

# Keys Marine Laboratory

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The Keys Marine Laboratory is a joint operation of the Florida Marine Research Institute of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Florida Institute of Oceanography. It was founded to provide a full service marine station in the Florida Keys for research and education.

The facility is located in the Florida Keys, 68 miles from Key West on Florida Bay. The location provides immediate access to many tropical marine habitats as well as coral reefs and the Gulf Stream. Miami International Airport is two hours away by car. Rental cars are available in Miami, Marathon, and Key West. Most other services are available locally and even the most sophisticated services and supplies are available on a next-day basis.

The facility is seven acres in size and includes nine buildings. There are dormitory style accommodations for twenty-eight people, a small wet lab, a small chemical lab, a large teaching and research dry lab, a classroom, a number of saltwater tanks of various sizes and a system of 30" deep, cement lined, interconnected saltwater pools totaling 548,000 gallon capacity.

When departing Miami International Airport, take Highway 836 West to 826 South or the Florida Turnpike South to Homestead. From Homestead, take U.S. 1 South to the lab. The lab is 101 miles from the Miami Airport. After passing over "Channel 5" bridge, you will be on Long Key. There is a sign for "City of Layton". Immediately after that sign, on your right, is the lab. It is across the street from the post office on U.S. 1. If you reach the Long Key State Park or the Long Key Bridge, you have gone too far.

There are facility boats available for visitor use. They are operated by staff members who know the area well. They should be scheduled in advance to assure availability. It has been our experience that most visitor boats break down when first used after arrival. Repair costs locally are quite high and break downs result in lost research time. KML boat charges are very reasonable and include the local knowledge of our operators.

Food can be purchased on the way down from Miami at several grocery stores along U.S. 1. There is two convenience stores in Layton and more grocery stores in Marathon 15 miles south of the lab. It is possible to arrange private catering of meals while at KML through Gwen Molnar at (305) 664-4001. There is one restaurant serving three meals a day within walking distance of the lab.

The facility has dormitory space for 28 people in three separate buildings. Each building has its own fully equipped kitchen. We make every effort to separate visitors by group, but gender is the first determining factor for separation. There may be multiple groups staying at the lab at the same time and you may find yourself sharing dorm space. Housing availability depends on early scheduling.

Due to the nature of our laboratory and the services we provide, we do not allow children to stay in our dormitories. There are two comfortable motels in the immediate area. The Lime Tree Bay Resort is next door to the lab and can be reached at 305-664-4740. The Edgewater Lodge is located on Long Key about a mile from the lab and can be reached at 305-664-2662. Motel rates vary with the season.

Our dormitories have a separate telephone number 305-664-0852. The phones in the dorms are blocked for long distance calls unless you have a calling card. This number rings in ALL of the dorms but not in the front office. If someone calls asking for a person not in your group, tell them to call again and let the other dorms pick up the phone in case the person they are looking for is in another group staying at the lab. Messages may be left for you by calling the office phone number 305-664-9101. You are responsible for retrieving your messages daily from the message board in the office during the hours of 8am to 5pm.

We have some basic guidebooks for fish and local inverts but the amounts are very modest. There is a limited reference library containing a variety of publications available for your use while staying at the lab. The researchers and educators that have published papers or books from the research they conducted at the lab are encouraged to donate copies to our library. Many of these are available as well for your study needs.

Scuba diving from the facility or from the facility boats is only allowed for AAUS certified divers. Arrangements must be made in advance of your arrival including the submission of a dive plan and a request for reciprocity from our Dive Safety Officer at USF, Bill Dent...he is reachable at 813-974-5018. There are places to rent dive equipment in Marathon. In some cases it is easier to arrange for independent dive trips with local dive shops and we can recommend some upon request. The closest recompression chamber is at Mariner's Hospital in Tavernier. The nearest hospital is Fisherman's Hospital in Marathon.

The lab has several floating type dive flags, their use is required for snorkeling in Florida waters. The fine for first offense is \$75 and the FMP love collecting it! There is a saltwater fishing license requirement in Florida. License revenues partly support the facility and we encourage you to purchase one. Recreational fishing or lobstering is not permissible from our boats. It also is not permissible from our shoreline at the lab.

Scientific collecting of specimens is permissible WITH the proper permits issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. To apply for permits, contact Lisa Gregg (FWC) 1-850-488-6058.

One set of linens and towels are provided each week to visitors. That is insufficient for the frequent water activities usually undertaken during marine field station visits. We recommend that you bring extra towels. Modest laundry facilities are available.

The lab can house your research chemicals in approved storage and a fume hood is also available. Any chemicals brought with you should return with you. We do not maintain any chemicals and in most cases it has proven difficult to acquire chemicals on short notice. Dry ice is currently available in Marathon at Publix, fifteen miles away. Liquid nitrogen is only available in Miami and we do not currently have a flask available. The lab has minimal glassware and lab supplies therefore you should arrange a supply before your arrival.

The KML is in a very attractive location for a vacation but we can only accommodate scheduled visitors intent on accomplishing their research and education goals. Do not invite guests without prior approval.

NO ALCOHOL - The Keys Marine Lab is a state operation and alcohol is not allowed on the premises.

NO PETS – no kidding.

NO SMOKING - in any buildings. It is permissible only in designated areas outside.

The KML seeks to make research animals available to visitors. Recreational fishing and lobstering at the lab are not permitted.

Tennis shoes or dive booties of some type are recommended for walking the flats and shore habitats and are necessary when walking around the facility.

**Our sun is hot!** Please consider bringing a hat and the most effective sunscreen you can buy.

Other lab services include:

- Fax- located in lab office (305)664-0850
- Computer lab for email and internet access with printer - daily group fee charge
- Copy machine
- Ice machine
- Boat ramp, gasoline, oil, wet and dry boat storage
- TV and VCR in classroom, overhead projector, slide projector, multi-media projector
- Electronic balance, compound and dissecting microscopes, fume hoods, centrifuge, analytical balance, spectrophotometer, drying oven, DO meter, de-ionized water, refrigeration and freezer space, walk-in freezer(-20C), ultra freezer(-45C).

Other local services include:

- All emergency services
- ATM banking services
- UPS (receipt only) and FedEx service (see office staff)
- Post office directly across the street from the lab
- Restaurants
- Grocery stores within 30 minutes drive