

Postcards from the Edge: Discoveries of New Colonies of Miami Blues

by Paula Cannon

If you were to go on a search to find hidden treasure, the first place you might look would be on a remote island. With visions of a treasure chest full of glittering gold, you might walk right over a beach full of pearls and not even notice. After living in and exploring the Florida Keys for more than 21 years, I've learned that some of the most exciting discoveries present themselves when expectation is left behind. On my latest voyage I found that beach of pearls!

Part 1. Boca Grande

In late November, 2006, I received a generous offer to go to Boca Grande with my good friends Katie Lyons and Tom Wilmers. Tom is a United States Fish & Wildlife biologist with our refuge. The small island of Boca Grande is located about twelve miles west of Key West in the Gulf of Mexico. Because I had long wanted to explore this island I was thrilled to accept the invitation.



*Top: The first-seen Miami Blue of the newly discovered colony on Boca Grande Key.
Bottom: The author storms the beach at Boca Grande Key. Photo by Tom Wilmers.
Opposite page: The beach at Boca Grande Key.*