

ON THE WATER GUIDE TO PROTECTING TAMPA BAY



TAMPA BAY AND ITS HABITATS

Tampa Bay is a rich mosaic of fish and wildlife habitats that supplies life-sustaining links in an ecosystem as biologically productive as some of the world's most celebrated rain forests. From coastal mangroves and marshes to underwater meadows of seagrass, from the open bay to the salty mouth of the Gulf of Mexico, each interdependent habitat plays a vital role.

SEAGRASSES – Seagrasses are flowering underwater plants found at shallow depths in protected bays and lagoons and in patches along the continental shelf of the Gulf of Mexico. As a nursery environment, seagrasses support small fish, shrimp, and crabs that hide among the blades and feast on decaying leaves. Tampa Bay is currently in the process of recovering its seagrass to levels once observed in 1950. To help preserve them stay within marked channels and avoid shallow grass beds.



MANGROVES – Mangroves are tropical trees that thrive in salty environments along the water's edge. Like seagrasses, they provide food and cover for a vast array of small fish and animals. Their roots anchor shorelines, and their branches serve as nesting sites for a wide variety of birds. Mangrove swamps that once ringed Tampa Bay have been replaced by development and seawalls.

SALT MARSHES & MUD FLATS – Salt marshes, which are composed of salt-tolerant rushes, sedges, and grasses, occur along the shorelines of estuaries like Tampa Bay in areas where wave action is minimal. These marshes, which periodically become submerged, nourish and protect many fish and animals. They also buffer upland areas from storms and help filter pollutants that run off the land.

HOW YOU CAN HELP! Purchase the Tampa Bay Estuary speciality 'Tarpon Tag' licence plate here: www.tbep.org/tbep_license.html – more than \$1.5 million from the sales of the plate has been awarded to the local community for Tampa Bay restoration and education grants.



“STOW IT – DON’T THROW IT”

Our Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems face many problems. Due to the vast numbers of people around the world who depend on them for a food source, harness them for their energy, use them to recreate, and rely on them to transport goods and people from one destination to another, they are in danger of becoming too depleted to sustain themselves. Carelessly discarded debris that enters these environments only adds to their stress. We can’t stop people from using these ecosystems BUT we can take better care of them and teach others to do the same!

EDUCATION IS THE KEY!

First of all, it is very important that you know not to litter, then it is very important to teach people of all ages not to litter!

REDUCE. REUSE. RECYCLE.

Help to reduce waste by buying items with less packaging. Use reusable water bottles and shopping bags. Recycle all glass, plastic, aluminum, tin and paper products.

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Make sure the garbage you put out for pick up is containerized. This will keep it from entering waterways via storm drains and preventing marine debris.



TEACH OTHERS! To give an educational presentation at local schools, clubs etc. sign up at www.stowitdontthrowitproject.org for a ready-made presentation on marine debris and its impacts.

WHAT A WASTE!

Take part in this word search to see the types of waste that are harmful to wildlife living in our oceans and rivers and along the shoreline. Make sure when you're on the beach you only leave footprints behind!

Z P P B G O M I E Y
V C B A L L O O N S
T A I Z A V L Z W G
T N M B S S M L F A
U D S E S E O B E B
B Y W V B R K T N C
E W A E O I S X I I
T R R R T T T G L T
T A T A T Z Y E G S
E P S G L R R A N A
R P X E E D O J I L
A E U C S X F C H P
G R T A Y W O L S L
I S C N S I A C I U
C L S S D N M S F I

PLASTIC BAG
CIGARETTE BUTT
FISHING LINE
GLASS BOTTLES
BALLOONS
BEVERAGE CANS
STYROFOAM
CANDY
WRAPPERS
STRAWS
TIRES

Powerboat P1 USA Tampa Race Event – 12th/13th July. For information on the race event go to: www.p1superstockusa.com

Content adapted from Stow It-Don't Throw It: A Guide to Keeping Our Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems Clean. www.stowitdontthrowitproject.org

For further details on Tampa Bay Estuary go to: www.tbep.org

P1 Marine Foundation: www.p1marinefoundation.com

