KEY

24-46.00N/81-35.00W, 24-45.81N/81-34.92W entrance, 24° 45.54N/81° 34.36W anchorage, 24-45.49N/81-36.50W exit west.

To enter this little used but well protected anchorage proceed to a point just west of the 3-4 foot bank north of the island (west of 81-35W). Then sail south until clear of this shallow bank, then southeast to the anchorage located just northwest of the island. Anchor in 7-10' about 150 yards northwest of the island. This is a very quiet, remote and picturesque spot with many birds. The holding here is good and it is protected in all but northwest winds. I rode out winds of 50 knots from the northwest for over an hour during a surprise violent cold front in the Spring of 04. It is probably the best anchorage on the northern route to Key West.

JOHNSTON KEY

24-44.45N/81-36.70W, 24-44.21N/81-36.49W entrance, 24° 44.09N/81° 36.13W anchorage.

About two miles west of Sawyer Key is the entrance to Johnston Key Channel leading to another quiet back country anchorage. Depending on the light and your ability to read shallow water you can take 6' draft over 4 miles east or 2

miles south in deep channels between the islands. This area is similar to the Tarpon Belly area to the east.

WISTERIA ISLAND

24° 34.00N/81° 49.00W

West Wisteria is one of several anchoring possibilities in Key West. It is probably the best as it has good holding in grass and sand, is close to the Galleon Marina, has much less harbor traffic and does offer your crew a snorkeling opportunity to the nearby island and "Pirate" shipwreck. Anchor in 6-15 feet of water in soft sand and grass anywhere off the western shore of the island. Watch out for the shallow bank that stretches westward from the south point of the island. You will swing with the current change during the night so set your anchor well. It is not well protected in strong westerly winds during which you can move to the anchorages on the opposite side of the island or eastern side of Flemming Key. For other anchorages in Key West just look to see where other boats are anchored, but be careful not to foul your anchor with the many wrecks and debris scattered on the harbor bottom between Fleming Key and Wisteria.

GULF SIDE FSB TO KEY WEST East to West

FSB TO MOSER CHANNEL

FSB Headpin Marker Red 2 (R2)	24 °51.50N/80 °44.75W
Marker G1	24 °51.05N/80 °49.98W
Marker R8	24 °48.73N/80 °54.74W
Marker G11	24 °47.67N/80 °57.57W
Marker R14	24 °45.50N/81 °03.50W
Marker R18	24 °44.34N/81 °06.42W
Marker R20	24 °43.74N/81 °07.48W
Stirrup Key (Optional Inshore Route)	24 °45.00N/81 °02.60W
Rachel Key (Optional Inshore Route)	24 °43.67N/81 °04.80W
Marker G21	24 °43.00N/81 °09.12W
Moser Channel North	24 °42.00N/81 °10.30W
Moser Channel South	24 °41.13N/81 °10.01W

NOTE: Limiting depth is just over 6' at Key Channel Bank R8 at low tide. For drafts near 6' deviate north or south of the route at low tide to avoid shallower areas shown on the chart.

MOSER CHANNEL TO KEY WEST

Moser Channel North	24 °42.00N/81 °10.30W
Marker R26	24 °42.20N/81 °13.40W
Marker R30	24 °42.07N/81 °16.46W
Marker R32	24 °42.02N/81 °17.57W
Marker R34	24 °42.73N/81 °19.36W
Marker R36	24 °43.28N/81 °20.04W
Marker R38	24 °44.85N/81 °21.47W
Marker R40	24 °45.38N/81 °22.39W
Marker R42	24 °46.44N/81 °23.89W
Marker G43	24 °46.97N/81 °24.62W
Marker R52	24 °47.52N/81 °24.98W
Marker G53	24 °48.27N/81 °24.99W
Marker G55	24 °50.24N/81 °25.56W
Marker G57	24 °50.45N/81 °25.74W
NW Channel North	24 °38.47N/81 °53.72W
Follow NW Channel to the South to Wisteria Island Anchorage	24 °34.00N/81 °49.00W

NOTES: The 3' depth shown just southwest of marker R32 on some charts is more like 8'.
Limiting depth in Big Spanish Channel is 5' just south of Big Spanish Key between R42 and G43 at a 0.4 low tide. Proceed carefully north of Big Spanish Key so as to remain in the deep marked channel until you round marker 57.

BURNT POINT TO KEY WEST

Burnt Point	24-45.73N/80-59.12W
Bullard Bank	24-48.79N/81-09.23W
Horseshoe Bank	24-50.49N/81-14.72W
Bullfrog Bank	24-51.09N/81-20.57W
Harbor Key Marker 57	24-50.56N/81-25.77W
NW Channel Shortcut 1	24-38.44N/81-51.24W
NW Channel Shortcut 2	24-37.07N/81-51.84W
Middle Ground Marker 17	24-33.98N/81-49.88W

GULF ANCHORAGES

Sawyer Key 1	24-46.00N/81-35.00W
Sawyer Key 2	24-45.81N/81-34.92W
Sawyer Key Anchorage	24-45.54N/81-34.36W
Sawyer Key Exit	24-45.49N/81-36.00W
Johnston Channel 1	24-44.45N/81-36.70W
Johnston Channel 2	24-44.21N/81-36.49W
Johnston Channel Anchorage	24-44.09N/81-36.13W
Cudjoe Channel 1	24-46.80N/81-33.50W
Cudjoe Channel 2	24-45.80N/81-33.50W
Cudjoe Channel Anchorage	24-45.00N/81-32.50W

-- Credit and great thanks given to Dave McCampbell, S/V Soggy Paws

**Dry Tortugas Diving
June 2007**

AVANTI / WINDJAMMER WRECK – 15-20'

24° 37.42N / 82° 56.56W

Located ¾ miles SW of Loggerhead Key. Interesting high relief wreckage of a late 19th century Windjammer sailing ship. Home to large numbers of reef fish, large grouper, nurse shark, barracuda, and a Goliath Grouper. Use mooring bouy if available, otherwise anchor in sand clear of wreck and reef.

SOUTH LOGGERHEAD 24 FOOT PINNACLE – 24-48'

24° 36.66N / 82° 57.38W

Large circular mound of steep-sided coral located off the reef in flat deep sand. Large crevices and caves. No ship wreckage. 15% live coral. Large snapper, spadefish, grouper. Lots of queen angels. Anchored on top of coral mound, in small flat spot, away from live coral.

SOUTH LOGGERHEAD 9 FOOT POINT – 15-35'

24° 36.88N / 82° 57.19W

Vertical cliffs, overhangs, and caves. Several swimthroughs. Lots of large grouper. One lobster. One spotted moray. 19th century ship wreckage. Large chain pile, bronze pin, copper sheathing, ballast (both bolder & shingle), iron fastenings and mast clamps. 3' x 3' flat metal plate. 5' x 8' modern rudder, intact. 15% live coral. Anchored just SW of the point in deep sand.