

The Everglades

Fast Facts

Location: Florida

Established: December 6, 1947

Size: 1,542,526 acres

Annual visitors: 1 million

Visitor centers: Ernest F. Coe, Flamingo, Shark Valley, Gulf Coast

Sprawling between South Florida's Lake Okeechobee and the Gulf of Mexico, the Everglades is one of the world's largest tropical wetlands.



Many people once thought of the Everglades as nothing more than swampland, and companies began to drain the territory in the 1920s in order to construct buildings. But the National Park Service became aware of the huge numbers of animals that live, breed, and feed in the area, including manatees and types of wading birds. In order to protect the land and animals from builders, they voted to designate the Everglades as a national park in 1934.

Wetlands

The Everglades are a unique Florida wetland that covers over 750 square miles. A wetland is an area of land that is covered in shallow water with really wet soil. Throughout a wetland you will find swamps and marshes that are full of shrubs, grassy plants, and really cool animals.

Underground you will find limestone and aquifers, which have a very important job. An aquifer is a layer of rock underground that helps drain, filter, and purify water.



Everglades National Park

Climate

The Everglades have a subtropical climate, which means it has hot, humid summers and cool, mild winters. There are two seasons in this region, the rainy season and the dry season. During the rainy season, the Everglades can get up to 60 inches of rain. That is almost double the average of other areas in the United States.

Plants and Animals

The Everglades, also known as the 'River of Grass,' is home to over 700 species of plants and animals. Some of these species can only be seen in this unique landmark.

The diverse plant life of the Everglades includes sawgrass marshes, mangroves, and hardwood hammocks. These unique plants not only serve as food and shelter for the animals that live there, but also assist in filtering the water that flows through them.

Did you know the Everglades are home to over 350 species of birds? You can find flamingos, bald eagles, osprey, spoonbills, and herons, just to name a few. If you are a bird lover, this would be the place for you. These birds can be seen flying high above the river, or at the edge of the marsh snacking on various fish, algae, and grasses that are found here.



Heron and Egret in the Everglades

Let's not forget the reptiles that can also be found in the river or edge of the marsh. Besides being a home to over 27 different types of snakes, the everglades are also the home to American alligators and American crocodiles. You can find American alligators in other parts of the US, but you can only find the American crocodile in Southern Florida. There are also many species of lizards that roam the area.



American Alligator



The Florida Panther

Finally, let's take a look at the mammals that lurk through the trees, shrubs, and waters of the Everglades. While exploring the area, you will be lucky to catch a glimpse of Florida's endangered panther, manatees, bottlenose dolphins, rabbits, moles, and bats.

Manatees

The manatee has a large, seal-shaped body with paired flippers and a round paddle-shaped tail. They are primarily grey in colour, with wrinkled skin covered with hairs and sometimes algae or barnacles. Often referred to as "sea cows", manatees are primarily herbivores, spending up to eight hours each day grazing on aquatic plants like seagrass and occasionally feeding

on fish. A combination of natural and human factors ultimately led the species to the brink of extinction and manatees were listed as endangered in 1967. Conservation efforts by a wide variety of public and private organisations - local, state and international - aided in the ongoing recovery of the West Indian manatee. The Florida population has now increased from only 1,270 manatees in 1991 to more than 6,300 in 2017.



10 Everglade Fun Facts

1. **Both alligators and crocodiles live here**
The Florida Everglades is the only place in the world where gators and crocs live together.
2. **There's a lot of endangered wildlife**
Thirteen endangered species and ten threatened species, to be exact. That's why Jungle Erv is so careful and conscientious about his private, preserved land, and airboat tours help make continuing that preservation possible!
3. **The Everglades is a huge source of water**
The water in the Everglades actually provides drinking water for 7 million people—that's one-third of all Floridians!
4. **The Florida Everglades covers a lot of land**
Exactly how much? 1.5 million acres, to be exact.
5. **Many people think of the Everglades as a swamp**
It's actually a river—albeit a super-slow one. The water in the Everglades is always drifting along at a snail's pace, and that slightly-moving water is a crucial component of the Everglades' ecosystem.
6. **The water is shallow**
With an average depth of only 4-5 feet and a maximum depth of about 9 feet. That's why airboats are the best way to tour the Florida Everglades waters: they have a practically flat bottom with no motor down in the water to disturb the sediment below or to become entangled with mangrove roots!
7. **Most of the Florida Everglades is freshwater**
It isn't salt, as many assume. That's why it's such a refuge for a wide variety of wildlife.
8. **The Everglades is classified as a subtropical wetland ecosystem**
It's the only one in North America.
9. **There are really only two seasons here**
A wet season and a dry season. The temperature only varies about 10 degrees between those two seasons, so you can expect that warm tropical weather no matter when you visit.
10. **Mosquitoes are everywhere**
And there are 68 different varieties of mosquitoes living in the Everglades. Thankfully, most of those varieties aren't interested in humans; they'd rather suck the blood of an alligator or crocodile..