Equipment Needed

- Swim fins
- Swim mask
- Snorkel
- Small mesh bag
- Divers-down flag (required by law)


care and handling

Collecting

- Scallops live about one year before they are ready to spawn. They can be found in seagrass beds, especially if fresh water gets into their shells. This can only be found in selected locations along Florida's west coast—principally St. Joseph Bay, the Steinhatchee area of the Big Bend, Homosassa rivers with expansive seagrass beds. Healthy seagrass meadows are essential for scallop recruitment and are critical to their survival. Seagrass beds provide a habitat for young scallops, helping them evade predators such as crabs, octopuses, or a variety of birds. By providing a protective environment, seagrasses help scallops reach their full potential. It is therefore important to manage seagrass beds by reducing pollution from boat and land sources to maintain these valuable habitats.

Legal Requirements

- Streamers must be displayed on vessel.
- The bag limit is 2 gallons of whole scallops (in the shell), or 1 pint of scallop meat per person per day.
- In addition, more than 10 gallons of whole scallops or 1/2 gallon of scallop meat may be legally possessed by any person for personal use while in possession of a valid vessel license.

Recipies

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 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, juice, paprika and black pepper. Melt a pat of butter in 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 remold into scallops. Cover with foil and bake at 350°F for 45 minutes, then remove cover and broil until lightly browned.
Boat
Small mesh bag
Snorkel
Swim fins

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED**

- Usually required to get to the best scalloping
- You must make reasonable efforts to stay
- Tethered to diver, must be at least 12 inches
- Displayed on vessel, must be at least 20

*productive. Most scallopers go by boat into
from a shallow-draft boat using a dip net or
areas. In shallow water, it is possible to wade
and snorkel from the beach unless it is a

Though not required, collecting scallops
pinch! that are at least 1.5 to two inches in size is
the scallops are large enough to produce enough
when they see you, but they do not swim fast or
many neon-blue eyes and may try to swim away
meets the edge of the grasses. Scallops have

**COLLECTING**

borderline areas where the sand/mud bottom
are not classified for harvest of other shellfish

**CARE AND HANDLING**

muscle, in many other parts of the world the
shells and unwanted soft parts. Although
they are not kept cold. Even if kept cold, scallops
can only be found in selected locations

**SCALLOP SHELL RECIPES**

**SCALLOPS ON THE HALF SHELL**

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teaspoon of seasoned salt and a few shakes (if
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Some people prefer to scrape away
the shells and unwanted soft parts. Try it stuffed into and on top of


**SCALLOP STUFFING**

For information about saltwater fishing,
license requirements, open seasons

**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 (scalloping) 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 Arpelska). 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

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 scallop population can be so small that 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.

**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.

**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 by research scientists at the University of South Florida, Florida Sea Grant, and FWC through its Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. 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-reared technology.

Early restocking efforts that used free-planting cultured scallops were not very successful. Scallops are known to be “catastrophic spawners” — when one spawns, they all do. A number of adults, spawning scallops were placed in cages on 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 can only be found in selected locations along Florida’s west coast—principally St. Joseph Bay, the Steinhardt area of the Big Bend, and the areas near the Crystal and Homosassa rivers with expansive seagrass beds. 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. Scallop 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.

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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).

Be courteous of other scallopers and move your boat back into the water. Small fish and crabs will be normal 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
- Fort Island Trail (44)
- Miss Maggie Drive (480)
- Halls River Road (500)
- Yulee Drive (490)

MAP LEGEND
- boat ramps
- marinas
- channel markers
- visible outcrop/structure
- state/county route
- roads
- US Highway
- St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve Boundary (28,000 acres)

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 finished cleaning, dump the shells and guts in any deep water away from shore so no one steps on them. Be sure the deep water is NOT a channel, spring or boat ramp/marina. Shells could fill these areas, incurring costs to remove the shells and causing negative impacts on swimmers, wildlife and navigation.
- 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.

MARINAS
- E's Marina & Campground - 6621 Riverside Dr., Yankeetown, 34496
- Twin Rivers Marina - 2880 N Seabreeze Point, Crystal River, 34429
- Pete's Pier - 1 Southwest 1st Place, Crystal River, 34429
- Homosassa Springs Marina - 10806 W Halls River Road, Homosassa, 34448
- Riverhaven Marina - 5296 S Riverview Circle, off Halls River Road, Homosassa, 34448
- MacRae's of Homosassa - 5300 S Cherokee Way, Homosassa, 34448

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.

Map Legend

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

Some fees may apply

Citrus County Welcome Center- 915 N Suncoast Blvd, Crystal River, 34489