

# THE EVERGLADES

## Significant features:

- situated at the southern tip of the Florida peninsula
- is actually a shallow river system (Kissimmee River – Lake Okeechobee – Gulf of Mexico) with slow moving water (30 - 600m per day) over limestone sediments
- the largest sawgrass prairie in North America
- with 524,686 hectares, the largest wilderness, east of the Rocky Mountains
- became a National Park in 1928 and a World Heritage Site in 1979
- over 93,100 hectares of mangrove forest; the largest mangrove ecosystem in the western hemisphere
- only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles exist side by side
- 300 species of birds, 120 species of trees, 25 varieties of orchids, 1000 kinds of plants
- 36 species of endangered animals (Florida panther, Manatee, American crocodile, water stork,...)
- the most significant breeding grounds for tropical wading birds in North America
- winter dry season: December to April; summer wet season: May to November
- “Gator holes” are the only places in the park where many animals can survive during the dry winter season
- air and water pollution, a growing population and a road and canal system reduced the wetlands to about 50% of its original size
- Hurricane “Andrew” damaged part of the park in 1992





