

St. Andrews

# AQUATIC PRESERVE

*“St. Andrews Bay is one of the most highly diverse estuaries in America, with over 2,900 species. On any given day, you can find almost anything in the clear waters of St. Andrews Bay. It is also one of the most fragile coastal estuaries that needs our continued protection.”*

*Mike Brim, Executive Director  
St. Andrews Bay Environmental Science Team*



Staff are involved in the turtle rescue program

## Project Spotlight

### Educational Signage

The most recent aerial photo study of the decline of seagrass shows a 17% decrease in area from 1950-1992. Reasons for the decline include poor water quality, sedimentation and propeller scarring from boater use. A signage program has commenced to address this concern by locating signs at various sites. These include; St. Andrews Park side of Grand Lagoon, Alligator Point to Courtney Point, the bay side of Shell Island and the shoreline around Tyndall Air Force Base within the St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve. This educational initiative will contribute to reduced impact on seagrass and accelerated recovery in areas previously affected.

## Key Accomplishment

- A partnership of many organizations including the Florida Park Service, Florida Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, St. Andrews Bay Resource Management Association, Bay Environmental Study Team, and Bay County have decided to address the damage of prop scarring to sea grasses by installing educational type signs around sea grass beds at the 3 ft. water level contour line. These signs will warn boaters of shallow water, and the presence of sea grass beds. Installation of signs will correspond with an educational campaign to keep boaters from entering shallow water where sea grass grows.



Signs alert boaters to the presence of seagrass

# St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve

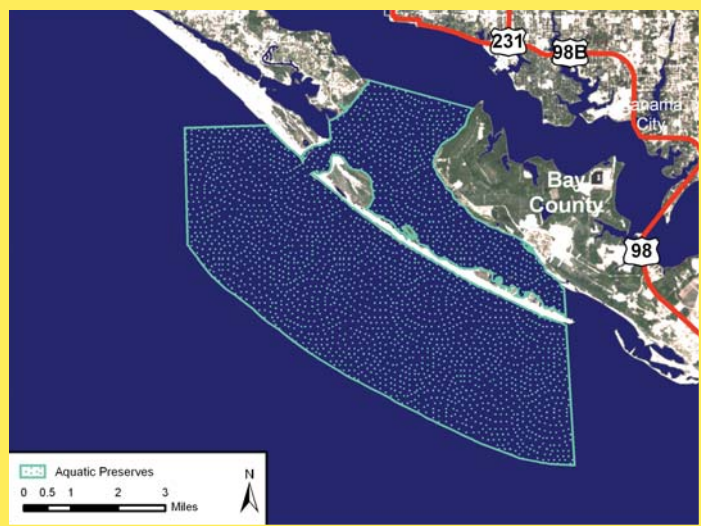


## Location:

Bay County

## Acreege:

25,000 acres of sovereign submerged lands



## Local Contact:

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## Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- St. Andrews Bay has the largest expanse of seagrass beds in the Florida panhandle and the adjacent Gulf waters have long been recognized as an exceptional water resource.
- Relatively clear water is one of the characteristic features of St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve. Several factors contribute to the bay's clarity, such as its spring-fed tributaries, low amounts of silty clay in the local soils and the filtering effect of the marshes and seagrasses.
- The rock jetties at the entrance to the bay are inhabited by a myriad of tropical species of fish and invertebrates. Semi-tropical fish species such as cocoa damsels, angelfishes, parrotfishes, spadefishes, and butterfly fishes are frequently observed during the warmer months of summer.
- The sea grass beds that are dominant on the back of Shell Island within the preserve have a diverse assemblage of fish populations including mullet, pinfish, needlefish, mojarra, seahorses, pipefish, blennies and gobies.



Shell Island off of Alligator Point



Osprey



A sea turtle nesting



Sand dunes in campground



Rock jetties to protect the beach



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