

The history of the formation of Biscayne National Park included weather, ecology concerns, landowners, developers, preservationists, and local and national government involvement. To fully understand the creation of the Biscayne National Monument signed into law, October 18, 1968 by President Johnson who visited the area at one time, go to <https://www.nps.gov/bisc/learn/historyculture/the-birth-of-biscayne-national-park.htm>.

"Given this Spanish influence on the area, there are theories that Biscayne Bay was named after the Bay of Biscay – a gulf on the northern coast of Spain and the western coast of France. However, to date, there has been no confirmation of this. Instead, there are only more theories." <graylinemiami.com>



Southern Biscayne Bay's human interaction has been recorded to be over 10,000 years ago. The islands are made up of a ridge of lithified coral and sand dating to 125,000 years ago. The bay originated 5,000 years ago behind rocky keys and coastal barrier islands with flat shoals between them. The Bay is a mixture of Atlantic and fresh water from the Everglades. The flora and fauna are unique and have flourished due to the temperate climate found in the bay. <nps.gov> <historymiami.org>

The Spanish named the indigenous people the "Tequesta."

"In short, the term Tekeshta or Tekesta means "We the People of the Good Earth." <Hartford-hwp.com>

"The Tequesta (also Tekesta, Tegesta, Chequesta, Vizcaynos) Native American tribe, at the time of first European contact, occupied an area along the southeastern Atlantic coast of Florida. They had infrequent contact with Europeans and had largely migrated by the middle of the 18th century." <definitions.net>

Spain ruled Florida for a combined 288 years during two occupancy periods prior to the American revolution and afterwards for a short time. Pirates were well known in the area during the 17th century, and during the 19th century, smuggling became a popular business. British rule followed during the 18th century. The United States acquired Florida in 1821. Land grants to Spanish, British and Americans were recorded in Biscayne. <historymiami.org>

"The first Bahamians were the Eagans—James Eagan, Rebecca Eagan, and Polly and Jonathan Lewis—who owned the land along "river Miami." The Eagans were listed as Hagen in the documents, as would be the pronunciation in Bahamian dialect, leading to court challenges later. James Eagan in 1832 served as the primary guide for John James Audubon during his expedition to the Florida Keys and was responsible for many of his important scientific discoveries." <historymiami.org>

Slave-run cotton plantations began by the 1830s but did not last long. Seminole Indian wars were the reason that inhibited further settlement. The United States military was called in, but further settlement in the area was discouraged due to the Civil War. After the war, immigration accelerated with the establishment of the Homestead Acts. As more and more people came to the area, Miami also grew. <historymiami.org>

The first market crop, which was welcomed by northerners, was pineapples. Initially brought to market by sailboat, later Flagler's railroad became the primary means of transport. However, as in the past, disease and hurricanes caused this market crop to suffer and give rise to other part of the Americas to provide a more profitable means of operation. <historymiami.org>

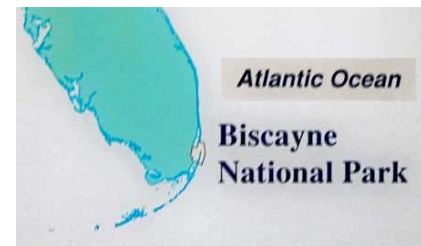
Besides fruit, Biscayne Bay had other products that proved to be profitable for a time. They were fish such as grunt, hogfish, snappers, grouper, and mullet were caught, plus sponges were harvested. <historymiami.org>

The railroad, new roads, private mansion and club development, and an increased tourist growth came nearly to an end in 1926. It was the famous Greater Miami Hurricane that devastated homestead families in Biscayne Bay. This devastation was followed by the Great Depression. <historymiami.org> Homestead, Florida is nearly 40 miles from Miami.

Since the 1920s, Biscayne Bay had many human and weather experiences. WWII caused the need to guard the coast from attack and especially from submarines. Post war talk of the development of a possible causeway gave way to encourage potential development. It also brought on the cry for protection of the coral reef in the region. The causeway was on the table for many years, but as it became louder and with more public awareness, political campaigns increased. The result was the formation of the National Monument which protects the extreme southern portion of the bay and reef beyond. <historymiami.org>

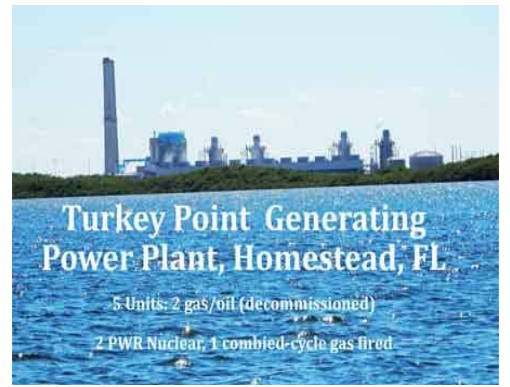
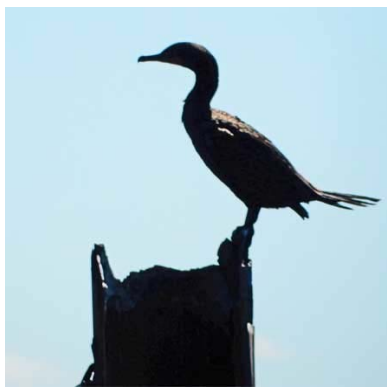
"The park protects historic resources, especially nationally listed historic sites that recognize pioneer settlers, the gilded era, and shipwrecks. Remains of hundreds of ships that wrecked on the reef remain in what is now park waters, about 40 such sites having been documented. Many of the wreck sites remain unidentified. Acknowledging the Reef's maritime history, the reefs from Triumph to Pacific were made a National Historic Area, and the park created an underwater Maritime Heritage Trail."

"The park preserves Biscayne Bay and its offshore barrier reefs. Ninety-five percent of the park is water, and the shore of the bay is the location of an extensive mangrove forest. The park covers 172,971 acres (270.3 sq mi; 700.0 km²) and includes Elliott Key, the park's largest island and northernmost of the true Florida Keys, formed from fossilized coral reef." <en.wikipedia.org>



Unfortunately, hurricanes, including Hurricane Andrew in 1992, have continued to plague, disrupt, and devastate the Biscayne Bay area. This photo program shares a visit to the park. Its beauty masks past hurricane devastations.







Sources: <https://www.nps.gov/bisc/learn/historyculture/the-birth-of-biscayne-national-park.htm>, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/Tekesta/docs/name.html>, <https://graylinemiami.com/blog/how-biscayne-bay-got-its-name/>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biscayne_National_Park, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey_Point_Nuclear_Generating_Station, <https://www.nps.gov/bisc/learn/historyculture/index.htm>, <http://www.historymiami.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Tequesta-2018-Mobile.pdf>, and <https://www.definitions.net/definition/tequesta>.