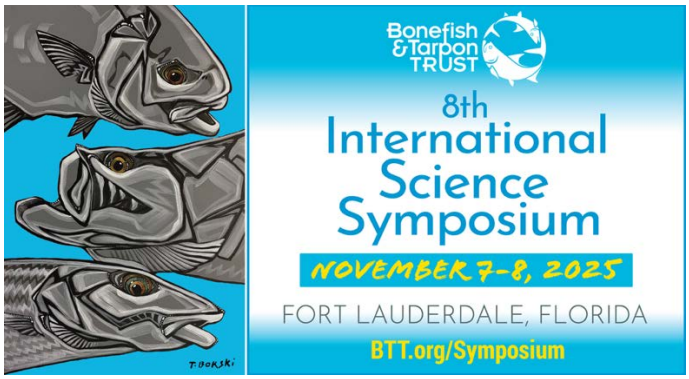


Flats food web study: Assessing permit and bonefish prey across our flats

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Seagrass prey species are an important food item for flats fisheries. Recent evidence has shown spatial differences in the diet and food web reliance on seagrass of flats fisheries species, suggesting variation in prey availability and quality across South Florida. To evaluate these patterns, we are conducting seasonal surveys of prey abundance and species composition at 12 seagrass flat sites spanning the Lower Keys, Upper Keys, and Biscayne Bay. Prey are sampled in the same way as previous studies with standardized throw traps during mid-dry, early wet, and late wet seasons. We will assess the spatial variation of prey and how prey is related to habitat characteristics. Additionally, prey will be compared to historic sampling to determine changes in prey populations over time. This work provides information about food availability for flats fisheries across South Florida, and its potential impact on fish quality.

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