

## Biscayne Bay Bayfront Park, Homestead, Florida

Bayfront Park is in Homestead, Florida, the gateway to the Florida Keys. It is one of seven Heritage Parks of the Miami-Dade County Parks system. The park has 1,200 acres, but only 90 are accessible to users. It was officially dedicated on November 13, 1955.

*"The land for Homestead Bayfront Park was originally deeded to Miami-Dade County in 1938 by James Sottile, owner of South Dade Farms, but development halted when World War II broke out. During the war, the entire park area was leased to the United States government for use by the Air Force, in connection with operations at the nearby Homestead Air Force Base. A few years after the war ended, a \$250,000 bond issue became available to construct the park, so the Air Force moved out and the park's construction commenced."* <liveapartlife.org>

Our visit to the park came at lunch time. The La Playa Grill, which opened in 2010, was a perfect place to dine, as we enjoyed their American/Mexican fare. Seafood was also available. From the Grill's 2nd floor one can see downtown Miami's skyline to the north and Key Largo to the south. There is an entrance fee to the park. The county created a tidal pool and artificial beach for Bayfront Park.

Like the Biscayne National Park, hurricanes have caused much damage to the region. On September 10, 2017, Irma, a category 4 hurricane, hit the Florida Keys with 130-mile per hour winds. Two-thirds of the state of Florida were without power after the storm hit. The state-wide damage estimates ranged as high as \$65 billion. Miami-Dade County had to plant 120 coconut palms at Bayfront to restore the canopy. <liveapartlife.org> <insurancejournal.com>

**"Caring for the Canopy** The challenge for Natural Areas Management (NAM) crews is preserving the tree canopy so that vines don't overgrow and create problems. Tree canopy is the layer of leaves, branches and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above. A larger tree canopy not only benefits the environment, it may also help with quality of life and health issues, according to a report from the University of Florida and Florida International University on Miami-Dade tree canopies." <liveapartlife.org>

This photo program shares our visit to Biscayne Bay Bayfront Park.









**Turkey and Black Vultures** Large dark birds with long broad wings. Bigger than other raptors except eagles and condors. Length: 25-31 in. Weight 70 pounds. Wingspan 66-71 in. (both sexes). They appear black but are mostly brown with red head and pale bill. Majestic in flight, but unsteady soarers. They tend to glide low to the ground. Their food sources are near trash bins or carrion.  
<allaboutbirds.org>



Sources: Special thanks to Michael Rudell and his coworkers at the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission by identifying the above fish in the tidal pool as a juvenile Barracuda, <http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/homestead-bayfront.asp>, <http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/library/homestead-bayfront-heritage.pdf>, <https://liveaparklife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/parks-magazine.pdf>, <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/>, <https://jobs.myflorida.com/go/Fish-and-Wildlife-Conservation-Commission/2817800/>, <https://www.visitflorida.com/en-us/cities/homestead/homestead-bayfront-park-rural.html>, [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Turkey\\_Vulture/id](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Turkey_Vulture/id), <https://www.nps.gov/bisc/learn/nature/fish.htm>, and <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southeast/2017/11/30/472582.htm>.

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