

Boating Basics



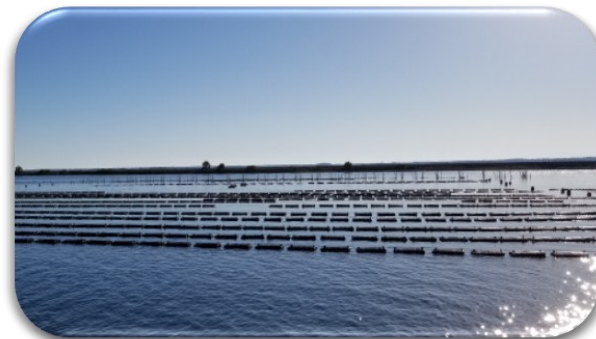
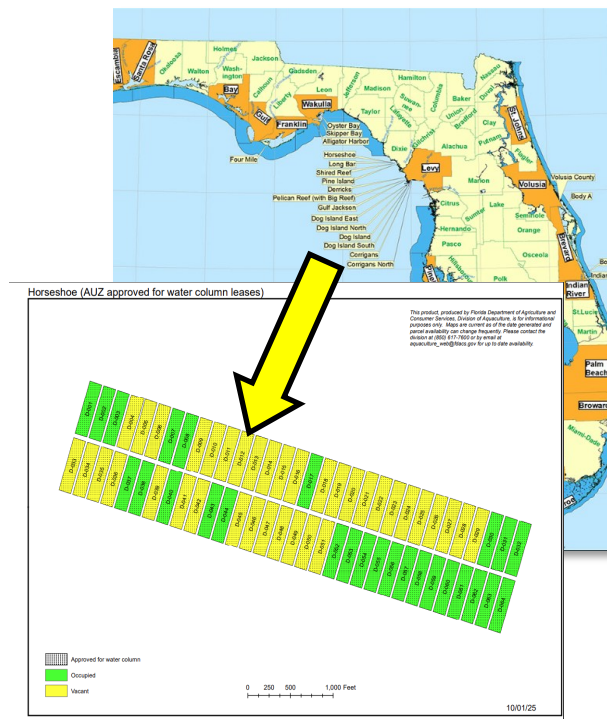
Navigating Near Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Areas



Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

Aquaculture on Sovereignty Submerged Land Leases

Sovereignty submerged land leases are lands owned by the State of Florida which are leased by aquaculturists for the commercial cultivation of native shellfish and live rock. Located throughout the state, Aquaculture Use Zones (AUZs) are blocks of lease parcels arranged in a grid pattern.



Oyster baskets float at the surface of water column aquaculture leases.



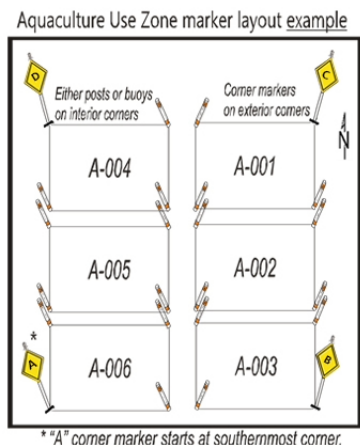
Clam farmers work their bottom leases. Note that all clam gear is submerged and not visible from the surface.

Types of Aquaculture Leases in Florida

Bottom Leases allow the use of the bottom 6 inches. These leases are primarily used for clam aquaculture in Florida. Clams are stocked into bags that are oriented in rows and anchored to the bottom to prevent loss of gear.

Water Column Leases allow the use of the entire water column and often contain floating or submerged cages or baskets. These leases are primarily used for oyster aquaculture in Florida.

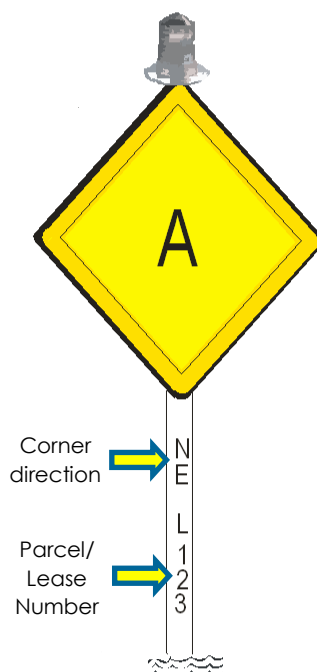
Example layout of an Aquaculture Use Zone.



All aquaculture leases are uniformly marked according the U.S. Coast Guard Private Aids to Navigation requirements.

- Water activities, such as swimming, boating and fishing are allowed on aquaculture leases as long as gear and crops are not damaged.
- Each AUZ has easements which can be used by the general public for navigating through the lease areas.
- No shellfish harvesting is permitted within 25 feet of a lease boundary or in easements.
- Markers, gear and shellfish within each lease are private property. Harvesting of commercial shellfish or theft of private agriculture property is a third degree felony, and may result in fines or imprisonment.

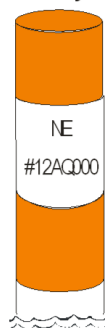
Example Corner Marker



The boundaries of each AUZ and water column lease parcels are marked with 3 foot x 3 foot diamond, yellow signs called 'corner markers'. When floating or suspended gear is present on the lease, these corner markers are also required to have a flashing marine lantern to ensure visibility in low-light conditions.

The boundary of each individual lease is marked with either a parcel post (2 inch PVC pole with orange reflective tape) or a parcel buoy. Each lease will have a post or buoy designating the four parcel corners. All lease markers contain a corner direction (NE, NW, SE, SW) and the specific parcel or lease number.

Example Parcel Buoy Example Parcel Post



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For more information about shellfish aquaculture leases visit:
www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Aquaculture-Submerged-Land-Leasing

Navigational charts for Florida's Aquaculture Use Zones may be downloaded at:
Charts.NOAA.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml



Hard Clam
Mercenaria mercenaria

Eastern Oyster
Crassostrea virginica