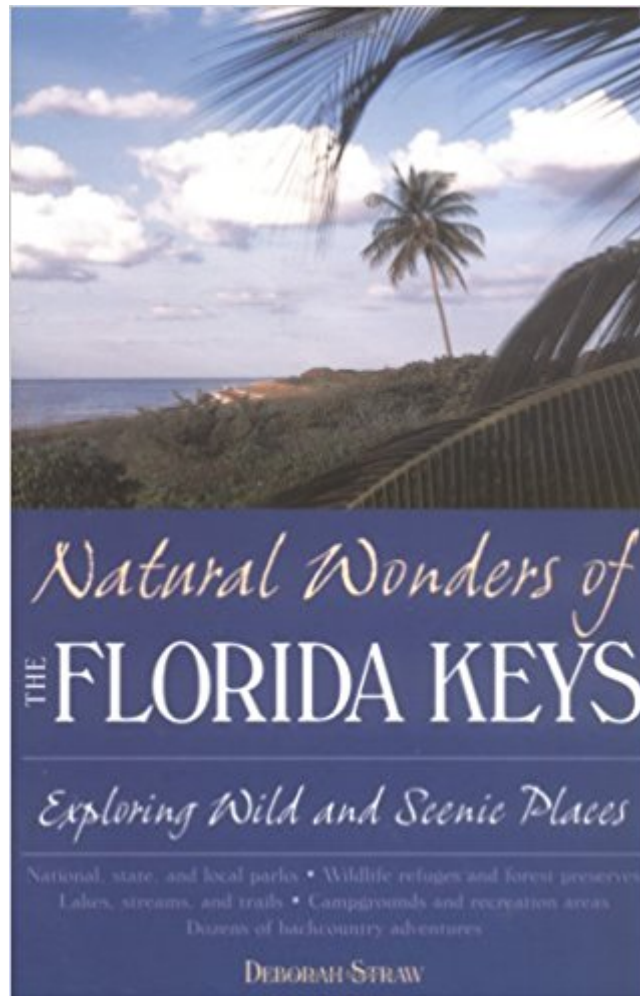




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Natural Wonders Of The Florida Keys



Synopsis

Outdoor enthusiasts and families will find abundant opportunities to learn about nature in these guides to wild things and wild places. Each title highlights more than 50 unspoiled state and national parks, forests, and reserves. It includes all the information needed to enjoy these national treasures.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Deborah Straws book makes visiting the Keys a wonderful natural approach. This is not a book for high end, hotel and restaurant types - if you are looking for recommendations to such. But for those of us that want to view and explore the beauties of nature, this book is number one. No, not meaning it is a camping book. Instead, it is a book for those wanting to explore the Keys - stay where you may but use this book as a source of great and fun ways to see the natural aspect of the Keys.

Natural Wonders of the Florida Keys is a friendly, informative companion for a leisurely journey through our country's sultry southern archipelago. Along the way we are introduced to a wide variety of animals, plants, and ecosystems. There are directions for finding beaches, parks, trails, and organizations dedicated to wildlife and habitat preservation. Thumbnail descriptions of various animals that inhabit the Keys pop up from the narrative like furry heads peering through the bushes. Leafing through the pages, one is surrounded by skinks and alligators. Herons and egrets take flight on our approach, and manatees glide gracefully by. We are introduced to forests, mangroves, reefs,

and tropical gardens. There are also hints for observing and interacting with the human fauna, such as the quirky characters who inhabit Mallary Square in Key West. As the days grow shorter and the temperature outside begins to fall, I can imagine myself hopping into a little sports car, cranking down the top, and pointing it south down Route 1. And who better to accompany me than the author, Deborah Straw? She clearly knows her way around, and sprinkles *Natural Wonders* with anecdotes, local history, and insider's info. Unlike dense travel guides crammed with useless data, *Natural Wonders of the Florida Keys* is good reading; introspective, humorous, and insightful. You'll enjoy it even if the closest you get to the Keys is Collins Avenue in Miami Beach.

I liked this book so much I've already given it as a gift. It's aimed at those of us who simply want to enjoy wildlife in its natural surroundings without experiencing too much physical discomfort. In an appealing, conversational style Deborah Straw imparts a wealth of information including the history of each Keys area, tour opportunities, camping facilities, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. For example, in the Key West section you learn about walking tours, a glass bottom boat, the beaches, and how to get easily from Miami to Key West without taking an inconvenient car. You can feel in every page the author's deep love and respect for animals of all kinds. She has definite opinions with regard to their treatment and protection, and this compassionate current runs throughout. She tells the would-be visitor about the climate by season, and she even includes warnings about what NOT to do. And, she looks out for the cost-conscious traveler. At the end of the book is a short reading list and a good index. I haven't been to the Florida Keys yet, but when I go, I'll definitely take along this book.

This book is a treasure for anyone planning to visit the Florida Keys, or even those merely interested in a vicarious experience with one of the country's most astonishing destinations. It also lists resources for people who might want to become more involved with environmental issues. Thoroughly researched and full of valuable insights, Deborah Straw's beautifully-written work resonates for readers who consider the ecosystem important.

If Deborah Straw ever leads a trip to revisit her *Natural Wonders of the Florida Keys*, I would like to know about it. In her book, she brought back many wonderful memories to me of my three years living in Key West, and traveling all over the keys with my family. It was many years ago, in the 50s, when the keys were more alive with flora and fauna than colorful humans who habitate there now. She made it come alive for me again. I read the book in a night, and am rereading it again. Yes, I

think she would be a wonderful guide. Take me there, Deborah.

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