

FLORIDA RECREATIONAL SALTWATER FISHING REGULATIONS

Issue Twenty Two, January 2003

A Publication of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

THE SCIENCE OF CIRCLE HOOKS

A few years ago, an article in this publication discussed the resurgence of circle hooks in the recreational fishing community. We used the term "resurgence" because anglers have actually been using circle hooks for thousands of years. You might wonder why this type of hook has endured so long. The reason is simple. **They catch fish.** In the last decade or so, scientific research has shown that they also cause less mortality, making them an effective catch and release tool.

You would think that something that was effective at catching fish **and** also beneficial to fisheries would be embraced by everyone. But in reality, there are still a lot of skeptics out there that doubt the effectiveness of circle hooks. Well, as they say, "the proof is in the pudding", so let's take a look at results from some scientific studies comparing the effectiveness of circle hooks to conventional "J" hooks.

Hooking and Catching

Most people probably get discouraged about circle hooks simply because they look like they would have a hard time catching anything. However, believe it or not, the odd-shaped curvature of the hook is exactly what makes it work so well. A study comparing the effectiveness of circle hooks to "J" hooks on sailfish found that circle hooks had significantly higher hooking

percentages than "J" hooks. Another study found that circle hooks landed significantly more bluefin tuna than "J" hooks.

These studies clearly show that circle hooks work with recreational gear. However, if you want real proof that circle hooks work, just look to individuals who make their living catching fish. Commercial anglers have readily adopted circle hooks, and for good reason. A study comparing the two types of hooks on commercial longlines found circle hooks to be incredibly effective by having a 2.5 times greater catch per unit effort than "J" hooks.

Good Conservation Tools

The predominant benefit of circle hooks from a conservation perspective is that they almost always hook fish somewhere in the jaw. Studies dealing with billfish, striped bass, tuna, salmon, and flounder have shown that as many as 95% of fish caught with circle hooks are in fact hooked in the corner of the jaw. "J" hooks on the other hand, have been found to have substantially higher chances of foul hooking or gut hooking fish, which in turn increases mortality. For example, a study conducted in Maryland involving striped bass found 9.1% of fish caught with "J" hooks held after capture died within 3 days, while only 0.8% of fish caught using circle hooks died.

A decreased chance of mortality is of great importance because most of the fish we like to catch have closed seasons, size limits, and/or bag limits, meaning many fish caught by anglers have to be released. For example, a good portion of the salmon fishery in California is catch and release.



Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
Division of Marine Fisheries



Fishing Regulations Inside!



THE SCIENCE OF CIRCLE HOOKS

Drifting with dead bait, or mooching, is a popular method for catching salmon, but a study in 1995 indicated catch and release mortality was high due to gut hooking with "J" hooks. In 1997, the Pacific Fishery Management Council required the California drift mooch fishery to use only barbless circle hooks. A following study reported that the mandatory use of circle hooks reduced catch and release mortality from 59% to 42%. That's a 17% reduction in catch and release mortality! While this is an extreme example, just think about the sheer number of snook, redfish, and seatrout released in Florida each year.

If you could potentially increase their odds of survival just by simply changing the type of hook you use, wouldn't it be worth it?

Experiment for yourself

If you haven't tried circle hooks yet, give them a shot. Even if you have tried them before and didn't like them, give them another chance. They will work; you just need to remember a couple of things. First, don't set the hook! The hook sets itself. Just wind the line tight and start playing the fish. Second, rig baits by placing the hook in a fleshy location that will enable the hook to tear loose and set itself when the

fish strikes. Bridling baits with circle hooks is also very effective and is becoming increasingly popular. In addition, after listening to anglers, many hook manufacturers are now making high quality, thin diameter circle hooks with wide gaps that are much better suited to different fishing applications than those that were available 5 or 10 years ago. Just make sure that the point is not offset from the shank by more than 4 degrees. Research has shown that offset circle hooks are much more prone to gut hooking fish.

The point is that circle hooks are good for catching fish and for maintaining healthy fisheries. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is currently working with organizations such as the International Game Fish Association, Florida Guides Association and the Miami Billfish tournament to promote the use of circle hooks. If you use circle hooks, you can do your part by helping spread the word to other anglers about this effective and conservation oriented piece of fishing tackle.



*Visit the FWC booth at these upcoming events to pick up your copy of the **Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations and Fishing Lines: Angler's Guide to Florida Marine Resources***

Florida Sportsman Show
February 1-2
Ft. Myers (813) 839-7696

Florida State Fair
February 6-17

Florida Fishing College
February 8
Manatee County (941) 748-0411 Ext# 5323

Romance with the Sea
February 15-16
Clearwater (727) 441-1791 Ext# 241

Frank Sergeant Fishing & Hunting Expo
February 28 - March 2
Tampa (813) 818-8000

Ladies, Let's Go Fishing!
March 21-23
Ft. Lauderdale (954) 475-9068

**Florida Sportsman Show
6th Annual Kids Carnival**
March 8
Summerland Key (305) 872-2599

Florida Sportsman Show
March 8- 9
Ft. Walton Beach (813) 839-7696

Florida Sportsman Show
March 29- 30
Jacksonville (813) 839-7696

Marine Quest
April 5
St. Petersburg (727) 896-8626

Shallow Water Fishing Expo
April 5- 6
Ft. Lauderdale (561) 562-5069

Ladies, Let's Go Fishing!
April 11- 13
Stuart (954) 475-9068

Florida Sportsman Show
April 12- 13
Tallahassee (813) 839-7696

Kids' Fishing Clinic
June 7
Cape Canaveral (850) 488-6058

Kids' Fishing Clinic
June 21
Fernandina Beach (850) 488-6058

The Division of Law Enforcement (DLE)

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

Tallahassee Headquarters
Bureau of Field Operations..... 850-488-9924

For Saltwater Fishing and Boating Questions, Contact the Nearest Regional Field Office Below

Northeast Region
Ocala..... 352-732-1225
Jacksonville..... 904-270-2500
Titusville..... 321-383-2740

South Region
Miami..... 305-956-2500
West Palm Beach..... 561-625-5122
Jupiter..... 561-624-6935

Special Enforcement Area
Marathon..... 305-289-2320

Southwest Region
Tampa..... 813-272-2516
Lakeland..... 863-648-3203
Fort Myers..... 239-332-6971

North Central Region
Lake City..... 386-758-0529
Crystal River..... 352-447-1633

Northwest Region
Panama City..... 850-233-5150
Carrabelle..... 850-697-3741
Pensacola..... 850-595-8978

In emergencies or if state fisheries, wildlife, or boating laws are being violated, call **1-888-404-FWCC (3922)** or for cellular phone users throughout the state, dial **#FWC** or ***FWC** depending on your location **VHF Channel 16**.

Recreational Gear

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

Hook-and-Line Gear

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

Nets

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

» Bully nets (for lobster only) no greater than 3 feet in diameter.

» Frame nets and push nets (for shrimp only) no greater than 16 feet in perimeter.

» Hand held landing or dip nets no greater than 96 inches in perimeter.

» Cast nets measuring 14 feet or less stretched length (stretched length is defined as the distance from the horn at the center of the net with the net gathered and pulled taut, to the lead line). Cast nets may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, spotted seatrout, weakfish, and unregulated species.

» Beach or haul seines measuring no larger than 500 square feet of mesh area, no larger than 2 inches stretched mesh size, not constructed of monofilament, and legibly marked at both ends with the harvester's name and address if a Florida resident. Non-residents using beach or haul seines for recreational purposes are required to have a commercial saltwater products license and legibly mark the seine at both ends with the harvester's saltwater products license number. Beach or haul seines may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, weakfish, and unregulated species.

Explosives, etc.

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

Hey Swordfish Anglers! Did You Know...

- Swordfish belong to the family Xiphiidae, and are the only species in the family.
- Swordfish can live up to 25 years and weigh up to 1200 pounds.
- Swordfish are found world wide in temperate and tropical waters.
- In the 1960's, most swordfish caught weighed more than 250 pounds, but today the average size caught is 90 pounds.
- Fifty eight percent of swordfish caught are juveniles that have not had the opportunity to reproduce.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service reports that the swordfish fishery is in decline because large, reproductive fish are rare.
- New recreational regulations establish a minimum size limit, for all swordfish taken in state waters, of 47 inches lower jaw fork length. Lower jaw fork length means the straight-line measurement of a fish from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail. The new regulations also require persons who sell swordfish in Florida to possess a valid Florida Saltwater Products License and Federal Limited Access Permit for swordfish.



Saltwater Fishing in Florida... What You Must Know Before You Go

Saltwater fishing licenses are sold at all county tax collectors' offices and at many bait-and-tackle shops. Licenses may also be obtained over the telephone by dialing Toll Free, **1-888-347-4356**. For those with internet access, licenses are now available on-line at **marinefisheries.org**. An additional fee is charged for these services (\$3.95-\$1.95). For any recreational licensing information not contained in this publication, please call your local county tax collector office.

Florida Residents

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

- Any person who has continuously resided in Florida for six months and who has an intent to claim Florida as their permanent residence.
- Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who is stationed in this state.

• Gold Sportsman's License (One-Year License includes Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses; and Type I Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Turkey and Florida Waterfowl, Snook and Crawfish Permits)... \$83.50. Florida residents may buy a lifetime saltwater fishing license or a lifetime sportsman license. Holders of lifetime saltwater fishing licenses may fish in saltwater for life and will pay no additional fees. The lifetime license fee includes the taking of snook or crawfish — which would otherwise require a separate fee. A lifetime sportsman license allows holders to fish in fresh water or salt water and to hunt in Florida. Both of these licenses require holders to obey fishing or hunting laws in effect at any given time.

*Costs for the types of licenses:

Florida Resident Licenses	
One-Year License.....	\$13.50
Gold Sportsman's License.....	\$83.50
(One-Year License includes Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses; and Type I Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Turkey and Florida Waterfowl, Snook and Crawfish Permits)	
Five-Year License.....	\$61.50
Combination Licenses (Florida Residents Only)	
Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater	\$25.50
Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater & Hunting.....	\$35.50
Lifetime Saltwater Fishing License	
Age: 0-4.....	\$126.50
Age: 5-12.....	\$226.50
Age: 13 or older.....	\$301.50
Lifetime Sportsman License	
Age: 0-4.....	\$401.50
Age: 5-12.....	\$701.50
Age: 13 or older.....	\$1,001.50
Non-Resident Licenses	
Three-Day License.....	\$6.50
Seven-Day License.....	\$16.50
One-Year License.....	\$31.50
Additional Privilege Permit	
Snook Permit.....	\$2.00
Five-Year Snook Permit.....	\$10.00
Crawfish Permit.....	\$2.00
Five-Year Crawfish Permit.....	\$10.00

If you are not required to buy a license, you are not required to buy permits. ←

*** An additional \$.50 subagents fee will be charged for any license or permit not purchased directly from the county tax collector.**

You Do Not Need a License If You Are:

- Any child under 16 years of age.
- A Florida resident saltwater fishing for recreational purposes from land or a structure fixed to the land – a pier, bridge, dock, floating dock, jetty or similar structure.
- Fishing from a for-hire vessel – guide, charter, party boat – that has a valid vessel license.
- A holder of a valid saltwater products license
- A Florida resident – 65 years old or older and you possess either a Resident Senior Citizen Hunting and Fishing Certificate or proof of age and residency.
- A Florida resident who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, who is not stationed in this state, while on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders. This does not include family members.
- Any person who has been accepted as a client for developmental services by the Department of Children and Family Services, provided the department furnishes proof thereof.
- A nonresident fishing for recreational purposes from a pier that has a valid pier saltwater fishing license.
- Fishing from a boat that has a valid recreational vessel fishing license.
- A Florida resident who is fishing for mullet in freshwater – with a valid Florida freshwater fishing license.
- A Florida resident fishing for saltwater fish in freshwater from land or a structure fixed to land. ←

Other Saltwater Fishing Fees

Vessel licenses are required for all vessels that charge a fee (for-hire vessels) to take passengers out to catch marine fish.

Eleven or more customers...	\$ 801.50
Ten or less customers	\$ 401.50
Four or fewer customers	\$ 201.50

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

The money collected from saltwater fishing licenses is used to improve and restore fish habitat and for marine fisheries research, law enforcement, and public education on marine resources.

Spearing

Spearing is defined as “the catching or taking of a fish by bowhunting, gigging, spearfishing, or any device used to capture a fish by piercing its body. Spearing does not include the catching or taking of a fish by a hook with hook and line gear or by snagging (snatch hooking)”. The use of powerheads, bangsticks, and rebreathers remains prohibited. The following is a list of species which are **prohibited** for harvest by spearing. Any other species not listed which are managed by the Commission, and those not managed by the Commission are allowed to be harvested by spearing.

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

You May NOT Spearfish (Excluding bowhunting and gigging):

- » Effective July 1, 2001, spearfishing of marine and freshwater species in freshwater is prohibited. Possession of a spear gun in or on freshwater is also prohibited.
- » Within 100 yards of a public swimming beach, any commercial or public fishing pier, or any part of a bridge from which public fishing is allowed.
- » Within 100 feet of any part of a jetty that is above the surface of the sea – except for the last 500 yards of a jetty that extends more than 1,500 yards from the shoreline.
- » In Collier County and in Monroe County from Long Key north to the Dade County line.
- » For any fish for which spearing is expressly prohibited by law.
- » In any body of water under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. (Possession of spearfishing equipment is prohibited in these areas, unless it is unloaded and properly stored.) Fishermen who catch and/or sell fish harvested by spearing are subject to the same rules and limitations that other anglers in the state are required to follow. 🐟

State Records and Slams

Florida State Fishing Records

Did you know that Florida has more world record fish catches than any other country in the world? Therefore, we as Floridians should be exceptionally proud of records caught here. To spread the word about Florida's great fishing opportunities, the State of Florida began in the early 1980s to recognize anglers who caught the heaviest of 73 species of fish. Administered by the "world record keepers", the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) in Dania, Florida, the state's all-tackle records apply to fish caught on both conventional and fly tackle. State record catches must be made in accordance with IGFA rules, and can be viewed at the Division of Marine Fisheries Website: www.marinefisheries.org

Grand Slam Club

The Grand Slam Club celebrates the variety of Florida game fishes and the achievement of anglers catching a particular set of three species in one day. The object of the program is to encourage anglers to pursue a variety of fish species, including some that have no food value, instead of focusing on one particular species of fish. There is a different slam for each of the state's four geographic regions. You are eligible for a slam as long as you catch one of the four combinations of species, even if you are not in that particular area.

North Florida: redfish, spotted seatrout, cobia; West Coast: redfish, snook, tarpon; South Florida: bonefish, tarpon, permit; East Coast: redfish, tarpon, spotted seatrout. People who fill out an application and qualify for a slam receive an artistic certificate signed by the President of the International Gamefish Association and the Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Additionally, qualifying anglers will receive life history information on the species they caught.

Starting next issue, anglers who qualified for slams or new state records will have their names printed in this publication, so get out there and try to catch a slam or a new state record. For more information or to apply for a state record or grand slam, contact the FWC Division of Marine Fisheries by calling 850-488-6058, or visit our website at www.marinefisheries.org. Entries are free!



For Additional Information Please Contact:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 Division of Marine Fisheries
 620 South Meridian Street
 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600
marinefisheries.org

New Artificial Reef Locations

COUNTY	DEPTH	REEFNAME	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
BAY	22	BRIAN MOELLER REEF	29° 53.948'	85° 28.268'
BAY	23	BEANIE AND HOSEHEAD REEF	29° 53.835'	85° 28.155'
BAY	25	PHINIZY REEF	29° 54.155'	85° 28.440'
BAY	60	CARBODY	29° 53.791'	85° 32.009'
BAY	68	CHARLES HOUSE REEF	29° 53.150'	85° 32.605'
BAY	68	MBARA BARGE ADDITION	29° 53.145'	85° 32.792'
BROWARD	70	EBEN-EZER-2	26° 00.398'	80° 05.589'
BROWARD	128	DANTOR	26° 00.590'	80° 04.990'
COLLIER	27	KEEWAYDIN 3 MILE #1	26° 02.034'	81° 49.787'
COLLIER	27	KEEWAYDIN 3 MILE #2	26° 02.109'	81° 49.852'
COLLIER	27	KEEWAYDIN 3 MILE #3	26° 02.169'	81° 49.899'
COLLIER	27	KEEWAYDIN 3 MILE #4	26° 02.226'	81° 49.969'
DADE	111	STEEL DECK BARGE	25° 49.360'	80° 05.063'
HILLSBOROUGH	15	BAHIA BEACH REEF (BAY) #5	27° 44.850'	82° 30.940'
HILLSBOROUGH	18	EGMONT KEY REEF (BAY) #26	27° 34.980'	82° 44.630'
HILLSBOROUGH	21	PORT TAMPA REEF (BAY) #6	27° 51.730'	82° 33.790'
LEE	58	ARC TOWERS	26° 24.964'	82° 24.625'
MONROE	135	SPIEGEL GROVE	25° 04.000'	80° 18.650'
OKALOOSA	101	VALPARAISO #8	30° 08.993'	86° 33.269'
OKALOOSA	110	OKALOOSA REEF ODYSSEY (SEA BARB)	30° 08.930'	86° 40.608'
OKALOOSA	110	DESTIN REEF "02"	30° 09.000'	86° 33.330'
TAYLOR	48	BUCKEYE REEF ADDITION-02	29° 38.400'	83° 54.310'
VOLUSIA	81	PORT AUTHORITY SITE #13 -#1	29° 10.132'	80° 41.452'
VOLUSIA	82	PORT AUTHORITY SITE #13 -#3	29° 10.098'	80° 41.451'
VOLUSIA	82	PORT AUTHORITY SITE #13 -#2	29° 10.253'	80° 41.526'
HILLSBOROUGH	19	BAHIA BEACH REEF (BAY)-BRIDGE RUBBLE	27°44.810'	82°30.950'
MARTIN	182	TREE BARGE-141 FT STEEL BARGE	27°13.419'	80°00.270'
PINELLAS	45	RUBE ALLYN REEF-CULVERTS	27°55.933'	83°01.413'
PINELLAS	47	RUBE ALLYN REEF-CULVERTS	27°55.924'	83°01.422'
PINELLAS	48	PINELLAS SOUTH REEF,SITE1	27°43.366'	82°58.519'
PINELLAS	46	RUBE ALLYN REEF-CULVERTS	27°55.943'	83°01.428'
MARTIN	100	TETREHEDRON REEF "A" (5 FT SOLID)	27°12.480'	80°02.347'
MARTIN	100	TETREHEDRON REEF "B" (5 FT SOLID)	27°12.492'	80°02.364'
MARTIN	100	TETREHEDRON REEF "C" (5 FT SOLID)	27°12.457'	80°02.348'
PINELLAS	46	RUBE ALLYN REEF-CULVERTS	27°55.943'	83°01.427'
PINELLAS	48	RUBE ALLYN REEF-CULVERTS	27°55.943'	83°01.416'
PINELLAS	48	PINELLAS SOUTH REEF,SITE1	27°43.373'	82°58.547'
PINELLAS	48	RUBE ALLYN REEF-CONCRETE CUTOFFS	27°55.940'	83°01.409'
PALM BEACH	88	GILBERT SEA -175 FT. SHIP	26°45.191'	80°00.622'
PALM BEACH	88	ST JACQUES-174 FT. SHIP	26°45.115'	80°00.615'
LEE	18	CAPE HAZE REEF(BAY)-CULVERTS	26°45.761'	82°09.494'
PALM BEACH	88	SHASHA BOEKANIER-185 FT. SHIP	26°45.074'	80°00.594'
ESCAMBIA	92	PENHALL REEF-BRIDGE RUBBLE	30°05.523'	87°11.497'
DADE	120	TACOMA-165 FT. SHIP	25°42.010'	80°05.067'
HILLSBOROUGH	19	BAHIA BEACH REEF (BAY)-BRIDGE RUBBLE	27°44.930'	82°30.910'

On the Internet... For current federal regulations and information:

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
<http://www.gulfcouncil.org>

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
<http://www.safmc.noaa.gov>

National Marine Fisheries Service
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

Licenses Are Now Available on the Web!

Florida hunting and fishing licenses, including those for saltwater fishing, can be purchased with a credit card on the Internet. When you purchase your license, you will be given an authorization number. These licenses will be valid immediately. Visit the FWC web site at marinefisheries.org to select the license you need to be a responsible user of Florida's natural resources. Remember, the money you spend on licenses is used to improve your fishing and hunting opportunities.

RESOURCE PROTECTION HOTLINES



Marine Fish Kills: 800-636-0511

Fish Tags: 800-367-4461

Division of Law Enforcement: 888-404-3922

Enviro-Line: 800-828-9338

(Great American Clean-up of Florida)

* The Fishing Lines: Angler's Guide to Florida Marine Resources is now on the web at: www.marinefisheries.org