

Fishing Regulations

Saltwater edition



Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

Valid from July 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010

MyFWC.com

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For additional information please contact:

Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

MyFWC.com

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Tallahassee, Florida 32301
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Introduction

This publication is provided as a guide to Florida fishing laws and regulations. The Florida Administrative Code is the final authority on fishing laws. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) strives to ensure information in this booklet is accurate, but assumes no liability for any errors that occur in this publication. Contact the FWC if you have any questions on issues not covered in this booklet. This publication is valid only from July 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010.

How your license fee helps

The money collected from saltwater fishing licenses is used to improve and restore fish habitat and for marine fisheries research, law enforcement, and public education on marine resources.

An additional \$.50 subagents fee will be charged for any license or permit not purchased directly from the county tax collector.

Obtain immediate license privileges, 24 hours a day, at MyFWC.com/License or by calling toll-free 888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356). Processing fees will apply to telephone and Internet sales. Additional processing fees will apply to telephone and Internet sales.

2010 Commission meeting dates and locations

Subject to change regarding availability of appropriate facilities to hold the meeting.

- September 1-3 - Pensacola Beach
- December 1-2 - Weston

For more information about Commission meeting dates, times, locations and agendas, visit our Web site at MyFWC.com and click on "Commission Meetings" on the left side of the page.

Shows and Events

Visit the FWC booth at these upcoming events to pick up your copy of the *Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations* and *Fishing Lines: Angler's Guide to Florida's Marine Resources*.

Kids' Fishing Clinic
Aug. 3-5
West Palm Beach
561-832-6780

FL Sportsman Fishing & Boating Show
Sept. 11-12
Palm Beach
941-378-0411
www.floridasportsman.com/shows

Kids' Fishing Clinic
Sept. 18
Martin County
850-488-6058

FL Sportsman Fishing & Boating Show
Sept. 25-26
Tampa
941-378-0411
www.floridasportsman.com/shows

Steve Yerrid Fishing Derby
Oct. 2
St. Petersburg
813-269-0955
www.pcfusa.org

Ladies, Let's Go Fishing!
Nov. 12-14
Islamorada
954-475-9068
www.ladiesletsstofishing.com



Setting priorities and mobilizing FWC resources

Managing Florida's fish and wildlife requires talent, drive, wisdom, commitment and countless other qualities in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's 2,000 employees. It also takes public input and the best available science.

The FWC's structure calls for its seven-member board of commissioners to set priorities and mobilize its resources. Each level of management and every employee takes that guidance and addresses the situations at hand.

The process sounds simple and straightforward, but priorities and scientific realities change constantly, and available resources fluctuate amid economic challenges and new environmental developments.

Florida long ago passed the days when nature could bind its own wounds. Conservation is in the hands of people in the public and private sectors who are motivated to take up the cause. It always will be.

Habitat and species management plans are critical to our long-term success. However, size restrictions, bag limits and other regulations are among the tools we can use to ensure future generations share our rich natural heritage. This Commission has an underlying philosophy that regulations must not be more restrictive than necessary to conserve the abundant fish and wildlife that enrich our enviable Florida lifestyle.

These regulations reflect the science, public input and all the other factors that determine how much pressure we Floridians may place on our resources, at this time, without placing them at risk. As conditions change, the regulations will change as well, and deciding what the changes should be is a responsibility this Commission and all its employees are proud and honored to carry. At the same time, we realize the FWC is but a spearhead for the army of individuals and institutions who band together to ensure an enduring natural legacy.

We encourage everyone to Get Outdoors Florida! and enjoy the benefits of connecting with nature in our wonderfully diverse state. Thanks to the stewardship of generations who lived here before us, opportunities are boundless.

And while you're at it, take a kid with you. This is their Florida too, and they will be happier, healthier and even smarter for it.

Have fun out there, and be safe!

Rodney Barreto

Chairman, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Contact us

Go to MyFWC.com for up-to-date information on recreational saltwater fishing regulations, news and events as well as resources, publications and videos.

Visit the FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute online at <http://research.MyFWC.com>

For federal fishing regulations, please contact:

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
888-833-1844
www.gulfcouncil.org

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
866-SAFMC-10
www.safmc.net

National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)
727-824-5301
www.nmfs.noaa.gov

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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Commissioners

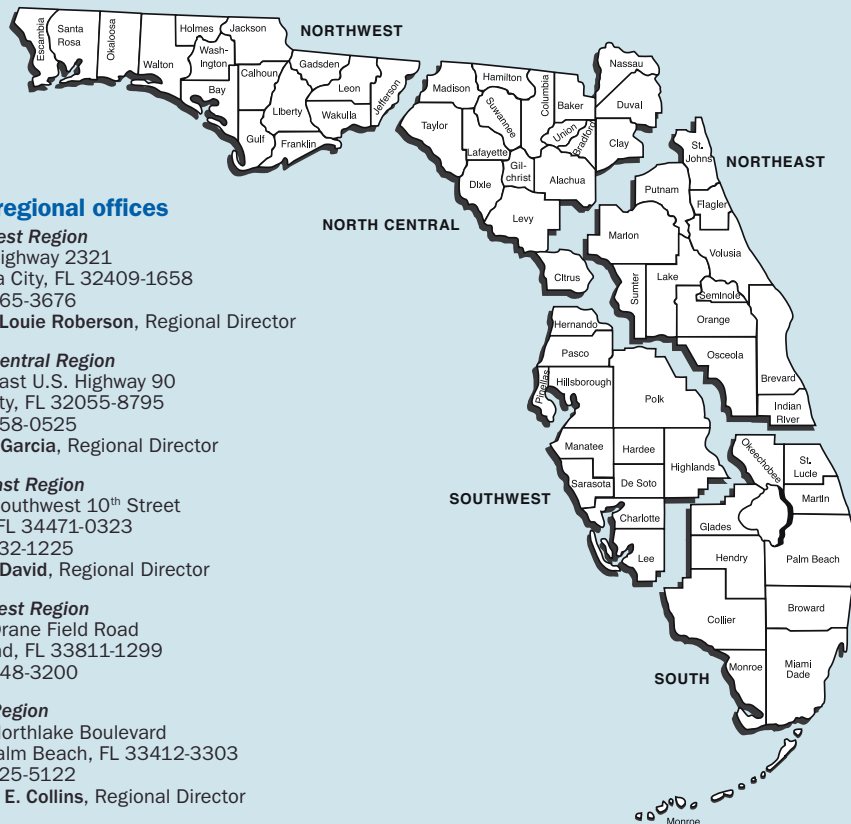
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New regulations protect Florida's bonefish

Bonefish are one of Florida's most-celebrated game fish because they are elusive, hard-fighting, and challenging to catch. Bonefish are also economically important because people from all over the world travel to the Florida Keys and Biscayne Bay to fish for bonefish on the flats. The FWC recently recognized bonefish as a premier saltwater game fish to elevate public awareness of bonefish in Florida. Most anglers already understand the importance of conserving bonefish by carefully handling and releasing most bonefish they catch. These released fish have a chance to grow, reproduce, and be enjoyed by other anglers.

Because bonefish are such a valuable sportfish, the FWC regulates bonefish with a strict bag limit of one-fish per person per day and a minimum size limit of 18 inches. Commercial harvest and sale of bonefish have been prohibited since 1972. The FWC recently approved new bonefish rules that ensure all species of bonefish found in Florida are included in state regulations, require bonefish to be landed in whole condition, and extend state bonefish regulations into federal waters. These new regulations take effect July 1, 2010 and contribute to bonefish conservation by strengthening FWC rules and making them easier to enforce.

The FWC also has a new bonefish website with information about bonefish biology, catch and release techniques, and fishing tips. On this site, you can share your favorite bonefish photographs using the FWC's Bonefish group on Flickr and become a fan of FWC's Bonefish page on Facebook. Continue to check back to MyFWC.com for feature video stories about bonefish from prominent fishing guides and FWC Commissioners.



Did you know?

There are at least three species of bonefish that inhabit Florida waters, but they are difficult to tell apart without genetic testing. Bonefish were probably considered a "trash fish" before sportfishing became popular because most people do not think they are good to eat. Many bonefish are caught in water only one foot deep! The scientific name for common bonefish, *Albula vulpes*, means "white fox" in Latin and refers to their elusive, quick nature.

Make sure there are fish for tomorrow

Only half of Florida's anglers buy a license, but their license fees are a vital source of funding for fish and wildlife conservation. Seniors, youths and others that are exempt can contribute to fish and wildlife conservation simply by voluntarily buying a fishing license.

Each license you buy captures more Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration money and brings tackle and motor boat fuel taxes home to Florida.

Visit: MyFWC.com
Call: 888-FISH-FLORIDA



MyFWC.com



Buy your license online!

When you buy your license online, it's fast, convenient and saves time and travel.

You can obtain a license 24 hours a day at MyFWC.com/LICENSE and begin fishing immediately!

Licenses are also available toll-free at 1-888-FISHFLORIDA (1-888-347-4356). Processing fees apply to telephone and Internet sales.

Saltwater fishing in Florida...

What you must know before you go

Saltwater fishing licenses are sold at all county tax collectors' offices and at many license agents. Licenses may also be obtained over the telephone by dialing toll-free, 1-888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356). For those with Internet access, licenses are now available online at MyFWC.com. An additional fee is charged for these services. For any recreational licensing information not contained in this publication, please go to MyFWC.com/License or call your local county tax collector office.

Florida residents

When applying for a saltwater recreational fishing license, you are considered to be a Florida resident if you are:

- Any person who has resided in Florida for six continuous months prior to applying for a resident license and who claims Florida as their primary residence.
- Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who is stationed in this state.

Gold sportsman's license

- **\$100** (valid for one year). Includes:
 - Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses
 - Management Area, Archery, Crossbow, Muzzleloading Gun, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl, Deer, Snook, and Spiny Lobster permits
- Florida residents may buy a lifetime saltwater fishing license or a lifetime sportsman license. Holders of lifetime saltwater fishing licenses may fish in saltwater for life and will pay no additional fees. The lifetime license fee includes the taking of snook or spiny lobster, which would otherwise require a separate fee. A lifetime sportsman license allows holders to fish in freshwater or saltwater and to hunt in Florida. Both of the licenses require holders to obey fishing or hunting laws in effect at any given time.

You do not need a license if you are:

- A resident who is saltwater fishing from land or a structure fixed to land who has been determined eligible for the food stamp, temporary cash assistance, or Medicaid Program by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Proof of identification and a benefit issuance or program identification card issued by DCFS or the Agency for Health Care Administration must be on your person when fishing.
- A child under 16 years of age.
- Any resident fishing for recreational purposes only, within her or his county of residence with live or natural bait, using poles or lines not equipped with a fishing line retrieval mechanism.
- Fishing from a for-hire vessel—guide, charter, party boat—that has a valid vessel license or charter captain license.
- A holder of a valid saltwater products license.
- A Florida resident 65 years old or older and you possess either a no-cost Resident

Costs for licenses

In addition to the cost of licenses and permits specified in this section, license agents may charge an issuance fee for selling licenses or permits. **Note: all sales are final.**

Florida resident licenses

One-Year Shoreline Only License	\$0.00
Covers shoreline fishing <i>only</i> , not fishing from a watercraft.	
One-Year License	\$17.00
Covers <i>both</i> watercraft and shoreline fishing.	
Five-Year License	\$79.00

Combination licenses (Florida residents only)

Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater	\$32.50
Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater & Hunting	\$48.00
One-Year Gold Sportsman's License	\$100.00
One-Year Military Gold Sportsman's License	\$20.00
(Offers the same privileges as the Gold Sportsman's License. Available only to Florida residents who are active or retired members of the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve, the National Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard or the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, upon submission of a current military identification card and proof of Florida residency. Purchase at county tax collector's offices only.)	

Lifetime saltwater fishing license (Florida residents only)

Age: 0-4	\$126.50
Age: 5-12	\$226.50
Age: 13 or older	\$301.50

Lifetime sportsman license (Florida residents only)

Age: 0-4	\$401.50
Age: 5-12	\$701.50
Age: 13 or older	\$1,001.50

Non-resident licenses

Three-day License	\$17.00
Seven-day License	\$30.00
One-Year License	\$47.00

Permits

Snook Permit	\$10.00
Five-Year Snook Permit	\$50.00
Spiny Lobster Permit	\$5.00
Five-Year Spiny Lobster Permit	\$25.00
Tarpon Tag (available only at tax collector offices)	\$51.50

If you are not required to have a license, you are not required to have permits (except tarpon).

If you are not required to purchase a fishing license and snook and spiny lobster permits, you may do so anyway to help support programs that protect and preserve Florida's marine fisheries resources.

- Senior Citizen Hunting and Fishing Certificate or proof of age and residency.
- A Florida resident who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, who is not stationed in this state, while on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders. This does not include family members.
- Any person who has been accepted as a client for developmental services by the Department of Children and Family Services, provided the department furnishes proof thereof.
- Fishing for recreational purposes from a pier that has a valid pier saltwater fishing license.
- Fishing from a boat that has a valid recreational vessel fishing license.
- A Florida resident who is fishing for mullet in freshwater with a valid Florida *freshwater* fishing license.
- A Florida resident who possesses a no-cost Florida Resident Disabled Person Hunting and Fishing Certificate. In order to qualify for this, applicants must provide a certification of total and permanent disability from the United

States Armed Forces, Railroad Retirement Board, Florida Worker's Compensation or the United States Veterans Administration. Alternatively, current documentation from the Social Security Administration for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits also will be accepted.

Other saltwater fishing fees

Licenses (Charter Boat or Charter Captain) are required for all vessels that charge a fee (for-hire vessels) to take passengers out to catch marine fish.

Eleven or more customers	\$801.50
Five to ten customers	\$401.50
Four or fewer customers	\$201.50

Optional fees include the annual Recreational Vessel fee (\$2,001.50) for not-for-hire pleasure craft and the annual Pier license (\$501.50). For charter licensing information, contact your local county tax collector's office or visit our Web site at MyFWC.com.



Jiangang Luo

Marine Life — Fish

SPECIES	REMARKS ¹	SIZE LIMITS (total length unless otherwise noted)
Angelfish	No more than 5 per person per day in any combination	Gray, French Angelfish: 1½–8" slot limit Blue, Queen Angelfish: 1¼–8" slot limit Rock Beauty: 2–5" slot limit
Butterflyfish		1–4" slot limit
Filefish/Triggerfish	Except Gray and Ocean Triggerfish	
Gobies		Maximum size limit: 2"
Hamlets/Seabasses	Except reef fish ² and Longtail Bass	
Jawfish		Maximum size limit: 4"
Parrotfish		Maximum size limit: 12"
Porkfish		Minimum size limit: 1½"
Pufferfish, Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	Includes Sharpnose Pufferfish, Striped Burrfish, Spotted Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	
Tangs and Surgeonfish		Maximum size limit (fork length): 9"
Wrasse/Hogfish/Razorfish	Except Hogfish Snapper	Spanish Hogfish: 2–8" slot limit Cuban Hogfish: 3–8" slot limit

Other Marine Life fish include¹: Basslets, Batfish, Blackbar Soldierfish, Blennies, Brotulas (Black and Key), Cardinalfish, Clingfish, Cornetfish, Damselfish, Eels (Moray and Snake), Frogfish, Hawkfish, High-hat/Jackknife-fish/Spotted Drum/Cubbyu, Pipefish, Reef Croakers, Seahorses, Sleepers, Yellow Stingray, Sweepers, Toadfish, Trumpetfish, and Trunkfish/Cowfish.

Marine Life — Invertebrates

SPECIES	REMARKS ¹
Anemones	Corallimorphs and Zoanths: No more than 5 polyps of each may be landed per person per day, must be harvested with a flexible blade no wider than 2". Corallimorphs must be harvested as single polyps only.
Conch, Queen	Harvest prohibited
Corals, Hard (Stony)	Harvest prohibited
Corals, Soft	No more than 6 octocoral colonies per person per day in any combination; harvest of attached substrate within 1" of base is permitted; harvest closes in response to federal octocoral closures
Crab, Hermit	Except Land Hermit Crabs
Crab, Horseshoe	Harvest prohibited
Live Rock	Harvest prohibited
Octopods	Except Common Octopus
Sea Fans	Harvest of Venus Sea Fan and Common (Purple) Sea Fan prohibited
Siphonophores/Hydroids	Harvest of Fire Coral prohibited
Sponges	Except Sheepswool, Yellow, Grass, Glove, Finger, Wire, Reef, and Velvet Sponges; no more than 5 sponges per harvester per day in any combination; harvest of substrate within 1" of base permitted north and west of the southernmost point of Egmont Key, no substrate allowed south of Egmont Key
Starfish	Harvest of Bahama Starfish (Cushion Sea Star) prohibited
Urchins	Except Sand Dollars & Sea Biscuits; harvest of Longspine Urchin prohibited

Other Marine Life invertebrates include¹: Brittlestars, Decorator (Furcate Spider) Crab, False Arrow Crab, Green Clinging (Emerald) Crab, Nimble Spray (Urchin) Crab, Red Mithrax Crab, Red-Ridged Clinging Crab, Spotted Porcelain Crab, Yellowline Arrow Crab, Fileclams, Upside-down Jellyfish, Nudibranchs/Sea Slugs, Sea Cucumbers, Sea Lilies, Cleaner/Peppermint Shrimp, Coral Shrimp, Snapping Shrimp, Nassarius Snails, Starsnails, Featherduster Worms, and Calcareous Tube Worms.

Marine Life — Plants

SPECIES	LIMITS
Algae, Coralline Red	
Caulerpa	
Halimeda/Mermaid's Fan/Mermaid's Shaving Brush	One gallon of tropical ornamental marine plants per day in any combination; 2 gallon maximum possession limit

¹ Unless otherwise noted, combined bag limit of 20 marine life fish and invertebrates per person per day, only 5 of any one species allowed. A 2-day possession limit also applies (40 total organisms, only 10 of any one species).

² Such as groupers, snappers, seabass, and amberjacks. Must abide by regulations for these species on pages 7–9.

Marine life regulations

Current Requirements for Recreational Marine Life Harvest:

- Recreational saltwater fishing license
- Organisms must be banded and kept alive
- A continuously circulating live well, aeration, or oxygenation system of adequate size to maintain these organisms in a healthy condition
- **Allowable Gear:** hand held net, drop net, rod, barrier net, slurp gun (use of quinaldine is prohibited)*
- **Bag Limit:** 20 organisms per person per day; only 5 of any one species allowed within the 20-organism bag limit
- **Possession Limit:** 2-day possession limit, 40 total organisms, no more than 10 of any one species allowed
- **Allowable substrate:** see species specifications in table
- **Closed areas:** Some closed areas exist**
- Sale of recreationally caught marine life organisms is prohibited

* Some organisms have additional gear limitations, see chart.

** Various closed areas exist. See regulations for Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, and Florida's State Parks before collecting in these areas.

Additional rules apply to the collection of shells containing live organisms in Lee or Manatee counties.

See MyFWC.com for FAQs about marine life harvest and information about collecting shells with live organisms.

FWC Division of Law Enforcement (DLE)


The FWC's Division of Law Enforcement patrols Florida's coastal waters to provide assistance to boaters and anglers as well as to enforce Florida's saltwater fishing and boating laws. FWC officers assist boaters who are in distress, provide advice and direction to those who are traveling Florida's coastline and waterways, and may issue citations for violations of state and federal fishing, wildlife, and boating laws.

In emergencies or if state fisheries, wildlife, or boating laws are being violated, call 888-404-FWCC (3922) or for cell phone users throughout the state, dial *FWC (*392) depending on your location, or hail on VHF Channel 16.

Basic recreational saltwater fishing regulations

This brief summary of regulations governs the taking of saltwater species in Florida state waters for personal use. It is not applicable to the commercial harvesting of these species. The absence of complete laws, rules and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from compliance with those laws, rules or regulations. State waters extend to 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic and 9 nautical miles on the Gulf. Federal rules apply beyond state waters. For species that do not have an established bag limit, more than 100 pounds or two fish per harvester per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial quantities. A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration are required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species. It is illegal to sell recreationally harvested fish without compliance with commercial license requirements. Issue Thirty Seven, July 2010. **Highlights indicate recent regulation changes.**

Species	Minimum Size Limits	Closed Season	Daily Rec. Bag Limit	Remarks
Amberjack, Greater ▲●	28" fork Atlantic; 30" fork Gulf		1 per harvester per day	
Amberjack, Lesser and Banded Rudderfish ▲●	Not less than 14" or more than 22" fork		5 aggregate of lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish	
Billfish ▲	Sailfish 63"; Blue Marlin 99"; White Marlin 66"		1 per harvester per day aggregate bag limit	Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528. HMS permit required in federal waters.
Black Drum ▲ □ T	Not less than 14" or more than 24"		5 per harvester per day	May possess one over 24". Snatching prohibited.
Bluefish ▲	12" fork		10 per harvester per day	
Bonefish □ ▲	18"		1 per harvester per day	
Clams (Hard)	1" thick across hinge	May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise	One 5 gal. bucket per harvester or 2 per vessel, whichever is less per day (whole in shell)	Illegal to harvest from closed areas. Go to www.floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas.
Cobia (Ling) ▲	33" fork		1 per harvester or 6 per vessel per day, whichever is less	To sell or exceed the daily bag limit follow commercial regulations.
Crab, Blue		Sept. 20–Oct. 4 Gulf state waters beyond 3 miles closed to traps; federal waters closed to traps, Regional closures (see map on page 11)	10 gallons whole per harvester per day	5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.
Crab, Blue Land		July 1–Oct 31	20 per harvester per day	Trapping prohibited, harvest of egg-bearing females prohibited, harvest prohibited in state parks and from the right-of-way of federal, state or county maintained roads.
Crab, Stone	2 ¾" claw	May 16–Oct 14	1 gal. Stone Crab claws per harvester or 2 gal. per vessel, whichever is less	5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Illegal to possess whole crab. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.
Crawfish (Spiny Lobster) ▲	Not less than 3" carapace measured in the water	April 1–Aug. 5 Exception: Sport Season (last consecutive Wed & Thurs of July each year)	Regular season: 6 per harvester per day	Recreational trapping prohibited. Spiny Lobster permit required when license required. Special bag limit for 2-day Sport Season. Contact FWC regional office for current information on Sport Season.
Dolphin ▲	20" fork Atlantic		10 per harvester per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel per day	To sell or exceed the daily bag limit follow commercial regulations.
Flounder ▲ □ T	12"		10 per harvester per day	May be harvested by spearing. Snatching prohibited.
Gag ▲ □ ●	24" Atlantic & Monroe County	Closed in Gulf (excluding Monroe County) Feb. 1–March 31 Closed Atlantic & Monroe County Jan. 1–April 30	1 per harvester per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 2 per harvester per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	No more than 1 fish may be Gag or Black Grouper, either individually or in combination in Atlantic & Monroe County. Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain & crew on for-hire vessels.
Grouper, Black ▲ □ ●	22" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)		1 per harvester per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 4 per harvester per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	
Grouper, Red ▲ □ ●	20"		3 per harvester per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 2 per harvester per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	
Grouper, Snowy ▲ ●			1 per harvester per day Atlantic	Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain & crew on for-hire vessels.
Grouper, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth ▲ □ ●	20"	Closed in Gulf (excluding Monroe County) Feb. 1–March 31 Closed Atlantic & Monroe County Jan. 1–April 30		
Grouper, Scamp ▲ □ ●	20" Atlantic & Monroe County; 16" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)			
Grouper, Warsaw and Speckled Hind ▲ ●			1 per vessel per day of each species	
Grouper, all others ▲ ●		Closed in Gulf (excluding Monroe County) Feb. 1–March 31 for Rock Hind and Red Hind Closed Atlantic & Monroe County Jan. 1–April 30 for Tiger, Rock Hind, Red Hind, Coney, Graysby		Atlantic & Monroe County: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels
Hogfish ▲ ●	12" fork		5 per harvester per day	
Mackerel, King ▲	24" fork		2 per harvester per day	Bag limit reduced to 1 in some state waters when federal waters are closed to all harvest. Check www.MyFWC.com/Fishing for most current regulations prior to fishing.
Mackerel, Spanish ▲	12" fork		15 per harvester per day	Transfer of Spanish Mackerel to other vessels at sea is prohibited.
Mullet, Striped (Black) & Silver			50 aggregate per harvester per day; Aggregate vessel limits Feb. 1–Aug. 31: 100 per vessel; Sept. 1–Jan. 31: 50 per vessel	Mullet aggregate bag limit includes Striped and Silver. Call DMFM for additional restrictions in Pinellas and Charlotte counties.
Oysters	3"	June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties. July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas.	2 bags per harvester or vessel, whichever is less per day. 1 Bag = 60 lbs. or two 5 gal. buckets (whole in shell)	Apalachicola Bay has summer & winter seasons/areas. Harvest from approved shellfish areas only. Go to www.floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas.
Permit & Pompano ▲ T	Not less than 11" or more than 20" fork		6 per harvester per day aggregate of Permit and Pompano	May possess one over 20" of either Permit or Pompano included in the aggregate bag limit. Vessel restriction: no more than 2 permit and pompano over 20" fork length at any time in any combination. Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited. Permit: hook & line only.
Pompano, African ▲ T	Not less than 24" fork		2 fish per harvester or per vessel per day, whichever is less	Hook & line gear only.
Red Drum (Redfish) ▲ □ T	Not less than 18" or more than 27"		1 per harvester per day	Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited. Harvest in Federal waters prohibited.
Red Porgy ▲ □ ●	14" Atlantic		3 per harvester per day Atlantic	

Species	Minimum Size Limits	Closed Season	Daily Rec. Bag Limit	Remarks
Scallops, Bay		Sept. 11–June 30	2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per harvester per day; no more than 10 gallons whole, or ½ gallon meat per vessel anytime	Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pasco-Hernando county line, to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County.
Sea Bass, Black ▲ □ ●	12" Atlantic; 10" Gulf		15 per harvester per day Atlantic	
Shad			10 aggregate per harvester per day	American, Alabama & Hickory are part of aggregate limit. Hook & line gear only.
Shark ▲ T	54" fork for all sharks except Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, blacktip, bonnethead, finetooth and smooth dogfish		1 per harvester or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less	Hook and line gear only. See list below for prohibited species.
Sheepshead ▲ □ T	12"		15 per harvester per day	Snatching prohibited.
Shrimp ▲		April & May closed to Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler & Clay counties	5 gallons heads on per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less	Contact FWC Regional Office for closed areas.
Snapper, Black and Wenchman ▲ ●			Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper, Cuba ▲ □ ●	12" (see remarks)		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit if under 30"	May possess no more than 2 Cuba Snapper over 30" per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less. 30" or larger not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snapper, Gray (Mangrove) ▲ □ ●	10"		5 per harvester per day	Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snapper, Lane ▲ □ ●	8"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit Atlantic	Gulf not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snapper, Mutton ▲ □ ●	16"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper, Red ▲ □ ●	20" Atlantic; 16" Gulf	July 24–May 31 Gulf	2 per harvester per day	Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit. Note: Check www.MyFWC.com/Fishing for most current regulations prior to fishing. Gulf: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.
Snapper, Schoolmaster ▲ □ ●	10"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper, Vermilion ▲ □ ●	12" Atlantic; 10" Gulf	Nov. 1–March 31 Atlantic	5 per harvester per day Atlantic; 10 per harvester per day Gulf	Vermilion Snapper not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit. Atlantic: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.
Snapper, all other ▲ □ ●	12"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	Includes: Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany, Queen, Silk & Yellowtail.
Snook (all species) ▲ □ T	Not less than 28" or more than 32" Atlantic Not less than 28" or more than 33" Gulf of Mexico, Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park	Dec. 15–Sept. 1, 2011 Atlantic Closed through Aug. 31, 2011 Gulf of Mexico, Monroe County, Everglades National Park	1 per harvester per day	Snook permit required when saltwater license required. State regulations apply in federal waters. Illegal to buy or sell snook. Snatch hooks and spearing prohibited. Closed state-wide through 9/16/10. Catch and release only in Gulf state waters.
Sponge, Commercial	Greater than 5" in greatest dimension measured across the top of the sponge		10 per harvester per day	Includes: Sheepswool, Yellow, Grass, Glove, Finger, Wire, Reef & Velvet sponge.
Spotted Seatrout ▲ □ T	Not less than 15" or more than 20" (statewide) except one fish over 20" per person	Nov. and Dec. S. Region Feb. N.E. and N.W. Regions (see regional definitions below)	4 per harvester per day South Region 5 per harvester per day N.E. and N.W. Regions	May possess no more than 1 over 20"; included in the regional bag limit. See regional definitions below.
Swordfish	47" lower jaw fork length with head attached or 29" cleithrum to keel length if head removed. See page 9 for diagram.		1 per harvester per day, not to exceed a maximum of 4 per recreational (not for-hire) vessel or 15 per for-hire vessel per day	All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528. HMS permit required in federal waters.
Tarpon			2 fish possession limit	Requires \$50 tarpon tag to possess or harvest. Snatching and spearing prohibited. Boca Grande Pass has seasonal regulations. Contact DMFM for current information.
Tilefish, Golden ▲ ●			1 per harvester per day Atlantic	Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit. Atlantic: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels
Triggerfish (Gray) ▲ ●	12" fork Atlantic; 14" fork Gulf			Triggerfish except Gray and Ocean have live landing & live well requirements.
Tripletail ▲ □ T	15"		2 per harvester per day	Hook & line gear only. No snatch hooks.
Wahoo ▲			2 per harvester per day	To sell or exceed the daily bag limit, follow commercial regulations.
Weakfish ▲ □	12"		1 per harvester per day	New regulations apply in new management area only. See page 11.
<p>▲ Must remain in whole condition until landed ashore (heads, fins & tails intact). □ Measured as total length. Total length is the straight line distance from the most forward part of the head with the mouth closed to the farthest tip of the tail with the tail compressed or squeezed together while the fish is lying on its side. ● Additional gear rules apply. See Reef Fish Gear Rules page 8. T Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.</p>				
<p>ORNAMENTAL TROPICAL FISH, INVERTEBRATES AND PLANTS See <i>Marine Life Regulations</i> on page 5.</p>			<p>PROHIBITED SPECIES It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell, or exchange the following species: Goliath Grouper (Jewfish), Nassau Grouper, Sawfish, Atlantic Angel Shark, Basking Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Sixgill Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Bignose Shark, Caribbean Reef Shark, Caribbean Sharpnose Shark, Dusky Shark, Galapagos Shark, Lemon Shark, Longfin Mako Shark, Narrowtooth Shark, Night Shark, Silky Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Sandbar Shark, Sevengill Shark, Sixgill Shark, Smalltail Shark, Spiny Dogfish, Whale Shark, White Shark, Manta Ray, Spotted Eagle Ray, Longbill Spearfish, Mediterranean Spearfish, Roundscale Spearfish, Sturgeon, Florida Queen Conch, Stony, Hard and Fire Corals, Sea Fans, Bahama Starfish, and Longspine Urchin. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited. Puffer fish harvest is prohibited in Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties.</p>	
<p>SEATROUT REGIONS Northeast Region means all state waters lying north of the Flagler-Volusia County line to the Florida-Georgia border, and adjacent federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters. Northwest Region means all state waters north and west of a line running due west from the westernmost point of Fred Howard Park Causeway (28E9.350'N 82E48.398'W), which is approximately 1.17 nautical miles south of the Pasco-Pinellas County line to the Florida-Alabama border, and adjacent federal EEZ waters. South Region means state waters lying between the Flagler-Volusia County line on the Atlantic Ocean and the southern boundary of the Northwest Region on the Gulf of Mexico in Pinellas County and adjacent federal EEZ waters.</p>			<p>FWC REGIONAL OFFICES Northwest Region Panama City 850-265-3676; North Central Region Lake City 386-758-0525; Northeast Region Ocala 352-732-1225; Southwest Region Lakeland 863-648-3200; South Region West Palm Beach 561-625-5122; Wildlife Alert 888-404-FWCC (3922)</p> <p>Harvester: Regardless of what species you are fishing for, bag limits are only for properly licensed individuals and those people exempt from licensing requirements who are actively harvesting. People harvesting may not exceed the individual bag limit and take someone else's bag limit. That is, people (including children) who are not actively harvesting or are not properly licensed (if license is required) may NOT be counted for the purpose of bag limits.</p>	
			 <p>For saltwater fish identification, request a copy of FWC's <i>Fishing Lines</i> magazine or visit: MyFWC.com.</p>	

Recreational gear

Additional regional gear restrictions may apply in your county. For further clarification, contact the local regional offices listed on page 2.

Reef fish gear rules (applies to species marked with ● on pages 7 and 9)

- **Gulf of Mexico:** These regulations require the use of a venting tool and dehooking device when recreationally or commercially fishing for reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico. All persons aboard a vessel harvesting reef fish must possess and use non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits.
- **Atlantic Ocean:** Recreational and commercial fishers are required to use dehooking devices as needed while fishing for reef fish.

These rules apply to the following species. For a complete species list, please visit MyFWC.com.

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| • Greater amberjack | • Lesser amberjack |
| • Banded rudderfish | • Gag grouper |
| • Black grouper | • Red grouper |
| • Snowy grouper | • Yellowfin grouper |
| • Yellowmouth grouper | • Scamp grouper |
| • Warsaw grouper | • Speckled hind |
| • Grouper, all others | • Hogfish |
| • Red porgy | • Black sea bass |
| • Black snapper | • Wenchman snapper |
| • Cubera snapper | • Gray snapper |
| • Lane snapper | • Mutton snapper |
| • Red snapper | • Schoolmaster snapper |
| • Vermilion snapper | • Snapper, all other |
| • Golden tilefish | • Gray triggerfish |

Hook-and-line gear

Hook-and-line anglers must tend their gear at all times to prevent people, marine life and shore life from becoming entangled in the line or injured by the hook. Also, it is against the law to intentionally discard any monofilament netting or line into or onto state waters. Monofilament line can entangle birds, marine mammals, marine turtles and fish, often injuring or killing them.

Nets

The following types of nets may be used for recreational purposes in Florida waters:

- Bully nets (for lobster only) no greater than 3 feet in diameter
- Frame nets and push nets (for shrimp only) no greater than 16 feet in perimeter.
- Hand held landing or dip nets no greater than 96 inches in perimeter.
- Cast nets measuring 14 feet or less stretched length (stretched length is defined as the distance from the horn at the center of the net with the net gathered and pulled taut, to the lead line). Cast nets may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, spotted seatrout, weakfish and unregulated species.
- Beach or haul seines measuring no larger than 500 square feet of mesh area, no larger than 2 inches stretched mesh size, not constructed of monofilament, and legibly marked at both ends with the harvester's name and address if a Florida resident. Non-residents using beach or haul seines for recreational purposes are required to have a commercial saltwater products license and legibly mark the seine at both ends with the harvester's saltwater products license number. Beach or haul seines may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida

pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, weak fish and unregulated species.

Explosives, etc.

The use of powerheads, explosives, chemicals or the discharge of firearms into the water to kill or harvest marine life is prohibited in state waters.

Spearing

Spearing is defined as "the catching or taking of a fish by bowhunting, gigging, spearfishing, or any device used to capture a fish by piercing its body." Spearing does not include the catching or taking of a fish by a hook with hook-and-line gear or by snagging (snatch hooking). Spearfishing is defined as "the catching or taking of a fish through the instrumentality of a hand or mechanically propelled, single or multi-pronged spear or lance, barbed or barbless, operated by a person swimming at or below the surface of the water." The use of powerheads, bangsticks, and rebreathers remains prohibited. The following is a list of species which are prohibited for harvest by spearing. Any other species not listed which are managed by the Commission, and those not managed by the Commission are allowed to be harvested by spearing.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| • Billfish (all species) | • Spotted eagle ray | • Sturgeon |
| • Manta ray | • Sharks | • Bonefish |
| • Tarpon | • Goliath grouper | • Snook |
| • Blue crab | • Nassau grouper | • Spotted seatrout |
| • Red drum | • Weakfish | • Stone crab |
| • Pompano | • African pompano | • Permit |
| • Tripletail | • Lobster | |
| • Families of ornamental reef fish (surgeonfish, trumpetfish, angelfish, butterflyfish, porcupinefish, cornetfish, squirrelfish, trunkfish, damselfish, parrotfish, pipefish, seahorse, puffers, triggerfish except greg and ocean) | | |

You may NOT spearfish (excluding bowfishing and gigging):

- Spearfishing of marine and freshwater species in freshwater is prohibited. Possession of a spear gun in or on freshwater is also prohibited.
- Within 100 yards of a public swimming beach, any commercial or public fishing pier, or any part of a bridge from which public fishing is allowed.
- Within 100 feet of any part of a jetty that is above the surface of the sea – except for the last 500 yards of a jetty that extends more than 1,500 yards from the shoreline.
- In Collier County and in Monroe County from Long Key north to the Dade County line.
- For any fish for which spearing is expressly prohibited by law.
- In any body of water under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. (Possession of spearfishing equipment is prohibited in these areas, unless it is unloaded and properly stored.) Fishermen who catch and/or sell fish harvested by spearing are subject to the same rules and limitations that other anglers in the state are required to follow.
- In Monroe County there are additional regulations spearfishing. For more information call 305-289-2320 or visit www.floridakeys.noaa.gov.

You may NOT spear, bowfish or gig:

- In Volusia County inland waters with the exception of flounder and sheepshead using a spear with three or fewer prongs.

New Artificial Reef Locations*

COUNTY	DEPLOY DATE	REEF NAME	MATERIAL	TONS	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	DEPTH	RELIEF
Dade	3/29/10	Golden Beach Eternal Reefballs Site #10	Modules Concrete Reefballs (6)	2.00	25° 57.768' N	80° 05.868' W	43	2
Dade	3/25/10	Two Islands Mitigation	Concrete Culverts	10125.00	25° 56.950' N	80° 07.725' W	38	18
Dade	3/8/10	Dock And Marine 03-2010	Concrete Rubble And Plings	108.00	25° 54.373' N	80° 08.015' W	15	3
Dade	12/30/09	Ophelia Brian Reef	Ship Steel 205'	900.00	25° 42.346' N	80° 05.148' W	110	40
Escambia	4/12/10	Navarre Pier Reef #4	Concrete Pilings And Caps (6)	84.00	30° 18.013' N	87° 12.616' W	46	4
Escambia	4/2/10	Navarre Pier Reef #3	Concrete Pilings And Caps (9)	101.25	30° 18.020' N	87° 12.570' W	44	5
Escambia	3/24/10	Navarre Pier Reef #2	Concrete Pilings And Caps (5)	110.00	30° 18.041' N	87° 12.628' W	44	4
Escambia	3/15/10	Navarre Pier Reef #1	Concrete Pilings And Caps (6)	102.00	30° 17.994' N	87° 12.873' W	44	5
Lee	3/1/10	Poseidon's Garden	Modules Concrete Blocks (14)	0.90	26° 22.347' N	82° 17.383' W	45	3
Martin	2/24/10	Glasrud Reef	Ship Steel Tugboat	46.00	27° 12.698' N	80° 00.259' W	187	42
Palm Beach	8/31/09	Boynton #3 Reef	Rock Limestone (300)	828.50	26° 31.870' N	80° 01.950' W	69	13
Sarasota	4/2/10	I-1, Lynn Silvertooth, #25	Modules Concrete Reefballs (17)	9.00	27° 17.160' N	82° 35.961' W	30	5
Sarasota	10/5/09	I-1, Lynn Silvertooth, #34	Concrete Anchors (12)	42.00	27° 17.115' N	82° 35.870' W	30	4

* Chart represents a small sample of the over 2,000 artificial reef sites in Florida; for additional artificial reef locations, go to MyFWC.com and click on "Fishing."

State records and slams

Congratulations to the following individuals who have qualified for new state fishing records and grand slam certificates! State records are administered by the "world record keepers," the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) in Dania, Florida. All-tackle records apply to fish caught on both conventional and fly tackle and catches must be made in accordance with IGFA rules. The Grand Slam Club celebrates the variety of Florida game fishes and the achievement of anglers catching a particular set of three species in one day. There is a different slam for each of the state's four geographic regions, and you do not need to keep the fish to qualify.

For more information or to apply for a state record or grand slam, contact the FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management by calling 850-488-6058, or visit our Web site at MyFWC.com. Click on "Fishing." Entries are free!

Grand slam certificates

West Coast Grand Slam

Frank Diaz
Mark. D. Wysocki
Richard Silver
Scott K. Gamster
William D. Miller
Clifford Fox

East Coast Grand Slam

Michelle L. Cha-Kim
Richard Silver
Clifford Fox

South Florida Grand Slam

Nick Battaglia

Regional grand slam fishes

North Florida

red drum, spotted seatrout, cobia

West Coast

red drum, snook, tarpon

South Florida

bonefish, tarpon, permit

East Coast

red drum, tarpon, spotted seatrout

Wildlife Alert Reward Program



Report fish and wildlife law violations by calling toll-free **1-888-404-FWCC (3922)**; on cell phones, dial *FWC or #FWC depending on service carrier; or click MyFWC.com/Contact.



Resource information

Join the nation's largest conservation law enforcement agency—become an FWC law enforcement officer.

For more information contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-866-FWC-HIRE (392-4473) or visit MyFWC.com/Law

To purchase fishing licenses:
888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356)
MyFWC.com/license

FWC Division of Law Enforcement
888-404-FWCC (3922)

For up-to-date information on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill please visit
www.MyFWC.com/OilSpill

To report fish and wildlife law violations, call the Wildlife Alert Hotline:
888-404-FWCC (3922)

FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
727-896-8626
http://research.MyFWC.com

To report fish kills: 800-636-0511

To report fish tags: 800-367-4461
TagReturn@myfwc.com

To report sawfish sightings:
941-255-7403, sawfish@MyFWC.com

Bird entanglement
888-404-3922
727-391-6211 for Tampa area

To request Tarpon DNA sampling kits:
800-367-4461
TarponGenetics@myfwc.com

Red Tide Information Hotline
866-300-9399 toll free in Florida
727-552-2488 nationwide

Aquatic Toxins Hotline
888-232-8635

Shellfish harvesting questions
FDACS
850-488-5471
www.floridaaquaculture.com

FWC prohibits the harvest of lemon sharks in Florida waters

by Aaron Poday

Florida's coastal waters are important for sharks because they serve as nursery, aggregating, and breeding grounds and sharks are a vital part of the marine environment. The FWC first recognized Florida's unique opportunity to conserve shark stocks nearly two decades ago when it implemented the first shark regulations. This action made Florida a world leader in shark conservation and management. The FWC recently continued its leadership role in conserving shark populations by prohibiting the harvest of lemon sharks in Florida waters.

Lemon sharks, *Negaprion brevirostris*, named for their yellowish-brown color, are often found near shore in shallow water. Each winter these sharks travel from all along the Western Atlantic and collect in large numbers in the same locations off Florida's coast. Scientists don't fully understand why they do this, but they believe the females may gather to attract mates. Lemon sharks are slow-growing and don't reach adulthood until they are 12-15 years old. When they become sexually mature, they only produce six to 18 pups per litter every two or three years, with only about half of these pups surviving. This makes lemons sharks highly vulnerable to fishing pressure, and raises the potential for anglers to catch large, unsustainable numbers of sharks with little effort. A recent tagging study showed that between seven and ten percent of tagged adult lemon sharks from a group off Jupiter, Florida were caught and harvested in one season. At that rate, an entire lemon shark aggregation could be harvested in just a few years.



To ensure lemon sharks are protected for future generations, the FWC took a proactive approach to managing this species by prohibiting the harvest of lemon sharks in state waters. The FWC did this because lemon sharks are most vulnerable to fishing pressure when they are in large groups near shore in Florida's state waters. In offshore federal waters, lemon sharks are usually not as concentrated or as easy to locate by anglers. Anglers are still allowed to catch and release lemons sharks in state waters off Florida and to harvest lemon sharks in federal waters adjacent to Florida. However, if an angler harvests a lemon shark in federal waters, the angler must bring the shark directly back to land without stopping in state waters.

Florida Shark Identification

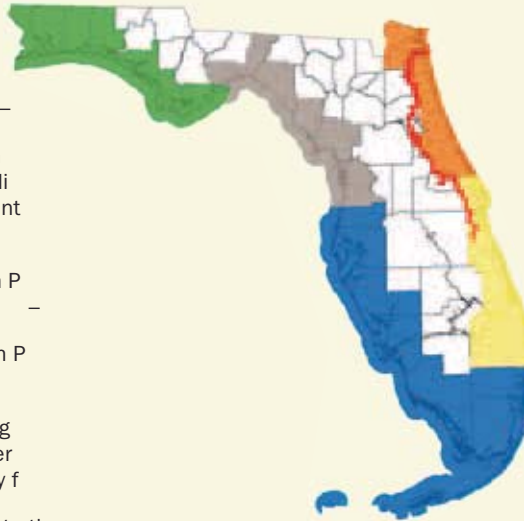
Illustrations: Joe Fisher

Species	Description	Identification
Spinner Shark <i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>	Snout is pointed 1 st dorsal fin originates <i>behind</i> pectoral fins Anal fin has black tip Distinctive wedge-shaped band (Z-line) on sides	<p>1st dorsal fin begins behind pectoral fins</p> <p>Pointed snout</p> <p>Distinct Z-line</p> <p>Black anal fin</p> <p>54" fork length minimum size</p>
Blacktip Shark <i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>	Snout is pointed 1 st dorsal fin originates <i>over</i> pectoral fins White anal fin Distinctive wedge-shaped band (Z-line) on sides	<p>1st dorsal fin begins over pectoral fins</p> <p>Pointed snout</p> <p>Distinct Z-line</p> <p>White anal fin</p> <p>No minimum size</p>
Bull Shark <i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	Snout is blunt Stocky body 1 st dorsal fin is rearward-sloping and originates <i>over</i> pectoral fins Fins on smaller sharks may be black-tipped	<p>1st dorsal fin begins over pectoral fins</p> <p>Blunt snout</p> <p>1st dorsal fin slopes rearward</p> <p>2nd dorsal fin begins forward of anal fin</p> <p>54" fork length minimum size</p>
Lemon Shark <i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>	Snout is blunt Dorsal fins nearly equal in size 1 st dorsal fin originates <i>behind</i> pectoral fins Yellowish-green to olive-gray in color	<p>1st dorsal fin begins behind pectoral fins</p> <p>Blunt snout</p> <p>Dorsal fins are similar in size</p> <p>Harvest prohibited</p>

Blue crab trap closures for recreational & commercial traps

The dates and locations of the closures are:

- All waters of the St. Johns River system from Jan. 16–
- All other coastal waters from the Georgia/Florida state line south through Volusia County from Aug. 20–29**
- All waters of Brevard through Palm Beach counties from Aug. –
- All waters of Broward through Palm Counties from July 10–19
- All waters of Hernando through Citrus Counties including all water of the Ochlockonee River and Bay
- All waters of Franklin County to the Florida/Alabama state line from Jan. 5–14



Additional Information:

The closures apply only to standard recreational and commercial blue crab traps. During the closures, these traps must be removed from the water. The harvest of blue crabs by other gears, such as dip nets and fold-up traps, is allowed during the closures.

The closures apply to recreational harvesters who use standard blue crab traps unless the traps are attached to private property, such as a dock.

Closures will extend from the shoreline out to 3 nautical miles and include all inland waters in these regions.

* All waters of the St. Johns River, its associated lakes and tributaries from west of the St. Johns River's intersection with the Intracoastal Canal through and including Lake Hellen Blazes

** Except all waters of the St. Johns River system

Florida Statutes prohibit tampering with, collecting from or moving traps that are not yours, even during the above closures (F.S. 379.366(4)(b)).

Weakfish regulations are changing in Florida

Most anglers fishing in northeast Florida can easily identify a spotted seatrout. But other seatrout that live in the same area can be more difficult to identify. Have you ever caught a trout that looked a little like a weakfish and a little like a sand seatrout? Many anglers have experienced this problem in northeast Florida waters because weakfish (sometimes called yellow-mouth trout) and sand seatrout look very similar. To complicate matters, the two species are interbreeding which has produced a hybrid population. Weakfish, sand seatrout, and their hybrid can only be positively identified using genetic testing. If anglers cannot identify which fish they caught, how can they know which regulations to follow?

This challenge has been solved by recent weakfish regulation changes in northeast Florida. The FWC has created a small Weakfish Management Area (Area)



Weakfish

made up of parts of Nassau County, including state waters off Amelia Island and the St. Marys River and its tributaries. Through genetic studies, FWC researchers found the most pure weakfish living in these waters than any other area in Florida. Inside this Area, anglers must follow the weakfish regulations shown in the chart for all three weakfish-like fish (weakfish, sand seatrout, and their hybrid). In all Florida waters outside the Area, the only regulation for the harvest of weakfish-like fish will be a 100 pound or less recreational daily bag limit. The FWC believes creating this Area will eliminate the identification challenge in Florida and ultimately provide the weakfish population the greatest protection.

Also, a recent stock assessment by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) determined that weakfish along the

entire Atlantic coast are severely depleted. (The ASMFC is a commission made up of all states that border the Atlantic and it coordinates data collection and fisheries management strategies among its member-states.) In response to the stock assessment, ASMFC established regulations for all Atlantic coast states to reduce fishing effort and help rebuild the weakfish fishery. Florida, as a member-state, adopted a weakfish recreational bag limit of one fish per day and a commercial harvest and possession limit of 100 pounds of weakfish per vessel per day or per trip, whichever is greater. However, these new weakfish regulations will only apply inside the Area. Anglers fishing outside the Area will not have to follow weakfish regulations.



Sand Seatrout

Regulations for All Weakfish-like Fish

Limits	INSIDE Area	OUTSIDE Area
Recreational Size	12" total length	No size limits
Recreational Bag	1 fish per person	100 lbs per person
Commercial Size	12" total length	No size limits
Commercial Trip	100 lbs per vessel	No trip limits

Illustrations: Diane Rome Peebles