

An overview: Keys Marine Laboratory

PO Box 968

68486 Overseas Highway, mm68.5

Long Key, Florida 33001

(305) 664-9101 Fax (305) 664-0850

The Keys Marine Laboratory (KML) is operated by the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO), comprised of a consortium of 28 universities and institutions within the State of Florida. It was established in 1987 to provide a full-service marine station in the Florida Keys for research and education. The facility is located in the city of Layton, 68 miles from Key West, overlooking Florida Bay. The location provides immediate access to many tropical marine habitats as well as coral reefs and the Gulf Stream.

The KML fleet of vessels is available for visitor use, ranging from our 18' Parkers to our 30' Island Hopper, including staff operators with extensive local knowledge. Additionally, select vessels within the fleet are available for self-captained use with appropriate documentation of experience and training. All vessel use should be scheduled in advance to assure availability.

The facility is seven acres in size and includes seven buildings. There are dormitory style accommodations for thirty people, a large teaching and research dry lab, and a classroom for lectures and group meetings. KML has a state-of-the-art flow-thru system furnishing high quality sea water to a variety of holding tanks from 45-gallon to 1000-gallon capacity, capable of maintaining or manipulating temperature and pH. Additionally, our Coral Reef Restoration Seawater System (CRRSS) is available for use by pre-approved projects (contact staff for more information). In the Fall of 2023, an additional NSF funded seawater system with 240 gallon tanks became available for use.

The facility has dormitory space for 30 people in three separate buildings. Each building has its own fully equipped kitchen. One set of linens and towels are provided to each visitor. If you are a long term visitor, we can provide new linens/towels upon request, just contact a staff member. We recommend that you bring an extra towel for the boat. Modest coin-operated laundry facilities are available at the Lab.

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 under the age of 18 to stay in our dormitories and we can only accommodate scheduled visitors intent on accomplishing their research and education goals. Do not invite guests without prior approval. 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 two miles from the lab and can be reached at 305-664-2662. Motel rates vary with the season.

We have a limited supply of basic guidebooks for fish and local inverts that may be signed out at the front desk. 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 one of our vessels is only allowed for pre-approved AAUS certified divers. Arrangements must be made 14 business days in advance of your arrival, including the submission of a dive plan, request for reciprocity (LOR), signed Waiver of Liability, and proof of insurance. There are places to rent dive equipment in Islamorada and 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 Mariner's Hospital in Tavernier or 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 \$90 and the FMP love collecting it! There is a saltwater fishing license requirement in Florida if you plan to fish or lobster off-site. License revenues partly support the facility and we encourage you to purchase one. Recreational fishing or lobstering is not permissible from our boats or 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 FWC SAL Staff at 850-487-0554 or SAL@MyFWC.com. Permitting questions for NOAA should be directed to Dr. Harrison Albert at FKNMSpermits@noaa.gov.

KML can house your research chemicals in approved storage areas during your stay 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, 20 miles away. Liquid nitrogen is only available in Miami and we do not currently have cylinders or dry-shippers available. The lab has minimal glassware and lab supplies, therefore you should plan to bring what you will need.

With advanced notice and request, KML staff can collect research animals for visiting educational and research groups. Please inquire with staff about availability and needs.

Getting Around:

- Miami International Airport is two hours away by car.
- Rental cars are available in Miami, Tavernier, Marathon, and Key West.
- 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. Go slow and enjoy the spectacular views of our unique environment! Our single-road access to the Keys is not meant for high speeds. 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.

What to do in the area:

Food can be purchased on the way down from Miami at several grocery stores along U.S. 1. There is one convenience store in Layton and more grocery stores in Marathon 20 miles south of the lab. There is one restaurant serving three meals a day within walking distance of the lab (Florida Boy).

The welcome binder contains locations and maps of parks, attractions, and things to do in the area. A comprehensive list and interactive map can be found on our website at <https://www.fio.usf.edu/keys-marine-lab/kml-booking-information/plan-your-visit/>

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, or around any buildings. It is permissible only in designated areas outside of the property gates. This includes vapes, tobacco, and other smoking devices.

For your safety, suitable closed-toed footwear is strongly suggested for traversing the pea rock and uneven terrain at KML. While working on the vessels, water shoes or dive booties of some type are recommended for walking the flats and shore habitats.

Our sun is hot! Be prepared with wide-brimmed hats, sunscreen, a water bottle to maintain adequate hydration, protective clothing (UPF), and rash guards for in-water activities. Other lab services include:

- Copy machine
- Ice machine
- Boat ramp, marine fuel
- Scuba tank rental and fills (AAUS Diver Only)
- multi-media projector
- Electronic balances, compound and dissecting microscopes, fume hood, drying oven, DO meter, de-ionized water, refrigeration and freezer space, ultra-freezer(-80C).

Other local services include:

- All emergency services
- ATM banking services
- UPS (receipt only) and FedEx service (see office staff)
- US Post Office - directly across the street from the lab
- Keys Shuttle Service (888) 765-9997 -- (305) 289-9997
- Local restaurants and eateries
- Grocery stores within 30 minute drive

See our website for more detailed information: <https://www.fio.usf.edu/keys-marine-lab/>

Follow our Social Media Pages for on-going activities at the Lab:

<https://www.facebook.com/KeysMarineLaboratory/>

<https://www.instagram.com/keysmarinelab/?hl=en>