

Florida's BIG BEND SHELLFISH TRAIL



Working Waterfronts in Coastal Communities

The Florida Big Bend has a long history of natural resource dependence that date to prehistory. Large Indian shell mounds scattered among the islands testify to the early inhabitants reliance upon shellfish for their sustenance. The waters surrounding the area's coastal communities have historically been tied to their economic survival. Oysters, crabs, shrimp and fish have all crossed docks from Keaton Beach to Yankeetown at one time or another in abundance. Today, clam aquaculture has replaced gill net fishing as the mainstay for many watermen.

Working waterfront communities still pursue mullet, especially during roe season, but now with a cast net to land this well-known southern delight. Far more common today are boats called 'bird dogs' converted to work clam and oyster farms. As you stroll the neighborhoods of these coastal towns, a common site will be stacked crab traps, wooden or plastic for stone crab and wire for blue crab, occasionally you'll discover clam bags laid across driveways. This is the easiest way to crush the sea life organisms that attach themselves over time to the bags. Although not harvested in the abundance of the past, this Big Bend remains a haven for fresh seafood. Succulent clams, freshly shucked oysters, soft shell crab or stone crab can be found on many menus and are fresh and delicious. With every bit, a taste of the sea and a sense of history.



Species harvested in Florida's Big Bend Region



Blue Crab, Hard Clams, Oysters, Shrimp and Stone Crab
Recreational Bay Scalping is a summer time adventure along these Florida coastal towns. Check with local chambers of commerce or tourist development websites listed on the map for local restaurants, accommodations and outfitters for 'scalping', fishing, educational clam, nature or eco boat tour. These boat tours are just offshore around the beautiful small islands in the Gulf of Mexico. These working waterfront communities offer an excellent 'Off-the-Beaten-Track' experience for you and your family.

Plan your trip today! Experience Florida's largest shellfish trail. Learn where to EAT and BUY Big Bend Shellfish, how to learn more about aquaculture and location of accommodations. Call to receive a FREE Big Bend Shellfish Trail Map **877-387-5673**

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