

# Alligator Harbor

# AQUATIC PRESERVE

*"Alligator Harbor is one of the world's largest feeding grounds for the Kemp's Ridley which is the rarest and most endangered of all marine turtles. The area's abundance of blue crabs, jellyfish, shellfish and sea grass provide an important food source for all sea turtles. The unspoiled waters and beaches are valuable breeding and nesting grounds for marine sea turtles. Alligator Harbor, in addition to being a valuable natural resource, is also archaeologically rich with several Miccosukee/Seminole Indian artifact and burial mounds surrounding the harbor."*

*Bill Wargo, Coordinator, Alligator Point Sea Turtle Patrol*

## Key Accomplishments

- The aquatic preserve staff have established a successful partnership with the University of Florida's Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Department, and participates in a monthly water quality and nutrient monitoring project. This ongoing project has created a long-term database that serves to document current water chemistry conditions, to be compared with future water conditions.
- Ongoing biological monitoring of valuable commercial and recreational fish and invertebrate species will supply habitat data that will identify areas that these important species utilize during critical life stages and will allow for better management practices in these areas.
- Staff have partnered with the Alligator Point Tax Payers Association (APTA), a network of active and concerned citizens, who are interested in protecting the natural ecological diversity and functions of the harbor. This group volunteers with beach clean up events, turtle patrol, water quality and bird surveys. The preserve staff provide the APTA newsletter with regular articles on the resources within and adjacent to the harbor and information on how citizens can stay involved in their environment.



Marshes comprise the bulk of the shoreline in Alligator Harbor

## Project Spotlight

### Educational Kiosks

In a joint effort between Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas and the Division of Agricultural Consumer Services, an informational kiosk was established at the Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve boat ramp. This kiosk represents a compilation of information about the Department of Agriculture, Division of Aquaculture and the clam aquaculture leases within the harbor, as well as other important resources and habitats within the Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve.



The kiosks are full of useful information for the public

# Alligator Harbor

## Aquatic Preserve



### Location:

Franklin County

### Acreage:

14,000 acres of sovereign submerged lands



### Local Contact:

Kim Wren  
Aquatic Preserve Manager  
108 Island Drive  
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[www.aquaticpreserves.org](http://www.aquaticpreserves.org)

### Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- Established as the Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve in 1969
- Alligator Harbor supports a variety of commercial and recreational species of fish and invertebrates
- Valuable habitat includes seagrass meadows, salt marshes, oyster bars, and beaches
- A major forage area for migratory birds, in particular for trans-gulf migrants in the fall and spring
- Clam aquaculture sites were established in 2002 and are producing a very valuable product for Florida's economy
- Migratory species include piping plovers, semipalmated plovers, least terns, peregrine falcons and a variety of hawks
- Local species include American oystercatchers, black skimmers, snowy plovers, royal terns and brown pelicans



Pelicans resting on a dock



Alligator Harbor is a popular location for sailing and other boating activities



Horseshoe crabs mate in the protected waters of Alligator Harbor



Shorebirds feed along the edge of the harbor



Great blue heron perched on a pine tree

