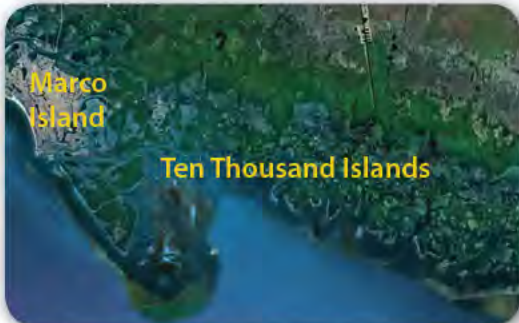


Mangrove communities

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Mangroves in Florida can be found as far north as St. Augustine on the east coast and Cedar Key on the west coast. In the northern portion of their range, they occur sparsely throughout broad temperate climate salt marshes, dominated by smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) and black needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*). Mangrove recruits in northern reaches of their range die during periodic severe cold spells. In south Florida, mangroves dominate along tidal rivers and streams as well as in low energy coastal wetlands. There

are three native mangrove species in south Florida: red (*Rhizophora mangle*), black (*Avicennia germinans*), and white (*Laguncularia racemosa*). Extensive mangrove forests occur along the southwest coast of Florida. The expanse of mangrove swamp in Everglades National Park measures approximately 1300 km² (500 mi²) and constitutes a unique habitat of south Florida. Mangroves are prolific contributors to coastal fisheries because of their high productivity and nursery functions.



Ten Thousand Islands on the southwest Florida Gulf coast (left) is a vast expanse of mangrove islands and tidal creeks. Red mangroves located on an intertidal shoreline (right).