



The Pensacola-Perdido Bay Bio-Scavenger Hunt Steps and Procedures for Participation

The inaugural Pensacola-Perdido Bay Bio-Scavenger Hunt has two objectives.

- 1) To educate the public about our estuary and its resources by engaging them in a citizen science project.
- 2) To provide information that may be useful for area resource managers who are part of, or interested in, the **Pensacola-Perdido Estuary Program**.

Below are steps and procedures on how to participate in this inaugural event.

Step 1: Registration

Register on Eventbrite – [link](#)

Registration is free, but this gives us an idea of who is participating and where they are Scavenger Hunting

Step 2: Workshops

Attend one of our workshops where we will explain the “how to’s”. There will be three workshops. One in Perdido, one in Pensacola, and one in Navarre. We can handle paperwork at these workshops as well. Check our website for exact locations and dates for this year.

Step 3: Selecting Habitats to Scavenger Hunt

Select a habitat to survey. You have four choices. 1) Beach and Dunes, 2) Salt marshes, 3) Seagrass beds, or 4) Hardened structures (such as jetties, seawalls, piers, etc.). Each will have their own species list and special requirements for accessing (see below). You can certainly do more than one if you like.

Step 4: Species Lists and Identification Guides

View, and download, a species list for each habitat you will be Scavenger Hunting from our website. Each list has a photo and you can also use identification guides you have at home. Familiarize yourself with these species so you have an idea of what you will be looking for while you are out there. Some species are difficult to tell apart, so good – clear photos (particularly of the head) are important for verification.

Step 5: Data Recording

Download, and print, the data sheet from the website. This data sheet is universal for all habitats. You can add species you found that you believe are of interest and we left out. We recommend a clipboard for recording while in the field. Pencils work better than pens if it is humid or wet. Another option is to record in a water-resistant notebook (like Rite in the Rain) and transfer to the datasheet afterwards.

We ask that you to report your invasive species to EDDMapS.org. You can do this when you return home and report from your data sheet, or you can download their app *I’ve Got One* from their website - <https://www.eddmaps.org/>. The app does not have all our species listed. If not, you will need to visit, and log, from the website itself.

Step 6: Volunteer Release

Download, print, read, and sign the volunteer release form. Please read entire form before signing and contact us if you have questions. This can be done at the workshop, or you can email (or mail) the form to us. Our mailing address is Rick O'Connor, Escambia County Extension, 3740 Stefani Road, Cantonment FL, 32533. Or drop it by the office.

Step 7: Accessing Site

It is important to know that being part of this project **DOES NOT** give you permission to access private property to conduct a Scavenger Hunt. Seagrass beds and salt marshes are public lands up to the mean high tide mark, and you can snorkel/walk these. Dunes, piers, and seawalls are private property and you must have their permission to survey before. This program does not cover fees to access public parks (such as Gulf Islands National Seashore) those responsibilities fall on the participant. Please park in public parking areas and not in front of private businesses or homes.

If accessing by boat, be sure your vessel is up to date on registration, you have all required safety equipment on board for the size of your vessel, and that you anchor out when accessing your site.

PLEASE REDUCE DISTURBANCE TO HABITAT

- Stay within given walkways while on dunes, do not create new trails
- Paddle or wade within the salt marsh if possible. If you must walk, do not trample marsh plants creating trails, rather remain on higher ground. If possible, approach marsh from water side.
- If accessing seagrass beds by boat, please do not create prop scars, rather tilt motor up and pole into shallower water. Please do not anchor in the seagrass, rather over open sand and swim to the seagrass beds.
- Do not climb or sit on rock walls or jetties. Piers, again, are private property.

Step 8: Selecting a Scavenger Hunt Day

The inaugural Bio Scavenger Hunt will be October 13 – 19, 2019. You can conduct your Scavenger Hunt anytime during that week. This allows changes due to bad weather. Please survey during daylight hours. We ask that you conduct your survey for a minimum of 30 minutes. It is true that most wildlife is more active during dawn and dusk, but for safety reasons – please survey during daylight.

Step 9: Preparedness

Scavenger Hunters should wear appropriate clothing and have appropriate supplies to deal with the environment. Closed toed shoes are appropriate for hiking. There are cactus, broken glass, and other hazards. Flip-flops are not the best choice. We recommend the same for walking around the aquatic habitats for the same reason, marine debris and oysters. Sun and rain protection are a must and we recommend as much water as you can take with you. We recommend a buddy system while doing this survey. Safety in numbers is always a good rule, be sure to have a charged cell phone with you for emergencies.

Step 10: Hazards

There are numerous hazards to be aware within each habitat.

Beaches and dunes have debris, cactus, snakes, briars, and the risk of heat stroke.

Salt marsh have sharp shells, debris, sharp plants, biting crabs, possible snakes and alligators.

Seagrass beds can have debris, sharp shells, crabs, stingrays, and jellyfish

Rock jetties have sharp objects everywhere, as well as biting and stinging wildlife (recommend gloves and shoes for this survey).

Snorkelers are required to have the red/white diver down flag when snorkeling. This is Florida law and you could be ticketed if snorkeling without one. We recommend each survey team have a small first aid kit with them, stay on trails/boardwalks while walking the dunes, and be aware of your surroundings always.

Also keep an eye out on the weather. **It is imperative that you leave the sight if you see lightning.**

Step 11: Approaching Protected Species

There are some basic rules for viewing wildlife, particularly if they are protected.

- Chasing or harassing wildlife can be against the law, depending on location and species. Please do not do this.
- The National Park Service recommends remaining at least 25 yards from wildlife in the park. Please adhere to this suggestion whether in or out of the national park, particularly with protected species.
- This can make photography difficult, consider carrying a zoom lens if you are Scavenger Hunting for potential protected species. Please do not take selfies with these animals. You are definitely TOO close if you are thinking this.
- Basically, if the animal reacts to your presence, you are too close, please move back.
- Please no dogs on beach while surveying. Dogs are not allowed on most of our beaches and you are not going to see any wildlife if you have one with you.

Step 12: Photos

Photos are very important, and clear photos even more so. It is difficult to get good photos of some animals, but we ask that you try. In some cases (such as beach mice) chances are you will find “sign” (tracks or scat) and not the animal. Again, try to get good clear photos of these and submit with your report.

Step 13: Reporting

There are multiple ways citizen scientist volunteers can report what they find on their Scavenger Hunts. Of course, there is the data sheet on our website. These can be downloaded, printed, and returned via email (scanned) roc1@ufl.edu or mailed to Rick O’Connor, Escambia County Extension, 3740 Stefani Road, Cantonment FL, 32533 – you can also drop them off at our office.

Invasive species should be reported to www.EDDMapS.org. They have an app you can download (IveGotOne) that can be used in the field.

We will provide a full report to all volunteers and to the community when we have logged all reports.

If you have any further questions, please contact us.

Rick O’Connor roc1@ufl.edu 850-475-5230 ext. 111

