

FISH! SOUTHEAST FLORIDA CANALS

ANGLER'S GUIDE TO HILLSBORO CANAL (G-08)

BROWARD/PALM BEACH COUNTIES



Exotic Fisheries Office
10216 Lee Road
Boynton Beach, Florida 33473

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DESCRIPTION – The eastern half of the 10.0 miles of navigable Hillsboro Canal (G-08) forms the boundary between Broward and Palm Beach counties, while the remainder runs through southern Palm Beach County. It flows eastward from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge to a water control structure near Military Trail. The western-most section runs parallel to Loxahatchee Road in a rural setting consisting of nurseries and pasture lands. Further east this canal is bordered by housing developments but many shorelines have overhanging trees and bushes which makes one feel as if they are in a much more remote area than they really are.

The main canal is characterized as having steep coral rock banks; ranges in width from 70 to nearly 160 feet, and averages about eight feet deep.

From the boat ramp at Villages of Hillsboro Park, it is 1.9 miles east to the structure at Military Trail and traveling west it is 8.1 miles to the boat barrier near the Water Conservation Area.

BOAT RAMP DIRECTIONS – The ramp at Villages of Hillsboro Park is paved with adequate parking. This ramp is accessed from I-95 by exiting at Hillsboro Boulevard and then following the directions on the map on the opposite page. There are also restrooms, picnic tables, grills and a playground at this park. **BOAT RAMP GPS COORDINATES:** (26.32766, -80.16076).

There is good access for shoreline anglers on the south bank of the Hillsboro Canal from the intersection of Hillsboro Boulevard and Loxahatchee Road west to the water control structure on the south side of the canal. There is also shore access along a dirt road that runs next to a short stretch of the L-36 Canal. The bank is low enough along this road to launch a canoe or small jon boat. There is also good shoreline access on the west side of the E-2W Canal between Glades Road and SW 18th Street.

Additional shoreline angling opportunities can be found in the E-series of canals that connect the Hillsboro Canal to the West Palm Beach Canal (C-51). Some exploring is necessary to find the best fishing locations, and always be sure to park cars safely on public right of ways.

GENERAL FISHING INFORMATION – The Hillsboro and Equalizer Canals provide excellent fishing for Largemouth Bass. Snook and Tarpon swim in the Hillsboro Canal which gives anglers an opportunity to complete a canal ‘trifecta’. After a series of warmer than average winters, Butterfly Peacock also find their way into this canal making a canal ‘grand

slam’ a possibility. Canal intersections and culverts are generally productive areas for catching most species of fish. Shoreline vegetation, rip-rap areas, and shady areas associated with bridges and culverts also provide excellent places to fish. If there is a strong current in the main canal, look for any protected areas that offer refuge from the current (e.g., cut-outs, bridge pilings, and the downstream side of non-flowing spillways of lateral canals). Culverts and spillways with water flowing through or over them into the main canal are sometimes especially good places to fish.

There are more Largemouth Bass in the Hillsboro Canal than most other southeast Florida canals. Harvestable Largemouth Bass in this system average 13.6 inches (1.5 pounds), and nearly 40% are larger than this. Fishing for Largemouth Bass tends to be best during the winter when the water temperatures cool are cooler and in the evening, night, and early morning during the summer. The bag limit for Largemouth Bass is five fish per day, only one of which can be larger than 16 inches.

The number and quality of panfish in these systems 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.

For the current Snook and Tarpon regulations please see www.MyFWC.com/fishing.

The Butterfly Peacock is a world renowned gamefish that was successfully introduced by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in the mid-1980’s to eat undesirable exotic fishes, and to provide more sportfishing opportunities for anglers in southeast Florida canals. The bag limit for Butterfly Peacock is two fish per day, only one of which can be greater than 17 inches. Butterfly Peacock are sensitive to water temperatures below 60°F which makes the Hillsboro Canal capable of only periodically supporting populations of this species. The intolerance of Butterfly Peacock to cool water temperature will prevent them establishing permanent populations here and further north.

Hillsboro Canal anglers can catch several exotic species including Bullseye Snakehead from Southeast

Asia, Oscar from South America, Spotted Tilapia from Africa, and Mayan Cichlid from Central America. These exotic fishes were illegally released and pose a threat to native species. Bullseye Snakehead are a long, cylindrical fish with sharp teeth and resemble native Bowfin except that the anal fin on the Snakehead is long (extends from vent to the tail) versus a short anal fin on Bowfin. Bullseye Snakehead also have a red ring around a black spot at the base of their tail. Bullseye snakehead can grow to a fairly large size (over 3 feet in length and 14 pounds). Oscar, Spotted Tilapia, and Mayan Cichlid are all bream-shaped fishes. Oscar have a red or orange circle at the base of the tail, and have a thick layer of protective mucus on their bodies. Spotted Tilapia are golden with black vertical bars or spots, and some have red on them. Mayan Cichlid are colorful and appear similar to a mangrove snapper with a turquoise ring around a black spot at the base of their tail. These exotic fishes are good to eat and you can keep every one you catch.

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

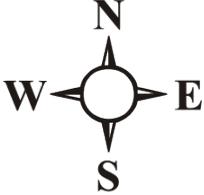
Anglers, particularly those from outside the metropolitan Miami - West Palm Beach area, should be aware that vandalism occurs at some boat ramps. Therefore, care should be taken to secure your vehicle and keep valuables out of sight or take them with you when you leave the ramp.

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

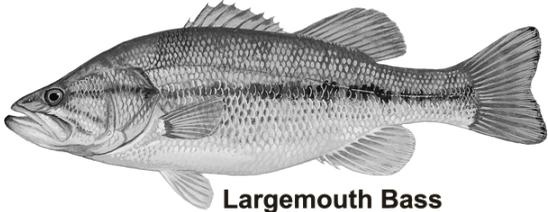
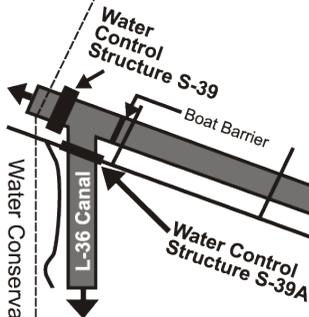
This series of southeast Florida angler guides are available at www.bit.ly/AnglerGuide.



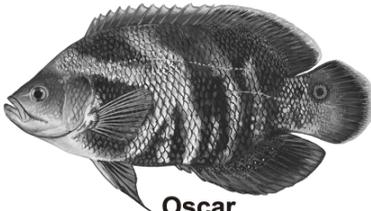
HILLSBORO CANAL (G-08) and TRIBUTARIES



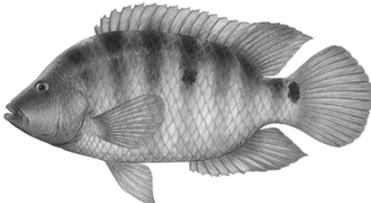
Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge



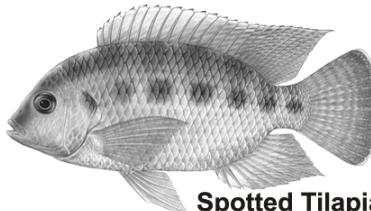
Largemouth Bass



Oscar

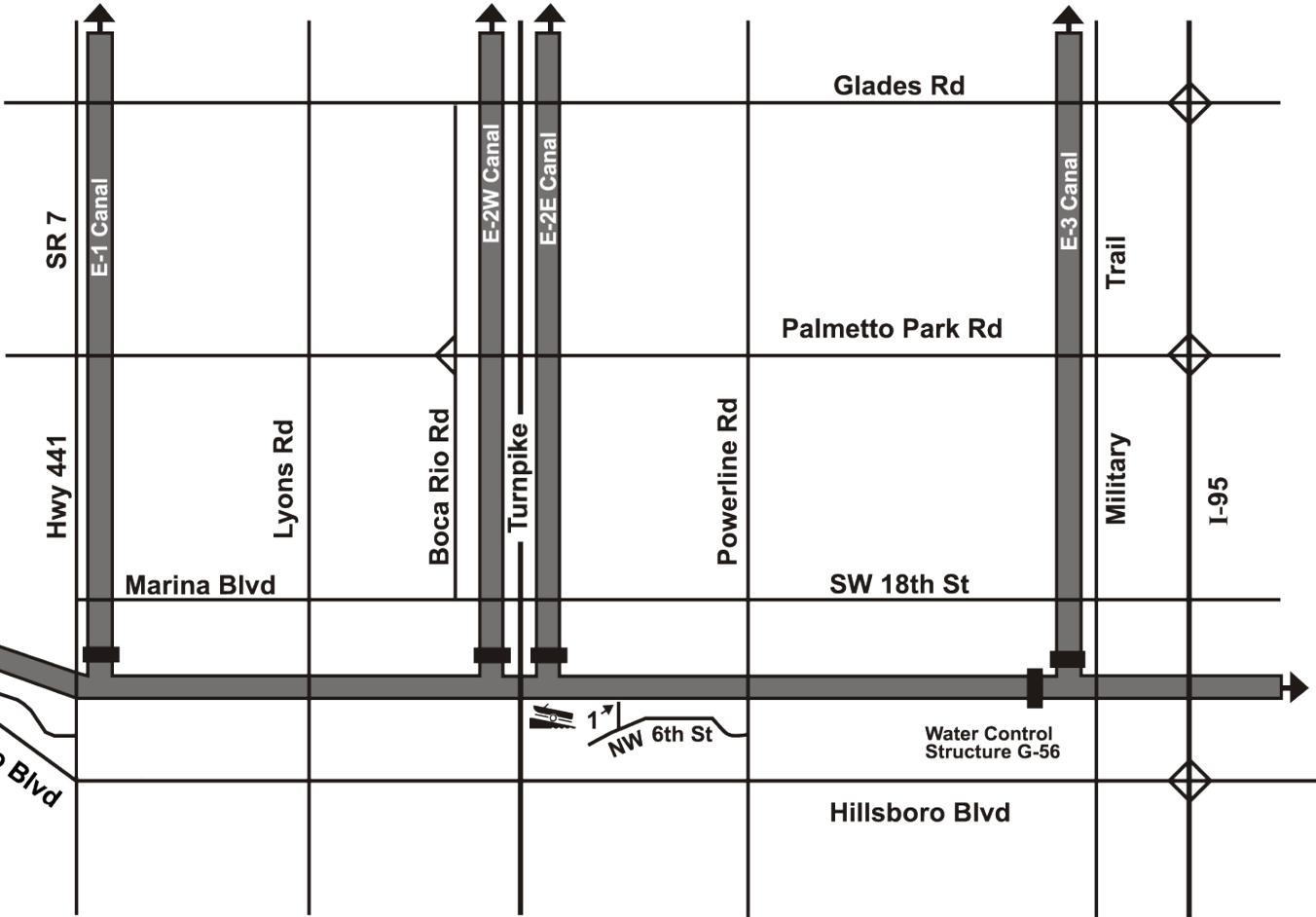


Mayan Cichlid



Spotted Tilapia

Palm Beach County
Broward County



	1. Boat Ramp/Villages of Hillsboro Park
	Water Control Structure
	Non-Boatable Culvert
Note: Map Not to Scale	

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