



# Scallop Conservation + Clean Water

A data-rich public handout for Pasco County families, marinas, schools, and community partners. Updated with current zone information and best-practice guidance.

## Why scallops matter

- Bay scallops live in shallow seagrass beds and respond quickly to habitat stress.
- Because they live only about one year, scallop numbers can reflect habitat and water-quality changes quickly.
- Florida Sea Grant notes that recreational scalloping is sustainable only when safety and conservation remain top priorities.

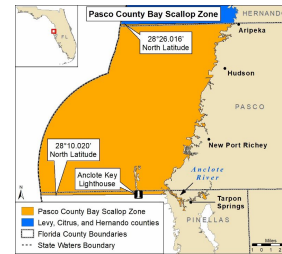
**1 year**

typical life span

**10–14 days**

larvae drift

## Pasco County Bay Scallop Zone



Source: FWC Pasco Zone map (current season reference).

**4–10 ft**

typical depth

**2 in**

voluntary sorter

## Key habitat facts

- Seagrass needs sunlight and clean, clear water.
- Juvenile scallops use blades of seagrass for habitat.
- Cloudy water, prop scars, nutrient runoff, and harmful algal blooms can reduce habitat quality.
- Florida Sea Grant notes populations now occur in selected west-coast areas, including patchy locations near Tarpon Springs and down to Pasco County.

## What makes this a Pasco issue

- Pasco's scallop zone is now a recognized recreational area.
- Shallow seagrass habitat, safe harvest practices, shell disposal, and clean-water habits all affect the public experience.
- A strong local education effort can reduce habitat damage and improve stewardship at launch sites and on the water.

## Real-image note

Real-image companion print pages are included in this package and use NOAA/Wikimedia photos: seagrass meadow, bay scallop, live scallop, and Pasco coastline. PDFs below stay print-clean and data-focused.



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Page 2: practical actions, talking points, and partnership ideas.

## Family actions

- Release smaller scallops alive in the water.
- Keep only what your group will use.
- Use the diver-down flag correctly.
- Dispose of shells far away from ramps, marinas, channels, springs, and swim areas.
- Keep trash, line, and plastics out of the water.

## Home & yard actions

- Pick up pet waste.
- Avoid applying fertilizer before heavy rain.
- Keep grass clippings out of streets and storm drains.
- Maintain septic systems and watch for sewage issues.
- Use Florida-friendly landscaping and erosion control where possible.

## Boater actions

- Trim up and idle over shallow seagrass.
- Anchor on sand when possible.
- Avoid prop scarring and repeated passes across grass flats.
- Share local scalloping etiquette with guests and first-time visitors.

## Foundation talking points

- “Scallop conservation is also a clean-water issue.”
- “Protecting seagrass protects future scalloping.”
- “Simple behaviors at home and on the water help Pasco’s coastal habitat.”
- “The McDowell Foundation wants Pasco County to lead through education and stewardship.”

## Partner ideas

- Marinas and bait shops can display sorter guidance.
- Schools and youth groups can use the activity sheets.
- Businesses can sponsor printing, giveaways, and cleanups.
- Volunteer teams can adopt launch sites or shoreline areas.

