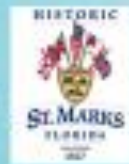




Big Bend Shellfish Trail

Natalie Anderson^a, Leslie Sturmer^a, Savanna Barry^b

University of Florida / IFAS
Shellfish Aquaculture Extension^a
Nature Coast Biological Station^b
Cedar Key, FL



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The Place

Located where the Florida peninsula meets the panhandle

One of the least developed and pristine stretches of coastline in the United States.

These habitats provide essential near-shore nurseries for commercial and recreational species.



The Shellfish

Species found in the Big Bend

- Bay Scallops
- Blue Crab
- Hard Clams
- Shrimp
- Stone Crab
- Oysters



*The
Conservation
Fund*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH:
A SUMMARY ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA'S BIG BEND REGION



THE
CONSERVATION
FUND

Grant Awarded

- \$20,000 Award
- Develop, produce & distribute Brochure Map
- Lead: Levy County Visitor Bureau
Co-lead: UF Shellfish Extension Program

The awardees include:

1. The College of Central Florida for workforce training of timber industry contractors.
2. The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission to develop and market nature-based itineraries for wildlife watching.
3. The Levy County Board of Commissioners to develop, produce and distribute a Big Bend Shellfish Trail Map, including a Website map.
4. The Cedar Key Oysterman's Association and Suwannee Oyster Association for the rehabilitation of the Suwannee Sound oyster population and fishery including re-establishing functional reef infrastructure to protect a vital regional fishery and reef ecology.
5. The Nature Coast Biological Station to undertake a tagging study ensuring sustainable harvests of the region's most important recreational fish species, spotted seatrout, and cultivate community partnerships to sustain the sportfishing industry.



The Brochure

Guide tourists to where to buy and eat local shellfish

Provide information about recreational harvest and commercial production of shellfish

Display locations of boat ramps to access boating, fishing and paddling within the region

Educate visitors and residents about the need to protect water quality and natural resources



Big Bend

SHELLFISH TRAIL

WORKING WATERFRONT
COMMUNITIES

DIXIE, LEVY, JEFFERSON & TAYLOR
COUNTIES – FLORIDA



Cedar Key Seafood Festival

FESTIVALS

Join one of the Big Bend's annual festivals and experience local flavor at its best!

DIXIE/TAYLOR COUNTIES

FEBRUARY: FIDDLER CRAB IN STEINHATCHEE

APRIL: HORSESHOE BEACH SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY

JUNE: WATERMELON FESTIVAL

APRIL: MONTICELLO BIKE FESTIVAL

LEVY COUNTY

OCTOBER: CEDAR KEY SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER: YANKEETOWN SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

TAYLOR COUNTY

OCTOBER: FLORIDA FOREST FESTIVAL –
WORLD'S LARGEST FREE FISH FRY



Fiddler Crab Festival in Steinhatchee

The Counties

Five rural counties:

- Levy
- Dixie
- Taylor
- Jefferson
- **Wakulla**



The Map

- Over 95 locations
- Wakulla: 21 (22%)
- 7,500 rack cards printed
- New Brochure Maps in final production



The Map

Restaurants: 6

WAKULLA COUNTY

- 24 COOTER STEW CAFÉ**
859 Port Leon Drive, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.9908
- 55 RIVERSIDE CAFÉ**
69 Riverside Drive, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.5668
www.riversidebay.com
- 36 POSEY'S STEAM ROOM & OYSTER BAR**
1506 Coastal Highway, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.5243
- 57 THE SEINEYARD ROCK LANDING**
99 Rock Landing Road, Panacea, 32346 • 850.713.0020
theseineyard.com
- 38 TROPICAL TRADER SEAFOOD RESTAURANT**
91 Coastal Highway, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.3474
- 39 ANGELOS & SONS SEAFOOD RESTAURANT**
5 Mashes Sands Road, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.5168
angelospanacea.com



The Map

Seafood Markets: 6

WAKULLA COUNTY

12 ST. MARKS SEAFOOD

71 Riverside Drive, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.5668

13 LYNN BROTHERS SEAFOOD

28 Lynn Circle, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.6083

14 OUTLAW OYSTER COMPANY

11 Rock Landing Road, Panacea, 32346 • 850.841.9344
www.outlawoyster.com

15 MY-WAY SEAFOOD

1249 Coastal Highway, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.0164

16 PANACEA AREA OYSTER COMPANY

12 Jer-Be-Lou, Panacea, 32346 • 850.567.9296

17 MINERAL SPRINGS SEAFOOD BY THE BAY

1612 Coastal Highway, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.2248



The Map

Bait & Tackle: 4

WAKULLA COUNTY

SHELL ISLAND FISH CAMP

440 Shell Island Road, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.6226
shellislandfishcamp.com

COASTAL CORNER MARKET

49 Coastal Highway, Panacea, 32346 • 850.713.0196

ROCK LANDING MARINA

99 Rock Landing Road, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.5844
rocklandingmarina.com

CRUM'S MINI MALL

1321 Coastal Highway, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.5501
crumsminimall.com



The Map

Marinas: 5

WAKULLA COUNTY

12 LYNN BROTHERS MARINA

28 Lynn Circle, St. Marks 32355 • 850.925.6083

13 SHELL ISLAND FISH CAMP

440 Shell Island Road, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.6226
shellislandfishcamp.com

14 SHIELDS MARINA

95 Riverside Drive, St. Marks, 32355 • 850.925.6158
www.shieldsmarina.com

15 TIDE CREEK MARINA

29 Mashas Sands Road, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.4841

16 ROCK LANDING MARINA

99 Rock Landing Road, Panacea, 32346 • 850.984.5844
rocklandingmarina.com



Maritime Heritage

- National Park Service
 - National Maritime Heritage Grant
 - \$34,300 award
- History and appreciation of
 - Indigenous use of shellfish
 - Early packing & shipping
 - Early fishery practices
 - harvesting vessels & processes
 - Wild/commercial harvest to aquaculture/recreational harvest
- Working waterfronts



Educational Panels

- Pannier graphics kiosks
 - 2-ft x 3-ft panels
 - ADA Compliant
 - 10-yr guarantee graphics (even in coastal/saltwater areas)
 - Easy to install

- Wakulla Expansion: 6 Panels
 - Big Bend Shellfish Trail (2)
 - Bay Scallops
 - Blue Crab
 - Oysters
 - Stone Crab



Extending the Trail

Big Bend Shellfish Trail

The Shellfish Trail is a road trip of dock-to-table destinations along the Big Bend coast. By following the longest shellfish trail in the U.S. and first in Florida, you can eat your fill of crabs, oysters, scallops, shrimp, and clams, and learn about their fisheries and a way of life.



As you stroll the neighborhoods here, you may see stacks of crab traps—wooden or plastic for stone crab and wire for blue crab. You may also discover oyster culture bags laying out to dry before being used again. Although harvests today do not reach past abundance, the Big Bend is a haven for fresh shellfish.

CLAMS
FRESH
DAILY
OPEN 7 DAYS



Photograph by Carlton Ward, Jr.

People have depended on natural resources here in the Big Bend for thousands of years. Native people created large shell mounds along the coast, and today's coastal communities have a deep history relying on local shellfish harvest. An abundance of oysters, crabs, scallops, and shrimp have crossed docks from Panacea and St. Marks to Yankeetown. In 1995, a statewide ban ended gill net harvest of mullet and other fish, as well as a way of life for many residents. Today, shellfish aquaculture has provided an alternative to net fishing for watermen in several communities.

- ✕ Look for educational signs at Panacea, Spring Creek, St. Marks, Steinhatchee, Jena, Horseshoe Beach, Suwannee, Shell Mound, Cedar Key, and Yankeetown.



The Shellfish Trail map guides you to working waterfront communities where you can buy, eat, and harvest fresh shellfish. And with every bite, you can taste the sea and sense the history.

Download your copy at: floridashellfishtrail.org



The Big Bend Shellfish Trail in Wakulla County is being supported in part by the Panacea and St. Marks Waterfronts, Wakulla County Tourist Development Council, and University of Florida/IFAS.

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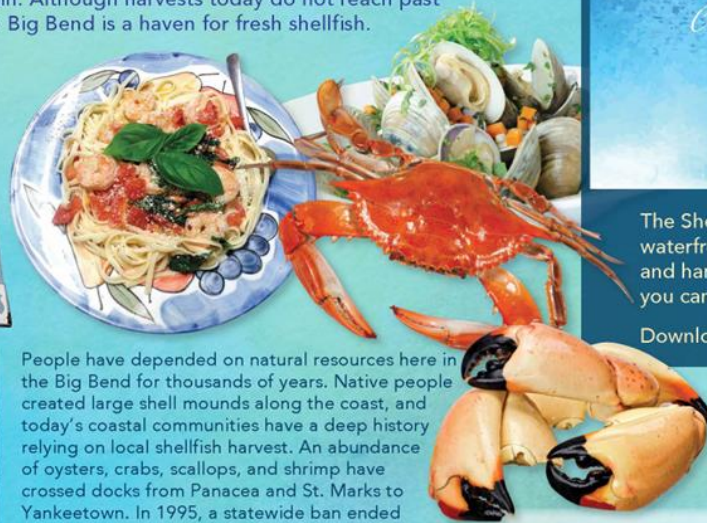
Extending the Trail

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Extending the Trail



Bay Scallops

Florida's Big Bend

Bay scallops used to support a commercial fishery but now are only harvested recreationally in Florida's Big Bend, where healthy seagrass meadows still support abundant scallops.



BAY SCALLOPS (*Argopecten irradians*) are bivalve mollusks that live in shallow seagrass meadows. Declines in seagrass coverage and water quality caused populations to collapse in other parts of Florida. Unlike clams and oysters, scallops are active swimmers and have many neon colored eyes.

Bay Scallop Fishery

Florida's bay scallops were once abundant enough to be harvested commercially. In Wakulla County, commercial fishing was an important industry by the mid-1800s. Fishers targeted many shellfish species, although bay scallops were a minor part of the commercial catch. After World War II, commercial fishing became increasingly important to the economy of Florida's Big Bend as motorized vessels capable of towing dredges and large nets were more common. Scallops were captured by pulling drag nets, made from webbing attached to metal frames, in tandem off mullet boats. The movement of the weighted nets along the sea bottom caused scallops to swim into the net. Commercial harvest of bay scallops along Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast peaked in the 1950s and steadily declined until the fishery closed in 1994.

Today, bay scallops are only harvested recreationally in Florida. The Big Bend's shallow nearshore waters contain expansive seagrass beds and encompass the heart of recreational scalloping territory. Popular scalloping areas in Wakulla County can be found from Spring Creek to St. Marks. Bay scallops can be captured by hand while snorkeling or by dip-netting.



HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

You need a valid Florida saltwater fishing license to harvest scallops.

Practice safe boating habits and be careful not to damage seagrass beds.

Learn more at: floridashellfishtrail.org



The Big Bend Shellfish Trail in Wakulla County is being supported in part by the Panacea and St. Marks Waterfronts, Wakulla County Tourist Development Council, and University of Florida/IFAS.



Extending the Trail



Oysters

Oysters support a new aquaculture industry in the Panacea area, providing food, jobs, and environmental benefits. Shellfish farming is a renewable, sustainable industry.



EASTERN OYSTERS (*Crassostrea virginica*) filter large quantities of water while feeding on naturally occurring microscopic plants (algae). Clean waters are critical to produce shellfish safe for people to eat. Oysters help improve water quality by increasing clarity and reducing excess nutrients. The gear used to culture oysters provides habitat for juvenile fish, crabs, and other organisms, improving species abundance and diversity.

Oyster Culture in Wakulla County

Although harvesting oysters has long been an important commercial fishery in Wakulla County, annual landings averaging around 12,000 sacks began declining in 2013. Decreased supplies and higher dockside prices prompted interest in aquaculture. To assist in these efforts, the Florida Governor and Cabinet approved use of the water column for off-bottom culture gear on shellfish aquaculture leases. A local community college also began an aquaculture certificate program. Today, there are 105 acres of leases in Apalachee Bay dedicated to oyster farming. The area's warm waters and high natural productivity allow for fast growth and continuous production. Over a million oysters are harvested annually by 50 to 60 growers, providing 30% of the state's aquacultured production. The industry also supports local jobs, including processing plant workers, equipment suppliers, and truck drivers.

Oyster farming starts on land in a hatchery with production of tiny oysters called "seed." The small seed are grown in shore-based tanks until they are large enough to be moved to open-water farms. Oysters live and grow protected inside plastic mesh bags supported by floats and longlines. When oysters reach market size, they are harvested, cleaned, and processed for sale.

Florida's Big Bend



WHERE CAN YOU FIND CULTURED OYSTERS?

Cultured oysters are sold as live shellstock (both shells intact) and shipped fresh in refrigerated conditions to markets. Their heavy shells are connected with a strong hinge, which allows oysters to remain closed and alive for days when chilled. Several sizes are available year-round. Oyster brands developed by growers and wholesalers reflect the industry's entrepreneurial attitude and "merroir" of the waters.

To find local restaurants and seafood markets featuring fresh cultured oysters, visit:
floridashellfishtrail.org.



The Big Bend Shellfish Trail in Wakulla County is being supported in part by the Panacea and St. Marks Waterfronts, Wakulla County Tourist Development Council, and University of Florida/IFAS.



Educational Panels



Mobile App

Guided Tours




- Yankeetown
- Cedar Key
- Horseshoe Beach
- Steinhatchee/Jena
- Suwannee




What is that Boat? Kiosk
Cedar Key, Florida 32625, United States
Created By: UF IFAS Nature Coast Biological Station

Information

🔊 Play Audio

  What's that boat sign 



[Privacy policy](#)

Welcome to the working waterfront, where local shellfishers work the waters using specialized boats and equipment. Visit this kiosk to read more about the region's iconic "bird dog boat", the workhorse of the local clam and oyster aquaculture industry. Then, hang out and watch the water to see these boats and their crew at work. Can you spot bushel baskets of fresh clams?

What is that boat? *Florida's Big Bird*

This is a working waterfront and you may notice some interesting boats. These skiffs and "bird dog" boats are the workhorses of the local aquaculture industry.



Many people have a lot of fun watching these boats work in the water.

The boat helps shellfish workers and another boat in the bay.

The water is from the bay of the boat, keeping the rest of the boat clean. This is called a "bird dog boat" because the forward motor points where it's going, much like a bird dog.

The captain, seated in front, can navigate the shallow waters of the Big Bird.

It's important to keep shells as fresh as possible. So, most time you see a working boat in a bay at the pier, make way for fresh seafood.

Bird dog boats have a few features, including water pumps to the deck from the water.

Bird dog boats transport market boats along to the shoreline. The average boat can hold 50-60 bushels. That's up to 50,000 clams, oysters, etc.

Historically, similar boats were used to transport market oysters to the pier. The boats were used to transport the oysters to the pier.



Trail Website

Visit: www.floridashellfishtrail.org/

BIG BEND SHELLFISH TRAIL
Experience fresh, local seafood along Florida's Big Bend

HOME ABOUT THE TRAIL FOLLOW THE TRAIL PLAN YOUR ROAD TRIP HARVESTING & COOKING SHELLFISH INDUSTRY

BIG BEND SHELLFISH TRAIL

Experience fresh, local seafood along Florida's Big Bend.

PLAN YOUR TRIP

EXPLORE THE MAP

TAKE GUIDED TOUR

SHELLFISH OF THE BIG BEND



Blue Crabs



Bay Scallops



Shrimp



Oysters

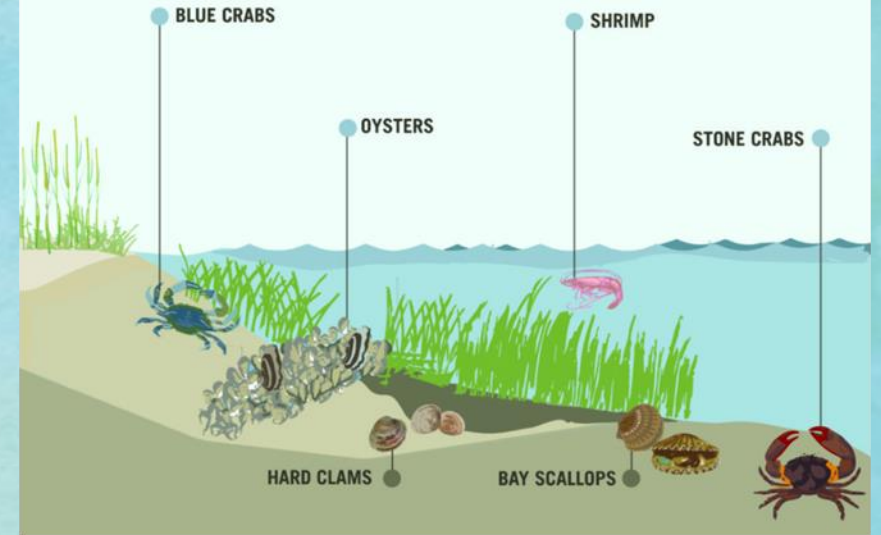


Stone Crabs



Hard Clams

SPECIES FOUND IN THE BIG BEND REGION



FLORIDA'S SHELLFISH TRAIL ROAD TRIP 1

DAY ONE: Travel north on SR 34 to US 90 in Levy County, Florida. Come prepared to be immersed in the local culture of a working waterfront for oystermake and clam farmers. Wander 2nd street, 3rd in history and architecture. (since 1820's). Today, there is a booming business of making clams and oysters just off shore. There are many "Farm to Table" restaurants serving oysters and oyster dishes. Take an educational and fun clam tour with South Bay Clam Farm from the dock in Cedar Key, call (352) 321-2255. Many restaurants on the island feature local clams, oysters, scallops and amazing World Championship Clam Chowder at King's Seafood restaurant.

DAY TWO: Travel north along US 19 NB and south CR 389 to the Salt Bank, coastal community of SHELLFISH in Dixie County, Florida. Fishermen will only see the Gulf of Mexico for provide there with an abundance of oysters, scallops, clams and stone crabs. Stop to enjoy lunch or dinner at the Salt Bank Shellfish Community Restaurant. Take a nature boat tour or paddling excursion with Business Guides & Outfitters, call (352) 943-1111.

DAY THREE: Continue north on US 19 NB then CR 51 to the coastal fishing community of SHELLFISH in Taylor County, Florida. This working waterfront of crab traps and shrimp boats creates a picturesque landscape of river and Gulf convergence. Celebrate with a shellfish lunch or dinner at Fisherman's Restaurant along Riverside Drive or a beautiful sunset on the dock at Ray's Restaurant.

DAY FOUR: Rounding the corner of the Big Bend along the Gulf of Mexico, visit SHELLFISH and SHELLFISH in Jefferson County, Florida where amazing farms and aquaculture grace the waterfront. Take time to paddle to the Gulf, or visit the Stone Crabs, visiting your way to the Gulf, or spend your day riding the mangrove trails looking for birds and wildlife. Stop by the Back House Bakery for a special treat of Southern Hospitality.

Plan your trip today! Experience Florida's largest shellfish trail. Contact us at www.floridashellfishtrail.org/ or call to reserve a FREE Big Bend Shellfish Trail Map. 352-321-2255

FLORIDA'S SHELLFISH TRAIL ROAD TRIP 2

DAY ONE: The beautiful coastal communities of SHELLFISH and SHELLFISH, Florida are known for their abundance of recreational villages during harvesting season. Bring your own boat or offshore fishing license is required for 3 feet of water in the most popular way of catching the scallops that are being on the nearby banks and reefs. Stop at Ray's Restaurant to watch the sun set into the Gulf of Mexico or Fisherman's Restaurant and they will prepare them just for you. After dinner, both are great places to watch the sunset or Fisherman's Restaurant for a great view of the Stonecrabs. Other nearby beaches, historic and a wonderful coastal area for photography.

DAY TWO: Just across the Shellfish Bay is the largest coastal community of SHELLFISH. Here you will find a local make your own oysters in the Shellfish Bay and Shellfish. Located right on the banks of the Shellfish Bay, this restaurant is a "back to back" with South Bay and Shellfish. Located right on the banks of the Shellfish Bay, this fishing trip for oysters in the Gulf of Mexico or Fisherman's Restaurant and they will prepare a nice dish for you. After dinner, both are great places to watch the sunset or Fisherman's Restaurant for a great view of the Stonecrabs. Other nearby beaches, historic and a wonderful coastal area for photography.

DAY THREE: SHELLFISH in Jefferson County is the place to stop to "eat the best" of the Shellfish Bay. The Shellfish Bay and Shellfish, Cook County and Shellfish. Take a boat on some paddling trip down the Shellfish Bay. Jefferson County has many nice and fishing trails and abundance of marine life to see. (352) 943-1111.

DAY FOUR: Member your way north along US 19 NB to the peaceful and picturesque island of SHELLFISH in Levy County. Adventure is king on the island, harvesting clams and oysters right from the Gulf of Mexico. Many local fishermen often harvesting clams and oysters. Southern Cross Sea Farms offers a retail shop where you can purchase local shellfish to cook at home.

Plan your trip today! Experience Florida's largest shellfish trail. Contact us at www.floridashellfishtrail.org/ or call to reserve a FREE Big Bend Shellfish Trail Map. 352-321-2255

how to Do florida

with Chad Crawford



*Promoting the
Trail*



Promoting the Trail

