

# Museum Collections

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



South Florida Collections Management Center  
Everglades National Park  
Homestead, FL



## The South Florida Collections Management Center

The South Florida Collections Management Center (SFCMC) is a multi-park museum program for Big Cypress National Preserve, De Soto National Memorial, and Biscayne, Dry Tortugas, and Everglades National Parks. The center coordinates the acquisition and preservation of museum collections, which support research and interpretive needs. Although located inside Everglades National Park, the SFCMC provides long-term museum planning for all five National Park Service units in south Florida.

## Overview of the museum collections

Collectively, the five park collections contain over 7 million objects, specimens, archival documents, and historic photographs. These collections are as diverse as the parks themselves and document a history spanning roughly 5,600 years.

The **archeological collections** include artifacts documenting the prehistoric and historic occupations of the areas now encompassed by the parks. Objects recovered from shipwrecks dating from the 1500s to the 1900s are also part of the museum collection.

Objects made by the Seminole and Miccosukee peoples who still live in the Everglades and the Big Cypress make up the bulk of the **ethnographic collections**. Examples include clothing, dolls, tools, and a canoe.

**Historic collections** span over 450 years of human history. A suit of armor from the 1500s,

cannons from the 1800s, and a swamp buggy and Nike Missile Base signs from the 1900s are just a few examples.

The parks also have **art collections** that include a wide range of artistic styles and media. A few of the artists represented are Charley Harper, Clyde Butcher, Dan Feaser, Edward Glannon, Sam Vinikoff, Eric Berg, Walter Weber, and Jeff Ripple, among others.

The collections also include over 100,000 **biological specimens**, including mollusks, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and a large herbarium of plants collected in the parks. Threatened and endangered species are represented, as are other rare scientific specimens. Both native and exotic species are present. The natural science collections provide an important record of the parks' biological diversity and the impacts of ecosystem change.

## Overview of the museum archives

The **museum archives** contain over 3 million documents, photographs, films, maps, plans, and drawings that document the parks' resources, history, and current research.

The primary holdings of the archives are **resource management records**. These important papers include data, reports, maps, photographs, management plans, and other items that document the parks' resources and National Park Service management of the sites. The archives provide baseline and monitoring data for park managers to measure change in, and monitor impacts to, the parks' natural and

cultural resources. Ecosystem restoration efforts are also documented in the archives.

Other **important holdings** include historic photographs, oral histories, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, films, journals, and personal papers of people associated with the parks.

The archives are accessible for research by appointment only, as space and staff are limited. Unlike a library, which primarily focuses on duplicate materials for lending, the museum archives collects primary documents and research data that cannot be checked out.

## Museum collections on exhibit

The SFCMC is primarily a processing and storage facility. However, park facilities display museum objects in rotating exhibits, including:

### *Big Cypress National Preserve*

- Oasis Visitor Center
- Welcome Center

### *Biscayne National Park*

- Dante Fascell Visitor Center

### *De Soto National Memorial*

- Visitor Center

### *Dry Tortugas National Park*

- Fort Jefferson Visitor Center

### *Everglades National Park*

- Flamingo Museum\*

\* The Flamingo Museum is currently closed for redevelopment. The visitor contact station is open.

## Museum collections on the web

The SFCMC is working to provide increased research access to the collections as well as general public access through exhibits, park websites, and the NPS Web Catalog. Not all collections are available online but the best ways to begin looking for collections are listed below.

### Natural and Cultural Collections of South Florida NPS Website

Increasing amounts of information about the collections managed by the SFCMC may be found at [www.nps.gov/southfloridacollections](http://www.nps.gov/southfloridacollections).

### NPS Park Websites

Big Cypress: [www.nps.gov/bicy](http://www.nps.gov/bicy)

Biscayne: [www.nps.gov/bisc](http://www.nps.gov/bisc)

De Soto: [www.nps.gov/deso](http://www.nps.gov/deso)

Dry Tortugas: [www.nps.gov/dрто](http://www.nps.gov/dрто)

Everglades: [www.nps.gov/ever](http://www.nps.gov/ever)

### NPS Web Catalog

To search for museum collections on the Internet, visit [www.nps.gov/history/museum](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum) and then click on the "Web Catalog" link under the "Collections" banner. Search or browse

collections by park or across parks.

### Other Repositories

The parks' archeological collections are housed at the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC). Visit their website at [www.nps.gov/seac](http://www.nps.gov/seac).

Thousands of photographs are available through the Open Parks Network at Clemson University: <https://openparksnetwork.org>.

NPS reports, studies, maps, and management plans that have been digitized may be available through the NPS Technical Information Center public site at [pubs.etic.nps.gov](http://pubs.etic.nps.gov).

The parks' animal specimens preserved in fluid are housed at the Florida Museum of Natural History and have been entered into the online database at [www.idigbio.org](http://www.idigbio.org).

The Everglades Digital Library—Reclaiming the Everglades includes scans of archives from the museum collection. Visit [dpanther.fiu.edu/dPanther/collections/rte](http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dPanther/collections/rte).

## Contacting the SFCMC

If you have further questions about the museum collections, are interested in donating materials to the National Park Service, or would like to schedule a research visit, contact the SFCMC staff through the "contact us" link at [www.nps.gov/sfcmc](http://www.nps.gov/sfcmc). We look forward to assisting you.

