

Pigeon Key Carrier

Fall 2018

Hurricane Irma: One Year Later

This past September, the Pigeon Key staff and the rest of the Florida Keys all looked back on how far we have come since Category 4 Hurricane Irma struck our beloved island chain. The Pigeon Key Foundation and Marine Science Center were so grateful for not only the immediate help we received after the storm, but also for the continued support throughout this year. Without the countless volunteers, school groups participating in service projects during their stay, and faithful teachers and chaperones returning to our facility in 2018, we would not be where we are today! Below is a handful of before and after photos to remind us of the positive momentum we've had moving forward after the storm. Thank you again to all of our supporters. We could not have done it without you this year!



January 2018



November 2018



November 2017



November 2018

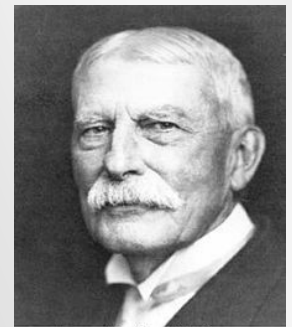


February 2018



November 2018

Pigeon Key
Foundation &
Marine
Science Center



Henry Morrison Flagler



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New Schools Visit Pigeon Key!

We had the pleasure of hosting twenty Riverview High School students this past October for their first visit to Pigeon Key. The students ranged from Freshman to Seniors, but they were all taking some form of Marine Biology course this semester! They got right in the water on their first afternoon after a 6 hour drive from Sarasota and collected sea urchins, sea cucumbers, and conchs right around the island's dock. While on the island, they learned about the importance of our Florida Keys ecosystem, Henry Flagler and the Florida East Coast Railway, the impacts of marine debris and shark biology. The highlight of the trip was the snorkel at Sombrero Reef. We had beautiful conditions exploring the reef where we encountered nurse sharks, parrotfish and many different species of birds passing overhead. We are truly blessed to have the third largest barrier coral reef in the world right in our backyard. We look forward to hosting another new school, Lexington Middle from Fort Myers in November!

Featured Creature: The Osprey

The Osprey, also known as the Seahawk, is a common bird of prey found in the Florida Keys. With its brown body, white head, and wingspan of up to 71 inches, it is quite easy to identify. The Osprey's main diet consists of fish that they are able to catch with the sharp talons they have on their feet. It is quite the sight to see one flying straight towards the water and hooking a fish with one fell swoop. On Pigeon Key, we are lucky to have resident Osprey that use the Old 7 Mile Bridge as a staging ground for their daily hunting. They will perch along the old railroad tracks, now used as the guardrails, and sit and wait for their opportunity to strike. There are also migratory Osprey that pass through the Keys on their way to their proper nesting grounds.

The Osprey's nesting period is between December and February and mating pairs take turns incubating anywhere from two to four eggs at a time. Males ensure females will not leave their mate by constantly bringing them food while they are nesting. Nests can be found in tall trees, telephone poles, man-made platforms, and some will reuse their nests year after year. They also have a distinct sound while communicating. Their squawks and squeals take place if an unknown Osprey is approaching a nesting area or just a mating pair communicating while one flies away from the nest. The resident Osprey of Pigeon Key can be heard all throughout the day. They are a magnificent bird to be able to watch and have in our surrounding ecosystem.



Pigeon Key Memberships: Become a Member Today!

Pigeon Key offers a wide variety of membership levels that will suit your individual or family needs! Members receive free admission to the island along with the historical tour, various Pigeon Key merchandise, and a 10% discount at our gift shop! By becoming a member your donation will go toward helping The Pigeon Key Foundation preserve its historical integrity, continue educating school groups through our Marine Science Center, and maintain the island. Check out our member packages on our website (<http://pigeonkey.net/visitors-center/membership/>) or you may also sign up by visiting our gift shop or calling us at 305-743-5999. We want to thank our current members and members that have been with us for many years! Your support means so much to the Pigeon Key Foundation.



Outreach Events: Fall 2018!

The Pigeon Key Foundation and Marine Science Center will be participating in two separate outreach events this fall and we would love to see you there! On November 8th, from 5-7pm we will be at the Sugarloaf School for their first annual Marine Science Community Night. We will also be at the Dolphin Research Center's Ocean Day on November 14th from 10am-2pm. The Pigeon Key staff will be running a touch tank with local critters and have information about Summer Camp, education groups, our daily historical tours and more! All ages are welcome at both events!



Visit Pigeon Key!

We have a very unique spot here in the Florida Keys! Seven days a week we offer guided, historical tours. They are led by a guide who is knowledgeable about the island and the Henry Flagler era that put Pigeon Key on the map. The tour itself lasts about an hour between walking about the grounds and seeing our historical buildings, some of which have been standing for over 100 years! Each tour is rounded out with a visit to our on-site historical museum. With the Florida Bay and the Atlantic Ocean as our backdrop, there is also tons of wildlife to observe during your visit. If you are not interested in the historical tour, you can always bring your snorkel gear and a picnic and enjoy our beach area. Amenities on the island include lounge chairs, picnic tables, a water fountain, restrooms and a fresh water shower right on the dock for you to rinse off if you decide to take a swim.

Transportation to the island is via ferry boat that runs three times a day at 10AM, 12PM, and 2PM. You can purchase your ticket in our Visitor's Center and Gift Shop located at 2010 Overseas Highway in Marathon, FL. Admission is \$12 per person and children under the age of 5 are free! We even have a \$3 discount for Monroe County residents. Spread the word about the best day trip here in the Florida Keys. We look forward to seeing you soon!



Pigeon Key Merchandise!

This month's featured merchandise is our Pigeon Key Foundation rash-guards! We have a long sleeve option in both gray and white and a short sleeve option in gray! Both styles come in Men's and Women's sizes and feature our Pigeon Key logo and an aerial shot of the island. You can find these awesome items at our Visitor's Center and Gift Shop. They will make the perfect gift this holiday season.



Pigeon Key Foundation & Marine Science Center

PO Box 500130
Marathon, FL 33050

Phone: 305-743-5999

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Dedicated to preserving the cultural history of the Florida Keys by promoting their healthy future through education, history, and research.