Dehooking tools should be a good fit for the angler, the fish being targeted, and the vessel. If an angler is fishing from a boat with a high gunwale, the dehooking tool may need to have a longer shaft. If being used on a kayak, a shorter dehooking tool should be used.

IN THIS ISSUE

Commission meeting – July
State Reef Fish Survey
Biscayne National Park
Red snapper – Gulf
Atlantic federal news
Bay scallops
Gag grouper – Gulf
Spiny lobster
2020 Lionfish Challenge
FLCoralCrew
FWC needs your feedback
Catch a Florida Memory
Events

STATE SEASON UPDATES
July – August

State waters are from shore to 9 nautical miles in the Gulf and from shore to 3 nautical miles in the Atlantic.

July 1 – Gag grouper (Franklin-Taylor) closes
July 1 – Blue land crab closes
July 1 – Bay scallops (Franklin-NW Taylor & Levy-Hernando) opens
July 17-26 – Bay scallops (Pasco) open
July 26 – Red snapper (Gulf) closes (state and federal waters)
July 29-30 – Spiny lobster mini season
Aug. 1 – Greater amberjack (Gulf) opens
Aug. 1 – Permit (Special Permit Zone) opens
Aug. 6 – Spiny lobster opens
Aug. 16 – Bay scallops (Gulf County) opens
Commission meeting – July

Marine Fisheries items
Information: The FWC Commission will listen to public testimony on and discuss the following marine fisheries management items listed below at the virtual July 22-23 meeting.

Decision making (regulation changes anticipated to be made on these topics):

- **Stone crab**: The Commission will consider a proposal that, if approved, will make changes to how stone crab is managed in Florida, including possible changes to season dates, minimum claw size, trap construction requirements, and possession of whole stone crabs on the water.

- **Bluefish**: The Commission will consider a proposal to modify the bag limit for bluefish in state waters along Florida’s Atlantic coast (Nassau through Miami-Dade counties) from 10 fish per person to 3 fish per person. (This item is on the Consent Agenda.)

- **King Mackerel**: The Commission will consider a federal consistency action to maintain consistent king mackerel commercial vessel limits in Atlantic state and federal waters following a federal commercial vessel limit increase expected to take effect before October 2020. (This item is on the Consent Agenda.)

Draft proposal (these items will be brought back to a future meeting for final decision):

- **Apalachicola oysters**: Staff will present an update on the status of the oyster population and fishery in Apalachicola Bay as well as an update on recent funding for large-scale restoration intended to promote the recovery of oysters in the Bay. The Commission will consider a draft proposal that would suspend wild oyster harvest from the Bay through Dec. 2025, or until restoration and associated monitoring are complete. Staff will recommend suspending harvest via Executive Order beginning Aug. 1, 2020.

- **Flounder**: The Commission will consider a draft proposal to make several changes to the flounder fishery. This includes possible changes to the size limit, recreational bag limit, establishing commercial trip and vessel limits, establishing an annual recreational closure, and extending all proposed and existing regulations into federal waters.

Discussions (no regulation changes are anticipated on these items):

- **Marine Fisheries Management Annual Workplan**: Staff will review new and ongoing marine fisheries management issues and request Commission approval of the 2020-2021 workplan.

- **Federal fishery management updates**: The Commission will discuss outcomes of recent meetings of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico federal fishery management councils.

Links for more information:

[Agenda](MyFWC.com)
State Reef Fish Survey

New requirement for reef fish anglers July 1, 2020

Information: Starting July 1, 2020, recreational anglers and spear fishers who intend to fish for or harvest certain reef fish from a private vessel in Florida are required to obtain the State Reef Fish Angler designation. The statewide State Reef Fish Survey will be replacing the Gulf Reef Fish Survey.

State Reef Fish Anglers will help improve recreational data for several reef fish such as snapper, grouper, and hogfish. The process is easy, no-cost and will help the FWC paint a clearer picture of how many people are targeting reef fish like red snapper and gag grouper.

Visit the link below for a full list of species included in the State Reef Fish Survey, information on how to sign up and much more.

Link for more information:
State Reef Fish Survey [MyFWC.com]

Biscayne National Park

New regulations effective July 1

Information: Several new regulations for those fishing in Biscayne National Park go into effect starting July 1, 2020.

Link for more information:
Biscayne National Park [MyFWC.com]

Red snapper – Gulf

Recreational season closes July 26

Information: The recreational red snapper season for anglers fishing from private recreational vessels closes in Gulf state and federal waters July 26 (last day of harvest is July 25). For-hire operators who do not have federal permits may participate in this season in state waters only. The Gulf season for federally-permitted for-hire operations is June 1-Aug. 1.

Link for more information:
Snapper [MyFWC.com]
Atlantic federal news

Red snapper season + new regulations
Information: The recreational red snapper season in Atlantic federal waters will be open the weekend of July 10, 11 and 12, and also July 17. In Atlantic federal waters, the daily bag limit will be one fish per person and there is no minimum size limit.

During this season, FWC will have research staff collecting data on red snapper at many of Florida’s boat ramps and docks. As you return from your trip, please take a moment to share your catch information and allow our staff to take samples and measurements. This information helps us and our federal fishery partners improve management of this species.

In addition, help test electronic data collection by voluntarily reporting trip information on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s MyFishCount app. You can get more information at MyFishCount.com.

The app does not replace data collected dockside, though, so if you use the app, please also continue to allow staff to collect data when you return from your trip.

Several new best fishing practices when targeting red snapper in Atlantic federal waters go into effect July 15. These new best fishing practices require anglers to use a descending device when releasing fish with signs of barotrauma, to use non-off set non-stainless-steel circle hooks when fishing in areas where red snapper are common and more.

Links for more information:

Snappers [MyFWC.com]
Federal Snapper Season and New Best Practices [NOAA Fisheries]

Bay scallops

Several season openings in July and August
Information: The 2020 bay scallop season for all state waters from Franklin-Jefferson, part of Taylor, and Levy-Hernando counties opens July 1. Waters off Pasco County are open July 17-26 and waters off Gulf County open Aug. 16.

Links for more information:

Bay scallops [MyFWC.com]

Gag grouper – Gulf

Recreational harvest in 4-county Gulf region closes July 1
Information: The recreational gag grouper season in state waters off Franklin, Wakulla, Taylor and Jefferson counties closes July 1, with the last day of harvest being June 30. The season off these counties will reopen Sept. 1 through Dec. 31.

Other Gulf state waters (excluding Monroe County) and all federal Gulf of Mexico waters opened to recreational harvest June 1 and will remain open through Dec. 31.

Grouper regulations in state waters off Monroe County follow Atlantic regulations where gag grouper is open from May 1 through Dec. 31.

Links for more information:

[MyFWC.com]

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**Spiny lobster mini-season (sport season)**

**July 29-30 recreational season**

Information: Spiny lobster will be open to recreational harvest in state waters July 29 and 30 for the recreational mini-season and will open for regular recreational and commercial harvest Aug. 6. Remember to use care around corals and other marine life. Boat and dive safely.

Links for more information:

[MyFWC.com]

[How to measure a spiny lobster][MyFWC.com]

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**2020 Lionfish Challenge**

**Turn in your lionfish for rewards**

Information: The 2020 Lionfish Challenge rewards lionfish harvesters with prizes for submitting lionfish. Participants who remove the most lionfish in the recreational and commercial categories by Sept. 7 (Labor Day) will be crowned the 2020 Recreational Lionfish King/Queen and the Commercial Champion. Register today or learn more about the program at [FWCReefRangers.com](https://www.fwcreefrangers.com).
**FLCoralCrew**
Information: If you want healthy, beautiful coral reefs and would like more information about Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease and what the FWC and partners are doing to help, join the Crew and sign up today: FLCoralCrew.com. And while you’re out enjoying the water this summer, remember these tips:

1. Avoid touching corals while diving.
2. Don’t anchor near corals.
3. Clean diving gear between dive sites.
4. Use environmentally friendly sunscreens.

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**FWC needs your feedback**
Information: FWC is collecting feedback on several fisheries topics including bluefish, flounder, spot, croaker, Atlantic blueline tilefish and snowy grouper.

Provide comments on these or other fisheries online at MyFWC.com/SaltwaterComments.

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**Catch a Florida Memory**
Submit saltwater catches and earn rewards

Information: Due to the effects of COVID-19, prize package mailings are taking longer than normal. While package mailings have resumed, significant delays are expected over the next few months. Anglers are still encouraged to submit catches and enjoy getting out on the water.

Earn rewards for various achievements while targeting a diversity of species and reducing fishing pressure on the most commonly sought-after catches.

- **Saltwater Fish Life List**: Can you catch all 70 species?
- **Saltwater Reel Big Fish**: Recognition for extraordinary-sized catches.
- **Saltwater Grand Slams**: Earn rewards for catching three specific fish in 24 hours.

Join the **Triple Threat Club** and earn even more prizes (including a long sleeve performance fishing shirt and more) by participating in all three programs. Anglers must qualify for each of the three programs to be eligible.

FWC also manages the **Florida Saltwater Fishing Records** program.

Link for more information:
EVENTS

July - August

COVID-19 update: Our top priorities are the health and safety of Floridians and visitors. Look for more information on upcoming events here in the future.

Contact: 850-487-0554 or marine@myfwc.com

Get this newsletter via email at MyFWC.com by clicking on “Sign up for updates”