

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Sarasota Bay Project • 941.359.5841
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SARASOTA BAY

The Sarasota Bay area is home to more than 550,000 people spread across two counties, Manatee and Sarasota, and nine incorporated cities and towns. Seasonal residents represent 10–25 percent of the total population. On the barrier islands, such as Siesta Key and Longboat Key, the percentage of seasonal residents is much higher, somewhere around 70–90 percent.

FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- Boating, fishing, swimming and nature study are typical recreational uses that help support more than 50 water-dependent industries.
- Sarasota Bay and its beaches are the center of a multi-million-dollar tourism industry.
- Tourism is the number one industry in Sarasota County and number two in Manatee County.
- Population increases and accompanying development between 1930 and 1990 resulted in the loss of historic seagrass meadows and mangrove wetlands to provide for homes, businesses and commercial waterfront development. With the loss of marine habitat came an accompanying decline in marine life, fish, birds, and shellfish.
- Human-induced pollution, principally nitrogen, impacts Sarasota Bay.

HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Sarasota Bay seagrass levels have declined 30 percent since 1950 due to increases in nitrogen pollution and dredge and fill activities that have covered and filled the Bay's floor.
- Bay saltwater wetlands have declined by 39 percent.
- Wastewater, stormwater, human waste, fertilizers, automobiles, lawn mowers, power plants, boats, personal watercraft and other human-induced causes of pollution provide excess nitrogen to Sarasota Bay.
- Nitrogen loadings have increased 480 percent since the 1800s.
- Sarasota Bay supports an estimated 110 million more fish, 71 million more crabs, and 330 million more shrimp than in 1988.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Improved or restored more than 100 acres of wetlands since 1990.
- Reduced nitrogen pollution levels by 47 percent since 1990.
- Increased seagrass habitat acreage by 18 percent (1,751 acres) since 1988.
- Increased saltwater wetland acreage by 8 percent.
- Constructed 21 wetland enhancement projects.
- Constructed 7 artificial reef projects.
- Retrofitted several watersheds for improved stormwater management.
- Reintroduced scallops to reestablish stocks.
- Leveraged more than \$18.8 million for Sarasota Bay restoration activities.

Sea Bass with Ginger Sauce

2 1-lb sea bass fillets
1/4 cup peanut oil
2 tbl fresh ginger, peeled and minced
1/3 cup green onions, chopped
1/4 cup soy sauce
4 tsp fresh cilantro, chopped

Bring the water to a boil in the base of a steamer. Place fish on rack, cover and steam. Cook until fish is just opaque, about 9 minutes per inch of thickness.

Chop onions and cilantro and set aside. Measure out soy sauce and set aside.

While fish is steaming, heat oil in small skillet over medium-high heat. Add the minced ginger and cook until crisp, 23 minutes.

Transfer the finished fish to a serving platter. Pour ginger and oil over top of fish. Sprinkle green onions, chopped cilantro and soy sauce lightly on top.

Serves two.