



## Volunteers Needed



### [Adopt a Scallop Cage at Your Dock](#)

The University of Florida/Charlotte County Sea Grant Extension Program (UF/FSG), in partnership with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission/Fish & Wildlife Research Institute (FWC/FWRI) is recruiting volunteers who live and have docks on Lemon Bay (Charlotte County), Gasparilla Sound and Coral Creek and who are interested in participating in a bay scallop restoration program. Participating volunteers will hang cages containing bay scallops from their docks where the scallops will grow and then spawn. Under good water quality conditions, bay scallops spawned into the water column, settle in nearby seagrass beds where they live out their life. The goal of this project is to increase the recruiting bay scallop population in the Lemon Bay and Gasparilla Sound area.

Fifteen (15) dock sites are being sought for this cage restoration program. Cages will be deployed at participating volunteer docks in July.

#### **Sites being considered for the project must:**

- Be located on (or directly adjacent) Lemon Bay (Charlotte Co. portion), Gasparilla Sound (including Lee Co. portion) or Coral Creek.
- Be in close proximity to healthy seagrass
- Have adequate water under the dock at all times (at least 2 foot at the lowest tide)
- Have good flushing/water quality

#### **Volunteers selected must:**

- Commit to the program for 1 year
- Agree to maintaining/cleaning their scallop cage monthly (UF/FSG will provide all cleaning equipment)
- Agree to collect and record data monthly and send to UF/FSG (shell height measurements and general data)

**UF/FSG & FWC/FWRI will provide...**the cages, scallops, monitoring tools, cage cleaning tools, data sheets, and instructions for the program.

The data that is collected will be used by to support additional monitoring and restoration activities.

**[For more information or to volunteer contact Betty Staugler at \(941\) 764-4346](#)**

Bay scallops were once plentiful enough to support a commercial scallop fishery. Today, few are found in southwest Florida waters. Scientists believe that poor water quality is responsible for their decline. Because bay scallops are highly sensitive to changes in water quality they make a good measure of ecosystem health.

**Note:** No commercial harvest of bay scallops is permitted in Florida. Recreational harvest is allowed only in state waters north of the Pasco-Hernando county line to the west bank of Mexico Beach Canal from July 1 through September 10. Rules are subject to annual change. [http://www.myfwc.com/RULESANDREGS/Saltwater\\_Regulations\\_bayscallops.htm](http://www.myfwc.com/RULESANDREGS/Saltwater_Regulations_bayscallops.htm)