

Basic Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

This is a brief summary of regulations governing the taking of saltwater species in Florida for personal use. It is not intended or designed to provide specific information on commercial harvesting of these species. The failure to include complete laws, rules, and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from abiding by those laws, rules, or regulations. State waters extend to 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic and 9 nautical miles on the Gulf. Federal rules apply beyond state waters. For species that do not have an established bag limit, more than 100 pounds or 2 fish per person per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial quantities. A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration is required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species. **Issue Twenty Two, January 2003**

Species	Minimum Size Limits	Closed Season	Daily Rec. Bag Limit	Remarks
Greater Amberjack ▲	28" fork		1 per person per day	
Lesser Amberjack Banded Rudderfish ▲	Not less than 14" or more than 22" fork		5 Aggregate of lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish	
Billfish ▲	Sailfish 63" Blue Marlin 99" White Marlin 66"		1 per person per day Aggregate bag limit	Species includes Marlin and Sailfish Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. Federal regulations apply in state waters.
Black Drum ▲♦T	Not less than 14" or more than 24"		5 per person per day	May possess one over 24"
Bluefish ▲	12" fork		10 per person per day	
Bonefish ♦	18"		1 per person per day	
Clams-Hard	1" thick across hinge	May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise	one 5 gal. bucket per person or 2 per vessel, whichever is less per day	Illegal to harvest from closed areas. Go to www.floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas
Cobia (Ling) ▲	33" fork		1 per person or 6 per vessel per day whichever is less	A saltwater products license and a restricted species endorsement are needed to sell cobia or exceed the one-fish daily bag limit
Crab-Blue			10 gallons whole per day	5 traps maximum. Use of commercial style traps prohibited in Volusia County Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited
Crab-Stone	2 3/4" claw	May 16 – Oct. 14	1 gal. Stone Crab claws per person or 2 gal. per vessel, whichever is less	5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply Illegal to possess whole crab. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited
Crawfish (Spiny Lobster) ▲	Larger than 3" carapace measured in the water	April 1 – Aug. 5 Exception: Sport Season - last consecutive Wed. & Thurs. of July each year	24 per vessel or 6 per person per day whichever is greater	Recreational trapping prohibited. Crawfish permit required. Special bag limit for 2-day Sport season Call DLE for current information on Sport season
Dolphin			10 per person per day	
Flounder ▲♦T	12"		10 per person per day	May be harvested by spearing
Grouper-Black & Gag ▲♦	24" Atlantic & Monroe County 22" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)		2 per person per day Atlantic & Monroe County 5 per person per day Gulf (excluding Monroe Co.)	Included in the daily Grouper aggregate bag limit
Grouper-Red, Yellowfin Yellowmouth ▲♦	20"		Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit	
Grouper-Scamp ▲♦	20" Atlantic & Monroe County 16" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)		Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit	
Grouper-Warsaw Speckled Hind ▲			1 per vessel per day of each species	Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit
Grouper-all others ▲			Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit	Includes: Coney, Graysby, Misty, Red Hind, Rock Hind Snowy, Tiger, Yellowedge
Hogfish ▲	12" fork		5 per person per day	
Mackerel-King ▲	24" fork		2 per person per day	Bag limit in Gulf-Atlantic fishery reduced to 1 when federal waters are closed to all harvest. Call DLE for details
Mackerel-Spanish ▲	12" fork		15 per person per day	Transfer of Spanish Mackerel to other vessels at sea is prohibited
Mullet Striped or Black			Feb. 1 - Aug. 31, 50 per person per day, maximum 100 per vessel	Sept. 1 - Jan. 31, 50 per person or per vessel, whichever is less. Contact DLE for additional restrictions in Pinellas & Charlotte counties.
Oysters	3"	June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties. July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas	2 bags per person or vessel, whichever is less per day 1 Bag = 60 lbs. or two 5 gal. buckets (whole in shell.)	Apalachicola Bay has summer & winter seasons/areas. Harvest from approved shellfish areas only. Go to www.floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas
Permit & Pompano ▲T	Not less than 10" or more than 20" fork		10 per person per day aggregate of Permit and Pompano.	May possess one over 20" of either Permit or Pompano Gigging, spearing, snatching prohibited
Pompano-African ▲T	Not less than 24" fork		2 fish per person or per vessel per day whichever is less.	Hook & line gear only
Red Drum (Redfish) ▲♦T	Not less than 18" or more than 27"		1 per person per day	Gigging, spearing, snatching prohibited
Red Porgy ▲♦	14" Atlantic		1 per person per day Atlantic	
Scallops-Bay		September 11– June 30	2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per person per day, no more than 10 gallons whole, or 1/2 gallon meat per vessel anytime	Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pasco-Hernando county line (near Aripeka-latitude 28 degrees, 26.016 minutes North), to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County (longitude 85 degrees, 25.84 minutes West). Any bay scallops harvested and possessed must be landed within the allowable harvesting area
Sea Bass-Black ▲♦	10"		20 per person per day - Atlantic	
Shad			10 Aggregate per person per day	American, Alabama, and Hickory are part of aggregate limit. Hook and line gear only
Shark			1 per person or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less	Practice of finning and filleting at sea prohibited. See list below for protected species
Sheepshead ▲T	12"		15 per person per day	Measured from the most forward point of the head to the rear center edge of the tail
Shrimp		April & May closed to Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, & Clay counties	5 gallons heads on per person or vessel per day, whichever is less	Must be landed in a whole condition Contact DLE for closed areas
Snapper-Black & Wenchman ▲			Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper-Cubera ▲♦	Not less than 12" or more than 30"		Included within 10 per person per day snapper aggregate bag limit if under 30"	Allowed 2 Cubera Snapper over 30" per person or vessel per day which ever is less. 30" or larger not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Gray (Mangrove) ▲♦	10"		5 per person per day	Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Lane ▲♦	8"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit if harvested from Atlantic	Lane Snapper harvested from the Gulf of Mexico not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Mutton ▲♦	16"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper-Red ▲♦	20" Atlantic, 16" Gulf	Nov. 1 - April 14 Gulf Only	2 per person/day Atlantic. 4 per person/day Gulf	Included within 10 per person per day. Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Schoolmaster ▲♦	10"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper-Vermilion ▲♦	10"		10 per person per day-Atlantic	Vermilion Snapper not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-all other ▲♦	12"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	Includes Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany Queen, Silk and Yellowtail
Snook (All species) ▲♦T	Not less than 26" or more than 34"	Dec. 15-Jan. 31 statewide; June, July, Aug. – Atlantic; May, June, July, Aug. – Gulf, Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park	2 per person per day-Atlantic; 1 per person per day-Gulf, Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park	Snook permit required when saltwater license required. State regulations apply in federal waters. Illegal to buy or sell snook.
Sponge- Commercial	Greater than 5" in greatest dimension measured across the top of the sponge		10 per person per day	Includes sheepswool, yellow, grass, glove, finger, wire, reef & velvet sponge
Spotted Seatrout ▲♦T	Not less than 15" or more than 20" (statewide) except One fish over 20" per person	N.E. and N.W. regions - February S. Region - November and December * See region definitions below	N.E. and N.W. regions - 5 per person per day S. Region - 4 per person per day	* See region definitions below
Swordfish	47" lower jaw fork length			Lower jaw fork length is the straight-line measurement from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.
Tarpon			2 fish possession limit	Requires \$50 tarpon tag to possess or harvest
Triggerfish (Gray) ▲♦	12"			All species of Triggerfish except Gray and Ocean have live landing & live well requirements
Tripletail ▲♦T	15"		2 per person per day	Hook and line gear only (No snatch hooks)
Weakfish ▲♦T	12"		4 per person per day	

▲ Must remain in whole condition until landed ashore (heads & tails intact) ♦ Measured as total length. T Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

ORNAMENTAL TROPICAL FISH AND PLANTS

Minimum Size Limit (Total length)	Spanish Hogfish 2"	Spotfin Hogfish 3"	Porkfish 1 1/2"
MAXIMUM SIZE LIMIT (Total length)	Angelfish (except Rock Beauty) 8"	Butterflyfish, Jawfish 4"	Rock Beauty 5" Gobies 2" Spanish Hogfish 8" Spotfin Hogfish 8"
BAG LIMIT Fishes / Invertebrates: 20 per person per day. No more than 5 Angelfish and no more than 6 Octocoral colonies Plants: 1 gallon per person per day			
Live landing and live well requirements. Harvest in Biscayne National Park & John Pennekamp State Park prohibited.			

PROTECTED SPECIES

It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell, or exchange the following species:
Nassau Grouper, Goliath Grouper (Jewfish), Sawfish, Basking Shark, Whale Shark, Spotted Eagle Ray, Sturgeon, White Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Manta Ray, Longspine Urchin, Stony, Hard and Fire Corals, Sea Fans, Florida Queen Conch and Bahama Starfish. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited.

SEATROUT REGIONS

"Northeast Region" means all state waters lying north of the Flagler-Volusia County Line to the Florida-Georgia border, and adjacent federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters.

"Northwest Region" means all state waters north and west of a line running due west from the westernmost point of Fred Howard Park Causeway (28E9.350'N 82E48.398'W), which is approximately 1.17 nautical miles south of the Pasco-Pinellas County Line to the Florida-Alabama border, and adjacent federal EEZ waters.

"South Region" means state waters lying between the Flagler-Volusia County Line on the Atlantic Ocean and the southern boundary of the Northwest Region on the Gulf of Mexico in Pinellas County and adjacent federal EEZ waters.