

Internet based angler logs as a source of fishery dependent data

FY 2013 Proposal

Richard Cody
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1. Overview

1.1. Sponsor

Richard Cody

1.2. Focus Group

Survey Design and Evaluation

1.3. Background

One of the recommendations made in the National Research Council's 2006 review of recreational survey methodology was to explore the potential for using panel survey methodology to obtain fisheries information (NRC, 2006). Currently, numerous examples exist of informal volunteer panel based electronic angler reporting systems that allow recreational anglers to record catch and fishing trip information. Whereas many of these panels take the form of web-based electronic logbooks that avail of smart phone as well as other forms of mobile technology, basically similar types of information are targeted. However, there can be distinct differences in how panel participants are recruited and panels maintained. Moreover, angler logs may vary by length of the recall period, the resolution and quality of catch and effort information obtained and angler incentives to report trip information. The motivation for the creation of a web-based angler survey or log may be out of concern for a particular stock or just a desire to provide a way for anglers/members a means to more accurately track their fishing trips. Whatever the rationale, there are some minimum data needs that must be addressed if the logs are to provide meaningful data for stock assessment purposes. How the data can be used will depend on how well they represent fishing activity and behavior (i.e., panel recruitment and maintenance and identification of potential sources of reporting bias among panel participants). Statistical considerations concerned with panel recruitment and maintenance were discussed recently at an MRIP funded workshop on "Opt-In" angler panels (Didden, 2012). Currently there are no minimum standards for how panels are constructed (i.e., recruited), the types of data collected or for the units reported. There may be an expectation among well meaning panel participants and organizers that their data be used and a tendency to presume foul play when they are not used as expected to inform stock assessments. Ironically, one of the cautions included in the NRC review was that stock assessment biologists were made aware of the data limitations (NRC, 2006). That caution could certainly be extended to participant anglers in electronic logbook programs and organizations that may have unrealistic expectations for how their data may be used. The defense of any decision to include or exclude data from this increasingly popular source is greatly facilitated through a well designed set of criteria that outlines minimum requirements for data types and quality as well as for the selection process used to recruit panel members. By setting criteria or standards and making those standards available to angling groups, who wish to avail of electronic reporting, decisions to include or exclude logbook data in the stock assessment process can be defended at data workshops. Guidance to angler groups and organizations wishing to establish electronic reporting systems or improve existing reporting systems, needs to take the form of a set of recommended practices that includes recommendations for minimum data elements and standards. By providing a template that ranks usability of data provided in e-logs in terms of data needs (including adaptability to future data needs), data quality, ability to account for potential sources of bias, and meet minimum standards for consideration as valid data sources, angler expectations for data use are clearly defined, and the potential of angler e-logs to augment state and federal data collection programs can be explored. The process allows for integration of an increasingly visible potential source of data under the MRIP umbrella. Anglers are provided with a vehicle for data usage and guidance in terms of data needs and quality. The Snook and Gamefish Foundation (SGF) has had a long standing partnering relationship with FWC. SGF has acted as a conduit between anglers, scientists and managers built from a mutual goal of conservation. SGF has been instrumental in garnering support from the angling population for state led data collection programs for snook and other inshore species. The original concept for the iAngler application was based on stock assessment needs for information on released catch. The group communicates regularly with state and federal partners on data needs and possible solutions. The partnership of SGF with FWC allows immediate as well as long term data needs to be communicated effectively to a large sector of the inshore and (an increasing number of offshore) angling population. SGF has been instrumental in FWC efforts to obtain hard parts for age and growth analyses through their endorsement of the snook carcass program. It is believed that the inclusion of groups such as SGF (and others potentially attempting to assist with data collection) within the MRIP process provides state and federal partners an opportunity to build support for MRIP data collection improvement efforts while allowing anglers a more active role in data collection. The value of these kinds of partnerships should not be underestimated in terms of the angler outreach potential (See attachment: Florida Saltwater Regulations - p17).

1.4. Project Description

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will partner with an established angler e-log provider (The Snook and Game Foundation of Florida (SGF) to evaluate the web-based Angler Action program and iAngler application for smart phones as a potential source of data for stock assessments. The data will be evaluated in terms of the representativeness of the recruited panel members, data volume, and resolution. Based on that review, a set of recommended practices for the establishment and maintenance of e-log systems will be produced. The evaluation will be used to make improvements to Angler Action Program/iAngler application. Improvements to the iAngler system will be evaluated for a period of one year to allow sufficient data to accumulate for before and after comparisons. Particular attention will be paid to panel recruitment and retention as well as the behavior of recruited anglers as it pertains to panel participation characteristics. Weekly data feeds from the AAP will allow an initial evaluation of the effectiveness of the panel in terms of project objectives and will allow for feedback to be

considered in a timely manner so that improvements can be made in an adaptive manner. An initial workshop will be focused on stock assessment data needs which will allow for minimum data standards to be developed. It is expected that these standards will depend on the data collection goals of the application but the practicality and defensibility of those data collection goals will be a primary consideration in any recommendation that follows.

1.5. Public Description

1.6. Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to provide guidelines for the establishment and upkeep of panel-based e-logs that are consistent with MRIP goals and augment rather than compete with MRIP data. By providing guidelines for minimum data requirements and standards for considered inclusion in stock assessments, expectations by users and developers can be realistically set. The process facilitates a leadership role for MRIP data collection programs and sets standards for electronic reporting system developers wishing to provide meaningful data for inclusion in stock assessments.

1.7. References

National Research Council (2006). Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods. National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C. 187pp. Didden, J. (2012). Summary of Feb 2, 2012 Workshop on Opt-In Angler Panels. MRIP Report 10pp.

2. Methodology

2.1. Methodology

As the goal of the study is to define parameters for use of e-log type surveys, methods concentrate on characterization and evaluation of the currently available data in an established e-logbook, describing and implementing needed improvements and reevaluation/calibration of data in terms of adjustments to survey design features. The Snook and Game Foundation will provide iAngler data for review and analyses. The database will be assessed in terms of sample size and distribution, species reported, counts and size distribution. The adequacy of the data to identify bias will also be assessed. Analyses will include as far as possible an overall characterization of the panel make-up, and associated response bias. Estimation of Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) will be completed for species for which adequate data exist and comparisons made with existing data for those species from MRIP and other sources. A three stage approach is advocated for this study and forms the basis for assessing the current status of data collection and recommendations for improvements consistent with MRIP goals. (1) Description of stock assessment needs and evaluation of the potential for angler e-logs to provide information. a. Description of minimum data elements and standards. b. Protocols for ranking e-Logs based on meeting minimum requirements for inclusion of data in the stock assessment process. c. Possible certification procedures for compliance with minimum data standards. ACCSP may be possible (2) Evaluation of the Angler Action Program/iAngler log devised by the Snook and Game Foundation in its current form for use as a potential source of data for stock assessments. The evaluation will include: a. Evaluation of the panel in terms of selection bias, quality and volume of information obtained. b. Description and critique of the survey instrument and information components. c. Description and evaluation of data elements in terms of formatting, minimum data requirements, data quality and participant reporting patterns. (3) Outline of improvements necessary for inclusion of iAngler data in stock assessment process. a. Description of practical improvements to the iAngler system that will help to identify sources of bias. b. Set expectations for the inclusion of iAngler data at the assessment level based on criteria for: i. scientific defensibility – must be able to identify and/or account for bias. ii. compatibility with existing data. iii. stock assessment needs. c. Incorporation and assessment of recommended improvements to the iAngler system. Recommended improvements will form the basis for a set of recommended practices and minimum data requirements to be made available to entities interested in providing data for stock assessment purposes.

2.2. Region

Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic

2.3. Geographic Coverage

iAngler/Angler Action Program users are largely constrained to Florida although users are worldwide

2.4. Temporal Coverage

Study period is from June, 2013-September 2014 (Earlier data incl.), Final Report December, 2014

2.5. Frequency

Weekly for data transfers, Monthly for data summarization and informal reporting, quarterly reports

2.6. Unit of Analysis

angler trip

2.7. Collection Mode

Electronic informal panel survey

3. Communication

3.1. Internal Communication

Weekly data downloads from SGF to FWC will be followed by a brief conference call to verify data transfer and to communicate any issues experienced. Monthly calls will be used to relay summary of data analysis to AAP staff. Weekly conference calls are expected to be of longer duration in the initial 4-6 months because recommendations for improvements will be discussed.

3.2. External Communication

A workshop is planned with stock assessment biologists, MRIP representatives (outreach and data related) to set initial standards for data collection. All other angler related outreach will be the responsibility of SGF. SGF will communicate such efforts to FWC partner and MRIP representatives. Recruitment workshops will be the responsibility of SGF. However, FWC will participate and communicate data needs. A minimum of four workshops will be presented. Informal communication between FWC analytical staff and S&T scientific staff will take place on an as needed basis with a goal towards insuring MRIP objectives and that direction taken in development of the AAP are consistent with data needs (3-6 times per year).

4. Assumptions/Constraints

4.1. New Data Collection

Y

4.2. Is funding needed for this project?

4.3. Funding Vehicle

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

4.4. Data Resources

Snook Foundation to Florida (iAngler data collection program) data transfers to FWC. Angler catch and trip information. Anglers will not be identified. Recommendations for minimum data standards, panel recruitment guidelines.

4.5. Other Resources

FWC staff time (data analyses) 0.5 FTE. Input from FWC stock assessment biologists regarding the initial set up (minimum data requirements, and data quality standards). Development of a FWC database to house data transfers (MS SQL Server). These data will comply with NOAA standards for data accessibility and metadata.

4.6. Regulations

Snook is primarily a catch and release fishery (>90% released). Although there have been long term closures on both coasts of Florida, data collection is expected to be impacted minimally as a result of regulations. Red drum and spotted seatrout are also regulated for seasonal closures with restrictive slot sizes. Regulated offshore species may be evaluated as candidate species for data elements considered lacking in MRIP. Seasonal and area closures apply in the Gulf and Atlantic.

4.7. Other

5. Final Deliverables

5.1. Additional Reports

Quarterly reports to NOAA (Grants.gov)

5.2. New Data Set(s)

Angler catch and trip information from iAngler (angler identification protected by Snook Foundation)

5.3. New System(s)

Data tables derived from weekly iAngler data feeds and associated metadata, data interface for transfer.

6. Project Leadership

6.1. Project Leader and Members

First Name	Last Name	Title	Role	Organization	Email	Phone 1	Phone 2
Bridget	Cermak	Database Analyst	Team Member	FI FWCC (FWC)	bridget.cermak@myFWC.com	727-896-8626, 1108	
Richard	Cody	Research Admin. II	Team Leader	FI FWCC (FWC)	richard.cody@myFWC.com	727-896-8626, 1700	
Linda	Roberts	Administrator (SGF)	Team Member	Snook and Game Foundation	Linda@snookfoundation.org	407-302-5550	
Rick	Roberts	Executive Director (Snook Foundation)	Team Member	Snook & Game Foundation	Rick@snookfoundation.org	407-302-5550	

7. Project Estimates

7.1. Project Schedule

Task #	Schedule Description	Prerequisite	Schedule Start Date	Schedule Finish Date	Milestone
1	Analysis of iAngler data (Pre-improvements)		06/01/2013	07/15/2013	Y
3	Implementation of recommended improvements to iAngler.	1,2	07/15/2013	09/30/2014	
2	Development of minimum data standards, criteria for improvements to iAngler.	1	06/01/2013	09/30/2013	Y
4	Analysis of improvements to iAngler System.	1,2,3	07/15/2013	08/31/2014	Y
5	Project Final Report	1,2,3,4	09/01/2014	12/30/2014	Y

7.2. Cost Estimates

Cost Name	Cost Description	Cost Amount	Date Needed
iAngler database analysis	0.5 FWC FTE for 15 months	\$32933.00	06/01/2013
Snook Foundation Contract with FWC	provision of iAngler data weekly, implementation of improvements, outreach	\$119000.00	06/01/2013

Cost Name	Cost Description	Cost Amount	Date Needed
Negotiated Indirect cost with NOAA	29.5% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) or 25% of TDC (whichever is less)	\$37983.00	06/01/2013
GSMFC Administrative costs	Administrative handling	\$10000.00	06/01/2013
TOTAL COST		\$199916.00	

8. Risk

8.1. Project Risk

Risk Description	Risk Impact	Risk Probability	Risk Mitigation Approach
Loss of interest by participant anglers	reduction in numbers of observations and bias of associated with cdata	Low	Weekly email reminders to anglers to report trips. Outreach through electronic and printed means as well as workshops.
regulatory changes	offset outreach efforts to improve recruitment and maintain panel	Low	Distribution of information through MRIP and state websites, angler organizations.

9. Supporting Documents

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FLORIDA SALTWATER RECREATIONAL 2013

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Issued: January 1, 2013

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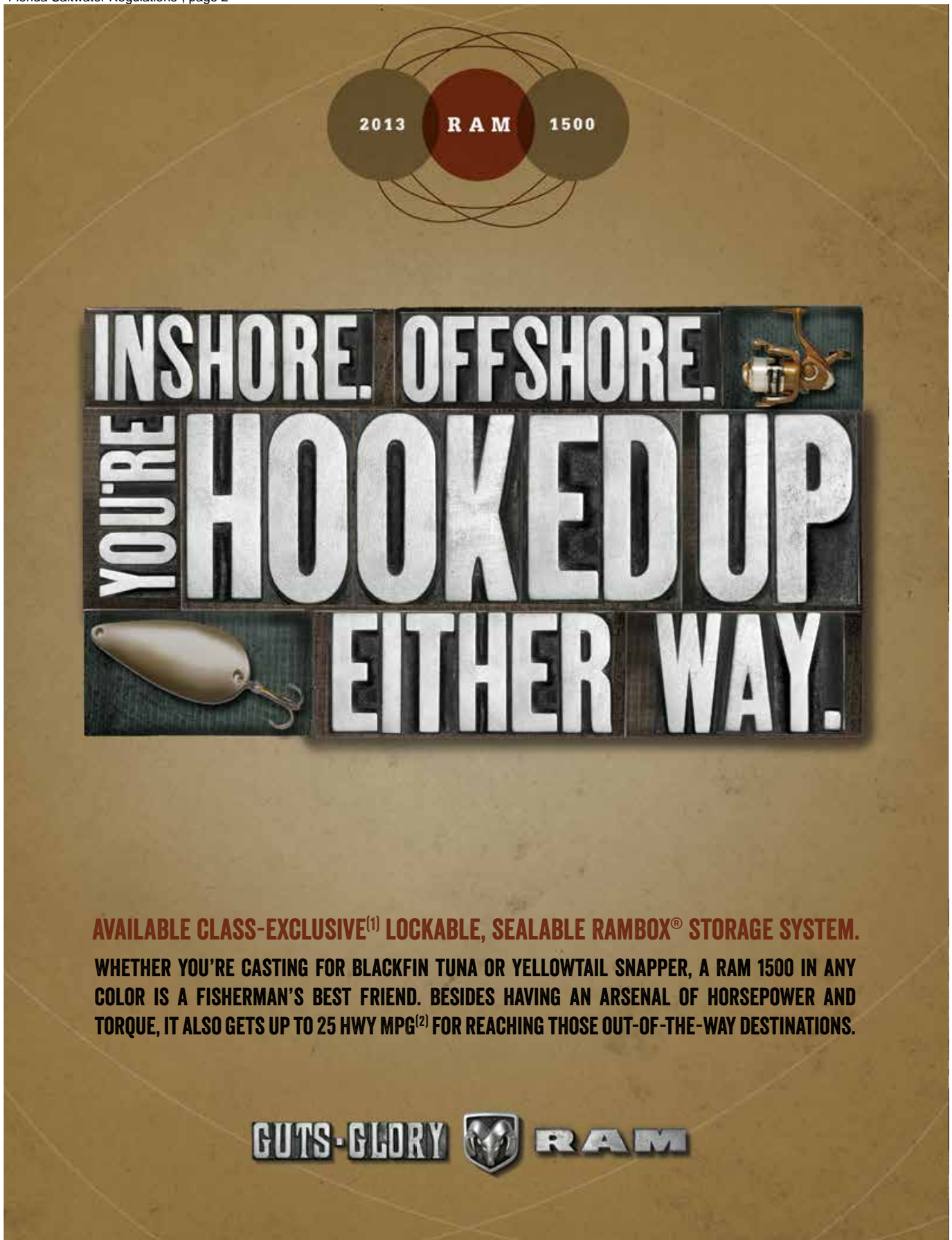
LIONFISH INVASION

» NEW REGULATIONS
Black Sea Bass **page 22**
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Ken Taylor

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On the cover

Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*)
Photographer: Cigdem Sean Cooper
www.Dreamstime.com
Inset: Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*)
caught by Holly Sulzinski

For additional information please contact:

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SALTWATER REGULATIONS

Introduction

This publication is provided as a guide to Florida fishing laws and regulations. The Florida Administrative Code is the final authority on fishing laws. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) strives to ensure information in this booklet is accurate, but assumes no liability for any errors that occur in this publication. Contact the FWC if you have any questions on issues not covered in this booklet. A continuously updated electronic version of this publication is available at MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Regulations.

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Subject to change regarding availability of appropriate facilities to hold the meeting.

- February 13–14, 2013 — Orlando
- April 17–18, 2013 — Tallahassee
- June 19–20, 2013 — Lakeland

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February 2nd–3rd, 2013, Ft. Myers
September 14th–15th, 2013, Tampa
October 12th–13th, 2013, West Palm Beach
Floridasportsman.com/shows

Florida State Fair

February 7th–18th, 2013
Tampa State Fairgrounds
FloridaStateFair.com

Ladies, Let's Go Fishing!

April 12th–14th, 2013, South Florida
May 10th–12th, 2013, Treasure Coast
LadiesLetsGoFishing.com

Kids' Fishing Clinics

February 23rd, 2013, Crystal River
(Preregistration required, call 850-487-0554)
March 9th, 2013, Fernandina
March 23rd, 2013, Daytona
April 6th, 2013, Panama City
April 13th, 2013, Pensacola
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June 15th, 2013, Florida Keys
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Tampa Tribune Outdoor Expo

March 1st–3rd, 2013, Tampa

2013 FREE SALTWATER FISHING DAYS!

State law currently provides for two "license-free" saltwater fishing days each year. Pending legislation to be considered in 2013 could increase the number of saltwater license free saltwater fishing days to four. At the time of publication of this printed guide, the dates for 2013 had not yet been established. Please visit the MyFWC.com website following the February 13–14 Commission meeting.



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SALTWATER REGULATIONS



As the 2012 fishing year closes, I'd like to take this opportunity to look back and thank everyone for their support and celebrations honoring the 75th anniversary of Sport Fish Restoration Program. I'd also like to thank you, Florida's resident and visitor anglers. Funded by your purchases of tackle, motorboat fuels and fishing tackle, the Sport Fish Restoration Program is able to create future fishing and boating opportunities. In Florida, about \$13 million of these funds are used annually to help support research, fish stock enhancement and artificial reefs. The FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management Outreach and Education subsection uses these funds to reach out to youth, women and first time and experienced anglers through fishing related literature and statewide outreach and education programs. Their goal is to create ethical anglers who fish with sustainability in mind and anglers that are actively engaged in the management of marine fisheries resources. FWC's youth fishing programs are a great way to introduce kids to the lifetime sport of saltwater fishing.

FWC is moving youth conservation programming to the forefront with their new initiative, the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network. FYCCN provides a statewide network of sustainable places where youth and their families can participate in outdoor activities and safely share experiences that inspire lifelong support of fish and wildlife conservation. FYCCN is dedicated to "Creating the Next Generation that Cares!" by encouraging children to put down their electronic devices and head outdoors. To learn more about the program, visit FYCCN.org.

A Florida resident since 1962, my own journey as a saltwater angler started in the early 1970s with a 22 foot Mako. I couldn't get into shallow water, and I always wondered what those people were doing in those small johnboats way over on the flats, where I couldn't see, let alone go. In the 80s, I finally got a flats boat. Today, fly fishing is my favorite. I've fished with Charlie Smith, the iconic angler who inspired the first fly for targeting bonefish, the Crazy Charlie; Capt. Nat Ragland, inventor of a fly called the Puff; and Capt. Rick Murphy, host of "Sportsman's Adventures."

When I'm not out fishing, I'm excited to serve as a member of the FWC Commission. I've been on the board since August 2007 and this year I am honored to have been given the opportunity to serve as your chairman. As we move forward into 2013, I look forward to working with you on marine fisheries and other FWC issues, balancing the needs of the fish with the wants of the fishers.

Kenneth Wright
Chairman, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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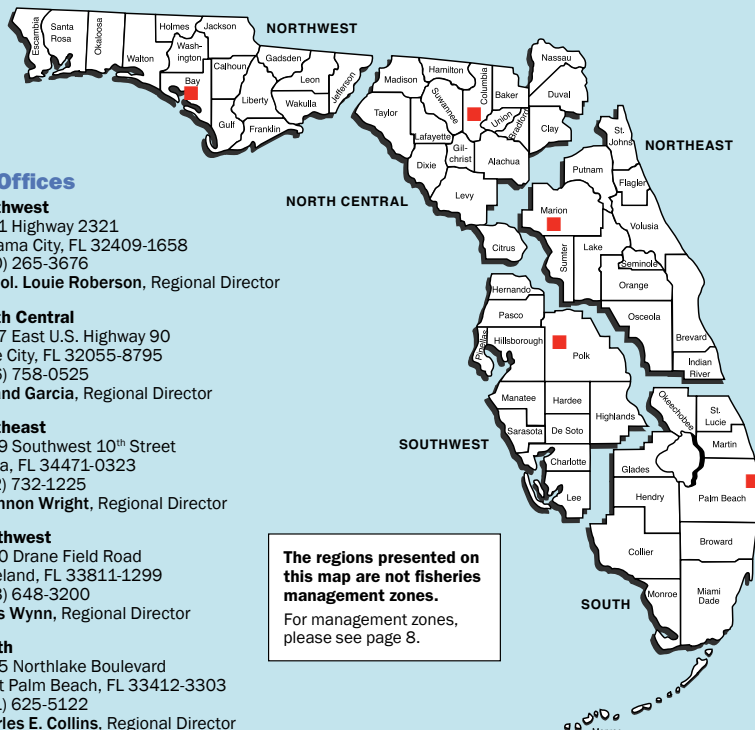
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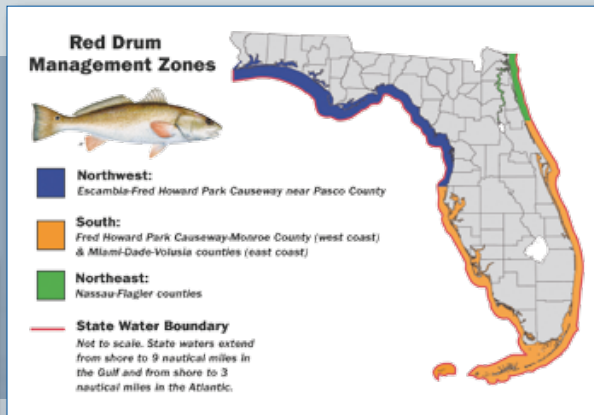
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Know Your Management

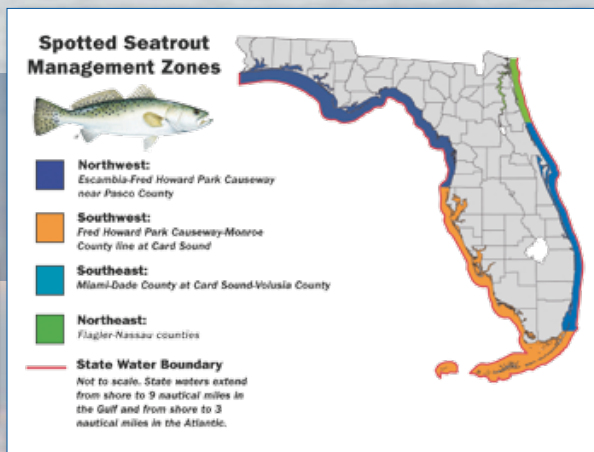
With the exception of reef fish species, recreational daily bag limits usually apply to all state waters of the Gulf and Atlantic. But there are exceptions, several of which involve very important recreational species such as red drum, spotted seatrout, bay scallops and weakfish. Each of these species have management zones with specific bag limits. Know your zone boundaries by using the information and maps below.

Red Drum has three management zones. The daily bag limit is two fish in both the northeast and northwest zones, and one fish in the southern zone. Red drum must be between 18 and 27 inches to be harvested. There is a vessel limit of eight fish and an onshore possession limit of six fish per person. Harvest is open year round.

- Northwest: Escambia through Fred Howard Park Causeway near Pasco County line
- Northeast: Nassau through Flagler counties
- South: Pinellas through Monroe and Miami-Dade through Volusia



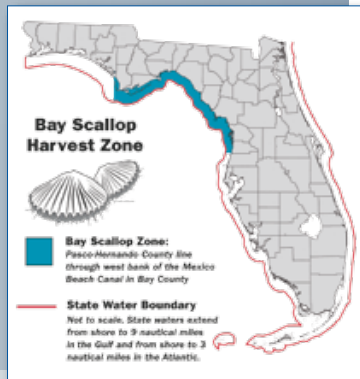
Spotted Seatrout has four management zones. The daily bag limit is six fish in the northeast zone, five fish in the northwest zone and four fish in the southeast and southwest zones. The statewide slot limit is 15 to 20 inches, and you are allowed to keep one fish (included in the daily bag limit) that exceeds the slot limit. Harvest is open year round.



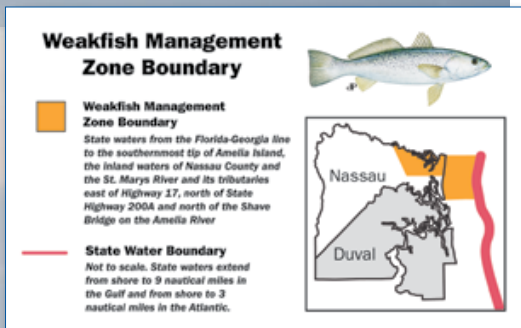
"Florida Saltwater Regulations", page 11

ent Zones

Bay Scallops have one harvest zone that extends from the Mexico Beach canal in Bay County to the Pasco/Hernando county line. Scallops are closed in all other state waters of the Gulf and Atlantic. Within the scallop harvest zone, the daily bag limit is two gallons whole or one pint shucked meat per person with a vessel limit of 10 gallons whole scallops or one half gallon shucked meat. Bay scallop season is open for harvest from July 1 through Sept. 24.



Weakfish have two management zones in Florida. Within the Weakfish Management Area (WMA) in Nassau County the daily bag limit is one fish and the minimum size limit is 12 inches. Within the WMA, the term "weakfish" includes pure weakfish, pure sand seatrout and weakfish/sand seatrout hybrids. In all state waters outside the WMA, weakfish and sand seatrout are not specifically regulated. This means that there is no minimum size limit and the bag limit of 100 pounds per person applies.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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FLORIDA'S CORAL REEF PROTECTION ACT

Learn About This Law And How It May Affect You.



Photo: Jenifer Podis

Florida's Coral Reef Protection Act went into effect in July, 2009 and allows the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to better protect coral reefs through efficient assessment and recovery of damages to coral reefs.

The law applies to all commercial and recreational vessels that transit state waters within Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Martin counties.

FDEP may assess civil penalties for causing damage to a coral reef totaling: a) less than or equal to 1 square meter (m²), \$150; b) more than 1 m², but less than or equal to 10 m², \$300 per m²; and c) more than 10 m², \$1000 per m².



To Learn More Please Visit:
www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral
www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/ripr.htm



January 1, 2013 ■ 9

"Florida Saltwater Regulations", page 12

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Grand Slams and State Records

The Florida Saltwater Grand Slam program is managed by the FWC in partnership with the International Game Fish Association (IGFA). Grand Slams challenge anglers to catch three specific fish species in a single day and were created to increase the variety of species targeted by anglers. There are currently four Grand Slam challenges: Panhandle, West Coast, South Florida and East Coast. Though the names of these grand slams are in honor of the fish often caught in those regions, anglers can earn any of the four grand slams regardless of what region they are fishing in. For example, you can get a South Florida grand slam while fishing in north Florida so long as you catch a bonefish, tarpon and permit within a 24 hour period. Successful applicants receive a certificate signed by both the President of the IGFA and the Executive Director of the FWC to recognize their achievement.

Another challenge hosted by the FWC is the Florida State Records program. There are currently 76 species eligible for state records in both conventional tackle and fly fishing categories. Almaco jack and vermillion snapper were both recently added to the list of eligibility and several other species are now being considered.

In addition to the programs mentioned, there are several exciting new programs currently being developed by the FWC. The intention of the new programs is to cultivate a saltwater fishing interest in new anglers as well as expand the activities of those already "hooked" on fishing.

Grand Slams

North Florida red drum, cobia, spotted seatrout	South Florida bonefish, tarpon, permit
East Coast red drum, tarpon, spotted seatrout	West Coast red drum, snook, tarpon

Grand slam certificate recipients

West Florida Grand Slam

Daniel Atkinson
Kevin Muench
David Atkinson
Stanley McJunkin
Mark R. King
Cathy Fox
Rodney L. Fletcher
Paul Pielow
Thomas Hickey
Del Elliot
Jay Endick
Dennis Bireley
Chester Brandes
Christopher Copeland
Mark Harris
William P. Carter
Liz Harris

East Florida Grand Slam

Kevin Muench
Tara Syc
Rodney L. Fletcher
Ross Q. Smith
William P. Carter
Liz Harris
Mark Harris

North Florida Grand Slam

Debbie Prado
Mark Harris

State Records

Rebecca Bursten caught a 3 lb. 2 oz. vermillion snapper near Panama City.
Bobby Martin caught a 19 lb. yellow jack in Key Largo.
Kenneth Baker caught a 13 lb. 4 oz. gray triggerfish in Pensacola.

For more information or to apply for a state record or grand slam, contact the FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management by calling 850-487-0554, or visit our website at MyFWC.com. Click on "Fishing." Entries are free!

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

GEAR & SPEARING

Recreational gear

Additional regional gear restrictions may apply in your county. For further clarification, contact the local regional offices listed on page 6.

Reef fish gear rules (applies to species marked with ● on pages 12 and 13)

- **Gulf of Mexico:** These regulations require the use of a venting tool and dehooking device when recreationally or commercially fishing for reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico. All persons aboard a vessel harvesting reef fish must possess and use non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits.
- **Atlantic Ocean:** Recreational and commercial fishers are required to use dehooking devices as needed while fishing for reef fish.

These rules apply to all members of the reef fish complex including groupers, snappers, amberjacks, red porgy, gray triggerfish, black sea bass, golden tilefish, banded rudderfish, speckled hind and others. For a complete species list, please visit MyFWC.com.

Hook-and-line gear

Hook-and-line anglers must tend their gear at all times to prevent people, marine life and shore life from becoming entangled in the line or injured by the hook. Also, it is against the law to intentionally discard any monofilament netting or line into or onto state waters. Monofilament line can entangle birds, marine mammals, marine turtles and fish, often injuring or killing them.

Nets

The following types of nets may be used for recreational purposes in Florida waters:

- Bully nets (for lobster only) no greater than 3 feet in diameter.
- Frame nets and push nets (for shrimp only) no greater than 16 feet in perimeter.
- Hand held landing or dip nets no greater than 96 inches in perimeter.
- Cast nets measuring 14 feet or less stretched length (stretched length is defined as the distance from the horn at the center of the net with the net gathered and pulled taut, to the lead line). Cast nets may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, spotted seatrout, weakfish and unregulated species.
- Beach or haul seines measuring no larger than 500 square feet of mesh area, no larger than 2 inches stretched mesh size, not constructed of monofilament, and legibly marked at both ends with the harvester's name and address if a Florida resident. Non-residents using beach or haul seines for recreational purposes are required to have a commercial saltwater products license and legibly mark the seine at both ends with the harvester's saltwater products license number. Beach or haul seines may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, weakfish and unregulated species.

Explosives, etc.

The use of powerheads, explosives, chemicals or the discharge of firearms into the water to kill or harvest marine life is prohibited in state waters.

Spearing

Spearing is defined as "the catching or taking of a fish by bowhunting, gigging, spearfishing, or any device used to capture a fish by piercing its body." Spearing does not include the catching or taking of a fish by a hook with hook-and-line gear or by snagging (snatch hooking). Spearfishing is defined as "the catching or taking of a fish through the instrumentality of a hand or mechanically propelled, single or multi-pronged spear or lance, barbed or barbedless, operated by a person swimming at or below the surface of the water." The use of powerheads, bangsticks, and rebreathers remains prohibited. The following is a list of species which are prohibited for harvest by spearing. Any other species not listed which are managed by the Commission, and those not managed by the Commission are allowed to be harvested by spearing.

- Billfish (all species)
- Manta ray
- Tarpon
- Blue crab
- Red drum
- Florida Pompano
- Tripletail
- Spotted eagle ray
- Sharks
- Goliath grouper
- Nassau grouper
- Weakfish
- African pompano
- Lobster
- Sturgeon
- Bonefish
- Snook
- Spotted seatrout
- Stone crab
- Permit
- Families of ornamental reef fish (surgeonfish, trumpetfish, angelfish, butterflyfish, porcupinefish, cornetfish, squirrelfish, trunkfish, damselfish, parrotfish, pipefish, seahorse, puffers, triggerfish except gray and ocean)

You may NOT spearfish (excluding bowfishing and gigging):

- Spearfishing of marine and freshwater species in freshwater is prohibited. Possession of a spear gun in or on freshwater is also prohibited.
- Within 100 yards of a public swimming beach, any commercial or public fishing pier, or any part of a bridge from which public fishing is allowed.
- Within 100 feet of any part of a jetty that is above the surface of the sea—except for the last 500 yards of a jetty that extends more than 1,500 yards from the shoreline.
- In Collier County and in Monroe County from Long Key north to the Dade County line.
- For any fish for which spearing is expressly prohibited by law.
- In any body of water under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. (Possession of spearfishing equipment is prohibited in these areas, unless it is unloaded and properly stored.) Fishermen who catch and/or sell fish harvested by spearing are subject to the same rules and limitations that other anglers in the state are required to follow.
- In Monroe County there are additional regulations for spearfishing. For more information call 305-289-2320 or visit www.floridakeys.noaa.gov.

You may NOT spear, bowfish or gig:

- In Volusia County inland waters with the exception of flounder and sheepshead using a spear with three or fewer prongs.

Permit, Florida Pompano and African Pompano

- Permit and African Pompano: Hook and line only in state waters; hook and line or spearing only in federal waters.
- Florida Pompano: Hook and line, cast net and beach or haul seine only in state and federal waters.

"Florida Saltwater Regulations", page 14

Basic recreational saltwater fishing regulations for state waters of Florida



This brief summary of regulations governs the taking of saltwater species in Florida state waters for personal use. It is not applicable to the commercial harvesting of these species. The absence of complete laws, rules and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from compliance with 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 unless expressly stated otherwise. For species that do not have an established bag limit, more than 100 pounds or two fish per harvester per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial quantities.** A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration are required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species. It is illegal to sell recreationally harvested fish without compliance with commercial license requirements. Issue Forty Two, Jan. 2013. Highlights indicate recent regulation changes.

Species	Minimum Size Limits	Closed Season	Daily Rec. Bag Limit	Remarks
Amberjack, Greater ▲●	28" fork Atlantic; 30" fork Gulf	June 1 – July 31 Gulf of Mexico	1 per harvester 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" Roundscale Spearfish 66"		1 per harvester per day aggregate bag limit	Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528 or hmspermits.noaa.gov. HMS permit required in federal waters.
Black Drum ▲♦T■	Not less than 14" or more than 24"		5 per harvester per day	May possess one over 24". Snatching prohibited.
Bluefish ▲	12" fork		10 per harvester per day	
Bonefish ■			0 per harvester per day	Catch and release only. Hook and line gear only.
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 harvester 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 harvester or 6 per vessel per day, whichever is less	
Crab, Blue		Regional trap closures apply. See page 22 for 2013 trap closure dates and locations.	10 gallons whole per harvester per day	5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.
Crab, Blue Land		July 1 – Oct. 31	20 per harvester 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 ¾" claw	May 16 – Oct. 14	1 gal. Stone Crab claws per harvester 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.
Dolphin ▲	20" fork Atlantic		10 per harvester per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel per day	
Flounder ▲♦T	12"		10 per harvester per day	May be harvested by spearing. Snatching prohibited.
Gag ▲♦●	24" Atlantic & Monroe County 22" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	Gulf (excluding Monroe County) CLOSED. Please visit MyFWC.com for dates of 2013 Gulf open season. Atlantic & Monroe County Closed Jan. 1 – April 30.	1 per harvester per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 2 per harvester per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	No more than 1 fish may be Gag or Black Grouper, either individually or in combination in Atlantic & Monroe County. Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain & crew on for-hire vessels. Please visit: MyFWC.com for the latest updates.
Grouper, Black ▲♦●	24" Atlantic & Monroe County 22" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	Closed in Gulf (excluding Monroe County) Feb. 1 – March 31 Closed Atlantic & Monroe County Jan. 1 – April 30	1 per harvester per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 4 per harvester per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	
Grouper, Red ▲♦●	20"		3 per harvester per day Atlantic & Monroe County; 4 per harvester per day Gulf (excluding Monroe County)	Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain & crew on for-hire vessels.
Grouper, Snowy ▲●			1 per harvester per day Atlantic	
Grouper, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth ▲♦●	20"	Closed in Gulf (excluding Monroe County) Feb. 1 – March 31 Closed Atlantic & Monroe County Jan. 1 – April 30		
Grouper, Scamp ▲♦●	20" Atlantic & Monroe County; 16" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)			
Grouper, Warsaw & Speckled Hind ▲●			1 per vessel per day of each species	Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit.
Grouper, all others ▲●		Closed in Gulf (excluding Monroe County) Feb. 1 – March 31 for Rock Hind and Red Hind Closed Atlantic & Monroe County Jan. 1 – April 30 for Tiger, Rock Hind, Red Hind, Coney, Graysby		Atlantic & Monroe County: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.
Hogfish ▲●	12" fork		5 per harvester per day	
Mackerel, King ▲	24" fork		2 per harvester per day	Bag limit reduced to 1 in some state waters when federal waters are closed to all harvest.
Mackerel, Spanish ▲	12" fork		15 per harvester per day	Transfer of Spanish Mackerel to other vessels at sea is prohibited.
Mullet, Striped (Black) & Silver			50 aggregate per harvester per day; Aggregate vessel limits Feb. 1 – Aug. 31: 100 per vessel; Sept. 1 – Jan. 31: 50 per vessel	
Oysters	3"	June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties. July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas.	2 bags per harvester 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 Floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas.
Permit ▲T■	22" fork Special Permit Zone (SPZ); Not less than 11" or more than 22" fork all other areas	May 1 – July 31 SPZ Only	1 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel per day SPZ; 2 per harvester per day all other state waters	May possess 1 over 22" fork length in all other areas, not to exceed 2 over 22" fork per vessel per day. For map of SPZ, please see: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Regulations/Permit/ .
Pompano, Florida ▲T■	11" fork		6 per harvester per day	Hook and line, cast net, and beach or haul seine ONLY.
Pompano, African ▲T■	24" fork		2 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel per day.	

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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

"Florida Saltwater Regulations", page 15

Species	Minimum Size Limits	Closed Season	Daily Rec. Bag Limit	Remarks
Red Drum (Redfish) ▲ ♦ ↑	Not less than 18" or more than 27"		2 per harvester per day N.E./N.W. Zone 1 per harvester per day South Zone	Gigging, spearing, snatching prohibited. Harvest in Federal waters prohibited. Vessel limit 8 fish, On-shore possession limit 6 fish. See map on page 8.
Red Porgy ▲ ♦ ●	14" Atlantic		3 per harvester per day Atlantic	
Scallops, Bay		Sept. 25 – June 30	2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per harvester per day; no more than 10 gallons whole, or ½ gallon meat per vessel anytime	Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pasco-Hernando county line, to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County. It is illegal to harvest, possess and land bay scallops on waters outside open harvest area. See map on page 9.
Black Sea Bass ▲ ♦ ●	13" Atlantic; 10" Gulf		5 per harvester per day Atlantic	See page 22 for additional information.
Shad			10 aggregate per harvester per day	American, Alabama & Hickory are part of aggregate limit. Hook & line gear only.
Shark ▲ ↑	No minimum size limit for Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, blacktip, bonnethead, finetooth and smooth dogfish. 54" fork for all other non-prohibited sharks.		1 per harvester or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less	Hook and line gear only. See list below for prohibited species.
Sheepshead ▲ ♦ ↑	12"		15 per harvester per day	Snatching prohibited.
Shrimp ▲		April & May closed to Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler & Clay counties	5 gallons heads on per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less	
Snapper, Black & Wenchman ▲ ♦ ●			Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper, Cubera ▲ ♦ ●	12" (see remarks)		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit if under 30"	May possess no more than 2 Cubera Snapper over 30" per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less. 30" or larger not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snapper, Gray (Mangrove) ▲ ♦ ●	10"		5 per harvester per day	Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snapper, Lane ▲ ♦ ●	8"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit Atlantic	Gulf not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.
Snapper, Mutton ▲ ♦ ●	16"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper, Red ▲ ♦ ●	20" Atlantic; 16" Gulf	Gulf CLOSED – check MyFWC.com for 2013 Gulf season dates Atlantic OPEN	2 per harvester per day	Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit. Note: Check MyFWC.com/Fishing for most current regulations prior to fishing. Gulf: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.
Snapper, Schoolmaster ▲ ♦ ●	10"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper, Vermilion ▲ ♦ ●	12" Atlantic; 10" Gulf	Nov. 1 – March 31 Atlantic	5 per harvester per day Atlantic; 10 per harvester per day Gulf	Vermilion Snapper not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit. Atlantic: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.
Snapper, all other ▲ ♦ ●	12"		Included within 10 per harvester per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	Includes: Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany, Queen, Silk & Yellowtail.
Snook (all species) ▲ ♦ ↑ ■	Not less than 28" or more than 32" Atlantic Not less than 28" or more than 33" Gulf and Monroe County	Atlantic (excluding Monroe) closed Dec. 15 – Jan. 31 and June 1 – Aug. 31. Gulf and Monroe County CLOSED until Sept. 1, 2013	1 per harvester per day	Snook permit required for harvest when saltwater license required. Illegal to buy or sell snook. Snatch hooks and spearing prohibited.
Spiny Lobster ▲	Carapace must be greater than 3" measured in the water	April 1 – Aug. 5 Exception: Sport Season July 24 – 25, 2013	Sport season: 6 per harvester per day in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park, 12 per day in all other harvest areas.	Recreational trapping prohibited. Spiny Lobster permit required when license required. Harvest of egg-bearing females prohibited. Special bag limit for 2-day Sport Season.
Sponge, Commercial ■	Greater than 5" in greatest dimension measured across the top of the sponge		10 per harvester per day	Includes: Sheepswool, Yellow, Grass, Glove, Finger, Wire, Reef & Velvet sponge.
Spotted Seatrout ▲ ♦ ↑ ■	Not less than 15" or more than 20" (statewide) except one fish over 20" per person		5 per harvester per day N.W. Zone 4 per harvester per day S.W. Zone 4 per harvester per day S.E. Zone 6 per harvester per day N.E. Zone	May possess no more than 1 over 20"; included in the regional bag limit. See management zone map on page 8.
Swordfish	47" lower jaw fork length with head attached or 29" cleithrum to keel length if head removed.		1 per harvester per day, not to exceed a maximum of 4 per recreational (not for-hire) vessel or 15 per for-hire vessel per day	All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528. HMS permit required in federal waters. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels.
Tarpon			2 fish possession limit	Requires \$50 tarpon tag to possess or harvest. Snatching and spearing prohibited. Boca Grande Pass has seasonal regulations.
Tilefish, Golden ▲ ●			1 per harvester per day Atlantic	Included within the 3 per harvester per day (Atlantic & Monroe County) and 4 per harvester per day (Gulf excluding Monroe County) Grouper aggregate bag limit. Atlantic: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.
Triggerfish (Gray) ▲ ●	12" fork Atlantic; 14" fork Gulf			Possible rule changes could affect seasons and bag limits. Check MyFWC.com for regulatory updates.
Tripletail ▲ ♦ ↑	15"		2 per harvester per day	Hook & line gear only. No snatch hooks.
Wahoo ▲			2 per harvester per day	
Weakfish ▲ ♦	12"		1 per harvester per day	Regulations apply in parts of Nassau County only. See map on page 9.
▲ Must remain in whole condition (removal of gills and guts allowed). ♦ 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. ■ State regulations apply in federal waters. ↑ Additional gear rules apply. See Reef Fish Gear Rules page 11. ● Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.			PROHIBITED SPECIES It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell, or exchange the following species: Coliath Grouper (Jewfish), Nassau Grouper, Sawfish, Atlantic Angel Shark, Basking Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Sixgill Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Bignose Shark, Caribbean Reef Shark, Caribbean Sharpnose Shark, Dusky Shark, Galapagos Shark, Lemon Shark, Longfin Mako Shark, Narrowtooth Shark, Night Shark, Silky Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Sandbar Shark, Sevengill Shark, Sixgill Shark, Smalltail Shark, Spiny Dogfish, Whale Shark, White Shark, Tiger Shark, Great Hammerhead Shark, Scalloped and Smooth Hammerhead Shark, Manta Ray, Spotted Eagle Ray, Longbill Spearfish, Mediterranean Spearfish, Sturgeon, Florida Queen Conch, Stony, Hard and Fire Corals, Sea Fans, Bahama Starfish, and Longspine Urchin. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited. Puffer fish harvest is prohibited in Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties.	
Harvester: Regardless of what species you are fishing for, bag limits are only for properly licensed individuals and those people exempt from licensing requirements who are actively harvesting. People harvesting may not exceed the individual bag limit and take someone else's bag limit. That is, people (including children) who are not actively harvesting or are not properly licensed (if license is required) may NOT be counted for the purpose of bag limits.			 	
For information on bag limits during multi-day trips, returning with fish from the Bahamas and spearing, please see "Other Information" at: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational			For saltwater fish identification, request a copy of FWC's Fishing Lines magazine or visit: MyFWC.com.	

LICENSES AND PERMITS

Saltwater fishing in Florida...

What you must know before you go

Saltwater fishing licenses are sold online at License.MyFWC.com, at all county tax collectors' offices and at many license agents. Licenses may also be obtained over the telephone by dialing toll-free, 1-888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356). An additional fee is charged for telephone and Internet services. For any recreational licensing information not contained in this publication, please go to MyFWC.com/License.

Florida residents

When applying for a saltwater recreational fishing license, you are considered to be a Florida resident if you are:

- Any person who has resided in Florida for six continuous months prior to applying for a resident license and who claims Florida as their primary residence.
- Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who is stationed in this state and any family members residing with them.

Gold sportsman's license

- **\$100** (valid for one year). Includes:
 - Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses
 - Management Area, Archery, Crossbow, Muzzleloading Gun, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl, Deer, Snook and Spiny Lobster permits
- Florida residents may buy a lifetime saltwater fishing license or a lifetime sportsman license. Holders of lifetime saltwater fishing licenses may fish in saltwater for life and will pay no additional fees. The lifetime license fee includes the taking of snook or spiny lobster, which would otherwise require a separate fee. A lifetime sportsman license allows holders to fish in freshwater or saltwater and to hunt in Florida. Both of the licenses require holders to obey fishing or hunting laws in effect at any given time.

You do not need a license if you are:

- A resident who is saltwater fishing from land or a structure fixed to land who has been determined eligible for the food stamp, temporary cash assistance, or Medicaid Program by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Proof of identification and a benefit issuance or program identification card issued by DCFS or the Agency for Health Care Administration must be on your person when fishing.
- A child under 16 years of age.
- Any resident fishing for recreational purposes only, within her or his county of residence with live or natural bait, using poles or lines not equipped with a fishing line retrieval mechanism.
- Fishing from a for-hire vessel—guide, charter, party boat—that has a valid charter boat license or charter captain license.
- A holder of a valid saltwater products license.
- A Florida resident 65 years of age or older

Costs for licenses

In addition to the cost of licenses and permits specified in this section, license agents may charge an issuance fee for selling licenses or permits. **Note: All sales are final.**

Florida resident licenses

One-Year Shoreline Only License	\$0.00
Covers shoreline fishing only , not fishing from a watercraft or from shore reached by watercraft.	
One-Year License	\$17.00
Covers both watercraft and shoreline fishing.	
Youth Saltwater Fishing License — valid until 17th birthday	\$17.00
Five-Year License	\$79.00

Combination licenses (Florida residents only)

Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater	\$32.50
Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater & Hunting	\$48.00
One-Year Gold Sportsman's License	\$100.00
One-Year Military Gold Sportsman's License	\$20.00
(Offers the same privileges as the Gold Sportsman's License. Available only to Florida residents who are active or retired members of the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve, the National Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard or the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, upon submission of a current military identification card and proof of Florida residency. Purchase at county tax collector's offices only.)	

Lifetime saltwater fishing license (Florida residents only; includes Snook and Lobster Permits)

Age: 0-4	\$126.50
Age: 5-12	\$226.50
Age: 13 or older	\$301.50

Lifetime sportsman license (Florida residents only)

Age: 0-4	\$401.50
Age: 5-12	\$701.50
Age: 13 or older	\$1,001.50

Non-resident licenses

Three-day License	\$17.00
Seven-day License	\$30.00
One-Year License	\$47.00

Permits

Snook Permit	\$10.00
Five-Year Snook Permit (Florida residents only)	\$50.00
Spiny Lobster Permit	\$5.00
Five-Year Spiny Lobster Permit (Florida residents only)	\$25.00
Tarpon Tag (available only at tax collector offices)	\$51.50

If you are required to have a license, even the \$0.00 shoreline license, you are required to purchase permits to harvest Snook and Spiny Lobster.

and you possess proof of age and residency, such as a Florida driver's license or ID, or an optional no-cost Resident Senior Citizen Hunting and Fishing Certificate.

- A Florida resident who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, who is not stationed in this state, while on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders. This does not include family members.
- Any person who has been accepted as a client for developmental services by the Department of Children and Family Services, provided the department furnishes proof thereof.
- Fishing for recreational purposes from a pier that has a valid pier saltwater fishing license.
- Fishing from a boat that has a valid recreational vessel fishing license.
- A Florida resident who is fishing for mullet in freshwater with a valid Florida *freshwater* fishing license.
- A Florida resident who possesses a no-cost Florida Resident Disabled Person Hunting and Fishing Certificate. In order to qualify for this, applicants must provide a certification of total and permanent disability

from the United States Armed Forces, Railroad Retirement Board, Florida Worker's Compensation or the United States Veterans Administration. Alternatively, current documentation from the Social Security Administration for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits also will be accepted.

Other saltwater fishing fees

Licenses (Charter Boat or Charter Captain) are required for all vessels that charge a fee (for-hire vessels) to take passengers out to catch marine fish.

Eleven or more customers	\$801.50
Five to ten customers	\$401.50
Four or fewer customers	\$201.50

Optional fees include the annual Recreational Vessel fee (\$2,001.50) for not-for-hire pleasure craft and the annual Pier license (\$501.50). For charter licensing information, contact your local county tax collector's office or visit MyFWC.com.

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SALTWATER REGULATIONS

KEYS TO IDENTIFYING THE JACKS

Florida has a variety of jack species, and their similar appearance sometimes leads to misidentification. Knowing a few of the key distinguishing characteristics for each species can make the identification process easy.

FLORIDA JACKS	
Greater Amberjack 	Size: Commonly 10–40 lb. (max. 140 lb.) Stripe: Front of eye to 1 st dorsal Fin Height: 2 nd dorsal more than double height of 1 st dorsal Color: Amber colored streak from eye to tail Body Shape: More elongated and rounder (less laterally compressed) than Lesser AJ and Almaco
Lesser Amberjack 	Size: Commonly 2–7 lb. (max. 12 lb.) Stripe: Eye to top of head in front of 1 st dorsal Fin Height: 2 nd dorsal less than double height of 1 st dorsal Body Shape: Less elongated and less round (more laterally compressed) than Greater AJ
Almaco Jack 	Size: Commonly 10–30 lb. (max. 80 lb.) Stripe: Eye to 1 st dorsal Fin Height: 2 nd dorsal 3–4 times height of 1 st dorsal Fin Location: Anal fin starts nearly as far forward as 2 nd dorsal Body Shape: Less elongated and less round than Greater AJ
Banded Rudderfish 	Size: Commonly 2–3 lb. (max. 10 lb.) Stripe: Dark eye stripe and 6 dark bars in juveniles only Fin Height: 2 nd dorsal 2 times height of 1 st dorsal Color: Greenish to blue in color above lateral line Body Shape: More elongated and rounder than Lesser AJ Tail: White tips on tail
Jack Crevalle 	Size: Commonly 3–20 lb. (max. 50 lb.) Color: Bright yellow on lower portions of body and fins, black spot on edge of gill cover Pectoral Fins: Long yellow pectoral fins with black spot at base Body Shape: Deep body with rounded head and blunt nose

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Participate in Fisheries Management

Report Your Catch!

The Snook and Gamefish Foundation, in partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and other partners, has established the **Angler Action** recreational data collection system. Logging and recording your trip and catch information through Angler Action is fast and easy. The system not only builds valuable data to be used in the management of recreational fisheries, but also functions as a record of your own fishing activity.

Angler action tools, including the **iAngler** smart-phone App, were developed through collaboration between research scientists and anglers. This ensures that the data is valuable to the science behind fisheries management decisions.

Angler Action data was used in the FWC 2011 Snook Stock Assessment and is slated for use in other species' stock assessments and research projects. Get involved in fisheries management by providing information on your next saltwater trip! Read more at SnookFoundation.org/data.

Download the iAngler Mobile Applications

for managing Angler Action data from your iPhone, iPad, Android Phone and Tablets. iAngler allows you to provide needed data without ever leaving your favorite fishing location. If a smartphone with the iAngler app is not available, you can also record information about the fish you catch and enter the data from your home computer once you are back on shore.

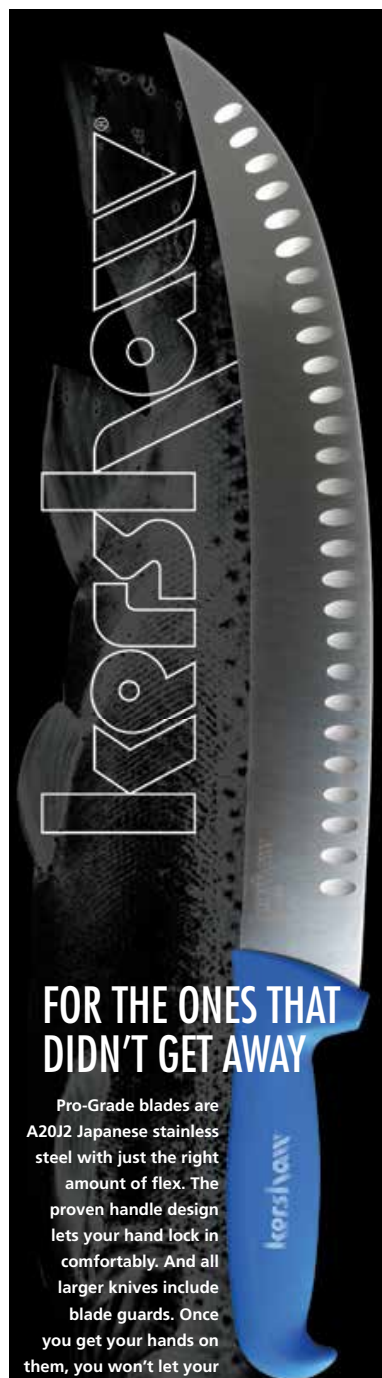
FWC Direct Data Collection

The FWC also collects data for specific species through "catch cards" and "tag returns." To receive a red snapper catch card with free return postage, e-mail your complete mailing address to FishStats@MyFWC.com. Or, if you don't mind paying postage, download a catch card. Please provide a return address with the completed catch card, and FWC will send you a free adhesive fish ruler to place on your boat or cooler.

If you catch a tagged snapper, grouper, or gray triggerfish, please record the tag number, the date, time and location of capture, fish length, and type of bait used. If a tagged fish is to be released, please record the tag number but do not remove the tag. Leaving a tag in a released fish allows FWC to obtain additional recapture data. Call the Angler Tag Return Hotline at 1-800-367-4461 or e-mail tagreturn@MyFWC.com with this information, and FWC will send you a free T-shirt!



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SALTWATER REGULATIONS

Marine life regulations

Requirements for
Recreational Marine Life Harvest:

- Recreational saltwater fishing license
- Organisms must be landed and kept alive
- A continuously circulating live well, aeration or oxygenation system of adequate size to maintain these organisms in a healthy condition
- **Allowable Gear:** hand held net, drop net, rod, barrier net, slurp gun (use of quinaldine is prohibited)*
- **Bag Limit:** 20 organisms per person per day; only 5 of any one species allowed within the 20-organism bag limit
- **Possession Limit:** 2-day possession limit, 40 total organisms, no more than 10 of any one species allowed
- **Allowable substrate:** see species specifications in table
- **Closed areas:** Some closed areas exist**
- Sale of recreationally caught marine life organisms is prohibited
- Regulations apply in federal waters

* Some organisms have additional gear limitations, see chart.

** Various closed areas exist. See regulations for Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park and Florida's State Parks before collecting in these areas.

Additional rules apply to the collection of shells containing live organisms in Lee or Manatee counties.

See MyFWC.com for FAQs about marine life harvest and information about collecting shells with live organisms.

Marine Life — Fish

SPECIES	REMARKS ¹	SIZE LIMITS (total length unless otherwise noted)
Angelfish	No more than 5 per person per day in any combination	Gray, French Angelfish: 1½ – 8" slot limit Blue, Queen Angelfish: 1¾ – 8" slot limit Rock Beauty: 2 – 5" slot limit 1 – 4" slot limit
Butterflyfish		
Filefish/Triggerfish	Except Unicorn Filefish, Gray Triggerfish and Ocean Triggerfish	
Gobies		Maximum size limit: 2"
Hamlets/Seabasses	Except reef fish ² and Longtail Bass	
Jawfish		Maximum size limit: 4"
Parrotfish		Maximum size limit: 12"
Porkfish		Minimum size limit: 1½"
Pufferfish, Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	Includes Sharpnose Pufferfish, Striped Burrfish, Spotted Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	
Tangs and Surgeonfish		Maximum size limit (fork length): 9"
Wrasse/Hogfish/Razorfish	Except Hogfish Snapper	Spanish Hogfish: 2 – 8" slot limit Cuban Hogfish: 3 – 8" slot limit

Other Marine Life fish include⁴: Basslets, Batfish, Blackbar Soldierfish, Blennies, Brotulas (Black and Key), Cardinalfish, Clingfish, Cornetfish, Damselfish, Eels (Moray and Snake), Frogfish, Hawkfish, High-hat/Jackknife-fish/Spotted Drum/Cubbyu, Pipefish, Reef Croakers, Seahorses, Sleepers, Yellow Stingray, Sweepers, Toadfish, Trumpetfish and Trunkfish/Cowfish.

Marine Life — Invertebrates

SPECIES	REMARKS ¹
Anemones	Corallimorphs and Zoanthids: No more than 5 polyps of each may be landed per person per day, must be harvested with a flexible blade no wider than 2". Corallimorphs must be harvested as single polyps only. Zero bag limit on Giant Anemone (<i>Condylactis gigantea</i>).
Conch, Queen	Harvest prohibited
Corals, Hard (Stony)	Harvest prohibited
Corals, Soft (Octocorals)	No more than 6 octocoral colonies per person per day in any combination; harvest of attached substrate within 1" of base is permitted; harvest closes when quota met.
Crab, Hermit	Except Land Hermit Crabs
Crab, Horseshoe	Harvest prohibited
Live Rock	Harvest prohibited
Octopods ³	Except Common Octopus
Sea Fans	Harvest of Venus Sea Fan and Common (Purple) Sea Fan prohibited
Siphonophores/Hydroids	Harvest of Fire Coral prohibited
Sponges	Except Sheepswool, Yellow, Grass, Glove, Finger, Wire, Reef and Velvet Sponges; no more than 5 sponges per harvester per day in any combination; harvest of substrate within 1" of base permitted north and west of the southernmost point of Egmont Key, no substrate allowed south of Egmont Key
Starfish ³	Harvest of Bahama Starfish (Cushion Sea Star) prohibited
Urchins ³	Except Sand Dollars & Sea Biscuits; harvest of Longspine Urchin prohibited

Other Marine Life invertebrates include⁴: Brittlestars³, Decorator (Furcate Spider) Crab, False Arrow Crab, Green Clinging (Emerald) Crab, Nimble Spray (Urchin) Crab, Red Mithrax Crab, Red-Ridged Clinging Crab, Spotted Porcelain Crab, Yellowline Arrow Crab, Fileclams³, Upside-down Jellyfish, Nudibranchs/Sea Slugs³, Sea Cucumbers³, Sea Lilies, Cleaner/Peppermint Shrimp, Coral Shrimp, Snapping Shrimp, Nassarius Snails³, Starsnails³, Featherduster Worms and Calcareous Tube Worms.

Marine Life — Plants

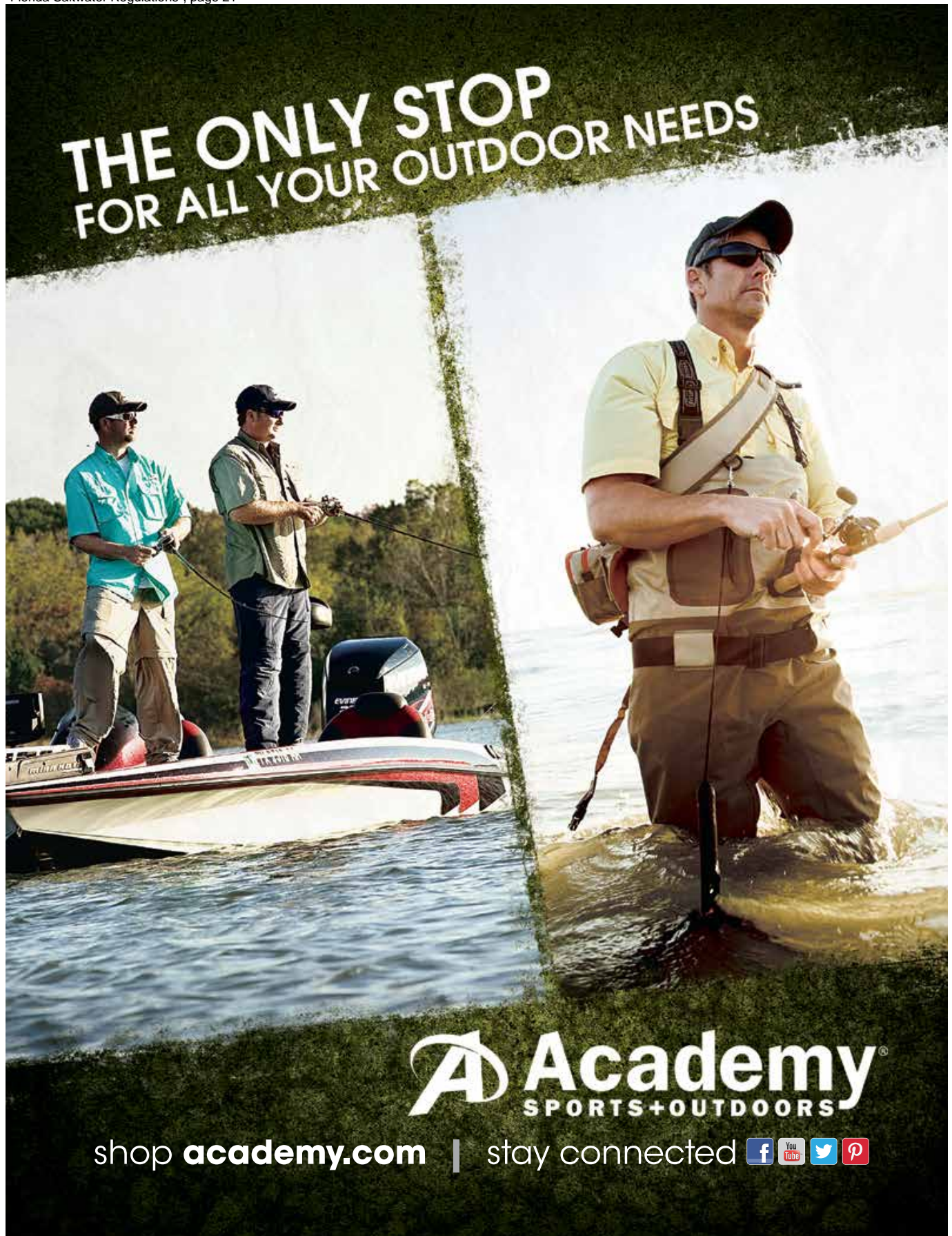
SPECIES	LIMITS
Algae, Coralline Red	One gallon of tropical ornamental marine plants per day in any combination; 2 gallon maximum possession limit
Caulerpa	
Halimeda/Mermaid's Fan/Mermaid's Shaving Brush	

¹ Unless otherwise noted, combined bag limit of 20 marine life fish and invertebrates per person per day, only 5 of any one species allowed. A 2-day possession limit also applies (40 total organisms, only 10 of any one species).

² Such as groupers, snappers, seabass and amberjacks. Must abide by regulations for these species on pages 12–13.





³ Bag limit of 2 live shells of any single species per harvester per day in Manatee County. Harvest prohibited in Lee County.

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SALTWATER REGULATIONS**New Artificial Reef Locations***

COUNTY	DEPLOY DATE	REEF NAME	MATERIAL	TONS	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	DEPTH	RELIEF
Volusia	9/1/12	Volusia Site 11 S	296 Concrete Culverts & Structures	320.00	29°16.102' N	80°41.928' W	83	9
Volusia	8/30/12	Volusia Site 7 Se	180 Concrete Culverts & Structures	367.00	29°00.940' N	80°40.783' W	54	7
Volusia	8/24/12	Volusia Site 5 E	215 Concrete Culverts & Structures	366.00	29°07.168' N	80°48.030' W	62	5
Volusia	8/22/12	Volusia Site 12 W	77 Concrete Culverts & Structures	163.00	29°11.890' N	80°46.792' W	70	12
Volusia	8/20/12	Volusia Site 6 Nne	202 Concrete Culverts & Structures	345.00	29°03.352' N	80°42.915' W	67	9
Volusia	8/17/12	Volusia Site 2 Middle	258 Concrete Culverts & Structures	386.00	29°09.593' N	80°40.640' W	80	10
Palm Beach	8/15/12	Phil Foster Park Snorkel Trail	613 Tons Of Limestone Rock	613.00	26°46.950' N	80°02.053' W	8	4
Volusia	8/15/12	Volusia Site 11 N	186 Concrete Culverts & Structures	365.00	29°16.710' N	80°41.911' W	89	6
Dade	8/13/12	Golden Beach Eternal Reefballs Site #14	6 Concrete Modules Reefballs	1.50	25°57.782' N	80°05.884' W	43	4
Volusia	8/13/12	Volusia Site 10 W	199 Concrete Culverts & Structures	383.50	29°21.430' N	80°49.976' W	64	9
Volusia	8/11/12	Volusia Site 7 Sw	257 Concrete Culverts & Structures	382.70	29°00.952' N	80°41.285' W	53	11
Palm Beach	8/10/12	Jupiter Inlet Stepping Stones Reef	Rock Limestone	860.60	26°57.210' N	80°03.730' W	32	7
Bay	8/9/12	MB-141, John Thompson Reef	3 Concrete Walter Ecosystem Modules on Pilings	6.00	29°54.168' N	85°27.972' W	22	5
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #10	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.509' N	85°50.700' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #9	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.664' N	85°50.432' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #8	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.906' N	85°50.706' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #7	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.667' N	85°50.872' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #6	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.781' N	85°50.534' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #5	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.776' N	85°50.697' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #4	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.775' N	85°50.857' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #3	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.782' N	85°51.006' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #2	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.918' N	85°50.519' W	91	8
Bay	8/9/12	Dupont Modules #1	4 Concrete Modules Of Three Types	9.00	29°58.917' N	85°50.851' W	91	8
Volusia	8/9/12	Volusia Site 6 SSE	205 Concrete Culverts & Structures	365.50	29°02.791' N	80°42.919' W	63	5
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) Center #2	4 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	14.00	30°06.788' N	86°18.616' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NE Leg End	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.972' N	86°18.321' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NE Leg #2	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.924' N	86°18.397' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NE Leg #3	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.881' N	86°18.486' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NE Leg #4	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.843' N	86°18.581' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SW Leg #4	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.749' N	86°18.720' W	121	8

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COUNTY	DEPLOY DATE	REEF NAME	MATERIAL	TONS	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	DEPTH	RELIEF
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SW Leg #3	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.703' N	86°18.786' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SW Leg #2	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.647' N	86°18.852' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SE Leg End	4 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	14.00	30°06.590' N	86°18.933' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SE Leg #2	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.637' N	86°18.400' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SE Leg #3	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.701' N	86°18.473' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) SE Leg #4	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.750' N	86°18.557' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) Center	4 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	14.00	30°06.807' N	86°18.666' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NW Leg #4	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.845' N	86°18.736' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NW Leg #3	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.890' N	86°18.818' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NW Leg #2	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.945' N	86°18.901' W	121	8
Okaloosa	8/7/12	Aquatic Life Ecosystem (ALE) NW Leg End	2 Concrete Walter Florida Limestone Modules	7.00	30°06.986' N	86°18.959' W	121	8
Volusia	8/7/12	Volusia Site 5 W	162 Concrete Culverts & Structures	351.60	29°07.188' N	80°48.635' W	62	6
Volusia	8/3/12	Volusia Site 4 S	215 Concrete Culverts & Structures	384.00	29°19.023' N	80°44.658' W	80	8
Volusia	8/1/12	Volusia Site 3 SW	211 Concrete Culverts & Structures	386.00	29°11.975' N	80°45.077' W	85	8
Volusia	7/30/12	Volusia Site 3 SE	104 Concrete Culverts & Structures	376.00	29°11.432' N	80°44.304' W	80	10
Volusia	7/27/12	Volusia Site 1 SW	90 Concrete Culverts & Structures	364.00	29°06.860' N	80°42.011' W	70	8
Volusia	7/25/12	Volusia Site 12 S	222 Concrete Culverts & Structures	522.00	29°11.595' N	80°46.478' W	73	8
Taylor	7/18/12	SFMA-Public Reef #8	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°38.328' N	83°44.909' W	35	3
Taylor	7/18/12	SFMA-Public Reef #7	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°38.389' N	83°43.948' W	35	3
Taylor	7/18/12	SFMA-Public Reef #6	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°38.851' N	83°44.428' W	35	3
Martin	7/17/12	Kyle's Crossbar Reef	277 Concrete Culverts, Pilings and Box Culverts	904.00	27°12.720' N	80°05.610' W	58	20
Taylor	7/16/12	SFMA-Public Reef #5	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°39.308' N	83°44.758' W	35	3
Taylor	7/16/12	SFMA-Public Reef #4	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°38.514' N	83°44.361' W	39	3
Taylor	7/16/12	SFMA-Public Reef #3	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°38.946' N	83°45.048' W	40	3
Taylor	7/16/12	SFMA-Public Reef #2	24 Concrete Modules Cubes	24.00	29°39.595' N	83°44.816' W	35	3
Martin	7/6/12	Aaron Vaughn Memorial Reef	270 Concrete Piling Cutoffs	1037.00	27°12.785' N	80°05.610' W	60	15
Lee	7/2/12	USS Mohawk CGC V.M.R.	Vessel Metal Coast Guard Cutter 165'		26°33.075' N	82°43.481' W	90	55
St. Lucie	4/27/12	St. Lucie 2012 Offshore Reef-02	30 Concrete Culverts and Manholes	1036.00	27°23.892' N	80°02.531' W	111	14
St. Lucie	4/10/12	St. Lucie 2012 Offshore Reef-01	200 Concrete Culverts	996.00	27°24.228' N	80°01.096' W	158	14

* Chart represents a small sample of more than 2,000 artificial reef sites in Florida; for additional reef locations, visit MyFWC.com/Fishing.

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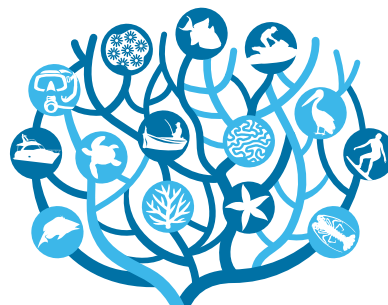
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SALTWATER REGULATIONS

NEW RULES FOR ATLANTIC BLACK SEA BASS

Atlantic black sea bass is in a federal rebuilding plan that started in 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in 2016. The 2011 stock assessment for Atlantic black sea bass found that overfishing is still occurring. ►



In an effort to continue rebuilding the fishery, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council recently increased the recreational minimum size limit from 12 to 13 inches and retained the existing daily bag limit of five fish per person in Atlantic federal waters.

In December 2012, the FWC Commission also approved rule changes to make black sea bass size and bag limits in state waters of the Atlantic consistent with the federal limits. The new minimum size limit for recreational harvest of Atlantic black sea bass will be 13 inches total length, and the new daily bag limit will be five fish per person with no vessel limits. These changes will become effective in state waters of the Atlantic on February 1, 2013.

These new regulations are designed to rebuild the Atlantic black sea bass fishery and do not affect black sea bass regulations in the Gulf of Mexico. A fully rebuilt fishery should allow for longer recreational seasons in federal waters and increased opportunities for recreational anglers.

2013 BLUE CRAB TRAP CLOSURES—DON'T LOSE YOUR TRAPS!

What's the issue? Each year, the harvest of blue crabs with traps is prohibited for up to 10 consecutive days in certain areas around the state. These closures are in place to facilitate the identification and removal of traps that have become lost or abandoned and pose a potential threat to the environment and may become hazards to boaters. All blue crab traps that remain in the water (unless they are secured to private property) in areas that are subject to these closures are considered derelict and may be removed and destroyed by the FWC or by FWC-authorized, volunteer trap cleanup groups. Trap closures during odd numbered years occur on the Gulf and southeast coast (see map). On even numbered years, closures occur on the east coast only.

What do you need to know? Trap closures apply to both commercial and recreational traps, and "trap" closures are not synonymous with "fisheries" closures. During a trap closure, recreational anglers can continue to harvest blue crabs with traps if they are secured to private property such as a vessel or dock. Harvesters can also continue to take blue crabs during a blue crab trap closure with other legal gear such as fold-up traps, hook and line, lift nets, dip nets, drop nets, etc. Be aware of when and where these closures will be in effect before you place your traps in the water. Traps must be removed from the water before 12:01 a.m. local time on the first day of each closure. You can stay up

to date with current regulations by checking the FWC website: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational, print and electronic publications, the electronic newsletter "Hot Sheet", news releases and social media. If you plan to use blue crab traps, please be aware of the trap closures and help others by sharing this information.

How can you help?

You can help to remove lost and abandoned traps from Florida waters by organizing or participating in a volunteer derelict trap and trap debris cleanup event that has been authorized by the FWC. It is illegal to remove or otherwise molest traps that do not belong to you without the express written permission of the trap owner, or without prior authorization from the FWC to conduct a volunteer trap cleanup event. The FWC does not organize or coordinate volunteer group trap cleanup events. If you are interested in participating in an organized derelict trap cleanup event, please contact the event organizer for information on how you may volunteer. Additional information regarding these cleanups and how to get involved online at: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Trap-debris/Volunteer-program/.



When and where are the 2013 trap closures?

- Jan. 5–14: Franklin through Escambia Counties (all waters within 3 nautical miles of shore; excluding waters of the Ochlockonee River and Ochlockonee Bay)
- July 10–19: Broward through Pasco Counties (all waters within 3 nautical miles of shore)
- July 20–29: Hernando through Wakulla Counties (all waters within 3 nautical miles of shore; including waters of the Ochlockonee River and Ochlockonee Bay)
- Sept. 20–Oct. 4: All state waters of the Gulf of Mexico between 3 and 9 nautical miles from shore

LAW ENFORCEMENT



The FWC's Division of Law Enforcement patrols Florida's coastal waters to provide assistance to boaters and anglers as well as to enforce Florida's saltwater fishing and boating laws. FWC officers assist boaters who are in distress, provide advice and direction to those who are traveling Florida's coastline and waterways, and may issue citations for violations of state and federal fishing, wildlife and boating laws.

In emergencies or if state fisheries, wildlife or boating laws are being violated, call 888-404-FWCC (3922) or for cell phone users throughout the state, dial *FWC (*392) depending on your location, hail on VHF Channel 16 or report violations via text message. Most cell phones allow users to send text messages directly to an email address. You can text Tip@MyFWC.com; standard usage fees may apply.

Resource information

Join the nation's largest conservation law enforcement agency—become an FWC law enforcement officer.

For more information contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-866-FWC-HIRE (392-4473) or visit MyFWC.com/Law

- To purchase fishing licenses:
888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356)
License.MyFWC.com
- FWC Division of Law Enforcement
888-404-FWCC (3922)
- For up-to-date information on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill please visit MyFWC.com/OilSpill
- To report fish and wildlife law violations, call the Wildlife Alert Hotline: 888-404-FWCC (3922)
- FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
727-896-8626
MyFWC.com/Research
- To report fish kills:
800-636-0511
- To report fish tags:
800-367-4461
TagReturn@MyFWC.com
- To report Sawfish sightings:
941-255-7403
sawfish@MyFWC.com
- Bird Entanglement
888-404-3922
727-391-6211 for Tampa area
- To request Tarpon DNA Sampling Kits:
800-367-4461
TarponGenetics@MyFWC.com
- Red Tide Information Hotline
866-300-9399 toll free in Florida
727-552-2488 nationwide
- Aquatic Toxins Hotline
888-232-8635
- Shellfish Harvesting Questions
FDACS, 850-488-5471
www.floridaaquaculture.com
- To report Lionfish sightings, please visit MyFWC.com/Reportlionfish or call 1-877-786-7267

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The Lionfish INVASION

IS IN FULL SWING

*What can be done
to minimize the impacts?*



Lionfish pose a significant threat to Florida's native marine species

and the ecosystem and, by the looks of it, the invasive species is not going anywhere, anytime soon. While lionfish fit nicely into the food web within their native Indo-Pacific range, that's not the case in this part of the world. Species that control lionfish populations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans do not exist here. The lack of natural control mechanisms and the lionfish's ability to reproduce rapidly is allowing the lionfish population to expand at an alarming pace.

It doesn't take an economist to figure out that anything that negatively impacts Florida's marine ecology will also negatively impact our fisheries and the overall economy of Florida. Florida's commercial and recreational fisheries have an estimated 10 billion dollar economic value, and while no one can accurately predict future economic impacts, the stakes are far too high to simply wait for Mother Nature to address this problem.

On a more positive note, once lionfish reach a juvenile or adult stage, they generally remain at a specific location. Lionfish are also easy to identify and relatively easy to harvest.

Control efforts in many locations within the invaded range (including the Florida Keys) have shown that focused and consistent lionfish removal efforts can successfully reduce lionfish numbers and limit ecological impacts. The problem is, Florida has a vast amount of suitable habitat for lionfish and it's clear that Florida will not have the manpower or economic resources to control lionfish at all locations.

So what is being done and what should be done?

Public and private entities are continuing research and monitoring efforts to track the range and distribution of the invasion. This information helps establish and support efficient and effective control programs. Public assistance by divers is imperative, and everyone can help by reporting all harvests and sightings at: <http://Nas.er.usgs.gov/SightingReport.aspx>. On the regulatory front, the FWC has removed the daily bag limit and is allowing persons to harvest lionfish without a recreational fishing license so long as they are doing so with pole spears, Hawaiian slings, dip nets and other devices designed and marketed exclusively for lionfish. These rule changes

are in effect through August 2013 and may be extended. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is issuing special permits to allow lionfish control in no harvest zones. Florida SeaGrant administers a grant program to support research efforts. Finally, the FWC is developing informational materials to get the word out about the lionfish problem and incentive programs to support and encourage lionfish removal.

Private organizations are playing a huge role by supporting research and hosting lionfish derbies to encourage removal. The Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) is also supporting research and conducting workshops to provide education and safe handling information. For further information on lionfish research, handling and control efforts please visit: Reef.org or MyFWC.com/Wildlife-habitats/Nonnatives/Marine-species/Lionfish.

Mother Nature has ways of taking care of biological invasions, but those processes take time. For now, it's up to us to protect our important marine resources. Please get involved and help to spread the word about the invasive lionfish! ■

Do you have a photo of your prize catch and want to show it off?

If so, the FWC invites you to participate in the Ethical Angler Photo Recognition Program! Send in your photo, along with a signed photo release form to EthicalAngler@MyFWC.com and your photo may appear on the next cover of the regulations!

For additional information, please visit MyFWC.com/Fishing.



"Florida Saltwater Regulations", page 27

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