

# New Underwater Coral Reef Camera Launched at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

KEY LARGO, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES,

June 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A

new 360° coral reef camera was unveiled today at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park during its World Ocean Day event. This unique underwater camera livestreams the reef and its environment using technology that is only available at a handful of places in the country and is the first of its kind in the Florida Keys.



This camera provides not only a live glimpse into the underwater world and our beautiful coral reef, but it also brings attention to the value of protecting the reef and its inhabitants."

*Tammy Gustafson, Florida  
State Parks Foundation  
President*

The educational tool allows viewers to explore the undersea ecosystem without any disturbance to the wildlife and plants. The livestream also shares the coral reef with individuals who may not be able to access the reef by snorkeling or diving. The video can be watched live at the park Visitor Center. Those who purchase a [Friends of John Pennekamp State Park membership](#) will have access to watch the livestream remotely from their computers, broadening viewing access of the coral reef. Member dive shops will also have access to share the livestream within their stores.

"This camera provides not only a live glimpse into the underwater world and our beautiful coral reef, but it also brings attention to the value of protecting the reef and its inhabitants," said Tammy Gustafson, Florida State Parks Foundation President. "We are proud to be a partner in offering this enhanced accessible view into our world-class coral reef."

Florida is the only state in the continental United States with extensive shallow coral reef formations near its coasts. Although the coral is threatened by rising ocean temperatures, rapid development, overfishing and disease, this livestream will help to promote and enhance conservation and preservation efforts focused on the reef system and the associated aquatic and plant life. The camera includes a sensor that reads ocean temperature, salinity, oxygen and light levels in real time, allowing for further education about the ecosystem.

"John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park is one-of-a-kind, and this coral camera will offer a new

way for visitors to experience one of Florida's most unique natural resources," said Chuck Hatcher, acting director of Florida State Parks. "We're grateful for the Florida State Parks Foundation and all of our community partners who helped bring this project to life."

About 60 miles south of Miami in Key Largo, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park hosts numerous school groups at its on-site classroom. As part of this experience, young visitors learn the importance of ocean conservation, including lessons about the coral reef environment. The coral camera in the Visitor Center will provide a real-time window into the reef activities, providing an engaging and live piece of the lesson.



John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park - Underwater Coral Camera Unveiling

"We are thrilled our coral reef camera is now available to the public far and wide," said Ann Helmers, Friends of John Pennekamp State Park President. "This is truly an exciting device that can be used for so many different purposes – marine education, ecosystem research, engaging with natural environments and spreading awareness about the coral reef and the help it needs."

The following donors and partners supported the \$55,000 camera installation: Friends of John Pennekamp State Park, Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund, the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Ocean Reef Conservation Association, Rod and Gun Club and the Florida State Parks Foundation.

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests. This project was completed by the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation.

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This project is funded in part by a grant from the nonprofit Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida (FWFF) via proceeds from the 'Discover Florida's Oceans' license plate. Since its founding, the Foundation has raised and given away more than \$50 million for conservation, outdoor recreation and youth programs and camps. For more information, please visit [www.wildlifeflorida.org](http://www.wildlifeflorida.org).

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