

FISH! SOUTHEAST FLORIDA CANALS

ANGLER'S GUIDE TO AEROJET CANAL (C-111)

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



Exotic Fisheries Office
10216 Lee Road
Boynton Beach, Florida 33473

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DESCRIPTION – Aerojet Canal (C-111) in Miami-Dade County is the southernmost freshwater canal in Florida. It originates near the eastern border of Everglades National Park, and flows southeast to just east of US 1. This map covers the eastern section of canal lying between water control structure S-18C west of Florida City to salinity control structure S-197 east of US 1.

The main canal is 6.4 miles long, and ranges in width from 115 to 140 feet with an average depth of about 18 feet. Aerojet Canal runs through the Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area and the road along the north shore is part of the Southern Glades Trail System. The trail is open to anglers, hikers, bicyclists, and horseback riders but not to motorized vehicles. The spoil bank along several miles of canal has been removed allowing water to flow directly from the canal into the surrounding marshes. This provides additional fish habitat and excellent viewing opportunities for numerous species of wading birds including great and little blue herons, egrets, roseate spoonbills and wood storks, as well as numerous alligators. Mosquitoes and deerflies can be very bad in the summer months and insect repellent is highly recommended during this time. Aerojet Canal is unique because its remote location allows anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts the opportunity to escape civilization and spend a few hours enjoying some good fishing in relatively unspoiled surroundings.

From the boat ramp at the salinity structure heading west, it is 0.2 miles to the US 1 bridge and 6.4 miles to the S-18C water control structure.

BOAT RAMP DIRECTIONS – There is a single-lane, concrete boat ramp in fair condition located on the main canal. Take US 1 south out of Florida City 10.8 miles to the turn-off on the east (left) side of the road just after crossing over the Aerojet Canal bridge. Follow the road and bear right (east) along the canal 0.3 miles to the ramp. There is adequate parking but no facilities. **BOAT RAMP GPS COORDINATES** (25.28806, -80.44225).

GENERAL FISHING INFORMATION – Aerojet Canal provides excellent Largemouth Bass fishing, and good catches of Butterfly Peacock. The Butterfly Peacock is a world renowned gamefish that was successfully introduced by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in the mid-1980s to eat undesirable exotic fishes and to provide more sportfishing opportunities for anglers in the metropolitan Miami-Ft. Lauderdale area.

Shoreline vegetation and shady areas associated

with the US 1 bridge and culverts all provide excellent places to fish. If there is a strong current in the main canal look for areas that offer refuge from the current (e.g., cut-outs and bridge pilings). Beginning approximately 2 miles from the boat ramp and continuing for three miles, the spoil bank along the south shore was removed allowing for water to flow directly into the marsh. During high water periods, anglers will have limited access to the flats next to the canal.

Based on FWC electrofishing surveys, the number of Butterfly Peacock in this canal appears to be increasing with Fall 2005 catch rates of fish larger than 10 inches similar to many of the best Butterfly Peacock canals in southeast Florida. Forty four percent of the harvestable Butterfly Peacock in this canal are greater than 12 inches, and 17% are greater than 14 inches (1.8 pounds). The bag limit for Butterfly Peacock is two fish per day, only one of which can be greater than 17 inches.

Fishing for larger Butterfly Peacock is best from March through May, although fishing is consistently good throughout the year. Butterfly Peacock feed only during daylight and normally close to shore, although schooling peacocks sometimes feed aggressively in open water. Most Butterfly Peacock are caught on live golden shiners or fast moving artificial lures and flies that imitate small fish.

Butterfly Peacock are more likely to be caught using live fish for bait than are Largemouth Bass, which make them an excellent fish for younger anglers, as well as those just learning to bass fish. It is illegal to use Goldfish or any other non-native fish for bait.

Aerojet Canal has more Largemouth Bass than most other canals in southeast Florida, and fish greater than 20 inches are regularly sampled although the average size is 13.4 inches (1.5 pounds). Largemouth Bass fishing tends to be best during the winter months when the water cools, and during early morning, late afternoon, and at night during the summer months. Plastic worms work well for Largemouth Bass, but they rarely catch Butterfly Peacock. The bag limit for Largemouth Bass is five fish per day, but only one of these can be greater than 16 inches.

The number and quality of panfish over six inches in Aerojet Canal is similar to other area canals. Live worms and crickets are the choice baits for many panfish anglers, although fresh bread or bread dough works well, is readily available, and it costs less.

Shoreline anglers have plenty of access to these fisheries at the boat ramp, and anglers can hike or bike along the Southern Glades Trail on the north shore of the

canal. The Trail crosses over nine culverts with open water behind them and easy access. The Southern Glades Trail also runs along both sides of two lateral canals on the north side of the main canal providing additional opportunities for shoreline anglers. There is also shoreline access for saltwater fishing past the boat ramp on the downstream side of the salinity control structure.

Aerojet Canal anglers might also catch one of several exotic fishes including Mayan Cichlid from Central America, Oscar from South America, and Spotted Tilapia from Africa. Mayan Cichlid are colorful and appear similar to Mangrove Snapper with a turquoise ring around a black spot at the base of its tail. Oscar are a bream-shaped fish with a red or orange circle at the base of its tail, and they have a thick coat of protective mucus on their bodies. Spotted Tilapia are bream-shaped, golden in color with black vertical bars or spots, and some have red on them. These exotic fishes were illegally released, pose a threat to native species, taste good, and you can keep every one you catch.

South Florida canals receive a great deal of fishing pressure, so we encourage anglers to release most, if not all of the Butterfly Peacock, Largemouth Bass, Snook, and Tarpon they catch. If anglers don't release a majority of the sportfish they catch, these high quality fisheries will deteriorate rapidly.

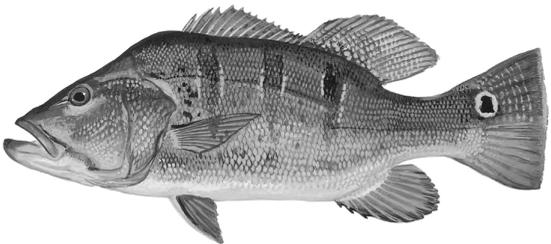
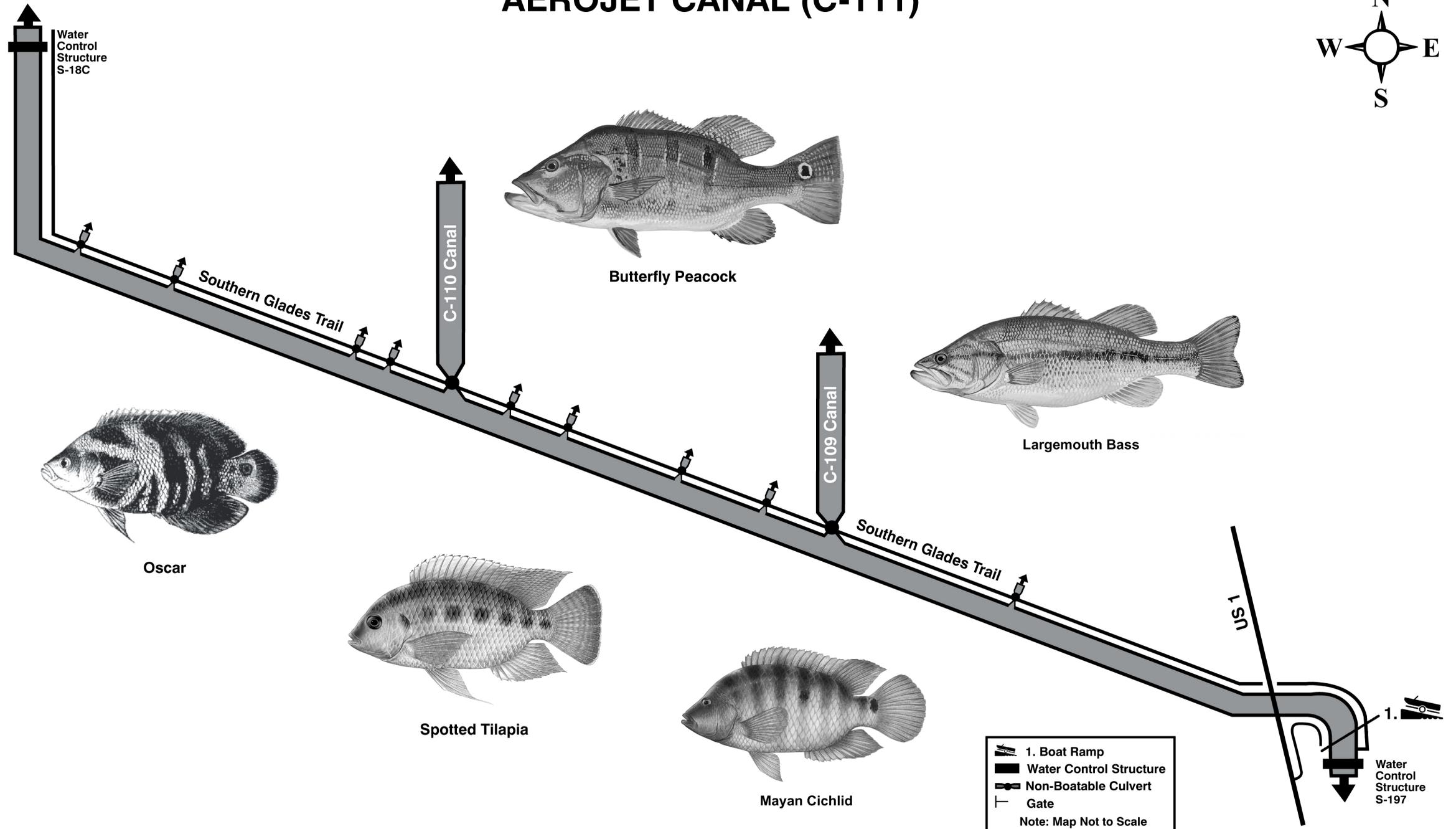
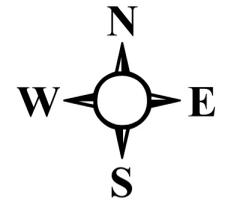
Anglers, particularly those from outside the metropolitan Miami - West Palm Beach area, should be aware that vandalism occurs at some boat ramps. Therefore, care should be taken to secure your vehicle and keep valuables out of sight or take them with you when you leave the ramp.

For more Florida fishing information, please visit Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's web site at www.MyFWC.com/fishing.

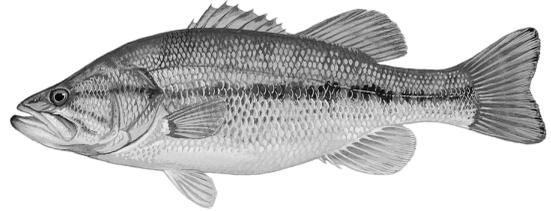
This series of southeast Florida angler guides are available at www.bit.ly/AnglerGuide.



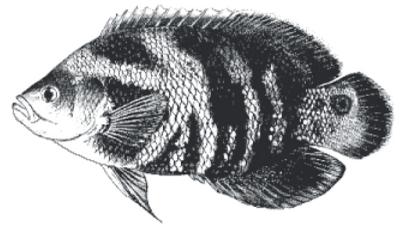
AEROJET CANAL (C-111)



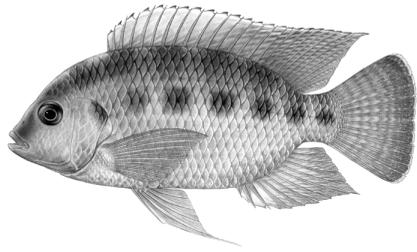
Butterfly Peacock



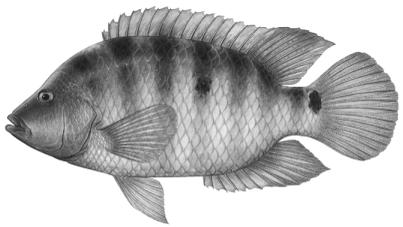
Largemouth Bass



Oscar



Spotted Tilapia



Mayan Cichlid

-  1. Boat Ramp
 -  Water Control Structure
 -  Non-Boatable Culvert
 -  Gate
- Note: Map Not to Scale

Largemouth Bass, Butterfly Peacock and Oscar illustrations by Duane Raver, Jr.; Mayan Cichlid and Spotted Tilapia by Diane Peebles.