



Educate Yourself

Support organizations and participate in activities throughout the community that focus on lagoon health. Go to public lectures, classes and interpretive centers that are offered at many locations along the lagoon.

Educate Others

Support programs to educate our families, schoolchildren, neighbors, businesses, state and tourists about the importance of the lagoon to our economy, our environment and our quality of life, the unique nature of this biodiverse estuary and the interconnectedness of the lagoon to our human activities.

Take Responsibility

- Use the least amount of fertilizer necessary on your lawn
- Ensure that your septic system is operating properly and does not leak
- Avoid seagrass beds with your boat
- Make sure none of your monofilament or other fishing/boating supplies fall into the lagoon
- Do not feed or interact with marine mammals and other wildlife in the lagoon



Support Research

Support the organizations that do basic research to understand the lagoon, its organisms and our relationship to the health of both. To learn more about donating to Harbor Branch research, visit <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/Donate.php>

Support Leadership

Ask your elected officials to share this “Love Your Lagoon” philosophy and pledge to work with other officials in their districts and in state and federal government to ensure that our lagoon can continue to be an economic resource and source of pleasure for all of us.

Enjoy Your Lagoon

Get out and experience your lagoon! Take your children and grandchildren for a walk along the shore, get onto a boat or a paddleboard and enjoy one of the most biodiverse estuaries in North America!

Indian River Lagoon — Facts and Figures

The Indian River Lagoon (IRL) is an “Estuary of National Significance,” one of 28 in the nation. The primary goal of the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRLNEP) is to protect this ecologically significant estuary that is threatened by degradation caused by human activity. IRLNEP coordinates watershed management at the local level, building community-based processes to implement protection programs with specific actions to address environmental problems.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

- The Indian River Lagoon is a 156-mile long estuary located on Florida’s East Coast.
- The IRL system is comprised of three distinct water bodies, Mosquito Lagoon, Banana River, and the Indian River.
- The IRL is an estuary, not a river. Unlike true rivers, water flow in the IRL is not driven by gravity. Rather, it is the wind that primarily drives the circulation patterns within the lagoon.
- Six coastal Florida counties occur within the natural IRL watershed (Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and northern Palm Beach County).
- Like all estuaries, the IRL is a semi-confined water body characterized by mixing of saline oceanic water and freshwater from upland sources. Water is exchanged between the IRL and the Atlantic through five ocean inlets—cuts in the barrier island chain. Although natural in origin, the inlets have been artificially stabilized and are maintained through human manipulation.

BIODIVERSITY

- The IRL has been cited as among the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America.
- The IRL straddles a warm-temperate climate to the north and a subtropical climate to the south. The influence of these two distinct biogeographical provinces is one of the factors underlying the spectacular biodiversity found within the Lagoon.
- High biodiversity is also fostered by the presence of a number of distinct habitats that serve as home to the plants and animals of the IRL. Seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, and saltmarshes are foremost among IRL habitats whose continued health is essential for a healthy lagoon.
- The IRL watershed is home to more than 2,100 different species of plants and more than 2,200 animal species, including some 700 fish species and 310 bird species.
- Approximately 50 threatened or endangered species can be found in the IRL region, including 12 plants and 36 animals.

THREATS

- The most serious threats to the health of the IRL include reduced water quality due to manmade hydrologic changes, non-point source pollution, loss and fragmentation of habitats, overuse/overharvest of resources, and the threat of invasive exotic species.