



# The Spoonbill



<http://www.dep.state.fl.us>

T A M P A B A Y A Q U A T I C P R E S E R V E S

F O R T Y Y E A R S . . . A N D C O U N T I N G  
- M A N A G E R , R A N D Y R U N N E L S

By the 1960s, it was becoming obvious that the very qualities that were drawing people to Florida's coastline were at risk of being "loved to death." Some of the state's most productive and beautiful bays and coastlines had been the focus of early settlers and subsequent urban growth. Citizen concerns led to legislative action, and a process was established to designate some of our most at-risk and pristine areas as "aquatic preserves."

Tampa Bay's aquatic preserve legacy began 40 years ago when the Boca Ciega Bay Aquatic Preserve was established by legislative action in 1969. Eventually, scientists were designated as active managers of this and Tampa Bay's three other aquatic preserves. Today, we can proudly point to thriving oyster reefs, seagrass beds and other submerged habitats that would not exist if this program were not in place.

As Tampa Bay's aquatic preserves manager, I have had scarcely more than a decade to learn the lessons from these four decades of issues



An American Oystercatcher pair, a threatened species, raises its young on an island in Pinellas County, Florida's most densely populated county.

and solutions. Several take-home messages have become apparent...

**Our program does not do the job alone.** Emerging issues often come to light by feedback from citizens, scientists and organizations. In the same manner, finding and implementing solutions often requires the effort of partners. I like to think of the aquatic preserves program as a catalyst that helps to bring all these willing resources together to address emerging issues in a timely and cost-effective way.

**The importance of aquatic preserves may not be as easily recognized as the importance of parks and other managed areas.** While abundant seafood, pure water and oxygen are vital to us, the products of healthy aquatic preserves are not generally something the public thinks about on a regular basis. The vast

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Vegetated shoreline of Frog Creek in Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve.



White Pelicans are seasonal visitors to Tampa Bay.

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areas of mangroves, seagrass and other aquatic preserve habitats are working silently in the background to maintain the quality of life that residents and visitors take for granted.

**Each aquatic preserve site is unique.**

Given the combinations of species, habitats, historic uses and other contributing factors, even the preserves within Tampa Bay require distinct management approaches. This diversity allows for comparisons among sites to better understand the nature and causes of changes.

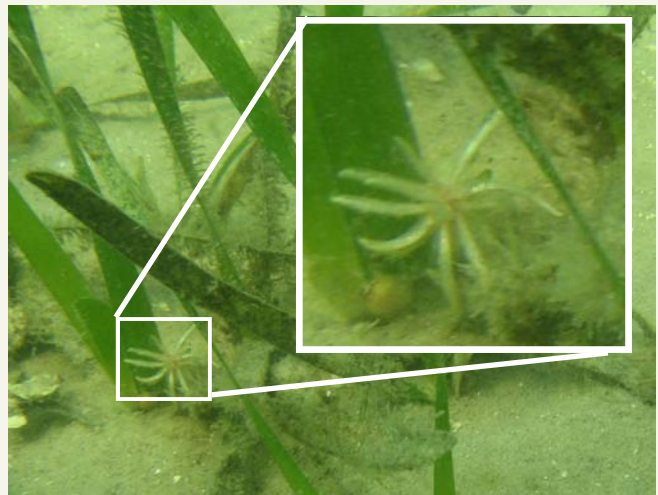
**You can't turn back the clock.** When we think of restoring and protecting resources we have to consider these things in a changing context. Ship channels, bridges, water diversion and other factors amplify the inherent natural dynamics of coastal areas. Understanding how to help habitats successfully function under the circumstances is a challenge closely tied to science.

**Nature is remarkably resilient if you give it a chance.** Dedicated people have contributed immensely to the recovery of Tampa Bay over the past few decades and the bay has shown an amazing response to their actions. For example, if we reduce our input of sediments and nutrients so seagrass can recover, that seagrass in turn helps capture sediments and

nutrients. In other words, our conservation efforts often are met with a response that is more than equal.

**We cannot sit on our laurels alone.** The Tampa Bay community deserves a pat on the back for recent increases in such sensitive species as seagrasses, scallops and octopuses, but history tells us that the best is yet to come if we so choose. The challenges of protecting marine resources in such a densely-urbanized watershed are met in part by the large number of enthusiastic volunteers. In addition to helping the area's aquatic preserves, these volunteers are helping to inform Tampa Bay's citizens of their individual responsibilities to protect the bay.

The future of Tampa Bay's aquatic preserves is not clear-cut, but it is exciting. As society and economics change, the evaluation of proposals for new sources of energy, food and recreation already are challenging the abilities of program staff. Newly-available science often holds insights into the impacts expected and the protective measures needed. Putting it all together is a daunting, but necessary, job. Hopefully, 40 years from now, Florida's citizens and partners in government and industry will look back on what we have done as equally important as the foresight and actions of those before us.



Aquatic preserves' staff capture a rare snapshot of turtlegrass in bloom in Tampa Bay.

## SCUBA: AN UNDERWATER TOOL - LIBBY CARNAHAN

The Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserve's dive team has evolved in the two years since its inception. The addition of the dive program increased the potential for observing the submerged resources of the aquatic



Shana Kinsey, Tallahassee, inspects a proposed pipeline route.

preserves. The office has utilized scuba to assess aquaculture lease sites, mitigation modules, and a proposed pipeline path. As assistant dive instructors, Libby Carnahan and Andrea Krzystan have assisted the DEP's SW District Dive Team with their check-out dives.

The FDEP Dive Team provides competent diver services to meet the scientific needs of the agency and the State of Florida. All FDEP scientific diving is executed under the supervision of the Dive Control Board (DCB). All divers must meet the minimum qualifications set



Greg Nieboer, SW District, demonstrates buddy breathing during a check out dive.

forth in the FDEP Diving Safety Manual including CPR, First Aid and Oxygen Administration certifications, a diving medical physical exam, and a minimum of 12 open water dives per year.

## WATER QUALITY CORNER - ANDREA KRZYSTAN

Based out of the University of South Florida College of Marine Science in St. Petersburg, the Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Prediction System (COMPS) program is a State of Florida supported effort which provides important information to local management and emergency response officials, scientists, and the general public. At the core of the COMPS program is a system of offshore buoys and coastal towers which collect real-time data on water and meteorological conditions. Combined with existing monitoring data and models the information collected from these stations can be useful in predicting storm surge events, understanding sediment transport and coastal erosion, and in researching red tide.

While it takes a talented team of people to run the COMPS program, we would like to acknowledge three people who have been especially helpful with the current Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves monitoring program. Mark Luther, a co-director of COMPS, was our initial contact with the program and introduced us to

Vembu Subramanian, the COMPS Data Manager, and Jeff Scudder, the COMPS Field Engineer, who have been instrumental in the management and distribution of our data along with the designing and installation of our monitoring platforms. We are very appreciative of their work and look forward to continuing our collaboration as one of the many COMPS program partners who provide valuable information about the Florida Gulf Coast Region.

The screenshot displays the COMPS website interface. At the top, it features the logos for the University of South Florida (USF) and the College of Marine Science. The main heading is 'COMPS COASTAL OCEAN MONITORING AND PREDICTION SYSTEM West Florida Shelf Observing Stations'. Below this, there is a map of the West Florida Shelf with various observing stations marked. To the left of the map is a 'COMPS' menu with links for General Information, Systems Table, Site Guide, Notices/Forecast, West Fla. Shelf, Tampa Bay, Data Downloads, Station Details, OODS Server, USF HF Radar Data, USE Of SST, Of only, OODS Status, News/Info, GuestBook, Employment, and Publications. To the right of the map is a 'Contact Information' section listing Dr. Mark P. Luther, Program Manager, and Dr. Robert R. Weisberg, Program Co-Director, with their respective phone numbers and email addresses. At the bottom of the screenshot, there are 'Related Links' for USF, COMPS, OMPL, OODS, IMARS, OceanVista Group, and NOAA, along with a link to the NOAA File Map. A footer note says 'Click here for USF-operated COMPS & PORTS Stations map' and 'Click on a station of interest in the map'.

Learn more about the program and explore current Gulf and Bay conditions through the COMPS website at <http://comps.marine.usf.edu/>.

## Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves

Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas

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Fax: 941-721-2099

E-mail: TampaBay.AP@dep.state.fl.us

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/aquatic.htm>



## Volunteer in your Aquatic Preserve Today!!!

### Volunteer Hours by Project

Maintenance: 63

Outreach: 12

Restoration: 619

Water Quality: 23

### Volunteer Hours by Month

June: 120

July: 60

August: N/A

September: 183

October: 184

November: 94

December: 74

## LITERARY LATITUDES: AN EPIC TALE... OF OYSTERS???

... ..  
- RANDY RUNNELS



I first saw this 1857 book more than 25 years ago in a rare book collection in New Orleans, and it has popped up several times since then. The cover of the original edition was deeply embossed in gold letters, and the text was just as interesting. Part of the full effect of reading this book is to read it in the original typeface. Even the introduction is entertaining with statements like...

*The oyster is a creature that perambulateth the bottom of the sea and deriveth nutriment from the limnosity thereof.*

This 72-page epic poem chronicles the relationship between two oysters named "Loligo" and "Mya" (fairest of shell-fish). It describes how they fall in love and their trip to the ancient scallop to be married. The story

takes an ominous turn when the merciless Clocinda decides to include the hero and heroine in a stew. I won't give away the ending, but the author shows sympathy for the oysters in language like...

*Alas! For thee must mild molluscules bleed,  
Must they too fall thy pampered maw to feed?*

Equally as interesting is the book's author. Behind the pseudonym of "A Fishe Shelly, Esq." was James Gerard Watson, a noted lawyer and humanitarian. The book was recently reprinted in paperback, and the full text can also be seen online at

<http://www.archive.org/stream/ostreaorthelove00gerarich>.