

# Apalachicola River and Bay Facts

The Apalachicola River basin includes the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR). The second largest of 25 reserves in the National Reserve System. The major objectives of the Reserve are research and education.

The River & Bay Watershed is one of the most important bird habitats in the southeastern U.S.

More than 360 marine mollusks are found in the watershed, many of these are endangered.

The Apalachicola River basin stands out as one of the last ecosystems that retains much of its incredible natural resources.

131 species of fresh and estuarine fish live in the Apalachicola River, more than any other river in Florida.

The Apalachicola River basin contains 127 of the very rarest species of plants and vertebrates and has the highest density of amphibians and reptiles in North American, north of Mexico.

The Apalachicola drainage basin boasts more than 1300 species of plants, 103 of which are threatened or endangered.

More than 50 species of mammals, including the threatened Florida black bear, the endangered West Indian Manatee, the Indiana bat, and the gray bat are found in the Apalachicola drainage basin.

More than 1300 plant species, 40 amphibians species and 80 species of reptiles live within the Apalachicola River basin, this is the highest diversity of amphibians and reptiles in the US and Canada.

The Apalachicola River basin has more than 180 species of fish and the area is a tremendous spawning and nursery ground for important commercial and sports fish species.

Endangered or potentially endangered species such as the Atlanta sturgeon, blue striped shiner, shoal bass and Suwannee bass are found in the Apalachicola River basin.

The Apalachicola River is the fresh water source for the Apalachicola Bay, a pristine and productive estuary of major economic and ecological importance to the northern Gulf of Mexico.

The Apalachicola Bay is one of the most productive estuaries in the northern hemisphere. The productivity of the bay is dependent on the Apalachicola River to carry fresh water and essential nutrients down stream to feed estuarine organisms.

The Apalachicola Bay provides 90% of Florida's oysters and over 10% of the total US production.

The Apalachicola Bay is a major nursery for penaeid shrimp, blue crabs, and many fish species including striped bass, sturgeon, grouper, red fish, speckled trout, and flounder.

Harvest of shrimp, crab, fish, and oysters is the driving force in the economy of Franklin County.