Least Terns Nest in Biscayne

During a Biscayne National Park sea turtle nesting survey, resource managers observed terns flying in isolated rocky areas on Soldiers Key. With the help of the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, staff identified the birds as least terns *(Sterna antillarum)*, a species listed as threatened by the

state of Florida. The resource managers surveyed the island and identified two nests with two eggs in each nest. On a return trip to the island they observed three fledglings. Park managers responded to the information by closing the nesting keys through the end of the nesting season (April-August). The park will continue to monitor these birds and their future nesting activities.

Park staff had presumed that least terns nested here, but had not confirmed this until the recent sightings. Now, the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission has added Soldiers Key and Ragged Key #1 in Biscayne National Park to their database of active nesting sites. Least Tern nesting habitat has been greatly reduced and these park islands represent some of the few known nesting sites in South Florida.