

Basic Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

This is a brief summary of regulations governing the taking of saltwater species in Florida for personal use. It is not intended or designed to provide specific information on commercial harvesting of these species. The failure to include complete laws, rules, and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from abiding by 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 2 fish per person per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial quantities. A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration is required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species.

Issue Thirty, January 2007

| Species | Minimum Size Limits | Closed Season | Daily Rec. Bag Limit | Remarks |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Amberjack - Greater ▲ | 28" fork | | 1 per person per day | |
| Amberjack - Lesser & 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 person per day aggregate bag limit | Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. Federal regulations apply in state waters. 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 person per day | May possess one over 24". |
| Bluefish ▲ | 12" fork | | 10 per person per day | |
| Bonefish ♦ | 18" | | 1 per person 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 person 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 person or 6 per vessel per day whichever is less | A saltwater products license and a restricted species endorsement are needed to sell Cobia or exceed the one-fish daily bag limit. |
| Crab-Blue | | Sept 20 - Oct 4 Gulf state waters beyond 3 miles closed to traps; federal waters closed to traps | 10 gallons whole per person per day | 5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited. |
| Crab-Blue Land | | July 1–Oct 31 | 20 per person 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 3/4" claw | May 16–Oct 14 | 1 gal. Stone Crab claws per person 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 ▲ | Larger 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 person per day | Recreational trapping prohibited. Crawfish 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 person per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel per day | A saltwater products license, a restricted species endorsement and a federal commercial vessel permit are needed to sell Dolphin, exceed the 10-fish bag limit, or exceed 60 per vessel per day statewide. |
| Flounder ▲ ♦ T | 12" | | 10 per person per day | May be harvested by spearing. Snatching prohibited. |
| Grouper-Black & Gag ▲ ♦ | 24" Atlantic & Monroe County; 22" Gulf (excluding Monroe County) | | 2 per person per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 5 per person per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County) | Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit. |
| Grouper-Red ▲ ♦ | 20" | | 1 per person per day Gulf | Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit. |
| Grouper- Yellowfin & Yellowmouth ▲ ♦ | 20" | | Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit | |
| Grouper-Scamp ▲ ♦ | 20" Atlantic & Monroe County; 16" Gulf (excluding Monroe County) | | Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit | |
| Grouper-Warsaw ▲ | | | 1 per vessel per day of each species | Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit. |
| Grouper-all others ▲ | | | Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit | Includes: Coney, Graysby, Misty, Red Hind, Rock Hind, Snowy, Tiger & Yellowedge. |
| Hogfish ▲ | 12" fork | | 5 per person per day | |
| Mackerel-King ▲ | 24" fork | | 2 per person per day | Bag limit in Gulf-Atlantic fishery reduced to 1 when federal waters are closed to all harvest. Call SW Regional Office for details. |
| Mackerel-Spanish ▲ | 12" fork | | 15 per person per day | Transfer of Spanish Mackerel to other vessels at sea is prohibited. |
| Mullet-Striped (Black) & Silver | | | Feb 1–Aug 31, 50 per person per day, aggregate of striped & silver mullet, maximum 100 aggregate per vessel | Sept 1 - Jan 31, 50 aggregate per person or per vessel. Call DMFM for additional restrictions in Pinellas, Charlotte & Pasco-Lee counties. |
| Oysters | 3" | June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties. July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas | 2 bags per person 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 person per day aggregate of Permit and Pompano | May possess one over 20" of either Permit or Pompano. Vessel restriction: no more than 2 permit and pompano over 20" fork length at any time in any combination. Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited. |
| Pompano-African ▲ T | Not less than 24" fork | | 2 fish per person 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 person per day | Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited. |
| Red Porgy ▲ ♦ | 14" Atlantic | | 1 per person per day Atlantic | |
| Scallops-Bay | | Sept 11–June 30 | 2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per person per day, no more than 10 gallons whole, or 1/2 gallon meat per vessel anytime | Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pasco-Hernando county line (near Aripeka-latitude 28 degrees, 26.016 minutes North), to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County (longitude 85 degrees, 25.84 minutes West). Any bay scallops harvested and possessed must |

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| Sea Bass-Black ▲ ◆ Shad | 10" | | | 20 per person per day Atlantic 10 aggregate per person per day | American, Alabama & Hickory are part of aggregate limit. Hook & line gear only. |
| Shark | | | | 1 per person or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less 15 per person per day | Practice of firming and filleting at sea prohibited. See list below for prohibited species. Snatching prohibited. |
| Sheepshead ▲ ◆ T | 12" | | | 5 gallons heads on per person or vessel per day, whichever is less | Must be landed in a whole condition. Contact FWC Regional Office for closed areas. |
| Shrimp | | | | April & May closed to Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler & Clay counties | |
| Snapper-Black & Wenchman ▲ | | | | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit | |
| Snapper-Cubera ▲ ◆ | Not less than 12" or more than 30" (see remarks) | | | Included within 10 per person per day snapper aggregate bag limit if under 30" | Allowed 2 Cubera Snapper over 30", per person or vessel per day which ever is less. 30" or larger not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit. |
| Snapper-Gray (Mangrove) ▲ ◆ | 10" | | | 5 per person per day | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit. |
| Snapper-Lane ▲ ◆ | 8" | | | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit if harvested from Atlantic | Lane Snapper harvested from the Gulf of Mexico not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit. |
| Snapper-Mutton ▲ ◆ | 16" | | | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit | |
| Snapper-Red ▲ ◆ | 20" Atlantic; 16" Gulf | | Nov 1-April 14 Gulf Only | 2 per person per day Atlantic; 4 per person per day Gulf | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit. |
| Snapper-Schoolmaster ▲ ◆ | 10" | | | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit | |
| Snapper-Vermilion ▲ ◆ | 11" | | | 10 per person per day | Vermilion Snapper not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit. |
| Snapper-all other ▲ ◆ | 12" | | | Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit | Includes: Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany, Queen, Silk & Yellowtail. |
| Snook ▲ ◆ T (All species) | Not less than 27" or more than 34" | | Dec 15-Jan 31 statewide; June, July, Aug Atlantic; May, June, July, Aug Gulf; Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park | 2 per person per day Atlantic; 1 per person per day Gulf, Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park | Snook permit required when saltwater license required. State regulations apply in federal waters. Illegal to buy or sell snook. Snatch hooks and spearing prohibited. |
| Sponge- Commercial | Greater than 5" in greatest dimension measured across the top of the sponge | | | 10 per person 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 & Dec S. Region; Feb N.E. and N.W. Regions (See regional definitions below) | 4 per person per day South Region; 5 per person per day N.E. and N.W. Regions | (See regional definitions below) |
| Swordfish ▲ | 47" lower jaw fork length | | | 1 per person or 3 per vessel whichever is less | Lower jaw fork length is the straight-line measurement from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail. 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 prohibited. Boca Grande Pass has seasonal regulations. Contact DMFM for current information. All species of Triggerfish except Gray and Ocean have live landing & live well requirements. |
| Triggerfish (Gray) ▲ | 12" fork | | | 2 per person per day | Hook & line gear only. No snatch hooks. |
| Tripletail ▲ ◆ T | 15" | | | 2 per person per day | A saltwater products license, a restricted species endorsement and a federal commercial vessel permit are needed to sell Wahoo or exceed the 2-fish bag limit. |
| Wahoo ▲ | | | | 2 per person per day | |
| Weakfish ▲ ◆ T | 12" | | | 4 per person per day | |
| ▲ Must remain in whole condition until landed ashore (heads & 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. T Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait. | | | | | |
| ORNAMENTAL TROPICAL FISH AND PLANTS | | | | | |
| MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT (Total length) Spanish Hogfish 2" Spotfin Hogfish 3" Porkfish 11/2" MAXIMUM SIZE LIMIT (Total length) Angelfish (except Rock Beauty) 8" Butterflyfish, Jawfish 4" Rock Beauty 5" Gobies 2" Spanish Hogfish 8" Spotfin Hogfish 8" BAG LIMIT Fishes / Invertebrates: 20 per person per day. No more than 5 Angelfish and no more than 6 Octocoral colonies PLANTS: 1 gallon per person per day Live landing and live well requirements. Harvest in Biscayne National Park & John Pennekamp State Park prohibited. | | | | | |
| PROHIBITED SPECIES | | | | | |
| It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell, or exchange the following species: Nassau Grouper, Goliath Grouper (Jewfish), Sawfish, Atlantic Angel Shark, Bigeye Angel Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Bigeye Tiger Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, White Shark, Spotted Eagle Ray, Sturgeon, Whale Shark, Spotted Shark, and Bahama Starfish. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited. | | | | | |
| 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 | | | | | |
| 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 (28E9.350N 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. | | | | | |