

Galveston Bay Earns a “C”: 2017 Galveston Bay Report Card Released

Oyster Population Needs Support and Clean-up Effort Scheduled for September

Houston, TX (August 9, 2017) – The Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) and the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC) released the latest results of the “2017 Galveston Bay Report Card”—a grading system used to convey the health of the Bay. The study assigned an overall grade of “C”, denoting significant threats to the region—an area marred by pollution, habitat loss and unfavorable coastal changes. The citizen-driven, scientific analysis was created to inform the community and inspire action to protect and preserve the Bay. The full and detailed report can be accessed at www.galvbay.org.

“Since its inauguration in 2015, the annual Report Card has identified the most pressing needs of the region and guided efforts to empower the public, as they preserve the area and foster a healthy and productive environment for generations to come,” said Galveston Bay Foundation President Bob Stokes. “Our initiatives are fueled by our yearly assessment of the Bay, and have led to community-based actions to restore lost or degraded wetlands, oyster reefs, and bird rookery habitats.”

The Galveston Bay Report Card evaluates 19 indicators that impact Galveston Bay and the surrounding watershed, which spans across 24,000 square miles and affects half of Texas’ population. The indicators are grouped into six critical issues and each graded on a scale of “A” to “F.” In addition to the grades, the report card shares ways for the public to support the Bay through activities like the Morgan’s Point [community beach clean-up](#) on September 23. The upcoming event strives to raise public awareness and educate citizens about the source of debris, while reducing the amount of offshore dumping along the coast.

The 2017 grades and changes from the previous year in each of those categories were scientifically determined to be as follows:

- *Human Health Risks:* Overall, the Bay received a **C**, after earning a B for recreation safety and C for seafood consumption.
- *Habitat:* An overall grade of **D** was assigned to this category and the sub-category of oyster reefs received an incomplete grade as the full extent of oyster reef losses will remain uncertain until new oyster reef data can be evaluated.
- *Water Quality:* The Bay maintained an **A** for the second year in a row.
- *Coastal Change:* While the overall grade was a **C**, it should be noted that the sub-category of relative Sea Level Rise was determined to be an F.
- *Wildlife:* Galveston Bay scored an overall grade of **C** for wildlife. Galveston Bay earned an invasive species grade of B, as there have been no reports of long-term established invasive species in the Bay.
- *Pollution Events and Sources:* Pollution Events and Sources received a **C**.

“Our research establishes a framework to improve the health of the Bay, and enables the public to preserve the area’s future,” said the Houston Advanced Research Center’s President and CEO, Lisa Gonzalez. “Together with the Galveston Bay Foundation, we have built a strong foundation that is leading to slow and steady improvement across the board.”

Galveston Bay—named an “estuary of national significance” by the United States Congress—is a vital natural resource for recreation, tourism and industry alike. The area houses three ports and serves as a hub for the manufacturing and refining of chemicals and petroleum products, making it economically significant for the state of Texas. Over the years, GBF and HARC have worked together to gather input from thousands of local residents, and ultimately, call attention to the problems plaguing Galveston Bay.

“We urge residents and local and state leaders to support our efforts and the preservation of Galveston Bay,” said Stokes. “Our research indicates that although measures have been taken to protect the region, there is still plenty of work to be done to save this precious natural resource and its watershed from long-term damage.”

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About the Galveston Bay Foundation

The mission of the Galveston Bay Foundation is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural resources of the Galveston Bay estuarine system and its tributaries for present users and for posterity. Its programs in advocacy, conservation, education and research strive to ensure that Galveston Bay remains a beautiful and productive place for generations to come. Established in 1987, the Galveston Bay Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. For further information, contact the Foundation at (281) 332-3381, visit www.galvbay.org, like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

About the Houston Advanced Research Center

HARC is a nonprofit research hub providing independent analysis on energy, air, and water issues to people seeking scientific answers. Its research activities support the implementation of policies and technologies that promote sustainability based on scientific principles. HARC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization building a sustainable future in which people thrive and nature flourishes. For further information, contact HARC at (281) 364-6000 or visit www.HARCresearch.org. You can also connect with us via [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#). Like or follow @HARCresearch.

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