

EGMONT HABITATS



Egmont Key is not a true barrier island but rather a formation from the accumulation of tide-borne sediments flowing seaward from Tampa Bay. This dynamic environment as people experience it today is the outcome of geologic processes over centuries that have influenced the natural habitats of Egmont Key.

DID YOU KNOW?

Egmont Key has a long history of human habitation that has resulted in highly modified habitats and the introduction of invasive plants such as Australian pine and Brazilian pepper.

DID YOU KNOW?

Habitats across the world are continually modified by the presence of exotic species. Exotic plants can threaten the integrity of natural plant communities and the wildlife that depend on it.

Coastal Berm

These berms formed by storm-deposited sand are characterized by a mixture of tropical herbs, shrubs, and trees. At Egmont Key, this community is dominated by cabbage palm. Other plants associated with this habitat type are strangler fig, saw palmetto, sea grape, and Florida privet.



Coastal Grassland

This plant community is dominated by herbaceous plants such as sea oat, sand spur, muhly grass, and beach panicum. Few or no shrubs and trees can be found here. This serves as a transitional area between coastal berm and beach dune communities.



3



Beach Dune

Formed by wind and wave action, these are characterized by low growing pioneer plants adapted to nutrient-poor soils and unstable environments. Sea oats, sand spur, railroad vine, and hairy beach sunflower are common plants of this community.

4



Marine Unconsolidated Substrate

This community refers to the littoral zones influenced by the tide – such as a sandy beach or a tidal flat. This community supports a variety of marine invertebrates and it is therefore a rich feeding ground for wading birds and shorebirds. This community is also highly sought after by people.

5



Marine Grass Beds

A mixture of shoal, manatee, and turtle grass can be found off the eastern shore of Egmont Key. This community is supported by coastal waters that are clear, shallow, and sheltered from high wave energy. It also serves as the feeding grounds and nurseries to abundant sea life such as starfish, sea urchins, and sea cucumbers. Vessel exclusion zones help protect this fragile community from damage caused by boat propellers and anchors.