

Wading Birds

Great Egret *Ardea alba* - "White Heron"

- Symbol of the National Audubon Society
- Feeds on fish, invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles
- Large all-white heron
- Long black legs and feet
- Yellow, strong, stout bill
- Nests in "rookeries"
- Hunts alone using a stalking behavior



Wood stork

Mycteria americana

- Large long legged wading birds. (about 50 inches tall with a 60+ inch wing span)
- Listed on the Federal Endangered Species list since 1984
- Only breed if there is an easily accessible food supply- eat mainly small fish
- Great indicator of wetland health

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COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION





Salt Marsh Plants and Animals

Smooth Cordgrass *Spartina alterniflora*

- Keystone plant species in the Georgia marshes

Periwinkle Snail *Littorina irrorata*

- Grayish-white to yellowish-tan
- Herbivore feeding on the algae and residue of plant detritus left behind from the tides

Ribbed Mussel *Geukensia demissa*

- Filter feeder that feeds only at high tide, closing the shell tightly at low tide to conserve water. Spawning occurs during the summer.

Fiddler Crab *Uca pugilator*

- Males have one enlarged claw used for finding a mate

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MARSH AND SHORE

Georgia's coastal marshlands and shoreline provide natural recreational resources that are vitally linked to many aspects of life in our region. These marshlands serve as a nursery for many species that are important for the ecology, recreation and economy of the area. In addition, natural marshlands and shorelines provide a buffer against flooding and erosion while helping to control and even eliminate pollutants.

Half-Million Acres of Estuaries Containing:

- *350,000 Acres of Salt Marsh*
- *3,400 Miles of Tidal Shoreline*
- *100 Miles of Sand Beaches*
- *14 Barrier Islands*
- *8 State Parks and Historic Sites*
- *13 State Wildlife Management Areas*
- *2 National Monuments*
- *1 National Seashore*
- *5 Federal Wildlife Refuges*

COASTAL FACTS



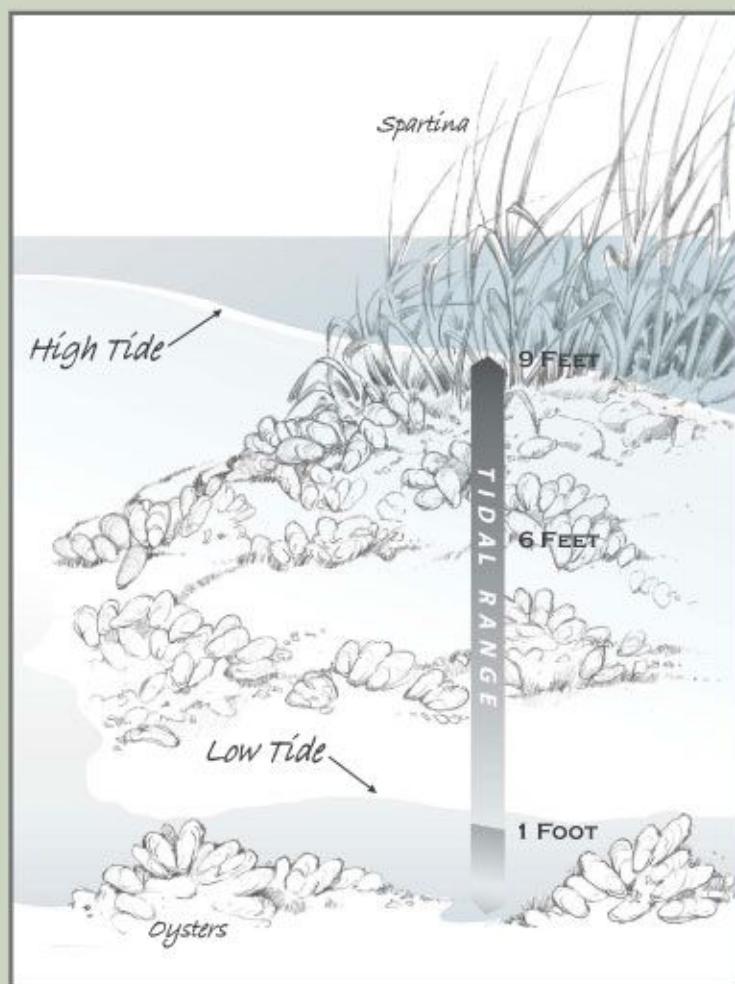
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TIDAL RANGE

Georgia's curving coastline is at the center and most western point of the South Atlantic Bight, creating the largest tidal range south of Canada's Bay of Fundy. Georgia has a tidal range of six to nine feet, with a twice-daily tidal cycle.

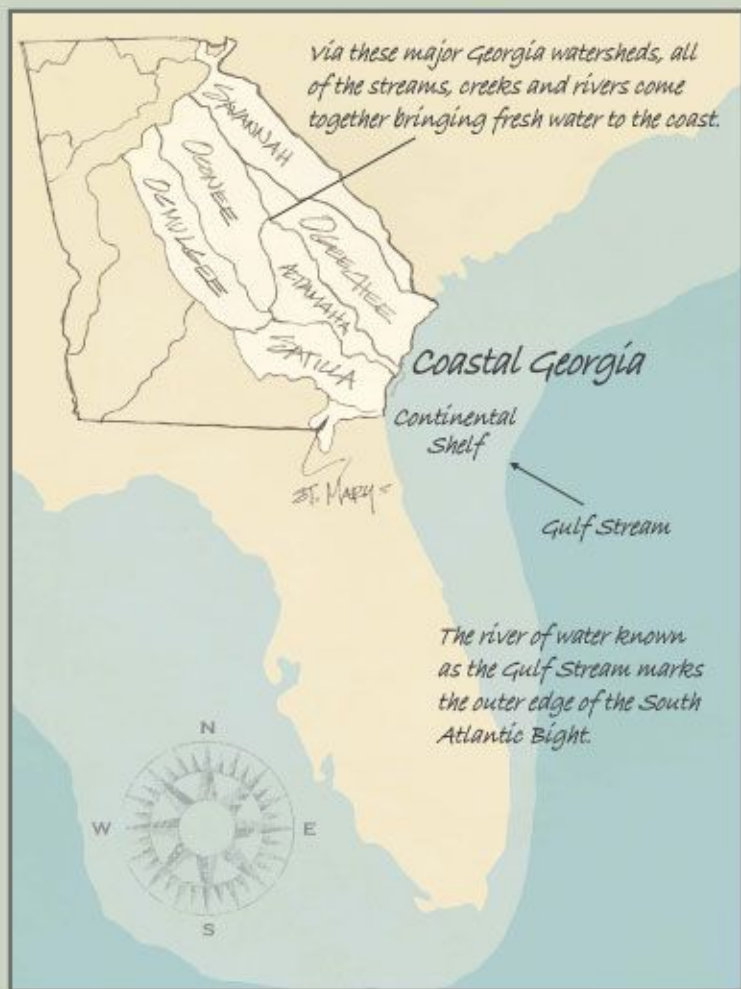
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SOUTH ATLANTIC BIGHT

Georgia's coast is at the center of a long, gradual bend in the eastern U.S. coastline that forms a large open bay known as the South Atlantic Bight. The remaining submerged portion of the lower coastal plain is called the continental shelf. Flowing along the eastern edge of the continental shelf is the river of water known as the Gulf Stream, which also marks the boundary of the South Atlantic Bight.

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Blue Crab

Callinectes sapidus

"cali" = beautiful + "nectes" = swimmer



- The "orange sponge" on the bottom of a female crab contains 700,000 to 2 million eggs
- On average only 1 out of every million eggs survive to be an adult
- Eats both plants and animals



Male - Jimmy

The male crab, or jimmy, has blue claws and an underside "apron" which looks like an upside-down T or the "Washington Monument."



Female - Sook

A mature female, or sook, has a widened apron with a semicircular bell shape that looks like the U.S. Capitol building.

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Eastern Oyster and Oystercatcher

Eastern Oyster

Crassostrea virginica

"Thick shelled edible mollusk"

- Keystone species in the Georgia marsh
- Live in brackish to salty waters near the ocean
- Oysters are filter feeders filtering up to 1.5 gallons of water per hour
- Shell was used in historic tabby construction

American Oystercatcher

Haematopus palliatus

"Dressed in a blood colored mantel"

- Large shorebird with a black head, red bill, brown back, and white underside
- Specialized bill allows feeding on oysters, clams and other bivalves



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Marine Fish

Redfish or Red Drum *Sciaenops Ocellatus* *"drum with an eye-like spot"*

- State Marine Sportfish
- Reddish-bronze to copper color
- Lives in excess of 40 years, maturing at 4 or 5 years
- Young fish are called "puppy drum"

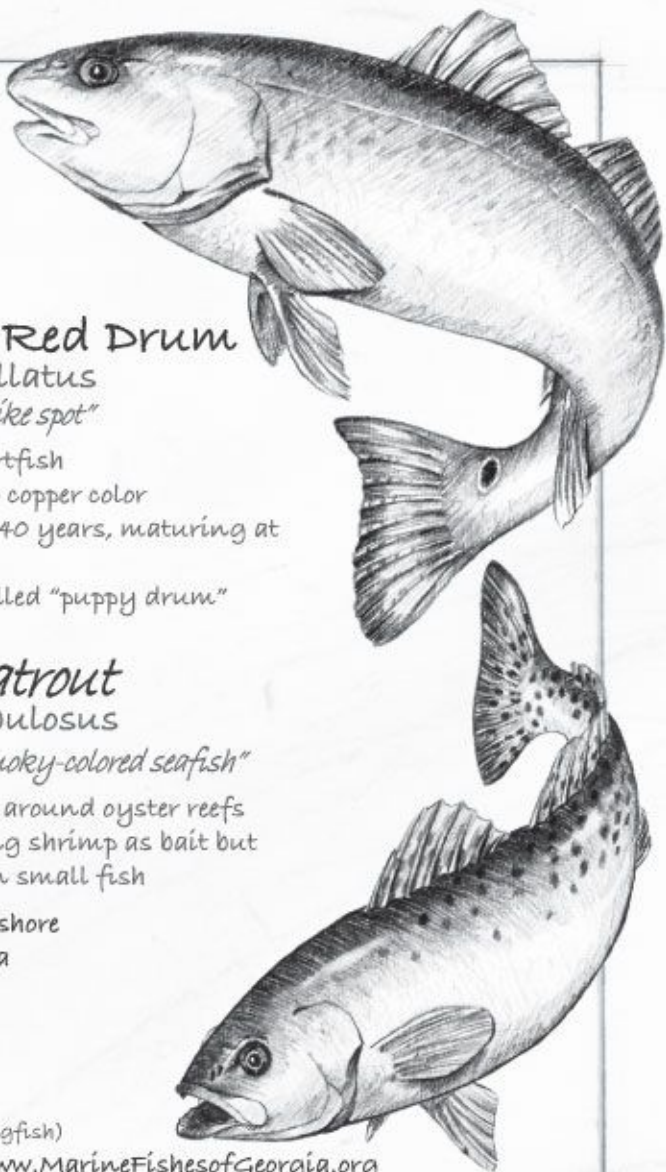
Spotted Seatrout *Cynoscion nebulosus* *"dog-toothed dark smoky-colored seafish"*

- Commonly found around oyster reefs
- Often caught using shrimp as bait but larger trout feed on small fish

Other Important In-shore Sportfish in Georgia

Black drum
Flounder
Sheepshead
Tarpon
Tripletail
Whiting (Southern Kingfish)

Visit www.MarineFishesofGeorgia.org



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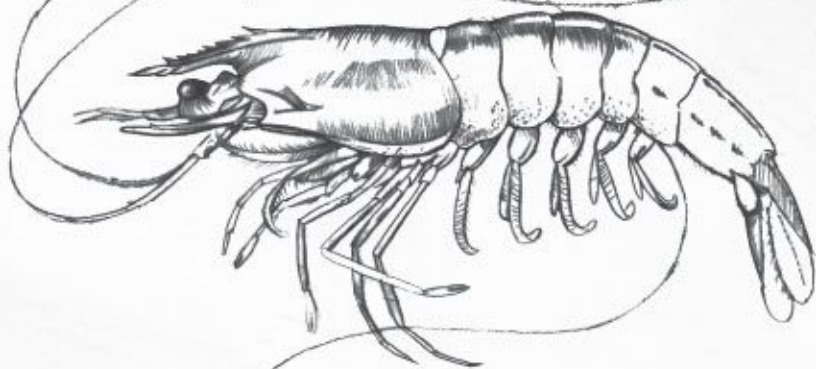
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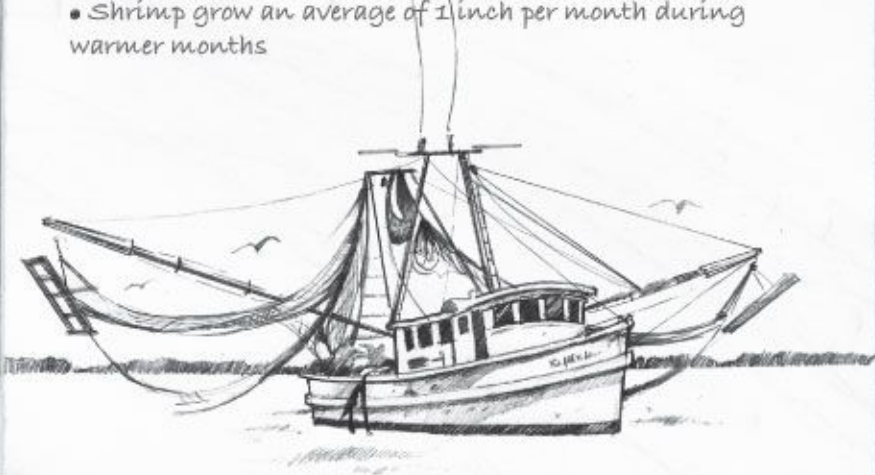


White Shrimp

Litopenaeus setiferus



- First species to become commercially important in the US
- Average life span is 12 months (maximum 24 months)
- Shrimp grow an average of 1 inch per month during warmer months



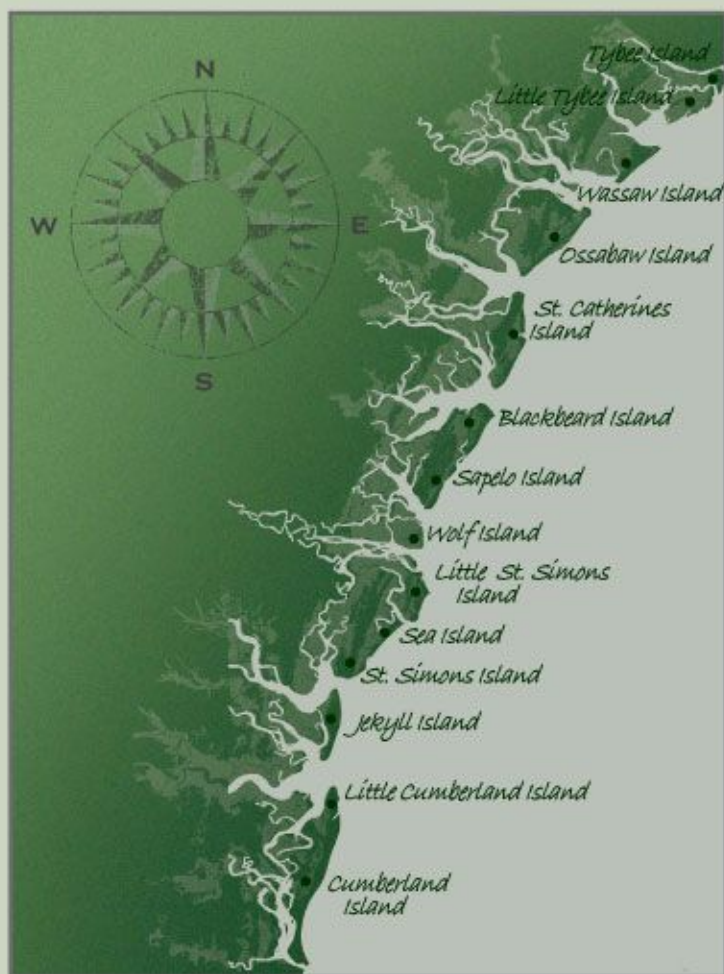
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BARRIER ISLANDS

Separating the Atlantic Ocean from the coast of mainland Georgia is a series of 14 barrier islands. These islands are several miles offshore and are connected to the mainland through a vast series of marshlands, tidal creeks, rivers and sounds. Wind, waves and currents are constantly reshaping this dynamic landscape.

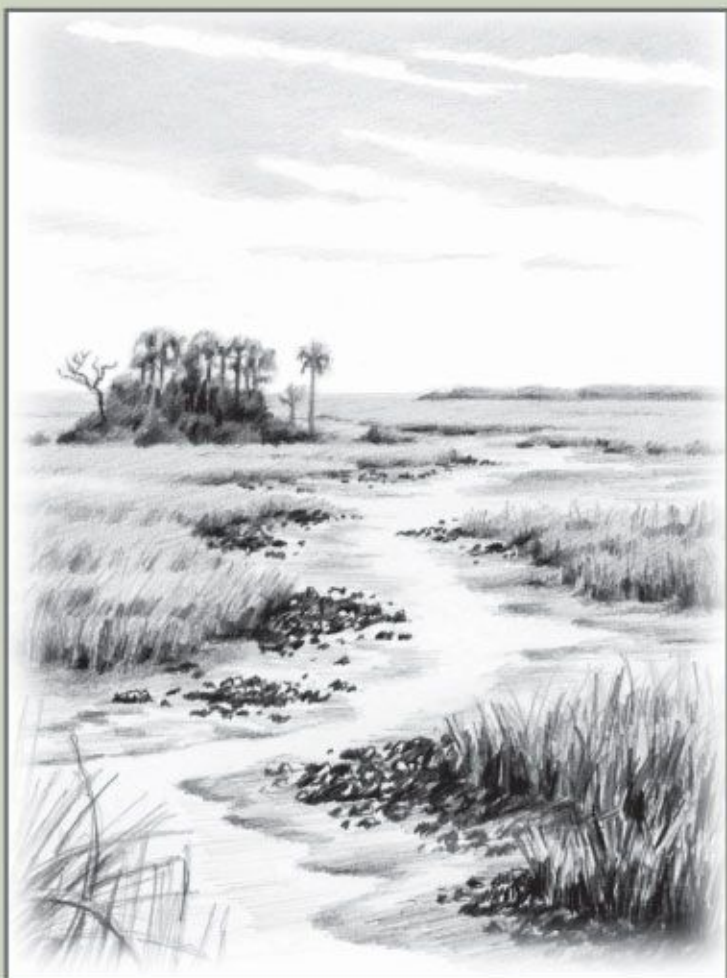
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SALT MARSH AND ESTUARIES

Behind the barrier islands—and protected from the forces of the Atlantic Ocean—estuaries are formed where fresh water from rivers mixes with the salt water of the sea. Salt marshes lie along the edges of the nutrient-rich estuaries. These naturally occurring ecosystems provide important nursery grounds for Georgia's oysters, shrimp, crabs and fish.

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Natural Shorelines

The Living Shoreline management technique is an innovative approach to stabilizing our natural shorelines. It takes advantage of natural features such as salt-marsh vegetation and oyster reefs as well as alternative engineering approaches. The goal is to preserve and build coastal habitats and to protect the shoreline from erosion. Along a Living Shoreline, marsh grasses, trees and shrubs provide habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife species. Healthy shorelines can also provide a safe haven for young and spawning fish, crabs and shellfish in shallow water.



Smooth Cordgrass
Spartina alterniflora



Ribbed Mussel
Geukensia demissa



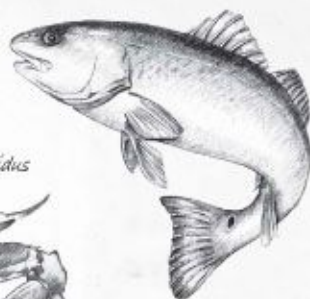
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