St. Martins Marsh and Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserves (SMMAP & BBSAP)

**Water Quality Metadata Report**

January – June 2024

Last updated: 01/29/2025 by MS

Note: This is a provisional metadata document; it has not been authenticated as of its download date. Contents of this document are subject to change throughout the QAQC process and it should not be considered a final record of data documentation until that process is complete. Contact the Aquatic Preserve office [Sandra.Chupinsky@floridadep.gov](mailto:Sandra.Chupinsky@floridadep.gov) with any additional questions.

**I. Data Set and Research Descriptors**

**1) Principal investigator & contact persons-**

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**2) Entry verification-**

Deployment data are uploaded from the YSI datasonde to a Personal Computer (IBM compatible) in the water quality lab at the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve office. Files are exported from KorEXO Software in a comma-delimited format (.CSV). Copies of these raw data files and calibration and field logs are uploaded to the AP Water Quality SharePoint. Aquatic Preserve staff remove pre- and post- deployment readings and upload these limited.csv files to the AP Water Quality SharePoint. Data then undergoes a two-step (primary and secondary) Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) procedure as outlined in the NERRS CDMO Data Management Manual Version 6.6 (http://cdmo.baruch.sc.edu/request-manuals/). The edited limited (.CSV) file is uploaded to the NERRS Centralized Data Management Office (CDMO) Non-SWMP Data Upload Service where data undergo automated primary QAQC. During primary QAQC, data are flagged if they are missing or out of sensor range. The edited file is then saved to the AP Water Quality SharePoint for the Aquatic Preserve Data Manager to perform a secondary QAQC review where it is opened in Microsoft Excel and processed using the CDMO’s NERRQAQC Excel macro. The macro inserts station codes, creates metadata worksheets for flagged data and summary statistics, and graphs the data for review. It allows the user to apply QAQC flags and codes to the data, remove any overlapping deployment data, append files, and export the resulting data file for upload to the Aquatic Preserve database. Lastly, a tertiary QAQC review is performed by the Aquatic Preserve Data Manager along with the Principal Investigator and assimilation into the Aquatic Preserve database as authenticated data. Where deployment overlap occurs between files, the data produced by the newly calibrated sonde is generally accepted as being the most accurate. For more information on QAQC flags and codes, see Sections 11 and 12.

Anomalous data are evaluated to determine whether to flag or reject the suspect values. Data outside the "normal" range of water quality parameters for each site are investigated for validity based on weather data, field observations, QC checks, graphs, and instrument diagnostics. Data are rejected if the anomalies are attributed to sensor malfunction and/or excessive fouling. In addition to observations of any physical damage (e.g., compromised DO probe membrane), sensor malfunctions are detected if the reading of the probe is outside the range established for the sensor or the sensor will not post calibrate. Data management is performed by Sandra Chupinsky and Madeline Singer.

**3) Research objectives-**

The objective of this effort is to establish baseline data by quantifying the spatial/temporal variability and trends, both seasonally and as a function of tidal force, of selected abiotic parameters within the Aquatic Preserves, to record changes in water quality due to major storm events such as hurricanes, and to use this water quality data to complement the annual seagrass monitoring conducted by the Aquatic Preserves.

**4) Research methods-**

Historically, YSI 600 OMS datasondes had been continuously operated (data collection interval: 30 minutes) at the Crystal River site since January 2004, at the Bennett Creek, Kings Bay, and Homosassa River monitoring stations since February 2004, and at the Withlacoochee monitoring station since March 2004. YSI 6600 EDS datasondes were operated at Cat Island and Lone Cabbage Key beginning in March 2004, and at Seahorse Key and Gomez Rocks beginning in April 2004. These models incorporate a specially designed wiper apparatus attached to the turbidity probe that reduces the oxygen and pH sensor fouling and thereby improves the quality of data collected. At each site, the sonde is contained within a 10 cm (inside diameter) housing pipe mounted vertically on a piling. To facilitate water flow across the sensors, several 2 cm diameter holes were drilled into the submerged portion of the pipe. Hole density is greatest near the base where the sonde sensors are located. In early 2005, the Cat Island and Lone Cabbage Key sites were removed. During most of 2005 and early 2006, data was sporadically collected at all sites due to lack of staff.

As of March 2006, all YSI 600 OMS sites were operational. In July 2006, the Gomez Rocks site was removed, and in August 2006, the Seahorse Key station became operational. In October 2006, the YSI 600 OMS was replaced with an YSI 6600 EDS sonde at the Kings Bay station. In March 2007, a 6600 EDS station was established in Dekle Beach. In early 2009, the data collection interval was changed to 15 minutes at all locations. In March 2009, an additional 6600 EDS station was installed at the mouth of the Suwannee River. In March 2010, the Kings Bay station was relocated due to the replacement of the piling the sonde was previously located at. In February 2012, all four YSI 6600 EDS sondes were upgraded from rapid pulse dissolved oxygen probes to ROX optical dissolved oxygen probes. In May 2015, the Crystal River site was broken down due to piling replacement, and the Seahorse Key site was deconstructed. The Homosassa site was upgraded from a YSI 600 OMS to a YSI 6600 EDS in August of 2015. The Kings Bay location was downgraded from a YSI 6600 EDS to a YSI 600 OMS outfitted with a turbidity probe. Due to insufficient staffing, data from 2015 to 2017 are intermittent, and all sites were decommissioned in 2017.

In July 2018, a new station was installed in Chassahowitzka using a 6600 EDS with a 15-minute data collection interval. Parameters being recorded include time, date, temperature (°C), specific conductivity (mS/cm), salinity (ppt), dissolved oxygen (% and mg/L), depth (m), pH, and turbidity (NTU). On March 03, 2020, the Chassahowitzka station was upgraded from a 6600 EDS to an EXO3. Parameters being recorded remain the same, but turbidity is now collected in FNU and salinity is in psu. The datasonde tube is attached to a piling with hose clamps, and water flow through the tube is facilitated with a series of drilled out 2-in and 1-in holes in the submerged portion of the tube.

At the end of October 2019, a new station was installed in Steinhatchee. An EXO2 is being used with a 15-minute data collection interval. Parameters being recorded include time, date, temperature (°C), specific conductivity (mS/cm), salinity (psu), dissolved oxygen (% and mg/L), depth (m), pH, turbidity (FNU), and chlorophyll (RFU and µg/L). The datasonde tube is attached to a channel marker with hose clamps, and water flow through the tube is facilitated with a series of drilled out 2-in and 1-in holes in the submerged portion of the tube. This site was created to fill a data gap that exists in the Big Bend and was funded by an EPA grant awarded to BBSAP in 2019.

In February 2023, a new station was installed in Cedar Key. An EXO2 was used with a 15-minute data collection interval. Parameters recorded included time, date, temperature (°C), specific conductivity (mS/cm), salinity (psu), dissolved oxygen (% and mg/L), depth (m), pH, and turbidity (FNU). The datasonde tube was attached to a channel marker with hose clamps, and water flow through the tube was facilitated with a series of drilled out 2-in and 1-in holes in the submerged portion of the tube. Due to heavy biofouling, in November 2023, the Cedar Key station was decommissioned.

A two-point calibration is used for pH (YSI buffers 7.00 and 10.00), turbidity (0.00 FNU or deionized water (DI water) and 124.00 FNU YSI standard), and chlorophyll RFU and µg/L (0.00 RFU/µg/L or DI water and 125 mg/L rhodamine Kingscote Chemicals solution). A single-point calibration is used for specific conductivity (YSI 50.00 mS/cm standard), dissolved oxygen (calibrated in 100% air saturated water), and depth (calibrated by using the current barometric pressure to determine the depth offset value).

As state above, sondes are housed within a vertical 10 cm (inside diameter) PVC pipe that is mounted to permitted pilings using hose clamps. Sonde exchanges at the 6600 EDS sites were made at approximately two-week intervals, whereas sonde exchanges at the EXO sites are made at approximately 21-day intervals. During datasonde changes, the sonde is lowered on an attached cable within the PVC and stopped by a stainless-steel bolt at the bottom of the PVC pipe to keep the datasonde from falling through. Holes (2” and 1” in diameter) are drilled throughout the PVC pipe to facilitate adequate water flow around sensors. The interior and exterior of the PVC housing pipe are painted with anti-fouling paint. The bottom of the PVC pipes are open and positioned about 0.5 meters above the bottom substrate. Datasondes and sensors are further protected from biofouling using plastic wrap and duct tape around the datasonde body. A plastic field guard is used at the Chassahowitzka site, whereas a copper field guard is used at the Steinhatchee site. Plastic mesh screening is secured around each field guard using low-profile zip ties.

At the end of a sampling period, sondes are returned to the laboratory where post-deployment readings and, if necessary, reconditioning take place in accordance with the methods outlined in the YSI Operating and Service Manual. The turbidity wiper brush is removed and replaced with a clean wiper to avoid contamination of standards during post-deployment procedures. After a superficial rinse of the sonde in tap water, post deployment readings are recorded for pH (YSI 7.00 and 10.00 buffer solutions) and specific conductivity (YSI 50.00 mS/cm standard). Post-deployment turbidity readings in 0.00 FNU standard (DI water) and 124.00 FNU (YSI standard) are recorded after a more thorough rinse of the turbidity sensor. Post-deployment chlorophyll readings in 0.00 RFU and µg/L standard (DI water) are recorded also. The results of these post-deployment readings are used to evaluate the validity of data (See Tables 2 and 3).

**5) Site locations and character-**

The St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve was established on October 21, 1969. The St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve covers open water areas from the Crystal River to the Homosassa River in coastal Citrus County. It is composed of approximately 28,400 acres of open water, several inlet bays, tidal rivers and creeks, salt marsh, and adjoins upland hammock islands. Nutrient exchange between the marshes and the Gulf of Mexico make the salt marsh a significant area of primary production and a nursery ground for commercial and recreational fish species. St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve’s freshwater tributaries includes two, first-magnitude, spring-fed rivers: the Homosassa River to the south and the Crystal River to the north. Spring discharge does not fluctuate dramatically from season to season allowing a constant flow of freshwater into St. Martins Marsh’s productive and well-balanced estuary. The area’s vast coastal salt marshes, mud flats, oyster bars, mangrove islands, and seagrass beds are the southern terminus for migratory waterfowl of the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways. St. Martins Marsh provides stop-over and wintering areas for many migratory species. The Springs Coast is characterized by unique limestone outcroppings and exposed karstic features. Habitats associated with these areas are seagrass meadows and hardbottom. Hardbottom habitat is defined as an area of hard substrate, natural or artificial, where macroalgae, sponges, and corals can grow and attach using specialized holdfasts. See Table 1 for a description of the Chassahowitzka datasonde

site in St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve.

The Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve was established in 1985. Its boundaries extend from the Withlacoochee River north to the St. Marks River and out nine nautical miles. The Preserve boundary encompasses all tidal lands, islands, seagrass beds, shallow banks, and submerged bottoms from the mean high-water line. Landward, it includes all-natural waterways tidally connected to the preserve to the extent of state jurisdiction. Spanning over 945,000 acres, the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve is the largest aquatic preserve and one of the most pristine places in Florida. The Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve consists mainly of a large, remote, and undeveloped expanse of submerged seagrasses and nearshore marshlands located along approximately 180 miles of the northeast coast of the Gulf of Mexico where the Florida peninsula joins the panhandle. Numerous estuaries, which nurture a diverse flora and fauna, are formed at the confluence of the many rivers and streams that flow into the Preserve. Open waters and submerged bay bottoms of these estuaries provide habitat to a wide variety of sea and shore birds. This region supports a very important commercial shellfish industry including Cedar Key clams, scallops, oysters, pink shrimp, and blue crab. This area of Florida is also a popular destination for the recreational scallop season. The Suwannee River region supports Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and the most viable population of the threatened Gulf sturgeon. Big Bend’s vast seagrass beds with mud and sand substrates are important marine habitats to this species. See Table 1 below for a description of the Steinhatchee datasonde site in Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve.

**Table 1: Station Descriptions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Site Name** | **Chassahowitzka** |
| Station Code | BBSCH |
| Location | N 28.77514, W 82.71631 |
| Active Dates | 07/2018 - Present |
| Mean Tidal Range (meters) | 0.414528 m |
| Salinity Range (ppt) | 12.5 – 34.9 ppt |
| Freshwater Input | Homosassa River and rainfall |
| Water Depth (meters, MLLW) | - 0.448056 m |
| Bottom Habitat | Sand/mud bottom, near mouth of Homosassa River |
| Pollutants | Nutrient runoff |
| Watershed Description | Springs Coast Watershed is spring fed |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Site Name** | **Steinhatchee** |
| Station Code | BBSST |
| Location | N 29.6625111, W 83.4289231 |
| Active Dates | 10/2019 - Present |
| Mean Tidal Range (meters) | 0.874776 m |
| Salinity Range (ppt) | .01 – 34.6 ppt |
| Freshwater Input | Steinhatchee River and rainfall |
| Water Depth (meters, MLLW) | -0.612648 m |
| Bottom Habitat | Mud bottom near the mouth of the Steinhatchee River |
| Pollutants | Nutrient runoff |
| Watershed Description | The Steinhatchee River is a part of the larger Suwannee River Basin. The Suwannee River Basin drains approximately 11,020 square miles with approximately half of the basin's area in Georgia. |

**6) Data collection period-**

Individual sonde deployment and retrieval dates and times for 2023 data are as follows:

BEGAN ENDED

Chassahowitzka Site

01/05/2024, 10:30 01/30/2024, 08:30

01/30/2024, 08:45 02/20/2024, 11:30

02/20/2024, 11:45 03/12/2024, 08:15

03/12/2024, 08:30 04/08/2024, 08:30

04/08/2024, 08:45 04/26/2024, 08:00

04/26/2024, 08:15 05/20/2024, 10:30

05/20/2024, 10:45 06/10/2024, 10:00

06/10/2024, 10:15 07/01/2024, 07:45

07/01/2024, 08:00 07/22/2024, 11:30

07/22/2024, 11:45 08/13/2024, 11:45

08/13/2024, 12:00 09/12/2024, 08:00

09/12/2024, 08:15 10/14/2024, 08:30

10/14/2024, 08:45 11/05/2024, 09:00

11/05/2024, 09:15 12/02/2024, 13:00

12/02/2024, 13:15 12/20/2024, 09:30

12/20/2024, 09:45 01/17/2025, 09:45

Steinhatchee Site

01/11/2024, 09:45 02/02/2024, 09:45

02/02/2024, 10:00 02/21/2024, 10:00

02/21/2024, 10:15 03/14/2024, 09:15

03/14/2024, 09:30 04/09/2024, 09:00

04/09/2024, 09:15 05/01/2024, 09:30

05/01/2024, 09:45 05/23/2024, 12:00

05/23/2024, 12:15 06/13/2024, 09:30

06/13/2024, 10:00 07/10/2024, 09:15

07/10/2024, 09:30 08/12/2024, 09:15

08/12/2024, 09:30 09/06/2024, 09:15

09/06/2024, 09:30 10/21/2024, 09:45

\* indicates short term loss of data due to battery failure, out of water for maintenance, weather related causes, and/or other internal problems that occurred during deployment.

\*\* indicates long term loss of data due to sonde removal from field for long term repairs.

**7) Distribution-**

The Principle Investigator (PI) retains the right to be fully credited for having collected and processed the data. Following academic courtesy standards, the PI and Aquatic Preserve (AP) site where the data were collected will be contacted and fully acknowledged in any subsequent publications in which any part of the data are used. The data set enclosed within this package/transmission is only as good as the quality assurance and quality control procedures outlined by the enclosed metadata reporting statement. The user bears all responsibility for its subsequent use/misuse in any further analyses or comparisons. Water quality data and metadata can be obtained from the PI (please see Principal Investigators and Contact Persons) and online at the Aquatic Preserves’ data portal home page [www.floridaapdata.org](http://www.floridaapdata.org). Data are available in comma delimited format.

**8) Associated researchers and projects-**

The SMMAP and BBSAP have formed partnerships with other agencies and organizations actively involved in resource protection in the Preserves’ watershed. Cooperating managers of lands within the AP’s include the: 1) National Park Service (NPS), 2) Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD), 3) Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), 4) Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Division of Recreation and Parks/Florida Park Service (FPS), 5) United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), 6) DEP Aquatic Preserve Program, 7) Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), 8) Florida Forest Service (FFS), and 9) Citrus, Taylor, Jefferson, Dixie, Levy, and Wakulla Counties.

Other water quality research and monitoring initiatives within the Aquatic Preserves include nutrient sampling from Waccasassa to Keaton Beach in conjunction with DEP’s Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR).

**II. Physical Structure Descriptors**

**9) Sensor specifications-**

**YSI EXO Datasonde:**

Parameter: Temperature

Units: Celsius (C)

Sensor Type: Wiped probe; Thermistor

Model#: 599827

Range: -5 to 50 C

Accuracy: ±0.2 C

Resolution: 0.001 C

Parameter: Conductivity

Units: milli-Siemens per cm (mS/cm)

Sensor Type: Wiped probe; 4-electrode cell with auto-ranging

Model#: 599827

Range: 0 to 100 mS/cm

Accuracy: ±1% of the reading or 0.002 mS/cm, whichever is greater

Resolution: 0.0001 to 0.01 mS/cm (range dependent)

Parameter: Salinity

Units: practical salinity units (psu)/parts per thousand (ppt)

Model#: 599827

Sensor Type: Wiped probe; Calculated from conductivity and temperature

Range: 0 to 70 ppt

Accuracy: ±2% of the reading or 0.2 ppt, whichever is greater

Resolution: 0.01 psu

Parameter: Dissolved Oxygen % saturation

Sensor Type: Optical probe w/ mechanical cleaning

Model#: 599100-01

Range: 0 to 500% air saturation

Accuracy: 0-200% air saturation: +/- 1% of the reading or 1% air saturation, whichever is greater 200-500% air saturation: +/- 5% or reading

Resolution: 0.1% air saturation

Parameter: Dissolved Oxygen mg/L (Calculated from % air saturation, temperature, and salinity)

Units: milligrams/Liter (mg/L)

Sensor Type: Optical probe w/ mechanical cleaning

Model#: 599100-01

Range: 0 to 50 mg/L

Accuracy: 0-20 mg/L: +/-0.1 mg/l or 1% of the reading, whichever is greater

20 to 50 mg/L: +/- 5% of the reading

Resolution: 0.01 mg/L

Parameter: Non-vented Level - Shallow (Depth)

Units: feet or meters (ft or m)

Sensor Type: Stainless steel strain gauge

Range: 0 to 33 ft (10 m)

Accuracy: +/- 0.013 ft (0.004 m)

Resolution: 0.001 ft (0.001 m)

Parameter: pH

Units: pH units

Sensor Type: Glass combination electrode

Model#: 599701(guarded) or 599702(wiped)

Range: 0 to 14 units

Accuracy: +/- 0.1 units within +/- 10° of calibration temperature, +/- 0.2 units for entire temperature range

Resolution: 0.01 units

Parameter: Turbidity

Units: formazin nephelometric units (FNU)

Sensor Type: Optical, 90-degree scatter

Model#: 599101-01

Range: 0 to 4000 FNU

Accuracy: 0 to 999 FNU: 0.3 FNU or +/-2% of reading (whichever is greater); 1000 to 4000 FNU +/-5% of reading

Resolution: 0 to 999 FNU: 0.01 FNU, 1000 to 4000 FNU: 0.1 FNU

Parameter: Chlorophyll

Units: micrograms/Liter

Sensor Type: Optical probe

Model#: 599102-01

Range: 0 to 400 ug/Liter

Accuracy: Dependent on methodology

Resolution: 0.1 ug/L chl a, 0.1% FS

**Depth Qualifier:**

YSI datasondes can be equipped with either vented or non-vented depth/level sensors.  Readings for both vented and non-vented sensors are automatically compensated for water density change due to variations in temperature and salinity; but for all non-vented depth measurements, changes in atmospheric pressure between calibrations appear as changes in water depth.  The error is equal to approximately 1.02 cm for every 1 millibar change in atmospheric pressure and is eliminated for vented sensors because they are vented to the atmosphere throughout the deployment time interval.

Standard calibration protocol calls for all non-vented depth sensors to read 0 meters at a (local) barometric pressure of 1013.25 mb (760 mm/hg).  To achieve this, each site calibrates their depth sensor with a depth offset number, which is calculated using the actual atmospheric pressure at the time of calibration and the equation provided in the Aquatic Preserve calibration sheet or digital calibration log.  This offset procedure standardizes each depth calibration. If accurate atmospheric pressure data are available, non-vented sensor depth measurements can be corrected. The Principal Investigator should be contacted in order to obtain information regarding atmospheric pressure data availability.

**Salinity Units Qualifier:**

The 6600 series sondes report salinity in parts per thousand (ppt) units, and the EXO sondes report practical salinity units (psu). These units are essentially the same and for Aquatic Preserve purposes are understood to be equivalent; however, psu is considered the more appropriate designation. Moving forward, the Aquatic Preserve program will assign psu salinity units for all data regardless of sonde type.

**Turbidity Qualifier:**

The 6600 series sondes report turbidity in nephelometric turbidity units (NTU), the EXO sondes use formazin nephelometric units (FNU). These units are essentially the same but indicate a difference in sensor methodology, for Aquatic Preserve purposes they will be considered equivalent. Moving forward, the Aquatic Preserve program will use FNU as the designated units for all turbidity data regardless of sonde type. If turbidity units and sensor methodology are of concern, please see the Sensor Specifications portion of the metadata.

**Chlorophyll Fluorescence Disclaimer:**

YSI chlorophyll sensors (6025 or 599102-01) are designed to serve as a proxy for chlorophyll concentrations in the field for monitoring applications and complement traditional lab extraction methods; therefore, there are accuracy limitations associated with the data that are detailed in the YSI manual including interference from other fluorescent species, differences in calibration method, and effects of cell structure, particle size, organism type, temperature, and light on sensor measurements.

**10) Coded variable definitions**

Sampling station: Sampling site code: Station code:

Chassahowitzka CH BBSCH

Steinhatchee ST BBSST

**11) QAQC flag definitions-**

QAQC flags provide documentation of the data and are applied to individual data points by insertion into the parameter’s associated flag column (header preceded by an F\_). During primary automated QAQC (performed by the CDMO), -5, -4, and -2 flags are applied automatically to indicate data that is missing and above or below sensor range. All remaining data are then flagged 0, passing initial QAQC checks. During secondary and tertiary QAQC 1, -3, and 5 flags may be used to note data as suspect, rejected due to QAQC, or corrected.

-5 Outside High Sensor Range

-4 Outside Low Sensor Range

-3 Data Rejected due to QAQC

-2 Missing Data

-1 Optional SWMP Supported Parameter

0 Data Passed Initial QAQC Checks

1 Suspect Data

2 *Open – reserved for later flag*

3 Calculated data: non-vented depth/level sensor correction for changes in barometric pressure

4 Historical Data: Pre-Auto QAQC

5 Corrected Data

**12) QAQC code definitions**

QAQC codes are used in conjunction with QAQC flags to provide further documentation of the data and are also applied by insertion into the associated flag column. There are three (3) different code categories, general, sensor, and comment. General errors document general problems with the deployment or YSI datasonde, sensor errors are sensor specific, and comment codes are used to further document conditions or a problem with the data. Only one general or sensor error and one comment code can be applied to a particular data point, but some comment codes (marked with an \* below) can be applied to the entire record in the F\_Record column.

General Errors

GIC No instrument deployed due to ice

GIM Instrument malfunction

GIT Instrument recording error; recovered telemetry data

GMC No instrument deployed due to maintenance/calibration

GNF Deployment tube clogged / no flow

GOW Out of water event

GPF Power failure / low battery

GQR Data rejected due to QA/QC checks

GSM See metadata

Corrected Depth/Level Data Codes

GCC Calculated with data that were corrected during QA/QC

GCM Calculated value could not be determined due to missing data

GCR Calculated value could not be determined due to rejected data

GCS Calculated value suspect due to questionable data

GCU Calculated value could not be determined due to unavailable data

Sensor Errors

SBO Blocked optic

SCF Conductivity sensor failure

SCS Chlorophyll spike

SDF Depth port frozen

SDG Suspect due to sensor diagnostics

SDO DO suspect

SDP DO membrane puncture

SIC Incorrect calibration / contaminated standard

SNV Negative value

SOW Sensor out of water

SPC Post calibration out of range

SQR Data rejected due to QAQC checks

SSD Sensor drift

SSM Sensor malfunction

SSR Sensor removed / not deployed

STF Catastrophic temperature sensor failure

STS Turbidity spike

SWM Wiper malfunction / loss

Comments

CAB\* Algal bloom

CAF Acceptable calibration/accuracy error of sensor

CAP Depth sensor in water, affected by atmospheric pressure

CBF Biofouling

CCU Cause unknown

CDA\* DO hypoxia (<3 mg/L)

CDB\* Disturbed bottom

CDF Data appear to fit conditions

CFK\* Fish kill

CIP\* Surface ice present at sample station

CLT\* Low tide

CMC\* In field maintenance/cleaning

CMD\* Mud in probe guard

CND New deployment begins

CRE\* Significant rain event

CSM\* See metadata

CTS Turbidity spike

CVT\* Possible vandalism/tampering

CWD\* Data collected at wrong depth

CWE\* Significant weather event

**13) Post deployment information-**

End of deployment post-calibration readings in standard solutions are taken prior to probe cleaning.

**Table 2. Post-deployment readings of EXO3 sondes deployed at the Chassahowitzka site** **during 2024.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **pH** | **pH** | **SpCond (mS/cm)** | **DO %** | **Turbidity (FNU)** | **Turbidity (FNU)** | **Depth (m)** |
| **Date/Std.** | **7.00** | **10.00** | **50.00** | **100.0** | **0.00** | **124.00** | **n/a** |
| 01/05/2024 | 7.13 | 10.11 | 50.169 | 101.3, 101.4 | 0.09 | 123.08 | 0.090 |
| 01/30/2024 | 7.19 | 10.17 | 50.034 | 101.8, 101.5 | -0.21 | 123.94 | 0.116 |
| 02/20/2024 | 6.94 | 9.94 | 50.163 | 101.5, 101.5 | -0.08 | 122.44 | 0.074 |
| 03/12/2024 | 7.08 | 10.03 | 50.052 | 102.2, 102.3 | -0.13 | 123.46 | 0.091 |
| 04/08/2024 | 7.17 | 10.17 | 49.826 | 100.4, 100.4 | -0.08 | 123.35 | 0.072 |
| 04/26/2024 | 7.09 | 10.12 | 49.924 | 100.4, 100.4 | 0.07 | 125.85 | 0.0002 |
| 05/20/2024 | 7.04 | 10.01 | 50.048 | 99.7, 99.7 | 0.17 | 123.25 | -0.039 |
| 06/10/2024 | 6.92 | 10.05 | 49.418 | 99.3, 99.3 | -0.02 | 114.81 | 0.028 |
| 07/01/2024 | 6.97 | 9.99 | 49.319 | 100.6, 100.6 | 0.01 | 123.43 | 0.074 |
| 07/22/2024 | 7.02 | 10.01 | 49.938 | 99.9, 99.8 | -0.04 | 122.03 | 0.028 |
| 08/13/2024 | 7.58 | 10.19 | 49.873 | 99.4, 99.5 | 0.03 | 124.65 | -0.00389 |
| 09/12/2024 | 6.95 | 10.05 | 46.677 | 96.7, 97.4 | 0.03 | 124.52 | -0.008 |
| 10/14/2024 | 7.15 | 10.05 | 49.636 | 100.7, 100.6 | -0.05 | 123.34 | 0.051 |
| 11/05/2024 | 6.90 | 9.94 | 50.433 | 103.0, 103.0 | -0.35 | 126.43 | 0.143 |
| 12/02/2024 | 7.09 | 10.08 | 49.032 | 101.3, 101.3 | -0.13 | 122.73 | 0.55 |
| 12/20/2024 | 6.99 | 10.07 | 50.177 | 101.6, 101.6 | 0.17 | 124.04 | 0.069 |

**Table 3. Post-deployment readings of EXO2 sondes deployed at the Steinhatchee site** **during 2024.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **pH** | **pH** | **SpCond (mS/cm)** | **DO %** | **Turbidity (FNU)** | **Turbidity (FNU)** | **Depth (m)** | **Chlor. (RFU)** | **Chlor. (µg/L)** |
| **Date/Std.** | **7.00** | **10.00** | **50.00** | **100.0** | **0.00** | **124.00** | **n/a** | **0.00** | **0.00** |
| 01/11/2024 | 7.00 | 10.05 | 50.067 | 99.9, 99.9 | 0.07 | 119.68 | 0.029 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| 02/02/2024 | 7.03 | 10.02 | 49.927 | 101.4, 101.4 | 0.20 | 122.85 | 0.096 | 0.01 | -0.01 |
| 02/21/2024 | 7.05 | 10.03 | 50.155 | 101.1, 101.0 | 0.01 | 122.27 | 0.066 | -0.06 | -0.3 |
| 03/14/2024 | 7.07 | 10.03 | 49.989 | 101.2, 101.1 | -0.03 | 122.23 | 0.059 | -0.02 | -0.18 |
| 04/09/2024 | 7.13 | 10.19 | 50.122 | 100.7, 100.7 | 0.00 | 122.73 | 0.005 | 0.02 | -0.02 |
| 05/01/2024 | 6.91 | 9.95 | 49.998 | 101.3, 101.3 | -0.04 | 122.31 | 0.0310 | -0.01 | 0.02 |
| 05/23/2024 | 7.01 | 10.01 | 50.062 | 100.5, 100.4 | 0.11 | 123.1 | 0.0040 | -0.04 | -0.08 |
| 06/13/2024 | 6.87 | 10.05 | 49.443 | 99.0, 99.0 | -0.04 | 114.05 | 0.0830 | -0.01 | -0.17 |
| 07/10/2024 | 7.03 | 10.06 | 49.619 | 101.7, 101.6 | 0.13 | 123.84 | 0.049 | -0.04 | -0.09 |
| 08/12/2024 | 7.00 | 10.00 | 50.025 | 100.5, 100.4 | -0.07 | 123.67 | 0.0330 | 0.00 | 0.07 |
| 09/06/2024 | 7.02 | 10.05 | 49.596 | 100.6, 100.5 | 0.05 | 125.36 | 0.051 | -0.12 | -0.40 |

**14) Other remarks/notes:**

1. Two dissolved oxygen values are recorded during the post-deployment evaluation process.
2. This style of metadata was formerly used by National Estuarine Research Reserve program; more specifically, this report was modeled after metadata reports created at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve.
3. Copies of calibration/deployment logs can be obtained through the Principal Investigator.
4. Accreditation must be given to Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection staff of the St. Martins Marsh and Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserves for all data used.
5. The morning of August 5, 2024, Category 1 Hurricane Debby made landfall near Steinhatchee causing flooding throughout the Big Bend region.
6. The night of September 26, 2024, Category 4 Hurricane Helene made landfall near Perry causing flooding throughout the Big Bend region.
7. The night of October 9, 2024, Category 3 Hurricane Milton made landfall near Siesta Key causing heavy wind and rain throughout the Big Bend region.

**Anomalous/suspect/rejected data**

**Note #1:** Slight shifts in data are sometimes correlated with sonde exchanges. These shifts are most noticeable in pH, specific conductivity, salinity, DO% and DO conc, and may be related to sensor drift (e.g., due to fouling) and/or calibration/performance differences between sondes.

**Note #2:** Turbidity “outliers” (i.e., values that are negative or greater than 1000 NTU for 6600 series sondes and 4000 NTU for EXO series sondes) were not deleted from the monthly records. Readings greater than 1000 NTU for 6600 series sondes and 4000 NTU for EXO series sondes are considered out of range and are rejected. They have been left in the database to provide users with a complete dataset and to allow true visual representation of the data in graphs. Negative turbidity values occur throughout the year at all sites. Some of these negative values are within the accuracy range of the sensor (+/- 2.0 %) and, therefore, were not removed from the dataset. They were marked suspect with the CAF code.

**Note #3**: Turbidity data is subject to single and clusters of spikes that occur in the beginning and middle of deployments. Turbidity values that fall between 500 and 1000 are not specifically indicated as suspect data, but possibly could be interpreted as suspect. Turbidity spikes may be associated with wiper malfunction but mostly the reason is unknown. Data users should exercise caution when interpreting turbidity data that fall within this range.

**Note #4:** Time series profiles of the dissolved oxygen data at all monitoring stations sometimes exhibits brief “spikes” of reduced DO concentrations. These events appear to be coupled with the occurrence of slack tide conditions as well as the level of fouling associated with the sonde.

**Note #5:** All times in data files at all sites had to be adjusted post-deployment; more specifically, times were altered such that the readings occurred on the hour and half hour. It has been determined that this clock error is a software issue and has been resolved.

## Station BBSCH:

**January 1-31, 2024**

1. Suspect turbidity data 01/05/2024 10:30 – 01/30/2024 08:30; indeterminant problem but clear discontinuity at datasonde swap. Turbidity sensor S/N 20A103293 passed calibration, ICV, and CCV.

**February 1-29, 2024**

1. Suspect turbidity data 02/20/2024 11:45 – 03/12/2024 08:15; indeterminant problem but clear discontinuity at datasonde swap. Turbidity sensor S/N 20A103293 passed calibration, ICV, and CCV. Turbidity sensor S/N 20A103293 is deployed on datasonde S/N 19E101880. Throughout 2023, turbidity sensor S/N 19J104933 had a similar indeterminant problem causing clear discontinuity at datasonde swaps. Turbidity sensor S/N 19J104933 was also deployed on datasonde S/N 19E101880. Going forward, we will be running tests on datasonde S/N 19E101880 once it is back from the field to see if the problem with turbidity sensors is being caused by an internal issue, or one of the other sensors drawing too much power.
2. Note: depth and pH data on 02/20/2024 11:45; datasonde appears to have taken a reading while being deployed in the PVC tube.

**March 1-31, 2024**

1. Suspect salinity and specific conductivity data on 03/08/2024 10:30; anomalous reading.

**April 1-30, 2024**

1. Suspect turbidity data 04/26/2024 08:15 – 05/20/2024 10:30, indeterminant problem but clear discontinuity at datasonde swap at 05/20/2024 10:30. Turbidity S/N 20D103483 passed calibration, ICV, and CCV. Previous two deployments had no discontinuity at datasonde swap, still not sure what the issue is here. Troubleshooting sensors in the lab has not shed any light on this issue. Sensors pass calibration, ICV, and CCV each deployment.

**May 1-31, 2024**

1. Note: As stated above, 04/26/2024 08:15 – 05/20/2024 10:30, due to an indeterminant problem datasonde swap seen at 05/20/2024 10:30. Similar issues were seen throughout 2023 with this datasonde. The datasonde as described above, S/N 19E101880, was replaced with datasonde S/N 20E100012 for the following deployment running from 05/20/2024 10:30 – 06/10/2024 10:00. Changing out the datasonde didn’t resolve the sensor discontinuity problem. Discontinuity was still seen at the sonde swap on 05/20/2024 10:45.
2. Note: S/N 20A103293 was replaced with S/N 20D103486 due to potential drift after running tests in the lab.

**June 1-30, 2024**

1. Note: turbidity sensor S/N 20D103483 read below DEP acceptance criteria during post-calibration on 07/01/2024. Sensor appears to fail post-calibration due to YSI standard differing between calibration and post-calibration. Turbidity data 06/10/2024 10:15 – 07/01/2024 07:45 fits site conditions and should not be failed due to low post-calibration readings in the lab.

**July 1-31, 2024**

1. No additional comments.

**August 1-31, 2024**

1. Note: Hurricane Debby made landfall near Steinhatchee, Florida as a Category 1 storm on 08/06/2024 causing flooding throughout the Big Bend region.

**September 1-30, 2024**

1. Note: Due to hazardous weather conditions caused by outer bands of Hurricane Francine, sonde S/N 19E101880 from deployment 08/13/2024 remained in the field for 30 days.
2. Suspect pH data 08/13/24 12:00 – 09/12/24 08:00. pH sensor S/N 20F161006 failed pH 7 CCV by 0.37 and slope by 13.3 mV. A new module was installed prior to deployment.
3. Note: Hurricane Helene made landfall near Perry, Florida as a Category 4 storm on 09/26/2024 causing catastrophic flooding throughout the Big Bend region. Due to storm impacts, sonde S/N 19E101881 from deployment 09/12/2024 remained in the field past the 30-day deployment period.
4. Note: Hurricane Milton made landfall near Siesta Key, Florida as a Category 3 storm on 10/09/2024 causing wind, rain, and decreased water levels throughout the Big Bend region. Due to storm impacts, sonde S/N 19E101881 from deployment 09/12/2024 remained in the field past the 30-day deployment period.
5. Reject all parameters except turbidity 09/12/2024 8:15 – 10/14/2024 8:30. C/T sensor 20A103494 failed temperature CCV by 2.552 °C and specific conductivity CCV by 0.823 mS/cm.

**October 1-31, 2024**

1. Note: Depth CCV value from 10/14/2024 deployment was higher than usual, possibly due to a barnacle near the depth port.

**November 1-30, 2024**

1. Note: DO was close to failing CCV from 11/05/2024 deployment.
2. Suspect turbidity data 11/05/2024 09:15 – 12/02/2024 13:00; Turbidity CCV failed by 0.05 FNU in DI water but passed in turbidity standard. Data fit conditions and do not appear to be impacted.

**December 1-31, 2024**

1. No additional comments.

## Station BBSST:

**January 1-31, 2024**

1. Missing all parameters on 01/11/2024 09:30; missed reading due to station maintenance.

**February 1-28, 2024**

1. No additional comments.

**March 1-31, 2024**

1. Suspect pH data 03/14/2024 09:30 – 04/09/2024 09:00; pH slope failed post-calibration by 2.5 mV. Data appears to fit conditions.

**April 1-30, 2024**

1. No additional comments

**May 1-31, 2024**

1. Suspect depth data 05/23/2024 12:15 – 06/13/2024 09:30. Depth data passed post-calibration however, there is a clear discontinuity at datasonde swap that carries on throughout the remainder of the deployment. Issue seems to resolve itself when next deployment starts.

**June 1-30, 2024**

1. Missing all parameters on 06/13/2024 09:45 due to station maintenance.
2. Suspect depth data 06/13/2024 10:00 – 07/10/2024 09:15; depth data failed post-calibration by 0.009263 m. Clear discontinuity at datalogger swap on 06/13/2024 10:00. Datasonde field guard on sonde S/N 19K100552 was mangled when datalogger was pulled from deployment.
3. Note: Turbidity sensor S/N 19J104932 from 06/13/2024 deployment read below DEP acceptance criteria during post-calibration on 07/11/2024. Sensor appears to fail post-calibration due to YSI standard differing between calibration and post-calibration. Turbidity data 06/13/2024 10:00 – 07/10/2024 09:15 fits site conditions and should not be failed due to low post-calibration readings in the lab.

**July 1-31, 2024**

1. Note: Sonde S/N 20E101240 from 07/10/2024 deployment remained in the field for over 30 days due to weather conditions caused by Hurricane Debby.

**August 1-31, 2024**

1. Note: Hurricane Debby made landfall near Steinhatchee, Florida as a Category 1 storm on 08/06/2024 causing flooding throughout the Big Bend region.
2. Reject all parameters on 08/12/2024 09:15; inaccurate reading due to sonde taking a reading as datasonde was pulled out of the station tube.

**September 1-30, 2024**

1. Missing all parameters on 09/06/2024 09:30; missed reading due to station maintenance.
2. Note: Hurricane Helene made landfall near Perry, Florida as a Category 4 storm on 09/26/2024 causing catastrophic flooding throughout the Big Bend region. Due to the extensive damage Hurricane Helene caused, BBSAP staff were not able to retrieve BBSST sonde S/N 19K100551 from deployment 09/06/2024 remained in the field past the 30-day deployment period.
3. Note: Hurricane Milton made landfall near Siesta Key, Florida as a Category 3 storm on 10/09/2024 causing wind, rain, and decreased water levels throughout the Big Bend region. Due to storm impacts, sonde 19K100551 from deployment 09/06/2024 remained in the field past the 30-day deployment period.
4. Note: The Steinhatchee station was broken in half during Hurricane Helene, potentially affecting depth data after 09/26/2024.
5. Suspect all parameters 09/26/2024 21:30 – 10/21/2024 09:45.
6. Note: Chlorophyll sensor S/N 19J104091 read lower than usual during post-calibration.