

Lovin' the Loxahatchee

River Segment Series #3—Oyster Reefs



Oyster Reefs support complex food webs, improve water quality and clarity, and stabilize shorelines in the Loxahatchee River and other estuaries.

Many key fisheries species, such as snappers, rely on the oyster reefs for feeding grounds. Juveniles of many species including snappers, bait fish, crabs, and other invertebrates need oyster reefs to provide suitable shelter. Other animals, including wading birds, raccoons, snails and starfish, use the oysters themselves as a food source.

Oysters are amazing filter feeders. One large oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water in one day! Collectively, thriving oyster reefs can filter

millions of gallons of water. This filtration results in improved water quality and clarity

which is essential for fish and seagrasses. Additionally, oysters can also stabilize shorelines and reduce wave impacts in estuary habitats.

The Loxahatchee River District is working with The



Nature Conservancy and NOAA on an oyster reef restoration project on the

Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. Seven reefs have been created to date. Already we are seeing juvenile fish move into the area and new oysters (spat) are beginning to settle on the new habitat.



LOXAHATCHEE RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

RIVER TIDINGS

Creature Feature—Mangrove Snapper

Mangrove or Grey Snappers are a common species of snapper found in the Loxahatchee River and at the River Center. They are generally gray color with some red coloring on their fins and scales. They will often show a black bar angled from the snout back across the eye to the top of the head. Sometimes they also show vertical bars along their body.

At the River Center we often see them change colors during feeding.

Juvenile mangrove snapper can be found near oyster reefs and mangroves, where they can easily find their prey.



Adult mangrove snapper are commonly found around structures such as docks or coral reefs.

THANK YOU!

RIVER CENTER SPONSORS

- The Howard Family
- The Krasker Family
- The Magrogan Family
- The Williams Family
- CMH Swim School

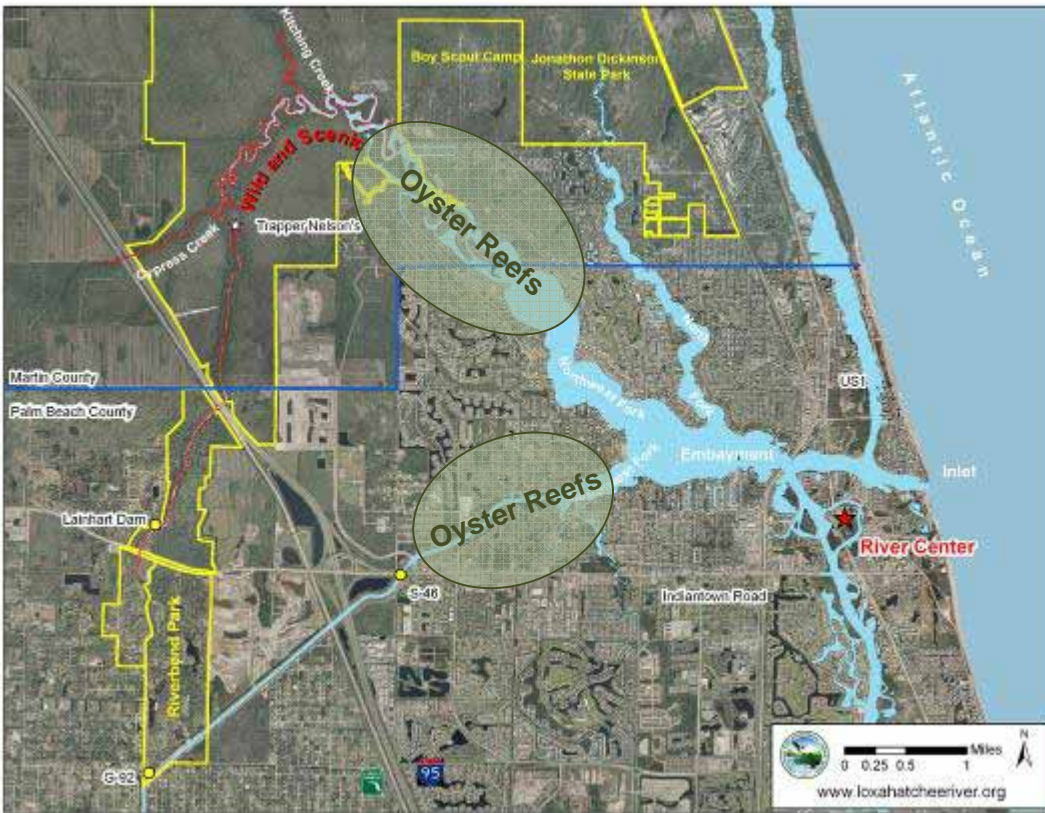
Our annual River Center sponsors are recognized on our donor wall at the entrance. Each tile is 50% off for 2009, so become a sponsor today!

Upcoming Events:

- July 14—Mini Movie Day—\$3 per child. Includes a popcorn and juice box. General Ages: 1-5.
- July 31—Mini Movie Day—\$3 per child. Includes a popcorn and juice box. General Ages: 1-5.
- August 7—Friends of the Loxahatchee River Meeting (noon) - Lynn Drake-Lasseter of Loxahatchee River Historical Society
- August 22—River Center Birthday Party—It's our 1 year anniversary! Help us celebrate!

Lookin' at the Loxahatchee

Get a bird's eye view



Did You Know?

- The Greek goddess, Aphrodite was said to have emerged from the sea on an oyster shell.*
- Before proper refrigeration was readily available, people were advised to only eat oysters during months ending in "R". May-August were the hottest months and therefore oysters did not keep well.**
- You can tell an oyster is alive because its shell is tightly closed.

*Funtrivia.com; **Associated Content



Van Pelt Foundation

Granted \$125,000 to the River Center for scholarships, fellowships, "green" projects, an educational pavilion, and other projects.

River Fast Facts

Oyster Reef Species:

- Eastern Oyster
- Checkered Pufferfish
- Yellowfin Mojarra
- Juvenile Mangrove Snapper
- Juvenile Sergeant Majors
- Flagfin Mojarra
- Pinfish
- Great Blue Heron
- Ibis
- Raccoon
- Sheepshead
- Blue crab
- Bandtail Pufferfish
- Porcelain Crab

One adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water in one day! Now, imagine one million oysters...



Water Play Day was a big hit with over 60 children participating. There water balloons, kiddie pools, sprinklers, water guns, and games. We will host one more event on July 15th. RSVP Early!



Staff participated in the Great Loxahatchee River Race and placed 1st for team trials! 20:02 around Burt Reynolds Park!



"Sleepin' with the Fishes"

The River Center's first sleep-over event was just "too much fun" - if there is such as thing! Smores, "worms in dirt", evening nature hike, karaoke, and more!