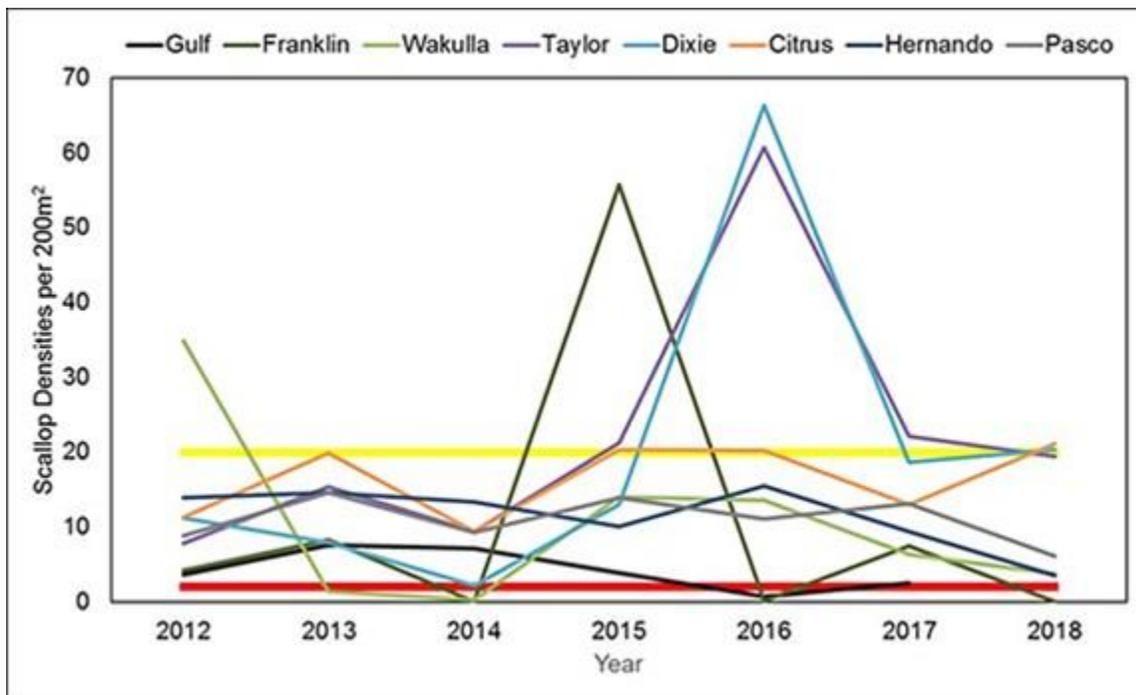


2018 FWRI Annual Bay Scallop Abundance Survey

Each summer, biologists assess bay scallop populations along the Gulf coast of Florida, located in open and closed recreational harvest areas (see map below). Surveys are usually initiated in June and completed in July. Scientists look at long-term trends in the abundance of scallops in both the open and closed areas and present those findings to the Division of Marine Fisheries Management.

Scientists classify bay scallop abundances into categories based on the average number of scallops per square meter (approximately 1.2 square yards). Collapsed (red) populations average between 0 and 2 scallops per 200m²; Vulnerable (yellow) populations average between 2 and 20 scallops per m²; and Stable (green) populations average between 20 and 200 scallops per m². Based on the historic landings data, bay scallop abundances in Florida were likely greater than one scallop per square meter, and capable of supporting a commercial fishery. In the last 20 years, the greatest average observed at a study site in each year was 100 scallops per 200m².



Open Harvest Area

There are eight counties that are surveyed within the open harvest area: Gulf, Franklin, Wakulla, Taylor, Dixie, Citrus, Hernando and Pasco. The graph below illustrates the average number of scallops observed per 200 square meters in those counties since 2012 and how that number relates to the abundance categories. In most years, populations within the open harvest area have been stable or vulnerable and only occasionally collapsed (below red line). Usually those statewide population collapses can be attributed to major environmental events such as an El Niño (1998), hurricanes (2004) or tropical storms (2010). A large-scale bay scallop restoration effort was conducted from 1998–2002 near the Crystal and Homosassa rivers in Citrus County and as a result the Homosassa abundance increased substantially in 2000 and 2001. Coastal communities benefited greatly from those restoration efforts, and the Crystal River/Homosassa Springs area continues to be a popular destination during scallop season.

YEAR	GULF	FRANKLIN	WAKULLA	TAYLOR	DIXIE	CITRUS	HERNANDO	PASCO
2012	3.6	4.2	34.9	7.9	11.3	11.3	13.9	8.9
2013	7.7	8.3	1.4	15.4	8.0	19.8	14.6	14.6
2014	7.2	n/a	0.3	9.4	2.2	9.4	13.4	9.3
2015	3.9	55.8	14.0	21.2	13.1	20.4	10.1	13.9
2016	0.8	0.1	13.6	60.7	66.3	20.2	15.5	11.2
2017	2.5	7.4	6.4	22.2	18.6	13.0	9.5	13.2
2018		0.1	3.8	19.5	20.3	21.1	3.5	6.1
AVERAGE ALL TIME	4.3	12.7	10.6	22.3	20.0	16.5	11.5	11.0

Closed Harvest Area

There are four study sites in the areas closed to scallop harvest: St. Andrew Bay (Bay County), Anclote (Pasco and Pinellas), Tampa Bay (Pinellas, Hillsborough and Manatee) and Pine Island Sound (Lee). In most years, populations in the closed harvest areas have been collapsed. While there has been an increase in the number of scallops observed in the closed areas during the last 10 years, likely due to a combination of management (prohibited harvest) and restoration efforts, those scallop populations continue to be extremely sensitive to localized conditions and as a result suffer frequent collapses. Unstable populations take longer to recover from a collapse and have reduced reproductive success due to fewer adults available to spawn and an increased distance between them.