

# Glossary



- accretion** - the build-up of land due to artificial or natural causes.
- bascule** - a style of bridge utilizing counterweights that allows a steel span to raise, permitting high-masted vessels to pass through.
- bathymetry** - the science of measuring water depths to determine coastal or ocean bottom topography.
- bayou** - a small, sluggish secondary stream or lake.
- beach renourishment** - the process of pumping sand onto beaches from channels, inlets, or offshore sources.
- bulkhead** - to partition an area for protection against intrusion by water; a structure that provides such protection.
- bulkhead line** - the farthest offshore area to which a structure may be constructed without interfering with navigation.
- commercial landing** - a quantity of fish or shellfish brought ashore by a commercial fishing operation.
- creek** - a natural stream or channel, normally smaller than and often flowing into a river.
- dredge spoil** - sand and/or mud removed from the bottom of a water course or body of water during dredging.
- dredging** - removing bottom material from a waterway.
- ebb-tidal delta** - sand deposited just outside the seaward margin of an inlet.
- ecosystem** - a natural unit formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment.
- erosion** - the loosening, transporting and wearing away of the land, chiefly by water or wind.
- estuarine habitat** - the natural home or dwelling place of an organism that lives in an estuary.
- estuary** - a semi-enclosed body of water with free connection with the open sea, and within which seawater is measurably diluted by freshwater from land drainage.
- exotic species** - plant or animal species not native to an area.
- fetch** - the distance traversed by waves without obstruction.
- fishery** - place for harvesting fish; a coordinated activity for the capture of fish.
- flood-tidal delta** - sand deposited just inside the seaward margin of an inlet.
- flushing** - the removal or reduction of contaminants in an estuary or harbor through the movement of water and consequent dilution.
- gillnet fishing** - a method of fishing in which specifically sized mesh nets catch fish, often mullet, by the gills. This method of fishing allows smaller or larger fish to escape the net, while fish of a certain size are caught.
- habitat** - the natural or unnatural environment of a plant or animal; the kind of place where a given organism normally lives.
- Halodule wrightii (shoal grass)** - thin (2 - 3 mm) flat leaves generally 4-10 centimeters in height. This species occupies the lower intertidal area and is the seagrass most commonly observed exposed on tidal flats. It is also common along the deeper fringes of *Thalassia testudinum* beds.
- Halophila englemannii (star grass)** - a seagrass characterized by a whorl of six to eight smooth, flat green leaves (to 3 centimeters in length) atop a slender stalk. The edges of the blades have fine teeth.
- hardened shoreline/shore hardening** - the artificial alteration of a shoreline, using seawalls, rubble or other means; replacement of vegetative or otherwise natural shoreline with man-made structures.
- hydrography** - the scientific analysis of the physical condition, flow, boundaries and related characteristics of surface waters.
- hydrology** - the science relating to the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth, and their reaction with the environment.
- inlet** - a short, narrow waterway connecting a bay or lagoon with the sea.
- intertidal** - the area of bay bottom that is alternately covered with water and then exposed due to the rise and fall of tide waters on a regular basis. Areas that are only occasionally exposed or covered due to extremely high or low tides are generally not considered to be *intertidal*.
- jetty** - a barrier built out from shore to protect the land from sand erosion by currents or waves.
- longshore drift** - the parallel movement of suspended sand along the beach, caused by wave and tidal action.
- mangrove** - a salt-tolerant sub-tropical tree or shrub found near the shore, with leaves and bark that are rich in tannin.
- marsh** - a transitional land-water area covered at least part of the time by estuarine or marine waters.
- mean depth** - the average depth of water.
- prop wash** - the turbulent action of water ejected from a boat propeller.
- prop scour** - the resultant condition of sediments subject to chronic prop wash.
- revetment** - a hard structure used to protect an embankment from water or wind.
- rip rap** - a foundation or revetment in water or on soft ground, made of irregularly placed stones or pieces of boulders and used to protect the shore.
- salinity** - any concentration of salt in water, usually measured in parts per thousand.
- salt marsh** - a marine habitat that is usually wet with saltwater and contains shrubby vegetation.
- seagrass bed** - a mass or growth of marine plants, generally found on the sea bottom in relatively shallow water.
- sea level** - the level of the surface of the ocean; especially, the mean level halfway between high and low tide used as a standard in reckoning land elevation or sea depths.
- seawall** - a wall or embankment constructed along a shore to reduce wave erosion and encroachment by the sea.
- sediment** - organic or inorganic material often suspended in liquid that eventually settles to the bottom.
- shellfish** - an aquatic invertebrate, such as a mollusk or crustacean, that has a shell or exoskeleton.
- shell mound/midden** - a refuse pile, in this region generally composed of fossilized bivalve shellfish, produced by aboriginal peoples.
- shoal** - to become more shallow, or an area of shallow water.
- smooth sheet** - a complete record of sounding taken during field surveys plus other data to provide proper interpretation of the survey, such as depth curves, bottom characteristics, names of geologic features, tide records, and other details.
- sound** - a body of water, wider than a strait or channel, usually connecting larger bodies of water.
- spoil** - accumulation of dredged materials.
- storm overwash** - storm-driven waves flowing across a barrier island.
- semi-diurnal** - referring to tides, when a high or low tide occurs twice in a 24-hour period, i.e., half (semi) a day (diurnal) in length of time.
- subtidal** - the area of the bay bottom that remains covered with water under all average tide conditions.
- substratum** - the bottom of the bay, the soils of the bay bottom. Can also refer to any surface that allows for the colonization of marine life.
- swash channel** - a narrow channel in which tides flow, often cut through a bar or shoal near tidal passes.
- Syringodium filiforme (manatee grass)** - the only seagrass with cylindrical leaves that may exceed 50 centimeters in length. Common in higher-salinity grass-bed fringe areas (deeper water) near gulf passes.
- Thalassia testudinum (turtle grass)** - the most conspicuous subtidal grass, with thin flat blades four to 12 millimeters wide and up to 1 meter in length, although most Sarasota Bay specimens are considerably shorter. At low tides the upper portions of the blades are often exposed.
- tide** - the periodic rising and falling of the oceans resulting from lunar and solar forces acting upon the rotating earth.
- tributary** - a body of water that supplies a larger body of water, such as a lake or estuary.
- turbidity** - cloudy or hazy appearance in a naturally clear liquid, caused by a suspension of fine solids.
- uplands** - terrestrial areas above the influence of tide waters.
- wetlands** - areas with wet or spongy soil, such as swamps or tidal flats, characterized by plants adapted to living under often-wet conditions.
- wastewater** - water that has been used for industrial or domestic purposes.
- wet-sand area (of beach)** - the area of beach generally seaward of the mean high-tide line.