

# MISSION: ICONIC REEFS

## LOOE KEY

Photo: Coral Restoration Foundation

Now part of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Looe Key was originally designated as a standalone national marine sanctuary in 1981. Historically, the reef supported large stands of staghorn and star corals. Today, Looe Key contains an offshore coral nursery and important restoration sites. It is also a premier dive and snorkel location, as home to the only remaining elkhorn thickets within the lower keys, along with unusually large colonies of pillar corals.

### Restoration Vision

**Mission: Iconic Reefs** is an unprecedented effort to restore seven ecologically and culturally significant coral reefs within Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Informed by years of research, successful trials, and expertise from scientists and restoration practitioners, this will result in resilient and regenerative coral reefs in the Florida Keys. At Looe Key, **Mission: Iconic Reefs** seeks to re-establish elkhorn and staghorn thickets along the reef crest. Restoration efforts will also bring star and brain coral colonies back to areas of spur-and-groove reef, where ridges of coral reef separate sandy channels. More than 116,000 coral outplants will help restore Looe Key's coral cover to an average of 17% across six habitat zones. Regular site maintenance, performance monitoring, and adaptive management will be performed to ensure success.

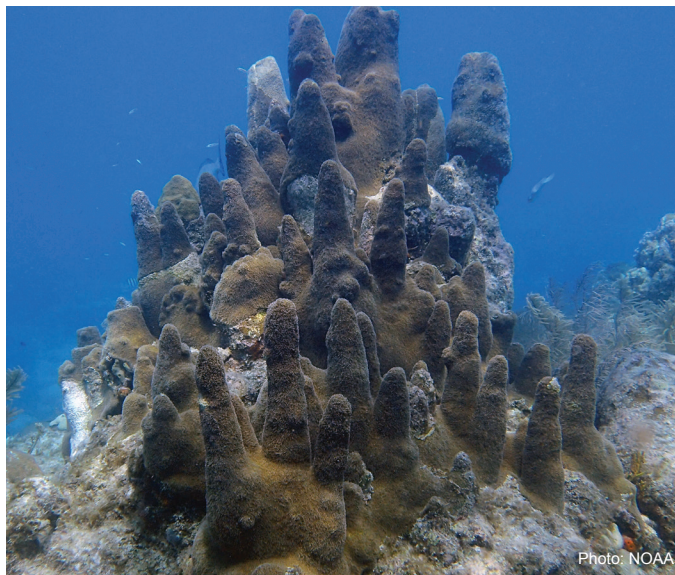
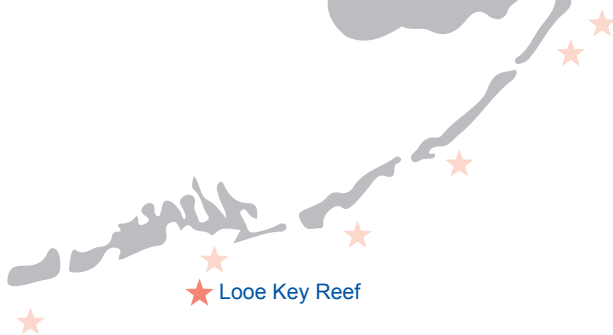
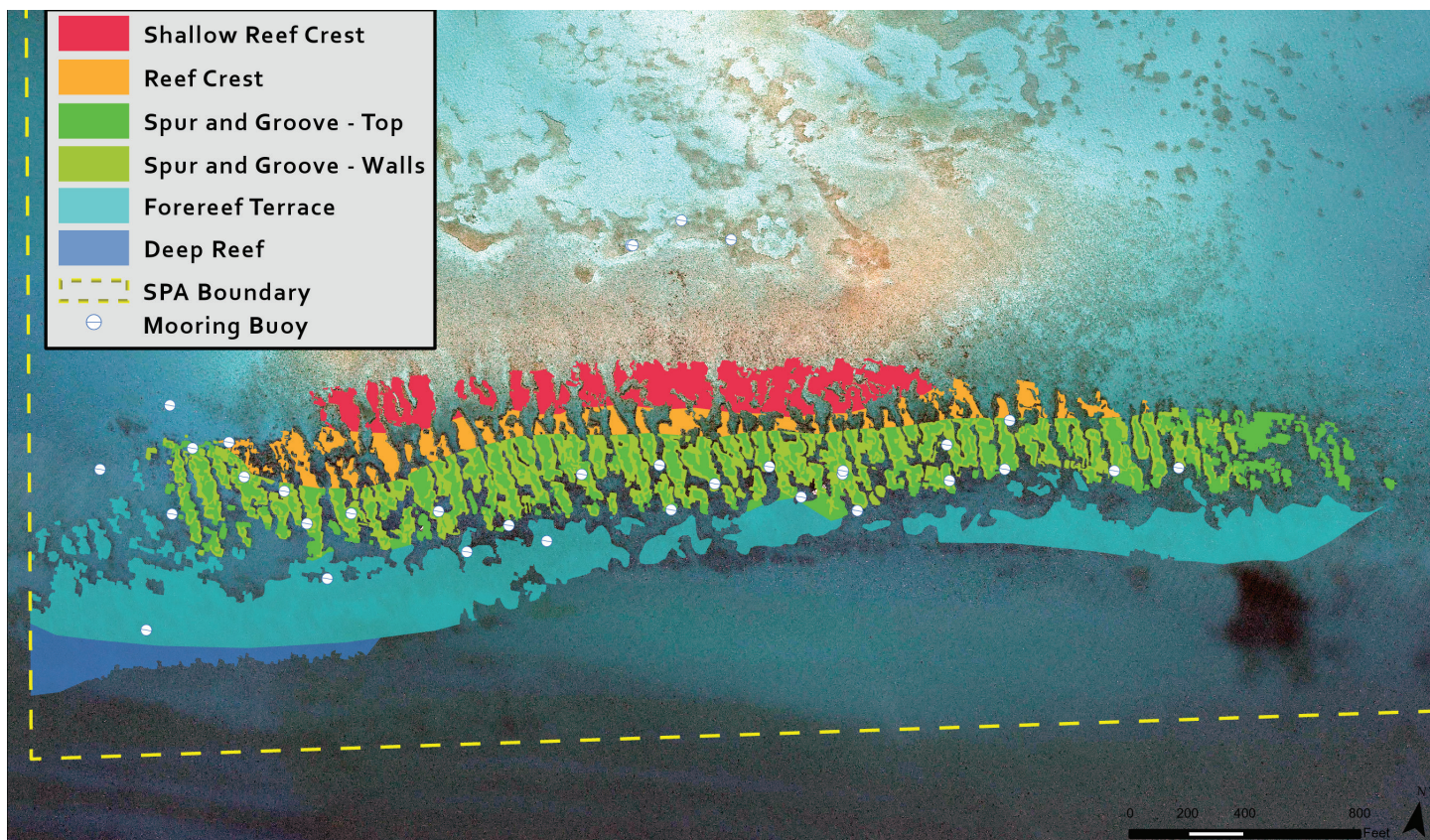


Photo: NOAA







The map of Looe Key (above) depicts the reef habitat zones to be restored through **Mission: Iconic Reefs**. The map also depicts portions of the sanctuary preservation area (SPA) boundary and locations of mooring buoys.

The table (top right) depicts the area to be restored, numbers of corals to be outplanted, and target total percent coral cover for Looe Key by Reef Zone and Phase.

The graph (bottom right) depicts the number of corals to be outplanted to Looe Key by species and phase. There is an emphasis on outplanting elkhorn and staghorn corals in Phase 1 with more emphasis on the star, brain, and other corals in Phase 2.

Zone	Area to be restored (m2)	Phase 1 Corals to be planted	Phase 2 Corals to be planted	Total coral cover (%)
Shallow Reef Crest	3,620	876	710	10.00
Reef Crest	6,733	7,109	7,518	34.50
Spur and Groove - Top	20,294	23,085	20,645	20.25
Spur and Groove - Sides	19,910	10,490	28,469	6.50
Forereef Terrace	6,094	5,912	10,814	19.50
Deep Reef	787	322	708	8.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57,438</b>	<b>47,794</b>	<b>68,864</b>	

