

It's in Your Hands

Stewardship of Florida's vast marine resources is important to conserve our fisheries so future generations can continue to enjoy what Florida has to offer. Ethical fishing practices and marine resource management can help maintain healthy fish populations and enhance fishing opportunities.

How to Contribute to Marine Fisheries Management

- Learn the fish common to your area and carry an identification guide.
 - When in doubt, throw it out.
- Learn regulations for fish you target.
 - View regulations at MyFWC.com/Fishing.
- Practice effective fish handling and release techniques.
 - Learn more about catch and release on page 10.
- Limit your take, don't take your limit.
- Protect important habitats and wildlife:
 - Properly dispose of trash, chemicals, oils and other hazardous materials.
 - Use charts to learn waterways, tie to mooring buoys and pole through shallow seagrass beds.
 - Set anchors securely so they do not drag.
- Do not feed wild animals or marine life:
 - They may lose their fear of humans and associate humans with food.
- Recycle fishing line and dispose of trash in a proper receptacle ashore:
 - Cut non-monofilament fishing line into small sections before disposal to avoid entangling wildlife.



Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program (MRRP)

- Statewide network of fishing line recycling bins and drop-off locations to recycle monofilament.
- Removes harmful monofilament from the environment and allows this material to be recycled.
- For more information and to find a drop-off location, visit MRRP.MyFWC.com.



Why are Fishing Regulations Needed?

Regulations are set by fisheries managers based on scientific data and public input to help maintain fish populations for the future. Without law-abiding anglers, highly valued species such as red drum and spotted seatrout would not maintain sustainable populations.

Common types of fishing regulations:

- **Bag Limit** – Sets a limit on the number of fish harvested at one time.
- **Size Limit** – Protects fish so they can reach a size that allows them to spawn.
- **Slot Limit** – Includes a lower size limit and an upper size limit, which allows fish to reach maturity before being harvested and protects large females that produce massive numbers of viable eggs.
- **Season** – Protects fish during spawning or limits the number of fish taken in heavily fished waters.

Citizen Science

There are numerous ways anglers can act as “citizen scientists” to help researchers build knowledge about marine resources. Here are just a few ways you can get involved:

- **Report Tagged Fish** – Several research projects release tagged fish into Florida waters. If you catch a tagged fish, be sure to call the Angler Tag Return Hotline at 800-367-4461.
- **Survey Participation** – The FWC may conduct surveys to gain more information on a specific subject area. Angler participation in these questionnaires is extremely beneficial to resource management.
- **Volunteer Programs** – Make a positive impact by assisting with activities such as education and outreach, biological sampling and monitoring, habitat restoration, laboratory work and many others.
- **Wildlife Alert** – If you suspect a fish, wildlife, boating or environmental law violation, report it to the FWC Wildlife Alert Reward Program by calling 888-404-FWCC (3922).
- **Fish Kill Hotline** – Report fish kills by calling 800-636-0511.
- For more information on how you can become a part of FWC’s programs, visit [MyFWC.com/Get-Involved](https://www.myfwc.com/Get-Involved).

Ethical Angling

Florida’s anglers should be proud of their conservation efforts, which have helped restore or sustain several valuable fisheries including snook, red drum and spotted seatrout. As the number of anglers continues to grow, it becomes more important than ever to be a marine resource steward. By respecting the marine environment and all of its components, we can help ensure good fishing for generations to come. After all, respect for nature and for other anglers is what fishing is all about.

To learn more about how you can conserve Florida’s important fisheries, visit [MyFWC.com/Conservation](https://www.myfwc.com/Conservation) and click on “Saltwater.”

