

FLORIDA FRESHWATER

2011

# FISHING REGULATIONS

Valid from July 1, 2011  
to June 30, 2012

## General Statewide Freshwater Fishing Regulations

pages 12–14



Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission

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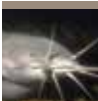
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Photo courtesy of Glen Lau

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**On the cover**

A woman and her dog enjoy a warm, summer day crappie fishing.



For the latest rules, always visit: [FLrules.org](http://FLrules.org)  
FWC rules are in chapter 68.



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# Commissioners' Message



## Today's youth are the future of Florida's freshwater fisheries.

The Sunshine State is blessed with 3 million acres of freshwater lakes, ponds and reservoirs and more than 12,000 miles of fishable rivers, streams and canals.

Add to that a year-round fishing season and more than 40 species of freshwater fish that anglers harvest, and it is safe to say we have great fisheries resources. More than 1.25 million anglers enjoy freshwater recreational fishing in Florida annually, and they generate an economic impact of \$2.5 billion and support 24,800 jobs in Florida.

We invite you to join the fun and excitement.

Managing Florida's freshwater fisheries requires public input, the best available science, habitat management, appropriate stocking programs and carefully tailored and enforced regulations.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is led by a seven-member board of commissioners who set priorities and help attain the necessary resources to accomplish the mission. They merge public input with science to manage fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.

The FWC supports and promotes the recreational fishing tradition by opening new areas, enhancing access and recruiting new anglers. We are especially mindful of the need to introduce children and under-represented groups to nature.

The Nielson Company reported that children 2 to 5 years old spend more than 32 hours a week in front of a TV. Similarly, the Keiser Family Foundation, documented school-age children spending 7.5 hours a day on electronic media. Preschool children who are overweight more than tripled from 5.8 percent in 1971 to 18.4 percent in 2009. Those sedentary lifestyles led to the weight gain as well as multiple health and social problems.

"Creating the Next Generation that Cares" is a major FWC effort. David Sobel, a noted educator said that we have to "give children a chance to love the earth before we ask them to save it." By getting children and families outdoors and engaged in active nature-based recreation, such as fishing, we not only create a caring generation to ensure the future of our resources, but benefit these new anglers by giving them a fun activity that can enhance their physical and mental well-being.

This initiative includes our efforts to build a series of Florida Youth Conservation Centers around the state and to engage other partners through the Get Outdoors Florida! Coalition ([MyFWC.com/Youth](http://MyFWC.com/Youth)).

Habitat and species management plans are also critical to our long-term success. This publication speaks to freshwater fishing regulations – additional tools we use to ensure future generations share our rich, natural heritage. The FWC has an underlying philosophy that regulations must not be more restrictive than necessary to conserve Florida's fish and wildlife. Thanks to the stewardship of generations who lived here before us, fishing opportunities abound. While you're at it, take a kid with you. This is their Florida too, and they will be happier, healthier and even smarter for it.



## About this Guide

This high-quality regulation guide is offered to you by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

J.F. Griffin is an award winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish & wildlife regulation books. J.F. Griffin supports the FWC staff in the design, layout and editing of the guides. They also manage the marketing and sales of advertising to appropriate businesses within the book.

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## Freshwater Rule Changes

Effective July 1, 2011

- Orange and Lochloosa Lakes—the number of bass longer than 24 inches total length that an angler may take is limited to one. Anglers are encouraged to use effective catch-and-release techniques to help extend the quality of this fishery. As before, all bass between 15 and 24 inches total length must be released immediately unharmed. Anglers are encouraged to harvest up to three (only two if one longer than 24 inches is also taken) bass shorter than 15 inches total length each day. This allows the larger fish to continue to grow quickly to trophy size due to less competition.
- Smith Lake—Has been removed from the Fish Management Area system.

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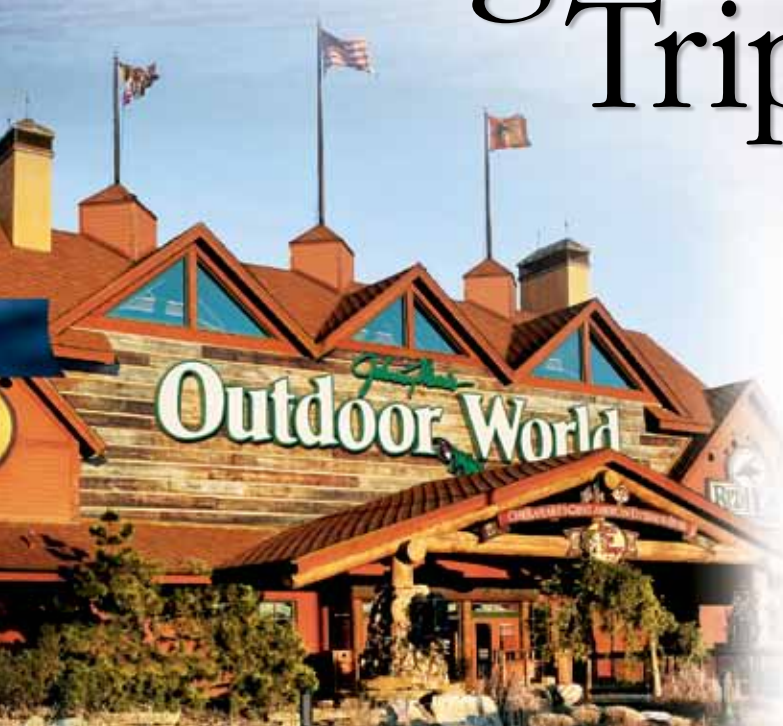
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This free booklet is your guide to Florida's freshwater fishing laws and regulations. The Florida Wildlife Code is the final authority on fishing laws ([www.FLrules.org](http://www.FLrules.org)). The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) strives to ensure this information is accurate but assumes no liability for errors that may occur. In addition, rules can change between publications. Contact the FWC if you have questions not adequately covered in this booklet; see contact list and map below. This publication is valid from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

Florida remains the "Fishing Capital of the World," due to great resources and responsible management. We consider the quality of life that is associated with recreational activities and living in a healthy environment to be extremely important to Floridians and visitors and are also striving to make Florida the undisputed "Bass Fishing Capital."

The FWC uses the best scientific management possible to help fulfill its mission of "Managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people." To fund those efforts, the Legislature sets fishing license fees and exemptions, as well as penalties for violating fish and wildlife conservation laws. **State law guarantees money from sale of fishing licenses goes to the FWC and cannot be diverted.**

In 1950, congressmen Dingell and Johnson, at the request of anglers and the fishing industry, created the original Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) program wherein fishing tackle was assessed an excise

fee and the monies returned to the states for fish restoration projects. The "Wallop-Breaux" amendment in 1984 expanded the act by adding import duties on sport fishing equipment, pleasure boats and yachts as well as taxes on motorboat fuels. The result is one of the most successful "user-pays, user-benefits" programs in the world, with taxes from sale of outdoor recreation supplies directly enhancing and promoting the resource.

The amount of money Florida receives from SFR is based on the size of the state and the number of paid licensed anglers—not licenses and permits, but the people who hold them. For instance, an angler with freshwater and saltwater licenses and a snook permit counts as one holder. Each certified holder generates approximately \$7.49 more for sportfish restoration providing nearly \$14 million for Florida in 2009.

Of those monies 15 percent went to boating access—building and repairing ramps and courtesy docks. The remainder went to fresh and saltwater fisheries conservation projects such as habitat restoration, fish stocking, artificial reefs construction, and youth fishing clinics.

The FWC encourages all anglers to buy a license ([MyFWC.com/License](http://MyFWC.com/License)). Even if you are legally exempt, you can contribute to the future of our fisheries resources by buying a license and helping the FWC keep your federal tax dollars in Florida to support sportfish restoration.

Recreational fishing often is portrayed in advertising because it is an enjoyable, whole-

some experience that reflects a happy and healthy lifestyle. Moreover, it is the number one gateway activity to get youth connected to nature in active outdoor recreation, which can reduce obesity, improve grades and most of all adds enjoyment to their lives. The FWC is working hard to ensure safe and sustainable recreational fishing for all of our citizens and guests and depends on your license fees to make sure there are fish for tomorrow.

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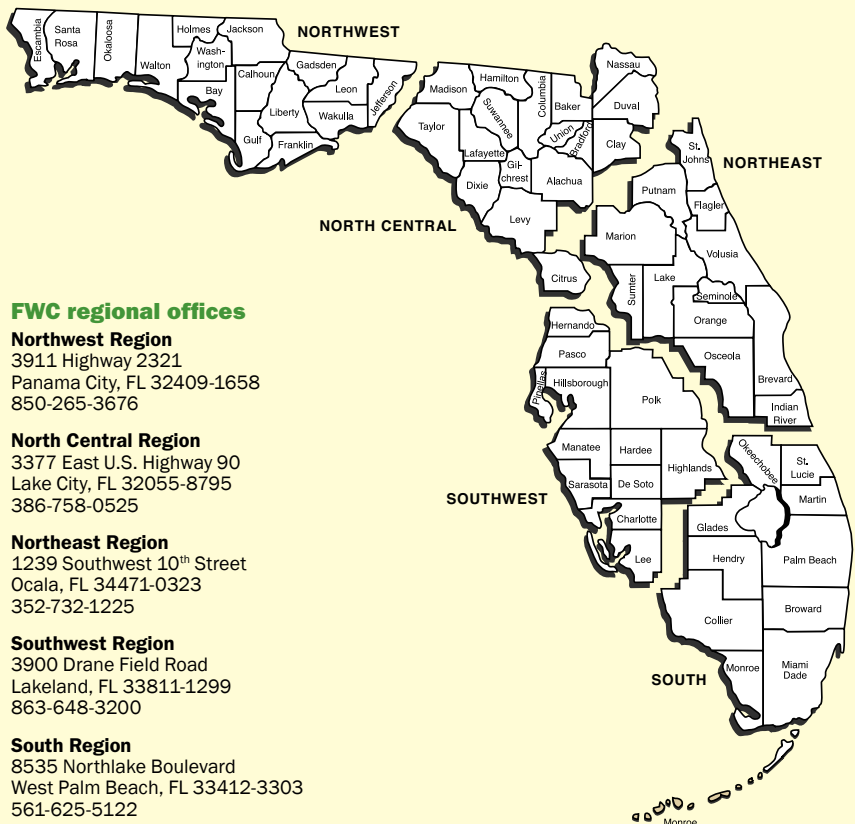
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# Tips from the Pros

## Take a Kid Fishing

**SHAW GRIGSBY**, Tournament angler, Host of “One More Cast” and Author of “Bass Master Shaw Grigsby: Notes on Fishing and Life”



Some of my fondest memories are of the times when I went fishing with my parents, children and grandson. As I look back on those memories, it was not the fish that I remember the most, it was the experiences.

The most important thing I have learned about taking a child fishing is to make it their day. If they get to the water and don't want to fish, that's okay. Allow the kids to do what they want, ride around in the boat, wade and catch little fish along the bank, or go swimming. When they are ready to fish, they will.

Once you get to fish, let them land the fish, even the ones you hook. Take a minute and look at the fish, its fins, gills and colors. Show them how to gently hold the fish, let it go and watch it swim away or take it home and let them help you prepare it for dinner.

Take time to observe what is going on around you while you fish. Watch for wildlife, you never know what you will see. Fishing is a wonderful way to introduce our children to the outdoors and to begin to teach them how to care for the environment.

## Concentration adds to Success and Enjoyment

**GLEN LAU**, Master Cinematographer, Author of “Bass Forever”



Concentration and focus are critical aspects of being a good bass fisherman. Casting, boat position and lure selection are all important to getting the bass to strike, but once you've got your bait or lure in the water, concentration becomes just as important to your success. You

can elevate your fishing dramatically by concentrating on what you are doing and focusing on the environment around you. This is really nothing more than living in the moment and not letting work or home distractions take away from your fishing time.

Glen Lau, one of America's most accomplished bass photographers and cinematographers, has produced an extraordinary collection of award-winning films and still photographs of bass in its natural environment. Many of his action-packed and highly informative films are available on DVD along with art prints ready for framing from [Shop.WildlifeFlorida.org](http://Shop.WildlifeFlorida.org). A portion of the sale supports the Florida Bass Conservation Center (see page 16).

## Bass Vegetation Patterns

**WALT REYNOLDS**, BASS Touring Pro (retired)



When you grab the family and head to the lake for some weekend fishing, the first question to enter your mind is “where to go.” The hardest part of ensuring a successful trip is finding fish. When going to new waters or areas, unless you have local help, you must be able to read the conditions and available cover to determine where fish are holding that day.

Grass is the prevailing cover in many Florida lakes and knowing the different grasses and why they grow in certain places will go a long way towards finding fish. Most fishermen know that Kissimmee grass, reeds, eel grass and pepper grass are good cover for finding fish. But did you ever wonder why fish seem to like these grass varieties far better than other grasses? I believe it has more to do with the bottom composition than the actual grass. Bass like a hard, firm bottom rather than a silt or muck bottom. These particular grasses grow only on a hard, sandy or shell bottom.

Even though cattails hold fish sometimes, because they often grow in mucky areas, bass will often avoid them.

On your next trip to the lake, notice what aquatic plants are growing in your area, and fish around those that grow on a hard bottom. You will see more fish brought to the boat that way.

### Patience

**ROBERT MONTGOMERY**, author of *Better Bass Fishing* and Senior Writer for *BASS*



Be patient. I know that's difficult to do when you see a spot that's likely holding a bass. But if you cast all around the area as you approach, you might catch the bass, or, just as likely, you might frighten it and make it more difficult – or even impossible – to catch.

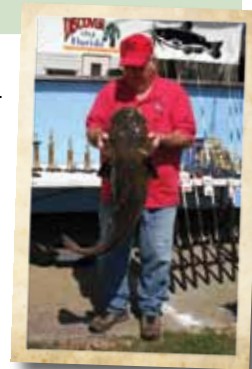
That's why you should wait until you are in perfect position to make the perfect cast. You want your first cast to provide you with the best opportunity to catch the fish, when it's just sitting there, waiting for a meal to swim by.

### Big Cats

**DON MINCHEW**, Catfish Tournament Organizer and angler

#### Flathead Catfish

Flathead catfish are now one of the top predator fish in the river system. In order to catch them during the day, I recommend fishing close to structures or mouths of sloughs and creeks that dump into the river. For late afternoon or night, fishing off sand bars is usually the best. I prefer fishing with a 3/0 to 4/0 reel and a medium to heavy rod with 4 to 8 ounce lead rigged Carolina style or a 3-way (grouper rig) and 40 to 60 pound test line. To catch larger ones, I use hand size live bait with a 4/0 to 6/0 hook. Smaller ones can be caught on worms, crawfish, shiners, or other live baits.



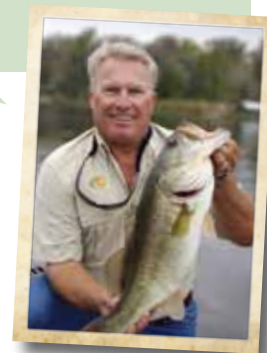
#### Blue Cats

The blue cat is a scavenger catfish. I recommend you fish current breaks and mouths of sloughs where you have multiple streams of water coming together. Cut bait is my bait of choice. I prefer mullet entrails or the head and entrails of an oily type bait fish, such as freshwater skipjack, shad or bream. I use a 2/0 to 3/0 reel with a 7 feet long medium to heavy action rod, along with 30 to 40 pound test line, 1 to 2 ounce sinker and a 3/0 to 6/0 hook based on the size of the bait.

### Clear Water Crankbaits on Heavy Tackle

**ROLAND MARTIN**, Legendary Angler and TV Host

In clear water, you'll often need light line to attract bass when crankbait fishing. To most people, this means light tackle. During the last few years, however, I've developed a system of fishing crankbaits combining light line and heavy tackle. I know that sounds strange, but I don't always do conventional things; you can fish 10-pound line on gear other than light tackle. With enough practice, you'll develop a feel for fishing light line on a big 7½-foot flipping stick with a high-speed reel, for example.



This setup gives me several advantages over the lighter type of rod used by most crankbait fishermen out there. The longer rod allows me to make longer casts than more conventional, shorter casting rods and the flipping stick enables me to set the hook faster and harder from a considerable distance. If you're using a 5-foot wimpy casting rod and a 5-pound bass hits your lure from about 70 feet away, it's a real chore to set the hook: that wimpy rod will only give you about 2 pounds of pressure and the line will have some stretch to it. Under those conditions, you can't control a 5-pound bass at all. Again, with enough practice, you will develop a feel for just how much pressure you can apply with the big rod to the light line without breaking off.

## LICENSES

### Fishing license requirements and fees

License, permit, and issuance fees and exemptions are established by the Legislature. In addition to the cost of licenses and permits specified in this section, license agents currently charge a 50-cent issuance fee for selling licenses or permits.

Licensing requirements follow the species of fish you are fishing for, regardless of where you are fishing. For example, anglers fishing for and possessing largemouth bass in brackish water need a freshwater license; anglers fishing for saltwater species in fresh water (e.g., spotted sea trout, red drum, snook, or American shad) need a saltwater license to possess these species. An exception is that when fishing in fresh water with a freshwater license (or legal exemption) you may take mullet without a saltwater license (seasons and sizes follow the saltwater fishing rules). See page 12, for fishing license exemptions, but remember anyone can buy a license to contribute to conservation.

#### Resident Freshwater Fishing Licenses

For the purpose of fishing in Florida, a person is a resident if he or she has lived in Florida for six continuous months prior to applying for licenses and claims Florida as his or her primary residence. Active military personnel stationed in Florida, including their spouses and dependent children residing in the household, are considered residents when purchasing fishing licenses.

<b>Freshwater Fishing</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$17.00
<b>5-Year Freshwater Fishing</b> (valid 5 years from specified start date)	\$79.00
<b>Freshwater/Saltwater Fishing Combo</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$32.50
<b>Freshwater Fishing/Hunting Combo</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$32.50
<b>Freshwater/Saltwater Fishing/Hunting Combo</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$48.00
<b>Resident 64 or Older Sportsman's License includes Freshwater Fishing and Hunting licenses; and Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Crossbow, Deer, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl permits</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$13.50
<b>Sportsman's License includes Freshwater Fishing and Hunting licenses; and Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Crossbow, Deer, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl permits</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$80.50
<b>Gold Sportsman's License includes Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses; and Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Crossbow, Deer, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl, Snook and Lobster permits</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$100.00
<b>Military Gold Sportsman's License includes Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses; and Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Crossbow, Deer, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl, Snook and Lobster permits (sold only at tax collector's office)</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$20.00

#### Nonresident Freshwater Fishing Licenses

<b>Freshwater Fishing</b> (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$47.00
<b>3-Day Freshwater Fishing</b> (valid 3 consecutive days from specified start date)	\$17.00
<b>7-Day Freshwater Fishing</b> (valid 7 consecutive days from specified start date)	\$30.00

#### Lifetime Licenses (for Florida residents only)

Lifetime licenses are available to Florida residents only. Funds generated from sales of these licenses are invested, creating an endowment to support long-term conservation of Florida's fish and wildlife resources. Costs of lifetime licenses are less than what would be spent on annual licenses, permits and fees, and are valid in Florida even if you move out of state. Lifetime license holders are also exempt from most recreational license or permits that may be created in the future.

<b>Lifetime Sportsman's License (includes Hunting, Freshwater Fishing and Saltwater Fishing licenses; Deer, Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Turkey, Muzzleloading Gun, Crossbow, Florida Waterfowl, Snook and Lobster permits)</b>	
4 years or younger	\$401.50
5-12 years	\$701.50
13 years and older	\$1,001.50
<b>Lifetime Freshwater Fishing License</b>	
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**Game and nongame freshwater fish**

**Game Fish:** black bass, crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish, warmouth, redbreast sunfish, spotted sunfish, flier, mud sunfish, longear sunfish, shadow bass, peacock bass, white bass, striped bass and sunshine bass.

**Nongame Fish:** all freshwater fish are defined as non-game fish, except grass carp and fish defined as freshwater game fish. **Note:** Alligator gar require a scientific collector's permit to take.

**Methods of taking freshwater fish**

Game fish and nongame fish may only be taken with pole and line or rod and reel. There is no limit on the number of rods an angler may use.

Freshwater fish may not be taken by use of any free-floating, unattached device, or by taking of fish or wildlife with firearms, explosives, electricity, spear gun, poison or other chemicals. The taking of fish by underwater swimming or diving is prohibited. It is unlawful to sell, offer for sale or transport out of the state any freshwater game fish unless specifically permitted by the FWC, except that licensed anglers may transport two days' bag limit of legally harvested game fish.


It is illegal to possess any freshwater fish along with gear that cannot legally be used to take freshwater fish, including gear types listed above and below for taking nongame fish or bait. An exception is game fish may be possessed together with cast nets having a stretched mesh size not greater than 1 inch; minnow dip nets not more than 4 feet in diameter; minnow seines having a stretched mesh size not greater than 1 inch, a length not more than 20 feet and a depth not more than 4 feet; and minnow traps not more than 24 inches in length and 12 inches in diameter, with a funnel entrance not more than 1 inch in spread.

Black bass, striped bass and white bass or their hybrids, peacock bass, or crappie and panfish (for crappie and panfish, only in waters where minimum-length or slot-size limits for these fish apply) may not be filleted, nor their head or tail fin removed, until you are done fishing for the day.

**Nongame fish may be taken:**

- By bush hook, setline or trotline baited with cut bait or other substance; but not including live game fish or any part of any game fish; bush hooks, setlines or trotlines (limited to 25 hooks total) are permitted for taking nongame fish for personal use, but only in those areas where trotlines may be lawfully used in accordance with the Wildlife Code of the State of Florida. Refer to the "Commercial Freshwater Fisheries Rules and Regulations Summary." Bush hooks, setlines and trotlines must be clearly and legibly marked with the harvester's name and address while being used or possessed in or upon the waters of the state.
- At night by bow and arrow and gigs.
- During daylight hours by manually operated spears, gigs, snatch hooks, crossbow or bow and arrow from a boat or from shore except at the spillways of the Eureka and Rodman dams on the Oklawaha River or

**License Exemptions: You do not need a freshwater fishing license if...**

- You are a child under 16 years of age.
- You are a Florida resident age 65 or older possessing proof of age and residency, or possessing a Resident Senior Citizen Hunting and Fishing Certificate. Residents age 65 or older may obtain, at no cost, complimentary hunting and fishing certificates from county tax collectors' offices.
- You are a resident who is fishing with live or natural bait, using poles or lines that are not equipped with a fishing-line-retrieval mechanism, and you are fishing for noncommercial purposes in your home county. However, you must have a valid fishing license to fish by any method in a fish management area. This is often referred to as the cane-pole exemption.
- You freshwater fish in your county of residence on your homestead or the homestead of your spouse or minor child, or if you are a minor child hunting or freshwater fishing on the homestead of your parent.
- You are a Florida resident certified as totally and permanently disabled and you possess a Florida Resident Disabled Person Hunting and Fishing Certificate. 
- You are a resident who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, you are not stationed in this state, and you are home on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders.
- You have been accepted as a client for developmental disabilities services by the Department of Children and Family Services. The department must furnish proof to such clients.
- You are fishing in a fish pond of 20 acres or less that is located entirely within the private property of its owner. A fish pond is a man-made pond constructed for the primary purpose of fishing, entirely within the property lines of the owner and with no surface water connection to public waters.
- You are fishing in a fish pond of 20 acres or more, whose owner has purchased a fish pond license at a fee of \$3 per surface acre.
- You possess a Resident Freshwater Commercial Fishing License.
- You are fishing in the St. Mary's River or Lake Seminole (but not including tributary creeks in Florida) and have a valid Georgia fishing license.
- You are freshwater fishing during Free Fishing Weekend (the first weekend entirely in April).

on the spillway of the Jim Woodruff Dam on the Apalachicola River or in Dade County canals south of the C-4 and east of the L-31N and L-31W canals inclusively.

- By the use of cast nets in the South and Northeast regions, in Citrus County, and in the Southwest Region, except that possession or use of cast nets in waters adjoining Saddle Creek Fish Management Area, Polk County, confined by Morgan Combee Road, U.S. Highway 92 and Fish Hatchery Road are prohibited.
- Using a bow and light at night. Night bowfishing tournaments do not require a permit in the Northwest Region.
- By netting and impounding at night from Sept. 1 to May 1 in specified waters of five Northwest Florida counties only. Nets used to take nongame fish in these specified waters must be less than 100 feet in length, have a minimum 3-inch stretched mesh and shall be continuously attended to ensure immediate release of any trapped game fish. Contact the Northwest Regional office for details.
- For personal use by any person possessing a valid freshwater fishing license by the use of not more than one slat basket

or one wire trap, made as specified in Rule 68A-23.003, FAC, and used only in those waters where use of wire traps or slat baskets is permitted for commercial purposes. Refer to the "Commercial Freshwater Fisheries Rules and Regulation Summary." Passive fishing gear such as slat baskets or wire baskets must be clearly and legibly marked with the harvester's name and address while being used or possessed in or upon the waters of the state.

**Prohibited gear for taking marine species in freshwater**

- **Spearfishing:** Use of any hand or mechanically propelled, single or multi-pronged spear or lance, barbed or barbless, to harvest or attempt to harvest any marine species while diving in freshwater is prohibited.
- Spearfishing for mullet in fresh water is prohibited.

**Methods of taking bait**

Freshwater shrimp and golden shiners of any size, or other freshwater nongame fish, including catfish, less than 8-inches total

length may be taken for bait, unless specifically prohibited, by the following methods:

- Cast nets having a stretched mesh size not greater than 1 inch in fresh waters of the state unless specifically prohibited.
- Minnow dip nets not more than 4 feet in diameter.
- Minnow seines having a stretched mesh size not greater than 1 inch, a length not more than 20 feet, and a depth not more than 4 feet.
- Minnow traps not more than 24 inches in length and 12 inches in diameter, with a funnel entrance not more than 1 inch in spread.
- Any game fish taken by these methods must be released immediately.
- Taking of bait for the purpose of sale requires a commercial fishing license.

**Use of fish for bait**

- Black bass, peacock bass or any part thereof may not be used as bait.
- Live non-native fishes (including goldfish and carp) may not be used as bait, except for variable platys and fathead minnows.
- Whole pickerel or panfish (e.g., bluegill, redear sunfish, redbreast sunfish, spotted

sunfish, flier, warmouth) or parts thereof may be used as bait for sportfishing by the angler who caught them. Whole pickerel or bream or parts thereof may not be used as bait for trotlines or bush hooks or any method other than by rod and reel or pole and line.

- Panfish less than 4 inches in total length raised by a licensed aquaculture facility may be purchased and used for bait.

**Release/Movement of fish**

Non-native fishes, except for peacock bass and triploid grass carp, must not be returned to the water nor may they be used as live bait, and should be consumed or disposed of properly.

Northern black bass (*Micropterus salmoides salmoides*) has been added to the conditional non-native species list. Possession, importation into Florida, sale or transportation of any live specimens or eggs of this species of black bass is prohibited except by special permit from the FWC. Hybrids of the northern black bass and Florida sub-species (*Micropterus salmoides salmoides* x *Micropterus salmoides floridanus*) are legal to possess in the Suwannee River and its tributaries and north and west of the Suwannee River.

**Taking and possession of freshwater mussels**

Certain families of freshwater mussels may be collected for personal use. The bag limit for freshwater mussels from these families is 10 per person (or 20 half shells). The possession limit is two days bag limit (see images to right and FAQ, page 32).

Mussels shall be taken by hand-picking only. Use of brailles, crowfoot bars, or other mechanical methods is prohibited. Freshwater mussels, live or dead, may not be taken for later sale.

Sizes indicated are average adult dimensions for identification purposes only.



3 inches  
Florida Shiny Spike



3½ inches  
Paper Pondshell

**Other clams**

Species of freshwater mussels from other families, such as the Asian clam, have no bag or possession limits.



1½ inches

**Protected: Shortnose and Gulf Sturgeon**

The species of sturgeon found in Florida – Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*) and Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) – are protected both federally and in the state of Florida. No person shall take, possess or sell any sturgeon or parts thereof, or their nests or eggs, except as allowed by specific federal



or state permit or authorization. People who inadvertently catch one have to immediately release it alive back to the water.

**It is illegal to possess grass carp or alligator gar without a permit.**



**Triploid grass carp** are used for aquatic vegetation control and may not be stocked or harvested without a permit. They grow to over 40 pounds.



**Alligator gar** are found only in the panhandle rivers and grow to more than 120 pounds. Their gator-like snout is distinct. Due to their limited numbers, harvest is restricted to individuals with a valid scientific collector's permit.

Grass carp illustration by Ted Walke; Alligator gar by Duane Raver, Jr.

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**Statewide bag and length limits**

Special bag and length limits apply to some lakes, rivers (this page) and Fish Management Areas (pages 21–28). Other fishes considered to be nongame fishes have no bag or possession limits, except as noted in individual Fish Management Area regulations.

Possession limit is two days' bag limit. It is illegal to transport or possess more than two days' bag limit of fish per licensed angler without a commercial license. Exceptions are fish legally acquired from aquaculturists (fish farmers) for use in aquaria, for brood stock, pond stocking or properly marked for the market. No native freshwater fish or their eggs may be taken or possessed except as permitted by these rules nor shall anyone wantonly or willfully waste the same.

- **5 Black bass** (largemouth, Suwannee, spotted, and shoal bass, individually or in total), only one of which may be 22 inches or longer in total length.
  - In south Florida (see page 20 for map): only one bass may be 14 inches in total length or longer.
  - South and east of the Suwannee River (see page 20 for map): black bass less than 14 inches in total length must be released immediately.
  - In the Suwannee River (see page 20 for map), areas north and west of the Suwannee River, and in any tributary river, creek or stream of the Suwannee River: black bass less than 12 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **50 Panfish** including bluegill, redear sunfish (shellcracker), flier, longear sunfish, mud sunfish, shadow bass, spotted sunfish (stumpknocker), warmouth and redbreast sunfish, individually or in total.
- **25 Crappie** (speckled perch).
- **20 Striped bass, white bass, and sunshine bass** (individually or in total), of which only 6 may be 24 inches or longer in total length.
  - In the Suwannee River, areas north and west of the Suwannee River, and in any tributary, creek or stream of the Suwannee River: the bag limit for striped bass is 3, each of which must be at least 18 inches in total length (20 fish combined bag limit).
- **2 Butterfly peacock bass**, only one of which may be 17 inches or longer in total length.
- **NOTES:** It is illegal to possess grass carp or alligator gar without a permit; these fish must be released immediately (see page 13). Black bass, striped bass and white bass or their hybrids, peacock bass, or crappie and panfish (for crappie and panfish, only in waters where minimum-length or slot-size limits for these fish apply) may not be filleted, nor their head or tail fin removed, until you are done fishing for the day.

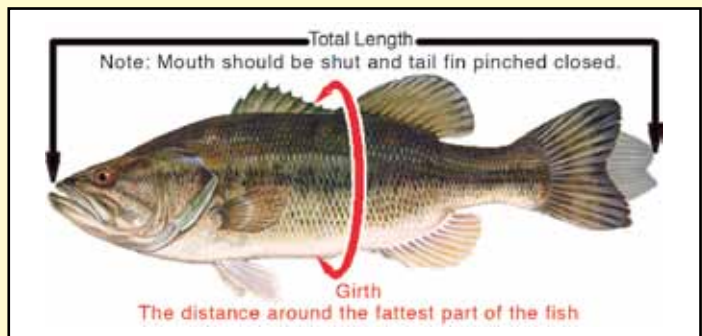
**Special bag and length limits**

See Fish Management Area regulations for bag and length limits for lakes in the Fish Management Area system (pages 21–28).

- **Jim Woodruff Reservoir, Lake Seminole:** 10 black bass, each must be at least 12 inches or greater in total length; 15 striped bass, white bass and sunshine bass (individually or in total), of which no more than two may be 22 inches or longer in total length; 30 crappie (speckled perch), in total; 50 panfish (does not include crappie); 15 pickerel (chain, grass and redbfin). Possession limit is 50 fish total, regardless of species.
- **St. Marys River and its tributaries:** 10 black bass, all of which must be at least 12 inches in total length; two striped bass, sunshine bass or white bass, both of which must be at least 22 inches in total length; 30 crappie (speckled perch); 50 total panfish (does not include crappie); 15 pickerel (chain, grass and redbfin).
- **Lake Talquin, Leon and Gadsden counties:** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length and crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **Lake Jackson, Leon County:** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **Lake Kerr, including Little Lake Kerr:** Black bass caught from 15 to 24 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is three, of which only one may be 24 inches or longer in total length.
- **Wildcat Lake, Marion County (Ocala National Forest):** Black bass must be released immediately.
- **Edward Medard Reservoir, Hillsborough County:** Black bass caught from 15 to 24 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is three.
- **St. Johns River Water Management Area (Farm 13, including the Stick Marsh), Indian River and Brevard counties:** Black bass must be released immediately.
- **S.N. Knight Tract, Indian River County (locally known as Kenansville Lake):** Black bass must be released immediately.
- **Lake Weohyakapka (Walk-in-Water), Polk County:** Black bass from 15 to 24 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is three, only one of which may be 24 inches in total length or longer.
- **Lake Okeechobee, including Harney Pond Canal (C-41) north of S.R. 78 to water control structure S-71; Indian Prairie Canal (C-40) north of S.R. 78 to water control structure S-72; all of Taylor Creek and Nubbin Slough; C-38 Canal/ Kissimmee River south of water control structure S-65E to S.R. 78, and C-41-A Canal, from the intersection of the C-38 Canal upstream to the S-84 structure, Okeechobee County:** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately; crappie (speckled perch) less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **Lake Trafford (Collier County):** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is five, only one of which may be 22 inches in total length or longer.

**How to Measure Your Catch**

Total Length is the straight line distance from the most forward point of the head with the mouth closed to the farthest tip of the tail with the tail squeezed or compressed.



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Right now kids devote nearly eight hours a day to entertainment media and "media multi-tasking," while the number who spend time hunting and fishing continues to decline dramatically. If we don't turn this around soon, in a few years there may not be anyone who cares about fishing resources and habitats. Or any place to fish, either.

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*Established by the Florida Legislature 1994*

What can you do? Contribute to our youth programs when you buy your license. These programs reconnect our kids with nature and traditional activities so our outdoor heritage becomes important to them, too.

You can also contribute at our website:

[MyFWC.com/YOUTH](http://MyFWC.com/YOUTH)



MyFWC.com



Largemouth Bass



Butterfly Peacock Bass



Warmouth



Striped Bass



White Bass



Sunshine Bass



Chain Pickerel



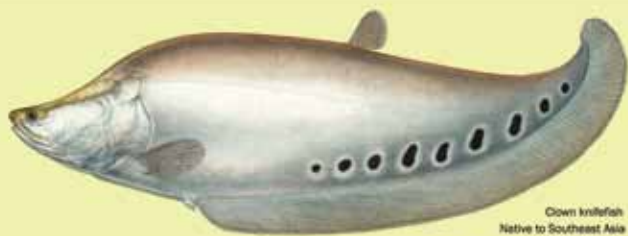
Channel Catfish



Yellow Bullhead

Fish art by Duane Raver, Jr.; blue tilapia by Diane R. Peebles.

**Protect our natural resources.**



Clown knifefish  
Native to Southeast Asia  
Art by Diane Peebles

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of non-native species.**



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families and individuals in active  
nature-based outdoor recreation.

[GetOutdoorsFlorida.org](http://GetOutdoorsFlorida.org)

## Florida Bass Conservation Center

The Florida Bass Conservation Center (FBCC) is a modern freshwater fish research and production facility that opened in Spring 2007, tripling the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's stocking capability. New genetic, health and population management techniques will help ensure the future of Florida largemouth bass and other species.

The FBCC is open to the public (visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) or call (352)732-1225 for times) and features a self-guided tour and displays, as well as a catch-and-release fishing pond.

Renowned cinematographer Glen Lau is offering his prints and videos including "Bigmouth" and "Bigmouth Forever" at: [shop.WildlifeFlorida.org](http://shop.WildlifeFlorida.org). Proceeds support the FBCC. It's a spectacular opportunity to get yourself one of the most exciting and informative bass videos available, or a great wall hanging, while helping ensure a safe and sustainable future for bass fishing in Florida.





Black Crappie



Blue Tilapia



Bluegill



Redbreast Sunfish



Spotted Sunfish



Redear Sunfish



Bowfin

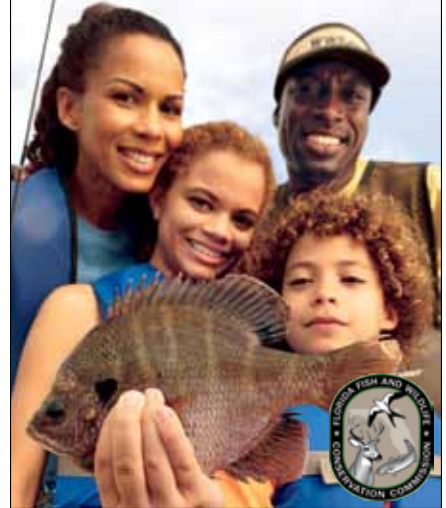


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# FLORIDA Angler Ethics

Bob Wattendorf, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

If you really want to know why fishing is fun, all you have to do is take children out and watch the stream of emotions that light up their faces as they learn to bait a hook, cast and finally hook-up and retrieve a fish. The joy of learning, the reconnection with nature and our heritage, and the fulfillment of knowing they can catch their own – just like the pioneers – contribute to those sensational smiles.

These are the same reasons, social scientists discover time and again, that fishing remains such a popular recreational activity. Herbert Hoover said, “Fishing is much more than fish. It is the great occasion when we may return to the fine simplicity of our forefathers.”

Dozens of studies have consistently verified that involvement with family members and friends, escaping the daily routine, relaxation, being outdoors close to nature, and the sport and challenge of fishing are the top five reasons for fishing. These motives remain at the top of the list regardless of the group studied.

Conservation agencies, guides, facility planners, anglers and boaters play roles in making fishing more fun and satisfying for everyone on the water. They share an abiding love for aquatic resources and the conservation stewardship ethic that help keep our natural resources pristine.

This checklist of ethical angling practices provides a starting point to make fishing more enjoyable, safe and sustainable for everyone, including future generations.

## An Ethical Angler:

- Promotes, through example and mentoring, an ethical use of aquatic resources.
- Values and respects the aquatic environment and all living things. Treats other anglers, boaters and property owners with courtesy and respect, including removing boat trailers promptly from active launching areas, watching wakes around other boaters, and providing adequate fishing space to anglers already on the fishing spot.
- Avoids spilling and never dumps pollutants, such as gas or oil. Appropriately disposes of trash, including worn lines, leaders and hooks. Recycles whenever possible and keeps fishing sites litter-free.
- Purchases required fishing licenses and permits. (If you are exempt, you may still purchase a license to contribute directly to conservation and bring in matching federal funds. See [MyFWC.com/licenses](http://MyFWC.com/licenses).)
- Learns and obeys angling and boating regulations and can identify fish to adhere to the rules.
- Keeps no more fish than needed for consumption, and never wastefully discards fish, while complying with the law. Carefully handles and releases alive all fish that are unwanted or illegal to keep. Uses tackle and techniques that minimize harm to fish when catch-and-release angling.
- Takes precautionary measures to prevent spread of exotic plants and animals and does not use diseased or nonnative baits.
- Participates in conservation efforts such as river clean-ups, vegetation transplanting, tagging studies and creel surveys.
- Practices safe angling and boating by following the laws and using common-sense practices to prevent injury to himself, others or property.
- Protects the environment from damage caused by careless boat operation, including prop-scouring vegetation, wake damage to shorelines, power-loading problems at ramps, anchoring on reefs and striking animals such as manatees or sturgeons.
- Conserves energy and water on a daily basis, knowing how it affects local fish and wildlife.



## Fishing Licenses

The law generally requires a fishing license if you are between 16 and 65 years old. However, many anglers know buying a license helps fund fish and wildlife conservation and voluntarily buy one as a way of showing their stewardship ethic. By law, fishing license fees are only used by FWC for implementing the mission of “managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.”



Photo courtesy of Glen Lau

## Florida's Black Bass Management Plan

Black bass are the most popular recreational fish in the United States, and have some of the most organized and informed fishing clubs. Florida is the heartland for these feisty sport fish. In the Sunshine State, black bass include Florida largemouth, shoal, spotted and Suwannee basses. Scientists specializing in fish species (ichthyologists) will tell you they aren't real bass at all, but rather members of the sunfish family

that include crappie and bluegill. But anglers who have tussled with a Florida largemouth bass will insist they are the "reel" basses.

Florida produces many of the world's premier bass fisheries, which is why bass anglers spend more than 14 million days here each year, which generates \$1.25 billion for the state's economy. With 3 million acres of freshwater lakes, ponds and reservoirs, and nearly 12,000 miles of rivers, streams and canals virtually all having bass in them, Florida is a natural Mecca for bass anglers.

The Florida largemouth bass is genetically unique, and is stocked in many areas of the world because of its potential for rapid growth to trophy size. Moreover, Florida has shoal, spotted and Suwannee bass, each of which exists in limited geographic areas and offers unique fishing opportunities. Programs such as the Black Bass Grand Slam, promoted in BassMaster Magazine, are drawing more attention to these limited populations, necessitating greater attention to conservation practices to ensure their sustainability. You can help by reporting your "Big Catch" bass with the form on page 29.

Without a doubt, Florida has vibrant, widely dispersed populations of black bass, one or more species of which are available within a 30- to 60-minute drive from anywhere in the state, thanks to our having more than 7,700 named lakes. Catch rates and overall angler satisfaction remain high compared with other states.

Recent information indicates that several forces have subtly eroded Florida's stellar freshwater fisheries and fishing industry – an economic engine worth some \$1.5 billion to the state's economy. Florida's claim to its "Fishing Capital of the World" title is solid, but as with other states, fishing is not like "the good old days." Urbanization and population growth threaten lakes, rivers and wetlands, while climate change bears an uncertain impact on freshwater habitat and black bass fisheries.

Although FWC and its predecessor agencies zealously managed Florida's fish to ensure their survival and sustainable use, in 2010 it strove to work with anglers and stakeholders to connect the pieces into one cohesive management plan. The FWC as the agency tasked with managing the Sunshine State's fisheries resources is finalizing an integrated, adaptive management plan for black bass that will position Florida as the uncontested Bass Fishing Capital of the World.

The long-term management plan for Florida bass species will be published and implemented this year. The plan's goals are quality fisheries and increased opportunities for anglers to pursue trophy Florida bass. Based on public input the plan is being organized into new opportunities, habitat management, fish management and people management. A key component will be a new high-visibility TrophyCatch angler recognition program to promote effective catch-and-release of trophy bass and global recognition for the productivity of Florida's bass fisheries.

## The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

Our approach is part of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which is the envy of almost every other country in the world and key to habitat and species conservation. Seven basic principles are involved:

1. Fish and wildlife are public resources. Throughout the U.S., wildlife is held in common ownership by the state for the benefit of all people.
2. Markets for trade in black bass and other wild sportfish is carefully restricted, removing a huge threat to sustaining those species.
3. States allow sustainable use of sport fish by law, not by market pressures, land ownership or special privilege. The public has input into how these resources are allocated.
4. The democracy of hunting is emphasized. In the European model, wildlife was allocated by land ownership and privilege. In North America, anyone in good standing can participate.
5. Hunters and anglers fund conservation, including wildlife species that are not harvested, by purchasing hunting and fishing licenses and paying excise taxes on recreational equipment.
6. Many fish and wildlife species are an international resource. Species, such as migratory fish, transcend boundaries requiring cooperative management.
7. Science is the proper tool for developing fisheries policy. This is a key concept of fish and wildlife management emphasized by Theodore Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold and many other conservation leaders.

**FISHING FUN!**

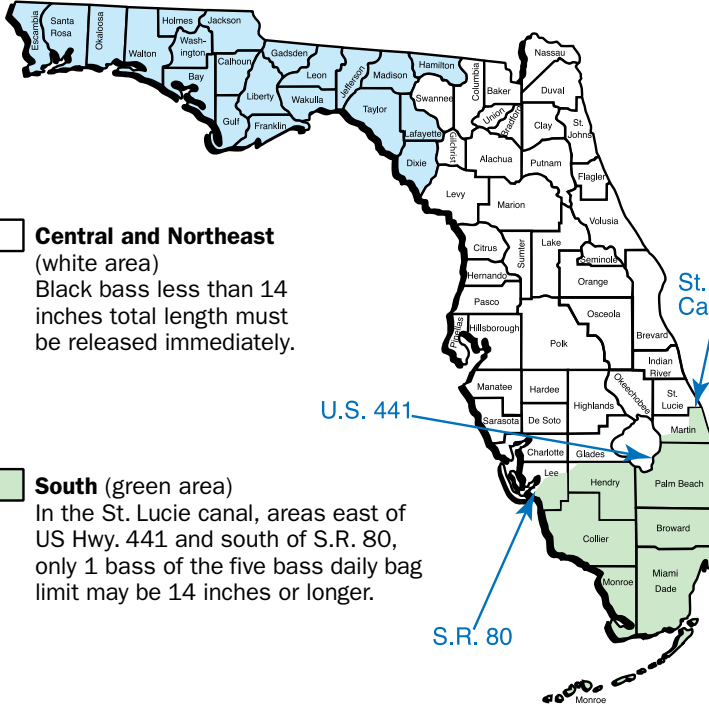


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## Black bass fishing zones

**Northwest** (blue area)  
Including the Suwannee River and its tributaries, black bass less than 12 inches total length must be released immediately.



**Central and Northeast** (white area)  
Black bass less than 14 inches total length must be released immediately.

**South** (green area)  
In the St. Lucie canal, areas east of US Hwy. 441 and south of S.R. 80, only 1 bass of the five bass daily bag limit may be 14 inches or longer.

**Note:** These are general black bass fishing zones. See the Specific Fish Management Area, and Special Bag and Length Limit sections for more local rules, including details about Lake Okeechobee.



### Make sure there are fish for tomorrow

Only half of Florida's anglers are required to buy a license, but their license fees are a vital source of funding for fish and wildlife conservation.

Seniors, youths and others that are exempt can contribute to fish and wildlife conservation simply by voluntarily buying a fishing license. License fees help with scientific management, habitat restoration, fish stocking, fishing and boating access, law enforcement and outreach programs.

Each license bought also captures more Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration money and brings tackle and motor boat fuel taxes home to Florida.

In addition, when you buy your license, you may now make a voluntary donation to youth fishing and hunting programs in Florida ([MyFWC.com/License](http://MyFWC.com/License)).

Thank you for supporting our youth!



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## Regulations for Fish Management Areas

1. A fishing license is required for residents from 16 to 64 years of age, and for non-residents 16 or more years of age, to fish by any method, including cane poles, on a Fish Management Area. Refer to Fishing License Fees for exemptions (page 10).
2. The possession of fishing tackle is prohibited on any Fish Management Area that is closed to fishing.

3. Bag limits and methods of taking freshwater fish apply except as provided for a particular Fish Management Area.
4. The possession of nets (other than legal minnow seines, cast nets or dip nets), fish traps, trotlines or setlines is prohibited unless specifically authorized by rules established for a particular Fish Management Area.
5. Persons entering or leaving Fish Management Areas that have designated entry points shall enter or leave only at such designated points.
6. Any vehicle, boat or other transportation device may be searched while in, entering or leaving a Fish Management Area.
7. Fish Management Areas may be temporarily closed to accommodate management projects (e.g., drawdowns), or if unsafe conditions exist, or as otherwise specified in a specific Fish Management Area rule.
8. Intentional release of wildlife or freshwater fish on Fish Management Areas is prohibited.

### Northwest Region

(see map on page 6 for regions)

**Juniper Bay Lake, Walton County:** open to fishing.

- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lake Piney Z, Leon County:** open to fishing.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Watercraft shall be allowed only as authorized by the City of Tallahassee.
- Access is prohibited from sunset until sunrise.
- Use or possession of cast nets or minnow seines is prohibited.
- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.

**Lake Victor, Holmes County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.

**Merritt's Mill Pond, Jackson County:** open to fishing.

- The taking of fish and wildlife with rifles is prohibited.
- Gigs are prohibited.
- Trotlines may be used.
- Redear sunfish (shellcracker) bag limit: 10
- Redear sunfish less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

*(Continued on page 22)*

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**Hurricane Lake, Okaloosa County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.

**Karick Lake, Okaloosa County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.

**Lake Stone, Escambia County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.

**Bear Lake, Santa Rosa County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.

**Joe Budd Pond, Gadsden County:** Closed to fishing, except as authorized by permit for Commission-sanctioned events (see [MyFWC.com/fishing](http://MyFWC.com/fishing) for details). Open to fishing during daylight hours on Saturdays and Sundays during July, August and September or as specified by order of the Executive Director.

- No motor vehicles on dams, spillways and fishing fingers.
- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Sunshine bass bag limit: 10
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

### North Central Region

(see map on page 6 for regions)

**St. Augustine Road ponds (North and South), Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Oceanway Pond, Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Hanna Park ponds, Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.

- Taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.

- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Pope Duval East and West ponds, Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Bethesda Pond, Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Huguenot Pond, Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Crystal Springs Park, Duval County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- No person between the ages of 16 years and 64 years shall fish unless accompanied by an angler less than 16 years of age; by an angler 65 years of age or older; by an angler who has been certified by the U.S. Veterans Administration, U.S. Social Security Administration, by any branch of the U.S. Armed Services, or by a licensed physician in this State to be totally and permanently disabled and has obtained a permanent license issued pursuant to Section 379.352(5), F.S.; or by an angler with proof of acceptance as a client for developmental services by the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages, and use of cast nets are prohibited.
- Boats are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Camp Blanding area, Clay County:** Indefinitely closed by the Army National Guard for security reasons. If the area is reopened to fishing, the following rules are in effect: Magnolia and Lowry Lakes will be open to fishing on days and times determined by Camp Blanding Post Commander. Openings may be changed at discretion of Post Commander to accommodate military training. All anglers will be required to check into and out of area at a manned check station.

- Guns are prohibited for taking of fish or wildlife except during designated hunting seasons for Camp Blanding Wildlife Management Area.
- Boat launching permitted only at designated areas.
- Camping is prohibited.
- During periods closed to hunting, vehicles may be operated only on roads to designated areas.
- Use of all-terrain vehicles is prohibited.
- All watercraft shall be operated at idle speed only.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Alligator Lake, Columbia County:** open to fishing.

- Fishing is prohibited in Ponderosa Pond except for authorized groups permitted by FWC.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Eagle Lake, Hamilton County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Swimming and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms are prohibited.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Ronnie Vanzant Park, Clay County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Boats or any floating vessel apparatus are prohibited.
- No swimming or camping.
- No person 16 years of age or older shall fish unless accompanied by an angler less than 16 years of age.
- Fishing permitted only with hook and line or rod and reel.
- Nets are prohibited, except for dip nets.
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lake Lochloosa, including Tadpole and Lochloosa creeks; Orange Lake, including Orange Lake proper, and waters south and east of CR 346, and west of U.S. Highway 301; and Cross Creek; Alachua and Marion counties:** open to fishing.

- Black bass 15 inches or more in total length and less than 24 inches must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 3; of which only 1 may be over 24 inches.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Trotlines having a gallon-sized plastic float at each end may be used, provided that such lines are sunk to the bottom or to a minimum depth of 4 feet.

**Newnans Lake, Alachua County:** open to fishing.

- Trotlines having a gallon-sized plastic float at each end may be used, provided that such lines are sunk to the bottom or to a minimum depth of 4 feet.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Suwannee Lake, Suwannee County:** open to fishing.

- No camping.
- No motor vehicles on dam and fishing fingers.
- Taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- Access to the area from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise for any use other than fishing and launching and loading of boats is prohibited.
- Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Koon Lake, Lafayette County:** open to fishing.

- Taking of fish or wildlife with firearms is prohibited.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Montgomery Lake, Columbia County:** open to fishing.

- Boats are restricted to idle speed—no wake.
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Watertown Lake, Columbia County:** open to fishing.

- Taking of fish or wildlife with firearms is prohibited.
- Watercraft shall be operated only at idle speed before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. daily.
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lang Lake, Hamilton County:** open to fishing from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

- Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Taking of fish or wildlife with firearms is prohibited, except by written permission of the landowner.

**Northeast Region**

(see map on page 6 for regions)

**East Lake Tohopekaliga, Osceola County:** open to fishing.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Minnow lift nets and trotlines may be used.

**Lake Jackson, Osceola County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets, minnow lift nets and minnow seines are prohibited.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Crappie less than 12 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Lake Marian, Osceola County:** open to fishing.


- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Minnow lift nets, fish traps and trotlines may be used.

**Lakes Tohopekaliga (West Lake Tohopekaliga), Cypress, Hatchineha, and Kissimmee, Osceola and Polk counties:** open to fishing.

(Continued on page 24)

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- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Minnow lift nets, fish traps and trotlines may be used.

**Lake Panasoffkee, Sumter County:** open to fishing.

- Trotlines may be used.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Chain of Lakes, Lake County (Cook, Winona, Palatka, Crescent, Louisa, Minnehaha, Hiawatha, Minneola, Wilson, Susan and Cherry):** open to fishing.

- Trotlines may be used from sunset until 9 a.m.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Lake Griffin, Lake County:** open to fishing.

- Trotlines are prohibited from 9 a.m. Friday until one hour before sunset on Sunday.
- Trotlines are also prohibited from 9 a.m. until one hour before sunset Monday through Thursday from May 1 through October 31.
- No trotline may be secured to or fished within 50 yards of a private pier or dock.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Pellicer Pond, Flagler County:** open to fishing.

- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lake Dias, Volusia County:** open to fishing.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Fox Lake, Brevard County:** open to fishing.

- No airboats for fishing or frogging.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**South Lake, Brevard County:** open to fishing.

- No airboats for fishing or frogging.
- Trotlines may be used.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Lake Ivanhoe, Orange County:** open to fishing.

- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Cast nets are prohibited.

**Lake Santiago in Demetree Park,**

**Orange County:** open to fishing.

- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Boats are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Cast nets are prohibited.

**Hal-Scott Lake, Orange County:** open to fishing.

- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Cast nets are prohibited.

- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass must be released immediately.

**Bear Creek Park, Orange County:** open to fishing.

- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Cast nets are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Shadow Bay Park, Orange County:** open to fishing.

- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Cast nets are prohibited.
- Bluegill bag limit: 5
- Bluegill less than 12 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 1
- Channel catfish less than 30 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Black bass must be released immediately.

**Clear Lake, Orange County:** open to fishing.

- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Cast nets are prohibited.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

### The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is "Creating the Next Generation that Cares"<sup>SM</sup>

The FWC and its partners want to create the next generation that cares about Florida's great outdoors, fish and wildlife and their habitats, while helping youth lead a happier, healthier and smarter lifestyle.

Over the last decade, children have become increasingly engaged with television, computers and other entertainment media. This lifestyle has resulted in higher rates of obesity, depression and other physical, psychological and emotional problems. A growing body of evidence suggests that all these areas of a child's life can improve by encouraging them to connect with nature.

The Get Outdoors Florida! Coalition brings many partners together to show how easy it is to offset these trends, by getting kids outdoors. [GetOutdoorsFlorida.org](http://GetOutdoorsFlorida.org) by listing simple activities and tips and providing a list of partners. The website also lists events and locations from around the state that take advantage of the Sunshine State's climate to provide an unending array of opportunities. You can also volunteer or make a cash donation on the site to help further this important cause.

The Florida Youth Conservation Center Network is taking this effort to a new level by building facilities around the state to provide camps and curricula that allow youth to enjoy and learn about fishing, hunting, shooting, paddling, boating, wildlife viewing and more. The focus for both

groups is on safe and sustainable nature-based activities that can be enjoyed for a lifetime, while making that lifetime longer and more enjoyable.

The American Pediatrics Association recommends that "parents become good role models by increasing their own level of physical activity. Parents should also incorporate physical activities that family members of all ages and abilities can do together. They should encourage children to play outside as much as possible." The National Environmental Education Foundation and federal agencies have begun training health care professionals on the importance of active nature-based recreation. They are even arming them with prescription pads. The recommended prescription—get outdoors and have fun. Fishing in particular is one of the least expensive, simplest and most accessible gateway activities to an active outdoor lifestyle.

Visit [MyFWC.com/Youth](http://MyFWC.com/Youth) to learn more about these programs and how you can participate and contribute to Creating the Next Generation that Cares.

## Creating the Next Generation that Cares!<sup>SM</sup>



- Lake Lawne, Orange County:** open to fishing.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
  - Cast nets are prohibited.
  - Channel catfish bag limit: 6

- Starke Lake, Orange County:** open to fishing.
- Cast nets and minnow seines are prohibited.
  - No bag limit for channel catfish.

- Turkey Lake, Orange County:** open to fishing.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
  - Cast nets are prohibited.
  - Panfish bag limit: 20
  - Channel catfish bag limit: 6
  - Black bass must be released immediately.
  - Except for sanctioned events, gasoline motors may not be used on boats.

- Lake Underhill, Orange County:** open to fishing.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
  - Cast nets are prohibited.
  - Panfish bag limit: 20
  - Channel catfish bag limit: 6
  - Black bass must be released immediately.

- Secret Lake, Seminole County:** open to fishing.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
  - Personal watercraft are prohibited.
  - Cast nets are prohibited.
  - Panfish bag limit: 20
  - Channel catfish bag limit: 6
  - Black bass must be released immediately.

- Lake Blue Cypress, Indian River County:** open to fishing.
- Trotlines may be used.
  - No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Southwest Region**  
(see map on page 6 for regions)

- Lake Tarpon, Pinellas County:** open to fishing.
- Trotlines may be used from sunset until 9 a.m. Sunday through Thursday.
  - No bag limit for channel catfish.

- Lake Seminole, Pinellas County:** open to fishing.
- Trotlines may be used from sunset until 9 a.m.
  - No bag limit for channel catfish.

- Bobby Hicks Park Pond, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.
- Cast nets and minnow seines are prohibited.
  - Swimming and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms are prohibited.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

- Gadsden Park Pond, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.
- Cast nets and minnow seines are prohibited.
  - Swimming and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms are prohibited.
  - Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
  - Black bass must be released immediately.
  - Crappie bag limit: 10
  - Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
  - Panfish bag limit: 20
  - Channel catfish bag limit: 6

- Lake Thonotosassa, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.
- Trotlines may be used from sunset until 9 a.m. Sunday through Thursday.
  - No bag limit for channel catfish.

- Lake Parker, Polk County:** open to fishing.
- Wire traps may be used for nongame fish.
  - No bag limit for channel catfish.

(Continued on page 26)

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**Saddle Creek Park, Polk County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets are prohibited.
- Black bass 15 inches or more in total length and less than 24 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 3
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lakes Tohopekaliga (West Lake Tohopekaliga), Cypress, Hatchineha, and Kissimmee), Polk and Osceola counties:** open to fishing.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Minnow lift nets, fish traps and trotlines may be used.

**Manatee Lake, Manatee County:** open to fishing.

- Trotlines may be used from sunset until 9 a.m., Sunday through Thursday.
- Outboard motors more than 20 h.p. may not be used.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

**Webb Lake, Charlotte County:** open to fishing during posted hours.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Vehicles may be used only on designated roads.

**Marl Pits 1 and 3, Charlotte County:** open to fishing.

- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass must be released immediately.

**Marl Pit 2, Charlotte County:** open to fishing.

- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 10 inches must be released immediately.
- Bluegill and redear sunfish combined bag limit: 10
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass must be released immediately.

**Tenoroc Fish Management Area, Polk County:**

- Fishing, hunting or trapping is allowed only by FWC permit. All anglers and hunters must check in and out at the Tenoroc Fish Management Area headquarters and deposit their valid fishing or hunting license with the custodian unless otherwise instructed. Permitted alligator hunt participants are exempt from the requirement to enter at designated points.
- Days and hours of operation and quotas shall be as designated by the FWC and posted at area headquarters (currently Friday through Monday only). Quotas will be established for each lake, and fishing is permitted in designated lakes only. Lakes may be closed to public access for man-

agement purposes or if access to the lake exposes the public to danger, by posting notice at the Tenoroc check station office. Quotas for open lakes may be temporarily increased to accommodate anglers during times when other lakes are closed due to management construction projects, road repair, unsafe access or special recreational events.

- Discharge of firearms is limited to the FWC firing range or at FWC sponsored events.
- All dogs must be leashed, except as authorized by FWC.

**Unless otherwise specified, Tenoroc FMA harvest restrictions are:**

- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Sunshine bass bag limit: 6
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Fish may not be filleted, nor their head or tail fins removed, until the angler has checked out at the area headquarters.
- Cast nets and minnow seines are prohibited.
- No person shall have any gun under his/her control while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Public access is prohibited in areas posted as "Restricted" for protection of threatened or endangered species, or environmentally sensitive areas.

## Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration — A legacy of success



*How often do you see people or businesses wanting to be taxed and happy about it?*

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. This Act has been key to implementing the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (see Page 19). Since 1941, sport-fishing businesses have paid a federal excise that was deposited in the general treasury of the United States but did not directly benefit manufacturers or anglers. In 1950, sportsmen and businesses teamed with conservation-minded policy makers to redirect these existing federal excise taxes to the Sport Fish Restoration Program (aka: SFR, Dingell-Johnson or Wallop-Breaux). As of 2012, Federal Aid and the North American Model will have been working for 75 years.

The concept was to restore sportfish populations and improve public access, so more people can enjoy fishing and fishing

sales would increase. SFR came about as a result of anglers wanting to see more money directed toward restoring the nation's recreational fisheries, and to ensuring better fishing opportunities for themselves and future generations. It has been the best thing for anglers since fishing reels were invented.

Today, SFR uses a small excise tax on fishing reels and other fishing tackle, as well as a motor boat fuel tax, to fund sport fish restoration and boating access programs. It is working. There are now at least 77% more anglers than in 1950. Purchases of tax-related items by anglers have increased by nearly 200% in constant dollars since 1955.

Anglers and fishing businesses want to know the benefits they receive in return. To help answer this, Andrew Loftus Consulting and Southwick Associates analyzed data on excise taxes invested, fishing participation, and angler purchases of excise-tax related products for a 2011 report to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The report found that excise-tax related return-on-investment ranged from 1,585% in 1970 to 2,643% in 1980.

In Florida alone, SFR provided \$13 million dollars in 2010, of which 15% (\$2.0 million) went to boating access. Freshwater fisheries conservation received \$5.5 million (the rest went to saltwater fisheries). In freshwater, the FWC uses this money to improve fisheries habitat, stock fish, conduct research and manage fish populations. We also conduct aquatic education programs and provide valuable fishing and conservation tips to anglers.

- Motor vehicles may be operated only on named roads, designated parking areas, and fishing ramps as designated in the area use brochure.
- Vehicles may not obstruct designated roads, boat ramps, gates or fire lanes.
- Swimming and float tubes are prohibited.

**Regulations for Tenoroc lakes are as follows:**

**Lakes A, Butterfly, C, F, Fish Hook, G, Half-Moon, Horseshoe, Hydrilla, Legs Lost, Lake East, Lost Lake West, Tern, 2, 3, and 4 (primitive launch only on Butterfly, F, Fish Hook, G, Half-Moon, Lost Lake East, Lost Lake West, and Tern):**

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.

**Lakes B and 5:**

- Boats are restricted to idle speed—no wake.
- Black bass 15 inches in total length or longer must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 2

**Picnic Lake:**

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Black bass bag limit: 2
- Black bass 15 inches in total length or longer must be released immediately.

**Pine (formerly East and West Pasture Lakes) and Derby Lakes:**

- Boats may not be used.
- Closed to fishing unless authorized by FWC permit for agency-sanctioned events except for anglers who have been certified by the U.S. Veterans Administration, U.S. Social Security Administration, by a branch of the U.S. Armed Services, or by a licensed Florida physician to be totally and permanently disabled and has obtained a permanent license issued pursuant to 373.561 (5)(b), F.S. or unless that person presents proof of acceptance as a client for retardation services by the Department of Children and Family Services. One properly licensed person may fish if accompanying or assisting a permitted individual as described above.
- Other than anglers described above, no one 16 years or older shall fish on Pine or Derby lakes unless accompanied by a child under 16 years of age.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Anglers may keep no more than 5 bluegill and redear sunfish 8 inches or longer in total length per day.

**Cemetery Lake:**

- Boats may not be used.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Anglers may keep no more than 5 bluegill and redear sunfish 8 inches or longer in total length per day.

**Lake Crago:**

- Largemouth bass, crappie and sunshine bass: statewide size and bag limits apply.
- Wire traps may be used for nongame fish.
- Trotlines may be used from sunset until 9 a.m.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Boats are restricted to idle speed—no wake.

**Freedom Lake Park, Pinellas County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets or minnow seines are prohibited.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

**Dover District Park Lake, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets or minnow seines are prohibited.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

*(Continued on page 28)*



**Wildlife alert!**

Report fishing, boating or hunting law violations by calling toll-free 1-888-404-FWCC (3922); on cell phones, dial \*FWC or #FWC depending on service carrier; or report violations online at MyFWC.com/Law.

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[www.eRegulations.com/FL/fishing/freshwater](http://www.eRegulations.com/FL/fishing/freshwater)

**Steven J. Wortham Park Lake, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets or minnow seines are prohibited.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

**Al Lopez Park Lake, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets or minnow seines are prohibited.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms are prohibited.

**Largo Central Park Nature Preserve, Pinellas County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets and minnow seines are prohibited.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms and possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Crappie daily bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Panfish daily bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish daily bag limit: 6.

**Walsingham Park Lake, Pinellas County:** open to fishing.

- Cast nets or minnow seines are prohibited.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Sunshine bass bag limit: 4
- Sunshine bass less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Crappie bag limit: 10

**Middle Lake, Pasco County:** open to fishing.

- Watercraft shall be operated at idle speed only.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms, camping or open fires at the boat launch site are prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Lake Istokpoga, Highlands County:** open to fishing.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Black bass 15 inches or more in total length and less than 24 inches must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 3
- Only 1 black bass may be 24 inches or greater in total length.

- Nongame fish may be taken by cast nets, dip nets, seines, trotlines, set lines, bush hooks and wire traps. Refer to the Florida Commercial Freshwater Fisheries brochure.

**Mosaic Fish Management Area (formerly Cargill Fort Meade Mine), Polk and Hardee counties:** open to fishing.

- Fishing is allowed only by daily permit issued by the FWC.
- All anglers must check in and out at the Mosaic creel station, the designated entry point, unless otherwise instructed.
- Days and hours of operation and quotas shall be as designated by the FWC and posted at the Mosaic creel station (typically Mosaic is open Friday through Monday). Fishing is permitted in designated lakes only. All other lakes and restricted areas, so posted, are closed to public fishing. Any lake may be temporarily closed to public access for management purposes, or in the event that access to the lake exposes the public to danger, by posting notice at the creel station.

**Unless otherwise specified, Mosaic FMA harvest restrictions are:**

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Sunshine bass bag limit: 6
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Fish may not be filleted, nor their heads or tail fins removed, until the angler has checked out at the Mosaic creel station. Disposal of fish remains within Mosaic property is prohibited.
- Taking of fish and wildlife with guns is prohibited.
- Motor vehicles may be operated only on designated roads, parking areas and boat ramps.
- Vehicles may not obstruct designated roads, boat ramps, gates or fire lanes.
- Swimming and float tubes are prohibited.
- Rough fish may be removed from designated lakes by cast nets and minnow seines by permission of the landowner.
- Outboard motors more than 10 h.p. may not be used.

**Regulations for individual Mosaic FMA lakes are as follows:****Haul Road Pit:**

- Black bass 15 inches in total length or longer must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 2

**Long Pond (LP2 West):**

- No boats permitted.

**Hardee County Park, Hardee County:** open to fishing.

- All anglers shall enter at the Park main entrance, the designated entry point, unless otherwise instructed.
- Angling from a boat is allowed by entry pass issued by Hardee County.
- Angling from shore does not require an entry pass unless otherwise posted at the Park main entrance.

- Days and hours of operation and quotas for freshwater fishing are posted at the Park main entrance. Fishing is permitted in designated lakes only. Any lake may be closed to public access by Hardee County for management purposes, or in the event that access to the lake exposes the public to danger, by posting notice at the Park main entrance.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Sunshine bass bag limit: 6
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Fish may not be filleted, nor their head or tail fin removed, until the angler has left the Park. Disposal of fish remains within Hardee County Park is prohibited.
- Taking of fish and wildlife with guns is prohibited.
- Motor vehicles may be operated only on designated roads, parking areas, and boat ramps.
- Vehicles may not obstruct designated roads, boat ramps and fire lanes.
- Swimming and float tubes are prohibited.
- Watercraft are restricted to idle speed—no wake.

**South Region**

(see map on page 6 for regions)

**Palm Lake, St. Lucie County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Caloosa Park Lake, Palm Beach County:** open to fishing.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Lake Okeehelée, Palm Beach County:** open to fishing.

- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**The northern-most Tropical Park Lake, Miami-Dade County:** open to fishing.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**Plantation Heritage Park Lake, Broward County:** open to fishing.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6
- Bluegill and redear sunfish less than 8 inches in total length must be released immediately.

# "Big Catch" Angler Recognition Program

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SIZES			
	TOTAL LENGTH		TOTAL WEIGHT	
	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth
Largemouth Bass	24"	18"	8.00	6.00
Suwannee Shoal, or Spotted Bass	16"	12"	2.00	1.50
Striped Bass	30"	22"	12.00	9.00
Sunshine Bass	24"	18"	7.00	5.25
White Bass	15"	11"	2.50	1.75
Black Crappie	14"	10"	2.00	1.50
Bluegill	11"	8"	1.25	0.75
Redbreast Sunfish	10"	7"	0.75	0.50
Redear Sunfish	12"	9"	2.25	1.50
Warmouth	10"	7"	0.75	0.50
Spotted Sunfish	8"	6"	0.50	0.40
Flier	9"	6"	0.75	0.50
Channel Catfish	31"	23"	15.00	11.25
Flathead Catfish	36"	27"	25.00	18.75
White Catfish	22"	16"	5.00	3.75
Blue Catfish	34"	25"	20.00	15.00
Brown Bullhead	16"	12"	2.00	1.50
Yellow Bullhead	14"	10"	1.50	1.00
Longnose Gar	50"	37"	20.00	15.00
Florida/Spotted Gar	28"	21"	5.00	3.75
Chain Pickerel	27"	20"	4.00	3.00
Redfin Pickerel	12"	9"	0.63	0.50
Common Carp	30"	22"	20.00	15.00
Butterfly Peacock Bass	18"	13"	5.00	3.75
Oscar	11"	8"	1.25	0.75
Blue Tilapia	18"	13"	5.00	3.75
Bowfin	30"	22"	10.00	7.50

The "Big Catch" Angler Recognition Program rewards anglers who catch a memorable-sized fish. Qualifying anglers receive a colorful citation showing the type fish they caught and a window sticker to proudly display their prowess. In addition, anglers who release their fish get special recognition. An angler catching five "Big" fish of the same species will be recognized as a "Specialist," fish of five different species qualifies as a "Master Angler," and 10 different species as an "Elite Angler." A special youth citation and pin is given to an angler under age 16 for catching a fish that is at least 75 percent of the qualifying size (see table above for specific sizes). Total length is maximum length in inches; weights are in pounds. Participants are encouraged to submit photographs. To qualify, the fish must be legally caught and exceed the minimum qualifying length or weight. The catch must be witnessed and a "Big Catch" form completed.

## OFFICIAL "Big Catch" PROGRAM APPLICATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, AND ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE FISH WAS CAUGHT: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
 WHERE FISH WAS CAUGHT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COUNTY IN WHICH FISH WAS CAUGHT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 TIME OF CATCH: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ [ ] AM [ ] PM

### METHOD USED TO CATCH FISH:

Rod and Reel with Artificial Lure, Lure Used: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rod and Reel With Natural Bait, Natural Bait Used: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cane Pole With Natural Bait, Natural Bait Used: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fly Rod and Reel with Artificial Fly, Fly Used: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Fishing Method (Describe): \_\_\_\_\_

### IDENTIFICATION AND WEIGHT/LENGTH OF FISH:

\*SEE CHART ON THIS PAGE FOR ELIGIBLE FISH SPECIES AND MINIMUM QUALIFYING WEIGHTS AND LENGTHS.

SPECIES: \_\_\_\_\_ WEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 GIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ LENGTH: \_\_\_\_\_

WAS FISH RELEASED? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF AWARD:

ANGLER RECOGNITION  YOUTH AWARD  SPECIALIST AWARD  
 MASTER AWARD  ELITE AWARD

The fish described in the application was legally caught in the state of Florida, by myself, and the above information is true and correct. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission may use this information and any photos for research, informational and other public purposes.

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Fishing License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

IF EXEMPT, CHECK ONE:  Younger than 16,  Older than 65,  
 Permanently disabled,  Used Cane Pole in County of Residence,  
 Military Home on Leave,  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
 "Big Catch" Program  
 620 South Meridian Street  
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

**NOTE: Advisories are expected to change after July 1, 2011; check web sites for updates.**

## Fish consumption advisories for freshwater anglers

Florida's freshwater and marine fishes are generally considered safe to eat. Fish is an excellent source of protein and nutrients. The American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least twice a week to help maintain cardiovascular health. However, certain fish can be potentially unhealthy to eat, because they can take up contaminants from the water and from the food they eat.

At low to moderate levels found in most Florida fish, mercury poses little danger, and fish can be consumed safely in reasonable amounts. However, developing fetuses and young children are more sensitive to the harmful effects mercury has on the brain than adults. As a result, women of childbearing age and young children should eat less fish than others to avoid higher health risks.

By choosing a variety of fish low in mercury from different water bodies and not eating only one type, anglers can enjoy health benefits without appreciable risks. Consumption advisories have been issued to help anglers choose fish lower in mercury while limiting consumption of some species of fish from certain waters.

### Count all fish meals from all water bodies

Fish eaten from different water bodies count toward the consumption guidelines. For example, a woman of childbearing age should not eat more than six ounces of cooked largemouth bass, combined, from all water bodies per month. Any additional fish meals eaten during the recommended time period should have low or no mercury levels.

### Other department of health fish consumption advisories

**Lake Apopka (Lake and Orange counties):** brown bullhead should not be eaten due to pesticide contamination.

**Lake Munson (Leon County):** Largemouth bass 19 inches or more should not be eaten more than one time per month due to PCBs.

### Mercury questions and answers

#### Where does mercury come from?

Mercury is released into the environment from natural deposits in rocks, volcanoes and soils. It is also released into the environment when power plants burn coal, incinerators burn mercury-containing wastes, and during production of other industrial chemicals. Airborne mercury attaches itself to dust and water particles and enters Florida waters with rain and runoff.

#### How does mercury get into fish?

Mercury is found in virtually all waters in the state, usually at extremely low concentrations. Naturally occurring bacteria, which decompose dead plant and animal material in lakes and wetlands, convert mercury into a form called methyl mercury. Methyl mercury accumulates primarily from organisms eaten by fish. Fish may contain different levels of contaminants based on their location, size, age, and feeding habits.

#### Can I trim or cook fish to get rid of mercury?

No. Mercury accumulates in the muscle tissue of fish, the part you eat. Therefore, trimming excess fat and skinning do not reduce the amount of mercury you consume. The only way to reduce mercury consumption is to eat fish from less contaminated water bodies and to select species that are lower in mercury.

#### How do I choose which fish to eat?

Small, short-lived species such as sunfish (e.g., bluegill, redear sunfish, redbreast sunfish, or spotted sunfish) and brown bullhead are generally lower in mercury. Generally, smaller largemouth bass contain less mercury than larger individuals. To help you select fish to eat, refer to the Safe Eating Guidelines, below, for statewide advice from untested waters. If you don't see your favorite sport fish or for recommendations for tested waters, please consult the

### "Your Guide To Eating Fish Caught In Florida"

Fish and shellfish have been tested for mercury in many Florida waters. For these, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Web site offers specific consumption advice: [doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice](http://doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice) or call DOH at (850) 245-4299.

In a few locations, some species have high mercury levels and should not be eaten, while others are recommended for limited consumption (one meal per week or one meal per month).

publication "Your Guide to Eating Fish Caught in Florida" available at [doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/](http://doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/) or by calling (850) 245-4299.

### EPA/FDA advice for women of childbearing age and young children

Women of childbearing age and children are more sensitive to mercury, and should take special precautions. Guidelines have been established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to protect this segment of the population. Please refer to the EPA Fish Advisories Web page for additional information: [epa.gov/waterscience/fish/](http://epa.gov/waterscience/fish/). EPA, along with FDA, recommend that when selecting and eating fish, women and young children reduce their exposure to the harmful effects of mercury by following these recommendations.

1. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.
2. Eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury, such as shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish. Albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to 6 ounces of albacore.
3. Check Florida Safe Eating Guidelines about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in Florida lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. The Florida statewide consumption advisory provides general guidelines for consumption of largemouth bass, bowfin and gar. For other fish from local water bodies that are not listed, consume no more than 6 ounces per week.

### For more information

Check the FWC Web site: [research.MyFWC.com/Mercury](http://research.MyFWC.com/Mercury), or [doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice](http://doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice).

## Safe eating guidelines

These Safe Eating Guidelines provide general advice to anglers from all untested water bodies in the state. See pages 16-17 for fish identification illustrations.

For species information and for specific guidance for all tested marine and fresh waters, consult the Florida Department of Health publication *Your Guide to Eating Fish Caught in Florida* [See: [doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/](http://doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/) or call (850) 245-4299].

**MODERATE GUIDELINES** generally apply to these species.

- Limits for women of childbearing age and young children are: **one** 6-oz meal per week.
- For everyone else: **two** 6-oz meals per week.

**STRICTER GUIDELINES** generally apply to these species.

- Limits for women of childbearing age and young children are: **one** 6-oz meal per month.
- For everyone else: **one** 6-oz meal per week.



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## Frequently answered questions

### Do I need a freshwater or saltwater fishing license or both?

**Answer:** In general, you need a freshwater license to take freshwater fish and a saltwater license to take saltwater fish, unless one of the exemptions specified on page 10 applies. If you are fishing in fresh water where no saltwater species live, you need a freshwater license and likewise if you are fishing in the ocean or gulf you need a saltwater license. However, when you get into estuarine areas where salt and fresh water mix and fish of both types can be found the issue becomes less clear. The interpretation of the rule is:

You need either a freshwater, saltwater or combination license, or appropriate exemption, to take fish (take is legally defined as taking, attempting to take, pursuing, molesting, capturing, or killing any fish, or their nests or eggs by any means whether or not such actions result in obtaining possession of such fish or their nests or eggs). If you are using species specific gear, your license should be appropriate (e.g., freshwater or saltwater) to the species you are targeting. Otherwise you need an appropriate type license to keep your catch and must immediately release any species for which you are not licensed. License requirements follow the species of fish, regardless of where they are caught. For example, if you only have a freshwater license and are primarily fishing for largemouth bass or bream (freshwater species) in a river, but happen to catch a red drum (a saltwater species), you must immediately release the red drum. An exception is you may take mullet from fresh water with only a freshwater fishing license.

### What regulations apply to frogs?

**Answer:** There are no seasons, bag or size limits for frogs and a recreational license is not needed. To sell frogs or take frogs to sell a commercial fish dealers license is required. Frogs may be taken in accordance with the provisions outlined in 68A-26.002, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), including the use of gigs—provided that gigs are not specifically prohibited in the area.

### What regulations apply to freshwater crayfish?

**Answer:** There are no seasons, gear, bag or size limits for freshwater crayfish and neither a recreational nor commercial license is needed. It is illegal to take Florida's imperiled crayfish (Panama City, Sims Sink and Black Creek crayfishes) and all cave-inhabiting crayfish.

### What regulations apply to freshwater turtles?

**Answer:** Licenses and permits are not required to take a recreational bag limit of turtles in accordance with the rules provided below.

Freshwater turtles taken from the wild may not be sold, but freshwater turtles raised on aquaculture facilities or purchased from licensed vendors can be sold. Possession of alligator snapping turtles, Barbour's map turtles and Suwannee cooters is prohibited. Individuals having these species as pets before July 20, 2009 must apply for a Class III Personal Pet License to keep their pet turtles. The limit is one alligator snapping turtle and two Barbour's map turtles per person per day. The following species and their eggs have a possession limit of two: loggerhead musk turtles, box turtles, Escambia map turtles and Diamondback terrapins.

Taking cooters, Escambia map turtles and snapping turtles from the wild is prohibited because of the similarity to Suwannee cooters, Barbour's map turtles and alligator snapping turtles, respectively. For all other freshwater turtles, take is limited to one turtle per person per day (midnight to midnight) from the wild for noncommercial use. Freshwater turtles only can be taken by hand, dip net, minnow seine or baited hook. Many freshwater turtles may be taken year-round, but softshell turtles may not be taken from the wild from May 1 to July 31. In addition, collecting of freshwater turtle eggs is prohibited.

You may transport no more than one turtle at a time, unless you have proof that all turtles were purchased legally, and an importation/temporary possession permit (MyFWC.com/license) from the FWC, or a valid Aquaculture Certificate of Registration from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS: FloridaAquaculture.com).

Red-eared sliders may be harvested without a permit but not possessed alive without a conditional species permit. Those in possession of a valid Aquaculture Certificate of Registration and restricted species authorization from the FDACS (FloridaAquaculture.com) may

culture and sell red-eared sliders, but only to out-of-state recipients or Floridians who have a valid conditional species permit. However, certified turtle farmers that buy red-eared sliders for direct retail sale must have a conditional species permit. The application for a conditional species permit is at MyFCS.com/license. Rules subject to change; see FLrules.org or the latest.

### What regulations apply to clams, mussels and other mollusks?

**Answer:** Regulations governing taking and possession of freshwater mussels are covered by 68A-23.015 FAC. In summary, "Taking" live or dead freshwater mussels for the purpose of sale, as well as "selling," is prohibited. Bag Limit: No person shall take more than 10 freshwater mussels, or 20 half-shells of the families Unionidae and Margaritiferidae (phylum Mollusca, Class Pelecypoda) per day. Additionally, no person may possess more than two days' bag limit (20 individual, 40 half-shells) of any mussels of these families. Any deviation to these restrictions requires a permit from the Executive Director, in accordance with 68A-9.002 FAC (see illustrations, page 13).

- Freshwater mussels from families other than the two mentioned above, such as the Asian clam, may be taken for bait or personal use. No recreational license is needed.
- Mussels may only be taken by "hand-picking." Use of brailles, crowfoot bars, or other mechanical methods is prohibited.

### What regulations apply to harvesting fish for home aquaria?

**Answer:** The rules and regulations for recreational take and possession apply. You cannot be in possession, nor may your aquarium contain more than these limits. Legal methods of collecting and license requirements also apply. You need a freshwater fishing license to take (defined as "taking, attempting to take, pursuing, hunting, molesting, capturing, or killing any freshwater fish, their nests or eggs, by any means, whether or not such actions result in obtaining possession of such freshwater fish or their nests or eggs"). Avoid taking Florida's endangered species. A list of them can be found at MyFWC.com/WildlifeHabitats.

### How do I use total length and girth to estimate bass weight?

**Answer:** When you don't have a scale, you can use total length and girth to get a rough estimate of a bass' weight. See the figure on page 14 for how to measure total length and girth, then use the following formula: Total Length (in inches)—squared, times girth (in inches) divided by 1200. For example, a 22" long bass with a girth of 15" would weigh about 6.1 pounds ( $22 \times 22 \times 15 / 1200 = 6.1$ ).

### What is the penalty for fishing without a license, keeping too many fish or illegal sized fish?

**Answer:** Generally, noncriminal infractions involve license or permit violations, motor size issues or measurement violations related to fish. Second degree misdemeanors are criminal acts and typically involve taking fish it is illegal to take, fishing in areas that are closed, using illegal gear or counting violations (more than the bag limit). Failure to pay a noncriminal penalty (similar to a traffic ticket) within 30 days also escalates the charge to a second degree misdemeanor. Forgery of a license or use of a forged license is a third degree felony. Florida Statutes outline the range of penalties; for instance a second degree misdemeanor is punishable by up to \$500 and/or 60 days imprisonment at the discretion of the court.

### What is the economic value of freshwater fishing in Florida?

**Answer:** In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau did a "National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Related Recreation" to determine the amount of participation and economic impact of these outdoor activities nationwide. Freshwater fishing in Florida was estimated to generate \$1.4 billion in retail sales, which produced an economic impact of \$2.4 billion. This economic boon to the state of Florida sustains 23,480 jobs and provided recreation for 1.4 million anglers (resident and nonresident), who spent 24.5 million days fishing.

Overall (freshwater and saltwater combined) Florida ranks number one in In-State Anglers (2.8 million vs. #2 Texas with 2.5 million), Days of Fishing in State (46.3 million vs. #2 Texas with 41.1 million), Days of Fishing by Nonresidents (4.8 million vs. #2 Wisconsin with 3.8 million), Number of Nonresident Anglers (885 thousand vs. #2 Wisconsin with 381 thousand) and total angler expenditures (\$4.4 billion vs. #2 Texas with \$3.4 billion).

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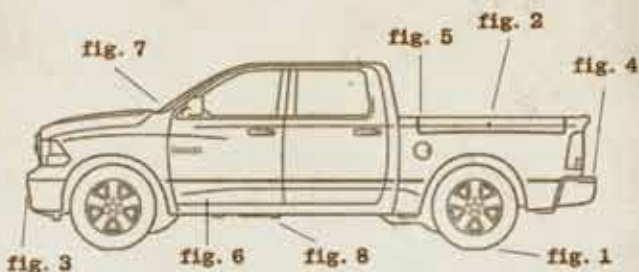


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