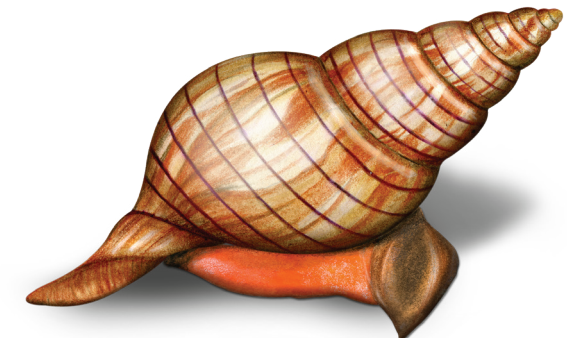


## Who Benefits From Scallops?



Cownose Ray



Banded Tulip Snail



Pinfish



Stone Crab



Blue Crab



Common Sea Star



American Oystercatcher



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle



Herring Gull



Bay scallops are not only a food source for humans, but also for many marine species making them an important part of a food web. Stone crabs, stingrays, sea stars, tulip snails, and whelks crush or pry open scallop shells and consume their meat.

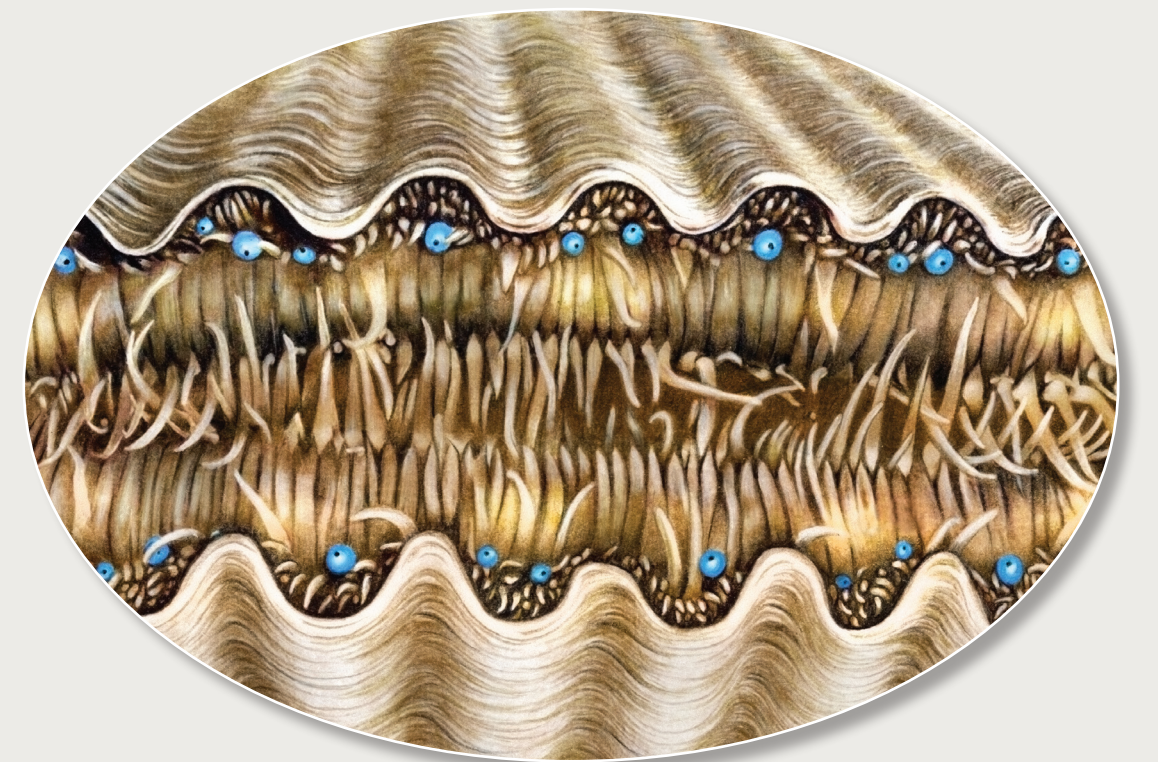
Shorebirds pry open scallops with their beaks or drop them in flight to break their shells while humans collect scallops for their adductor muscle.

# Atlantic Bay Scallop

*Argopecten irradians*  
IN FLORIDA

The bay scallop is a bivalve native to the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Coast north to Cape Cod. In Florida, bay scallops play important ecological and cultural roles. They are an indicator species, alerting resource managers to changes in ecosystem health. The recreational harvest season across the Gulf brings visitors to local communities.

## Scallop Biology



- Bay scallops can grow to 3.5 inches.
- With over 40 tiny electric-blue eyes lining the outer rim of the shell, they can sense predators.
- The adductor muscle is used to swim by rapidly opening and closing the shell to expel water. This pushes them backwards!
- Scallops are filter-feeders that can filter up to 4 gallons of water per hour.

## Threats to Scallops



Prop Scarring

Stormwater Runoff

**Habitat Damage** — Seagrass impacts, such as prop scarring from boats running too shallow, can harm bay scallops by destroying their habitat.

**Environmental Conditions** — Bay scallops are sensitive to changing water quality such as salinity, temperature, nutrients, and sediment. Incompatible land use practices and increased stormwater input to nearshore habitats can damage scallop habitat and reduce their populations.

**Toxins** — Heavy metals and other chemicals that wash into bays by stormwater runoff can impact scallop growth, reproduction, and overall health.

## Bay Scallop Conservation

You can help ensure that future generations will enjoy abundant bay scallop populations by being a good coastal steward.

- Support scallop restoration programs
- Follow harvesting guidelines
- Boat slowly in the shallows and trim up
- Support efforts to protect water quality



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## Our Bay Scallop Habitat Needs

Scallops flourish in waters with salinities ranging between 20 and 38 parts per thousand. They also prefer temperatures of 69 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit and rely on healthy seagrass meadows for their reproduction and survival.



The largest populations of bay scallops are found north of Tampa Bay to St. Joseph Bay.

## The Decline of Bay Scallops

Commercial harvest of bay scallops in Florida ended in 1994 because of drastic declines in scallop populations. Currently, recreational scallop harvest is only permitted in a handful of Gulf

bays that support adequate scallop populations. The historic decline of bay scallops is attributed to several threats including poor water quality, loss of seagrass habitat, and overharvest.

## Life Stages of a Bay Scallop

