

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Swim mask
- Snorkel
- Swim fins
- Small mesh bag

- Divers-down flag (required by law)



- » Displayed on vessel; must be at least 20 inches by 24 inches with a stiffener to keep the flag unfurled. Should only be displayed while snorkelers are in the water; display above the vessel's highest point.
- » Tethered to diver; must be at least 12 inches by 12 inches; mandatory when using a mask and snorkel from the beach unless it is a marked swimming area.
- » You must make reasonable efforts to stay within 300 feet of a divers-down flag on open waters and within 100 feet of a flag within rivers, inlets, or navigation channels.

- Boat

- » Usually required to get to the best scalloping areas. In shallow water, it is possible to wade for scallops in the seagrass, or to collect them from a shallow-draft boat using a dip net or landing net, but these methods are not very productive. Most scallopers go by boat into water 4 to 10 feet deep where they anchor, put up their dive flag, and snorkel over the beds, collecting the scallops by hand.



RECIPES

SCALLOPS ON THE HALF SHELL

Mix 1/2 stick of melted butter, 2-3 cloves of chopped garlic, juice from 1 lime or lemon, 1/2 teaspoon of seasoned salt, and a few shakes (if desired) of your favorite hot sauce. Remove the top shell from scallop, leaving whole animal in bottom of shell. Spoon 1/2 tsp. of butter mixture over scallop, and then broil 4" from heat for 3-4 minutes.

Note: Some people prefer to scrape away the darker meats and leave just the white scallop muscle.

SCALLOP STUFFING

Scallops make an excellent ingredient for seafood stuffing using, butter, garlic (optional), seasoned bread crumbs, lime juice, paprika, and black pepper. Melt a pat of butter in a saucepan, cook a chopped clove of garlic, and add scallops to cook briefly. Stir in breadcrumbs until liquid is absorbed and remove from heat. Lightly season with paprika and pepper, then remoisten with a small amount of lime juice until the mixture sticks together. Try it stuffed into and on top of hog fish or red grouper fillets. Cover with foil and bake at 325°F for 45 minutes, then remove cover and broil until lightly browned.

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For more information about scallops, scallop research, and recreational harvesting of the Florida Bay Scallop, visit

www.flseagrant.org

or contact

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For information about accommodations and scallop excursions in the area:

DISCOVER
CRYSTAL RIVER
FLORIDA

Citrus County Visitors & Convention Bureau
915 N. Suncoast Blvd
Crystal River, FL 34429
Office: 352.794.5506
1-800-587-6667

www.discovercrystalriverfl.com
info@visitcitrus.com
www.facebook.com/discovercr

For information about saltwater fishing, license requirements, open seasons and limits, contact:



Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
<http://myfwc.com>

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Sea Grant
Florida

RECREATIONAL HARVESTING OF THE
FLORIDA BAY SCALLOP

CITRUS COUNTY

**BOAT
RAMP &
MARINA LOCATOR
MAP INSIDE!**

The Florida bay scallop is a bivalve mollusk that lives in seagrass beds in relatively shallow water, usually 4 to 10 feet deep. At one time, scallops were reported from as far east as West Palm Beach and as far west as Pensacola. Today, populations can only be found in selected locations with expansive seagrass beds along Florida's west coast—principally in St. Joseph Bay, the Steinhatchee area of the Big Bend, and near the Crystal and Homosassa Rivers. Healthy seagrass meadows are essential for maintaining scallop populations, so remember to practice responsible boating, and avoid damaging the seagrass beds. Scallops live about one year before either dying off naturally or being eaten by humans, crabs, octopuses, or a variety of shell-crushing fish. They spawn primarily in the fall. After about a two-week period as plankton, larvae develop a small shell and settle onto seagrass blades. They continue to grow while attached to the grass blades by a mass of silk-like filaments called a byssus. They later fall from the grass blades and become free swimmers. Unlike oysters and clams, scallops are active swimmers. They click their shells together, forcing expelled water to propel them rapidly. Scallops are simultaneous hermaphrodites, able to spawn as either males or females, and are very fertile. A single scallop can produce more than one million eggs per spawn.

MAKING A COMEBACK

To monitor bay scallop populations in the state and maintain a plentiful breeding population, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission annually reviews the status of the scallop stock. In 2002, FWC reopened an area between the mouth of the Suwannee River and the Pasco/Hernando county line. This area had been closed due to the limited number of scallops in that region.

It is believed that the comeback may be partly the result of a restoration program begun by scallop researchers at the University of South Florida, Florida Sea Grant, and FWC through its Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI). Early work funded by Florida Sea Grant determined the feasibility of aquaculturing the bay scallop both as a commercial fishery, and for replenishing depleted natural stocks. The funding allowed researchers to expand a scallop hatchery and nursery, which in turn provided enough scallop seed to test hatchery-release technology.

Early restocking efforts that used free-planting cultured scallops were not very successful. Scallops are known to be “synchronized spawners” — when one spawns, they all do. A number of adult, spawning scallops were placed in cages on the bay bottom where healthy populations previously existed. It was found that hatchery-reared scallops held in close proximity appeared to have an increased chance of successfully reproducing over natural scallops that are sparsely distributed. Recent studies by researchers, including scientists from Mote Marine Laboratory and FWRI, have shown that adult populations may quickly rebound in some SW Florida locations when late-stage hatchery-reared larvae are introduced. Future genetic studies are expected to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of using larvae to increase scallop populations.



LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In Florida, commercial harvest of bay scallops is banned. In general, recreational scallopers between the ages of 16 and 65 must have a current Florida saltwater fishing license to collect scallops. There are some exceptions, listed in the FWC “Florida Saltwater Recreational Fishing Regulations,” which is available in bait shops, FWC offices, or at the FWC website (<http://myfwc.com>). All non-residents over the age of 16 are required to buy a license unless they are fishing (scallop) from a for-hire vessel (guide, charter, party boat) that has a valid vessel license.

The season runs from approximately late June through late September. (Always consult the FWC website for dates of current season.) Harvesting is allowed from the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal (in Bay County) to the Pasco-Hernando county line (near Aripeka). **The bag limit is 2 gallons of whole scallops (in the shell), or 1 pint of scallop meat per person per day.** In addition, **no more than 10 gallons of whole scallops or 1/2 gallon of scallop meat may be possessed aboard any vessel at any time.** You may harvest scallops only by hand or with a landing or dip net. Scallopers must remain in the legal scalloping area while in possession of scallops on the water, including the point where they return to land.

See legal requirements about divers-down flags in equipment section.

COLLECTING

Scallops may be spotted on or near the bottom of seagrass beds, usually lying on their ventral shells. Often, they are easiest to find in borderline areas where the sand/mud bottom meets the edge of the grasses. Scallops have many neon-blue eyes and may try to swim away when they see you, but they do not swim fast or far. Keep collected scallops in a mesh bag, rather than in a pocket or in your swimsuit. They can pinch!

Though not required, collecting scallops that are at least 1.5 to two inches in size is seen as a best scalloping practice because the scallops are large enough to produce enough meat to make cleaning worthwhile. This also gives small summer scallops more time to grow and spawn in the fall.

CARE AND HANDLING

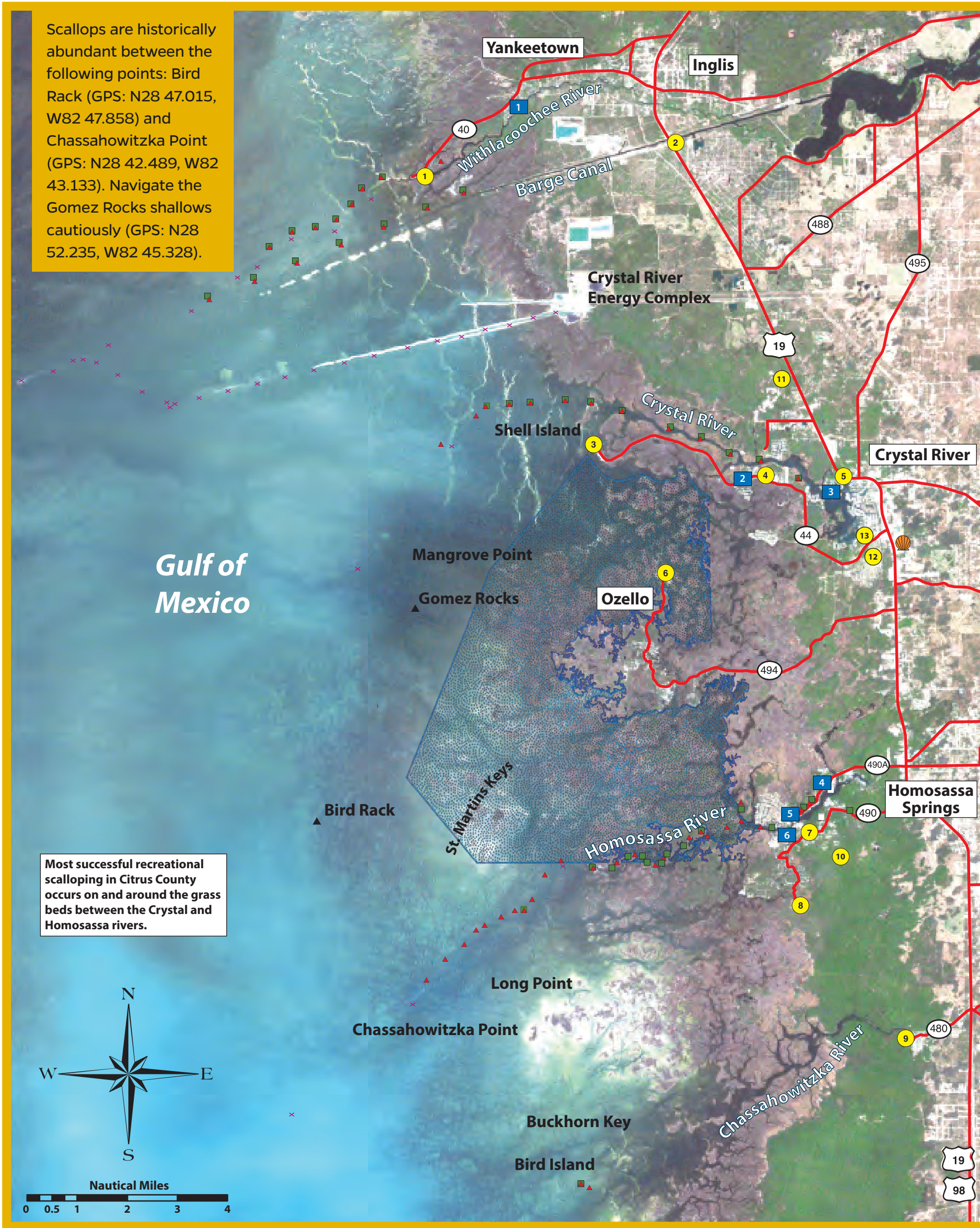
When brought to the boat, scallops should be immediately placed on ice in a cooler for the trip to shore unless you decide to clean the scallops while on the water. Scallops are quite sensitive to temperature and will quickly die if they are not kept cold. Even if kept cold, scallops will usually die shortly after being placed on ice, especially if fresh water gets into their shells. Placing them on ice, however, makes them easier to open, because the muscle holding the shells together relaxes. A scallop, clam, or oyster knife, or even a teaspoon, can be used to open the shells and cut the white muscle free, discarding the shells and unwanted soft parts. Although most Floridians only eat the white scallop muscle, in many other parts of the world the entire animal is eaten. If you do plan to eat the entire scallop, it should be cooked thoroughly because many open harvest areas for scallops are not classified for harvest of other shellfish species.



BOAT RAMP AND MARINA LOCATOR MAP FOR THE CITRUS COUNTY AREA

This guide to recreational scalloping includes educational information about scallops and scalloping. The boat ramp and marina locator map show local water access points in the Citrus County area.

This map is not intended for navigational use. Channel markers may not be where shown. For navigation purposes use only official nautical charts of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Citrus County area is featured in NOAA nautical charts 11408 and 11409, which are normally available for sale at marine and coastal businesses throughout Florida.



Scallops are historically abundant between the following points: Bird Rack (GPS: N28 47.015, W82 47.858) and Chassahowitzka Point (GPS: N28 42.489, W82 43.133). Navigate the Gomez Rocks shallows cautiously (GPS: N28 52.235, W82 45.328).

Most successful recreational scalloping in Citrus County occurs on and around the grass beds between the Crystal and Homosassa rivers.

MAP LEGEND



Fuel available



Some fees may apply

Remember - safety first!
Carry life preservers
and other vessel safety
equipment.

Citrus County Welcome Center - 915 N. Suncoast Blvd, Crystal River, 34429

BOAT RAMPS

- 1 Bird Creek Park - 8000 HWY 40 West, Yankeetown, 34498
- 2 Cross Florida Barge Canal - SE of the bridge on US 19, 7 miles north of Crystal River
- 3 Ft. Island Gulf Beach - 16000 W Ft. Island Trail, Crystal River, 34429
- 4 Ft. Island Trail Park - 12073 W Ft. Island Trail, Crystal River, 34429
- \$ 5 City of Crystal River ramp - 558 NW 3rd Ave., Crystal River, 34428
- 6 Ozello Fishing Pier - at the end of S John Brown Drive, Crystal River, 34429
- 7 Homosassa public ramp - at the end of Cherokee Way, off Yulee Drive, Homosassa, 34448
- 8 Mason Creek Boat Ramp (small boats, no marked channel) - 6891 S Mason Creek Road, 34448
- \$ 9 Chassahowitzka River Recreational Area (small boats) - 8600 W Miss Maggie Drive, Homosassa, 34448
- \$ 10 The Starting Gate - 10605 W Yulee Dr, Homosassa, 34448
- \$ 11 Crystal River Watersports- 2380 US-19, Crystal River, 34428
- \$ 12 Plantation Inn & Golf Resort on Crystal River- 9301 W Fort Island Trail, Crystal River, 34429
- \$ 13 Port Hotel and Marina 1610 S E Paradise Pt Rd., Crystal River, 34429

MARINAS

- \$ 1 B's Marina & Campground - 6621 Riverside Dr., Yankeetown, 34498
- \$ 2 Twin Rivers Marina - 2880 N Seabreeze Point, Crystal River, 34429
- \$ 3 Pete's Pier - 1 Southwest 1st Place, Crystal River, 34429
- 4 Homosassa Springs Marina - 10806 W Halls River Road, Homosassa, 34448
- \$ 5 Riverhaven Marina - 5296 S Riverview Circle, off Halls River Road, Homosassa, 34448
- 6 MacRae's of Homosassa - 5300 S Cherokee Way, Homosassa, 34448

Cleaning Your Shells

- Be courteous of other scallopers and move your boat away from the scalloping areas first, then anchor. It's no fun scalloping where others are cleaning their catch.

- When done cleaning scallops, do not discard shells in rivers, channels, springs, or in the water at boat ramps or marinas. Shells could fill these areas, incurring costs to remove the shells and causing negative impacts on swimmers, wildlife, and navigation. Discard scallop shells out in open Gulf waters, or store shells in a bag and discard at home.

- Want to keep shells to use for crafts or garden cover? Try placing the shells in a net bag and putting them back into the water. Small fish and crabs will be happy to clean the shells.

ROAD NAMES

- 44 Fort Island Trail
- 480 Miss Maggie Drive
- 490A Halls River Road
- 490 Yulee Drive

MAP LEGEND

- 7 Boat ramps
- 9 Marinas
- Channel markers
- Visible outcrop/structure
- 100 State/county route
- Roads
- 19 US Highway
- St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve Boundary (28,000 acres)