

Decades of Dedication: Fish Spawning Aggregation Research in the Florida Keys

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Research on fish spawning aggregations in the Florida Keys has spanned several decades, evolving through collaborative efforts among federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, resource users, and other interested parties. Given these diverse partnerships, sustaining long-term, standardized datasets across the region remains a significant challenge. Shifting management priorities and variable funding have led to uneven resource allocation and related scientific focus among aggregation sites, resulting in data gaps—especially with respect to long-term biomass trends. While some locations have robust time-series data, others remain under-documented or only studied during limited periods. Here we provide a comprehensive overview of historic and ongoing fish spawning aggregation research in the Florida Keys, including focal species, geographic coverage, participating partners, and techniques employed. We also discuss how selected datasets have informed fisheries management at places such as Riley’s Hump and Western Dry Rocks and highlight opportunities to strengthen data continuity and integration moving forward.