



# The Wetland Report

## A Bay Grasses in Classes Publication

Winter 2017-18

A seasonal publication designed to inform and connect the participating schools of Bay Grasses in Classes:

- Pinellas County:**  
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- Other Nurseries:**  
 Carlouel Yacht Club [mollymstags@gmail.com](mailto:mollymstags@gmail.com)

## A big thanks to... Lakewood High School

Lakewood High School has been an exceptional member of the BGIC program this year. New to BGIC, Lakewood teacher Rachel Schalles has brought her students out to help with a multitude of TBW events. They have completed one *Paspalum vaginatum* harvest at the donor marsh in Port Manatee and one *Paspalum* planting at Safety Harbor and are eager to get their second nursery up and running. They also participated in an oyster restoration project at Fantasy Island.



Students from Lakewood High School helping their teacher, Rachel Schalles, out of the donor marsh in Port Manatee.

Special thanks to all of the Lakewood students who donated their time as well as to Rachel Schalles for all the help this year. We look forward to continuing to work with Lakewood this year!

## New Approaches

The BGIC team has continued to expand the list of species grown in our nurseries. So far we have planted *Paspalum vaginatum*, or seashore paspalum, in 6-8 inch pots. This method has proven successful at 4 different school nurseries. East Bay High School and Lennard High School started growing paspalum last school year and recently transplanted their mature grasses at Apollo Beach Nature Preserve.

We also expect to expand to *Spartina bakerii* this spring once we optimize our method of harvesting. Continuing with our efforts to reduce our waste, we plan to transition most nurseries to using recycled pots from local nurseries. If you know where we can find used or donated nursery pots, please do not hesitate to contact us at Tampa Bay Watch to let us know!



Potted Paspalum growing in one of East Bay High School's wetland nurseries.

## A Sustainable Tampa Bay Watch

There is a new initiative starting at Tampa Bay Watch! Sustainability has always been a recurring theme, but there is a new committee being added with the goal of improving the organization's sustainable practices and educating the public on how they can do the same. The committee will also emphasize how these sustainable efforts can positively impact our oceans worldwide.

Among the sustainable practices that will be encouraged are clean, renewable energy sources, support for local food providers, composting, recycling, and, of course, habitat restoration.

So far, Tampa Bay Watch has greatly reduced the use of single-use plastics at events. You may also have noticed recently that the organization has been cutting back on plastic trash bag consumption in favor of using recycled barley bags donated by local breweries for harvesting and cleanup events.

**If any FFA schools have animal feed bags that are going to be discarded, please let us know so that we can use them for the same purpose.**



## Did You Know...

The plants in your nursery do not actually need salt water to survive, but their salt tolerance gives them an evolutionary edge over freshwater plants in salt or brackish water.



### Seasonal Nursery Care & Reminders

**Don't forget to look for freshwater weeds and algae!**

- For freshwater plants, please weed the nursery and then keep the salinity at 20 ppt until there is improvement.
- For algae, please turn off water, allowing the nursery to dry out for one week, and then peel the algae off of the trays.

Our wetland nursery plants may start to turn a little brown in the colder months. Don't worry; this is a stage of dormancy. If you are concerned, feel free to send us a photo of the nursery.



This newsletter is produced by the Bay Grasses in Classes team at Tampa Bay Watch, Inc., a nonprofit environmental stewardship program dedicated to the scientific and charitable purpose of monitoring, protecting, and restoring the Tampa Bay estuary. Visit [tampabaywatch.org/bgic](http://tampabaywatch.org/bgic).



It's  
*Winter*  
in the Marshes



## *Loggerhead Shrike*

LANIUS LUDOVICIANUS



- OFTEN IMPALES PREY ON A SPIKE TO SAVE PART OF IT FOR LATER (PRACTICES ON LEAVES)
- THEY ARE SIT-AND-WAIT PREDATORS, SITTING ON A PERCH AND SCANNING THE GROUND FOR PREY
- CLASSIFIED AS A SPECIES IN STEEP POPULATION DECLINE DUE TO HABITAT DESTRUCTION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## *Copepod* OITHONA COLCARVA

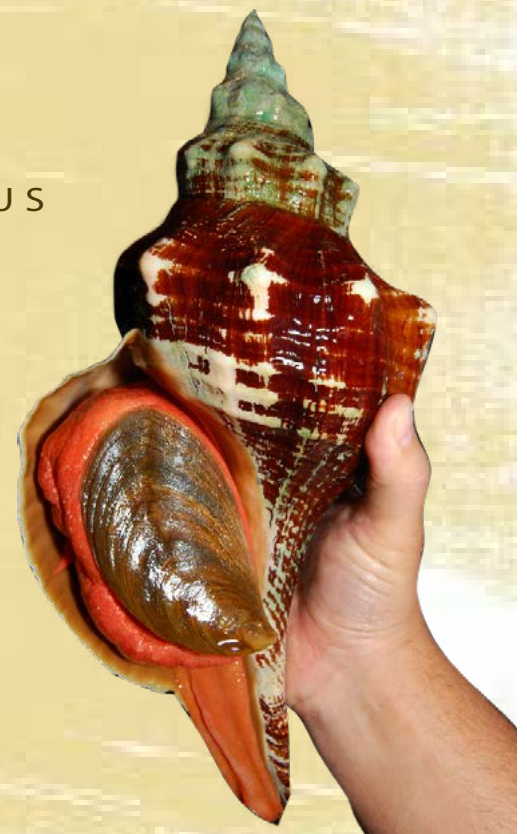
- TOO WEAK TO SWIM AGAINST OCEAN CURRENTS, THESE TINY CREATURES SPEND THEIR ENTIRE LIVES AS PLANKTON, MAKING THEM HOLOPLANKTONIC
- THE NAME COPEPOD COMES FROM THE GREEK WORDS "COPE" MEANING "PADDLE" AND "POD" MEANING "FOOT." THEY USE THEIR LONG TAIL TO FLICK THEMSELVES THROUGH THE WATER
- OITHONA COLCARVA IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF COPEPOD IN TAMPA BAY AND IS ONE OF OVER 10,000 OTHER SPECIES OF COPEPOD WORLDWIDE



## *Horse Conch*

TRIPLOFUSUS PAPILLOSUS

- A PREDATORY SNAIL THAT CAN GROW TO BE ALMOST TWO FEET LONG
- NATIVE TO FLORIDA, IT IS THE STATE'S OFFICIAL SHELL
- HUNTS LIGHTNING WHELKS AND TULIP SNAILS USING CHEMORECEPTION—A FORM OF SMELL



Notes  from  
a Mystery Marsh Resident

➤ I walk along the sea floor using my pelvic and pectoral fins.

➤ I use my brown, bumpy skin to camouflage my body while I lie in wait for prey.

➤ I detect my prey using long, thin appendages on my snout and then swallow it with a single, fast gulp.

What am I?

The first person to submit the right answer to [mspall@tampabaywatch.org](mailto:mspall@tampabaywatch.org) wins a prize!



TAMPA BAY WATCH FROM OUR CLASSROOM NURSERY TO THE SHORES OF TAMPA BAY

# *Salt Marsh*

*Spartina alterniflora*