

Oyster restoration goals

The Texas oyster fishery is primarily managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in accordance with the Texas Oyster Fishery Management Plan (1988) and the Parks Wildlife Code¹⁴.

Many coastal restoration plans, including the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan (2017), provide guidance for oyster restoration in Texas¹. The Galveston Bay Plan (1994, currently being updated) by the Galveston Bay National Estuary Program sets an objective for the bay to maintain an oyster population of at least half of the 1983-1993 average¹⁵. Three actions are outlined to accomplish this:

- Requiring commercial oyster harvesters to return oyster shell to the bay
- Promoting the development of oyster reefs using alternate substrate materials
- Protecting a portion of oyster reefs in preserves or research areas

Oyster shell recycling

Galveston Bay Foundation's (GBF) Oyster Shell Recycling Program has recycled 845 tons of oyster shells as of September 2018¹⁶.



In 2011, GBF began recycling oyster shells through a partnership with Tommy's Restaurant and Oyster Bar³.



As of 2017, GBF partnered with six restaurants and stored recycled shells at three curing sites³.

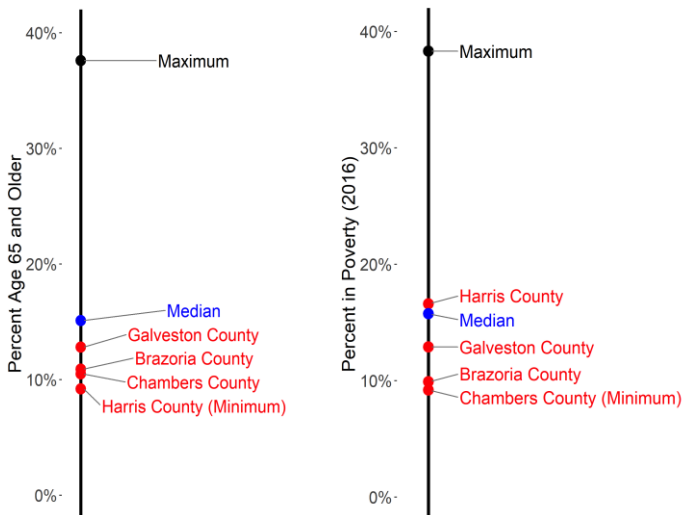


The reclaimed shells serve as new oyster habitat, enhancing local oyster populations.

Note: In the following sections, the line graphs compare the counties surrounding Galveston Bay (as shown in the map above) with all of the U.S. counties that border the Gulf of Mexico. In each graph, the Galveston Bay counties are shown in red, the minimum and maximum of all of the Gulf coastal counties in black, and the median of all Gulf coastal counties in blue.

Demographics

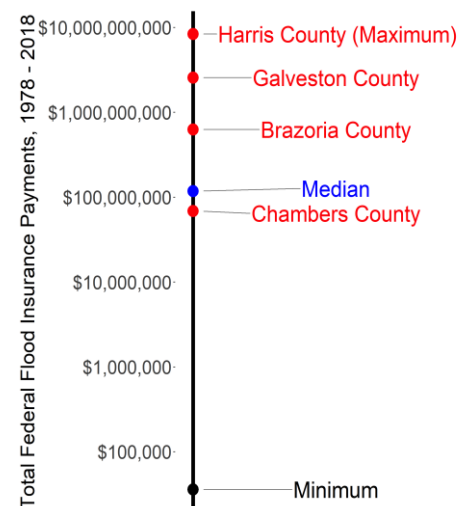
Galveston Bay counties have a **lower proportion of older people**⁷, and generally have a **lower rate of poverty**⁸, compared to most Gulf coastal counties.



Galveston Bay counties have food insecurity rates between 14.5% and 17%⁹, which are higher than the median Gulf coastal county (14.3%).

Flood vulnerability

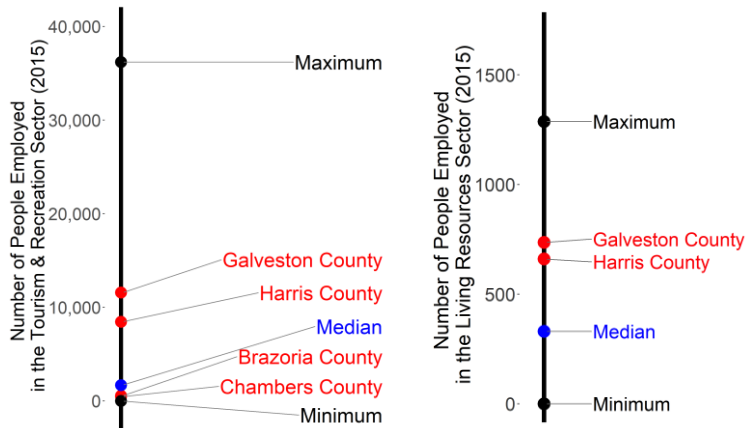
In general, Galveston Bay counties **received more money from federal flood insurance payments** than most Gulf coastal counties¹⁰.



As of 2010, more than 109,000 people were estimated to live within one mile of the shoreline in Galveston Bay counties¹¹, which is about 2% of their total population.

Economy

Galveston and Harris counties employ more people in the recreation sector (includes charter and recreational fishing, boat tours, marinas, campsites, hotels, and restaurants) and in the living resources sector (includes commercial fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing, and seafood markets) than most Gulf coastal counties¹².



The recreation sector makes up 0.08% to 3.8% of GDP in Galveston Bay counties¹³.

The living resources sector makes up 0.16% of GDP in Galveston County.

Note: Economic data on the living resources sector for Brazoria, Chambers and Harris counties are not available due to confidentiality issues.

Recreation

Recreational activities related to healthy estuaries are popular among residents and visitors of Galveston Bay. According to recent reports:



In 2018, **More than 84,000 pleasure boats** were registered in Galveston Bay counties⁶.

Popular fish include the Atlantic croaker, sand sea trout, southern flounder, red drum and spotted sea trout⁵.



There are **over 600 bird species and over 20 potential birder attractions** around Galveston Bay⁵.

Oyster harvest in Galveston Bay

Galveston Bay's oyster fishery contributes **\$9 million** to the Texas economy in an average year².

Galveston Bay oyster landings accounted for **47-50%** of total Texas oyster landings, by weight and value, between 2007 and 2016².

Oyster harvest in Galveston Bay has dropped by **more than 80%** since the mid-2000s due to sedimentation from hurricanes, predation, disease, fishing pressure, and drought. Low salinity due to severe flooding in 2017 caused high oyster mortality, further reducing the 2018 harvest¹⁷.

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