

# FISHING REGULATIONS

General Statewide  
Bass Regulations  
Have Changed

pages 10-12



**TrophyCatch**

See page 4

Valid from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

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Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission



Please visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing/Freshwater](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing/Freshwater) for the most current regulations



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## Buy your license online!

**When you buy your license online, it's fast, convenient and saves time and travel.**

Download the FWC Fish-Hunt-FL app for your iPhone or Android for instant access.

You can obtain a license 24 hours a day at [GoOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://GoOutdoorsFlorida.com) and begin fishing immediately!

Licenses are also available toll-free at 1-888-FISHFLORIDA (1-888-347-4356). Processing fees apply to telephone and Internet sales.



## MyFWC.com

Visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) for up-to-date information on fishing, boating and how to help ensure safe, sustainable fisheries for the future.

## FLRules.org

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

## Fish and Wildlife Alert Reward Program

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; report violations online at [MyFWC.com/Law](http://MyFWC.com/Law) or text: [Tip@MyFWC.com](mailto:Tip@MyFWC.com).

## FREE Florida Wildlife Magazine — Online

Articles and tips for anglers, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts. Visit [FloridaWildlifeMagazine.com](http://FloridaWildlifeMagazine.com) to subscribe to the new electronic publication.

## Florida Freshwater Angler Newsletter



Subscribe to FWC's free quarterly fishing newsletter at [bit.ly/FFASubscribe](http://bit.ly/FFASubscribe).

## Stop the Spread of Non-native Species

It is illegal to release any non-native fish or any other non-native organism into the waters of the state. To find out more visit [MyFWC.com/WildlifeHabitats](http://MyFWC.com/WildlifeHabitats).



## On the cover

Deborah Hanson caught, documented and released this 10 lbs. 6 oz. largemouth bass in Lake Istokpoga, earning her TrophyCatch rewards (see page 4). **Photo courtesy of [TrophyCatchFlorida.com](http://TrophyCatchFlorida.com).**



## A new era for bass management

Thank you for taking time to review this 2016–17 Freshwater Fishing Regulations Summary. We hope you find the articles and information helpful as you plan your fishing trips in Florida's abundant lakes, rivers, and ponds. We want to help you and your families enjoy great fishing trips that create lasting memories.

This year will mark a historic period in Florida's management of largemouth and other black bass species. Statewide regulations for bass have been in existence since 1994 while the number of lakes managed under special regulations has increased. As part of the FWC's Black Bass Management Plan ([bit.ly/BlackBassPlan](http://bit.ly/BlackBassPlan)), FWC biologists worked for over two years to listen to angler opinions, evaluate bass populations statewide, and develop a proposal that will simplify all bass regulations, meet angler desires, and ensure that Florida continues to produce trophy bass into the future (see page 16 for details on New Bass Regulations).

This guide is also filled with useful fishing tips from the pros, suggestions on where to go fishing, information about health concerns of eating fish, fishing camps for children and families, and Florida's Angler Recognition Programs. Our TrophyCatch Program has entered its fourth season, rewarding anglers for catching, photodocumenting, and releasing largemouth bass weighing over eight pounds ([TrophyCatchFlorida.com](http://TrophyCatchFlorida.com)). We are grateful to all our anglers and partners who make TrophyCatch a successful example of citizen-science to conserve our valuable trophy bass fisheries.

If you are a visiting angler to Florida, welcome! More information about freshwater fishing can be found at our website ([MyFWC.com/fishing/freshwater](http://MyFWC.com/fishing/freshwater)). Please contact our closest Regional Office listed on page 6 to speak to one of our biologists. Great fishing is always close by in Florida, all you need to do is enjoy!

**NEW**

## Freshwater Rule Changes

### Statewide black bass rules have been changed.

The new statewide bag and length limits for black bass are: 5 Black bass (including largemouth, Suwannee, spotted, Choctaw, and shoal bass, individually or in total), only one of which may be 16 inches or longer in total length. There is no statewide minimum length limit for largemouth bass.

### Regulations for black bass species including Suwannee, shoal, spotted, and Choctaw bass have been changed.

No person shall kill or possess any Suwannee, shoal, spotted, or Choctaw bass that is less than 12 inches in total length.

### Shoal Bass Conservation Zone

Chipola River: No person shall kill or possess any shoal bass in the section between Peacock Bridge and Johnny Boy Landing.



### For additional information:

Check Special Regulations on page 12 and specific Fish Management Area rules on pages 19–26 for additional details.



## 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. It also manages the marketing and sales of advertising to appropriate businesses within the book.

The revenue generated through ad sales significantly lowers production costs and generates savings. These savings translate into additional funds for other important fisheries and habitat programs. Promotional advertisement does not constitute endorsement by FWC.

If you have any feedback or are interested in advertising, please contact us at 413.884.1001 or online at [www.JFGriffin.com](http://www.JFGriffin.com)

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## TrophyCatch

TrophyCatch is Florida's most popular reason to go bass fishing! It offers great prizes for anglers who document and release largemouth bass 8 pounds and over. You must have a scale and camera to capture the required photo of the entire fish (**head to tail**) on a scale with the weight legible.



### TrophyCatch Prizes

- Gift cards provided by Bass Pro Shops and/or Rapala
- Products from SpiderWire, Glen Lau and other partners
- Discounts offered by Fitzgerald Rods, New Wave Taxidermy and American Registry
- Registering automatically enters you in a free random drawing to win a Phoenix bass boat powered by Mercury and anchored by Power-Pole.



### TrophyCatch Research

Data collected from over 4,000 TrophyCatch submissions so far provides Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission biologists with the number of trophy-sized bass being caught and released around Florida, helping to identify productive waterbodies for future lake management planning. More details can be found at [TrophyCatchFlorida.com/research](http://TrophyCatchFlorida.com/research).



TrophyCatch Season 3 Champion Seth Chapman (on left) celebrates his 15-pound 11-ounce catch with his family.

### Stay in the Know

Visit [TrophyCatchFlorida.com](http://TrophyCatchFlorida.com) to register and submit your catch for great prizes. While there, you can sign up for program email updates and be sure to "Like" us on

[FaceBook.com/TrophyCatchFlorida](https://www.facebook.com/TrophyCatchFlorida) and follow us at [YouTube.com/TrophyCatchFlorida](https://www.youtube.com/TrophyCatchFlorida) for the latest catches and information.

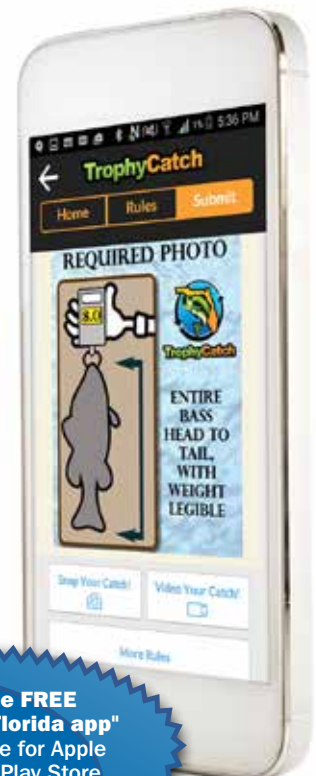
This program would not be possible without TrophyCatch partners, which include Bass Pro Shops, Phoenix Boats, Mercury Marine, Rapala, SpiderWire, Power-Pole, American Outdoors Fund which provides the Trophy-Catch Championship Ring, and others. Thank them for their support and investment in the conservation of Florida's trophy bass.



## Big Catch and State Records

The "Big Catch" Angler Recognition Program rewards anglers who catch a memorable-sized fish. Pages 14–15 illustrate the 33 species of freshwater fish included and qualifying sizes, as well as State Records. If you catch a possible state record, obtain an application at [Bit.Ly/FL-RecordFish](http://Bit.Ly/FL-RecordFish) and call your nearest regional office (see Page 6).

Registering for TrophyCatch automatically enters you in a **FREE** random drawing to win a Phoenix bass boat powered by Mercury and anchored by Power-Pole!



**Look for the FREE "TrophyCatch Florida app" in the App Store for Apple phones or the Play Store for Android devices.**

# Buy Your Florida Fishing License!

“I DO”



*“Buying a fishing license is a great way to say I DO care about the future of Florida and its fisheries resources.”*

Johnny Morris  
Founder & CEO, Bass Pro Shops



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## Take the Pledge at IDoFish.com

Always buy a fishing license. Fees support only fishing, and projects including accessible fishing piers and boat ramps, stocking fish, improving habitats, fish research, and fisheries' management. Get yours at designated retailers, tax offices, and online at [GoOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://GoOutdoorsFlorida.com)



### — JOIN OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS —





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 publisher 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 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) if you have questions not adequately covered in this booklet. This publication is valid from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017.

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 of the World."

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 the 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 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 added 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, public-benefits" programs in the world, with taxes from the sale of

outdoor recreation supplies enhancing and promoting the resource.

Fifteen percent of Florida's SFR funds 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 ([GoOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://GoOutdoorsFlorida.com)). 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 is an enjoyable, wholesome experience that reflects a happy and healthy lifestyle. Moreover, it is the No. 1 gateway activity to get youth connected to nature in active outdoor recreation, which can reduce obesity, improve grades and, most of all, add 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.



## Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

620 South Meridian Street  
Farris Bryant Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600  
(850) 488-4676  
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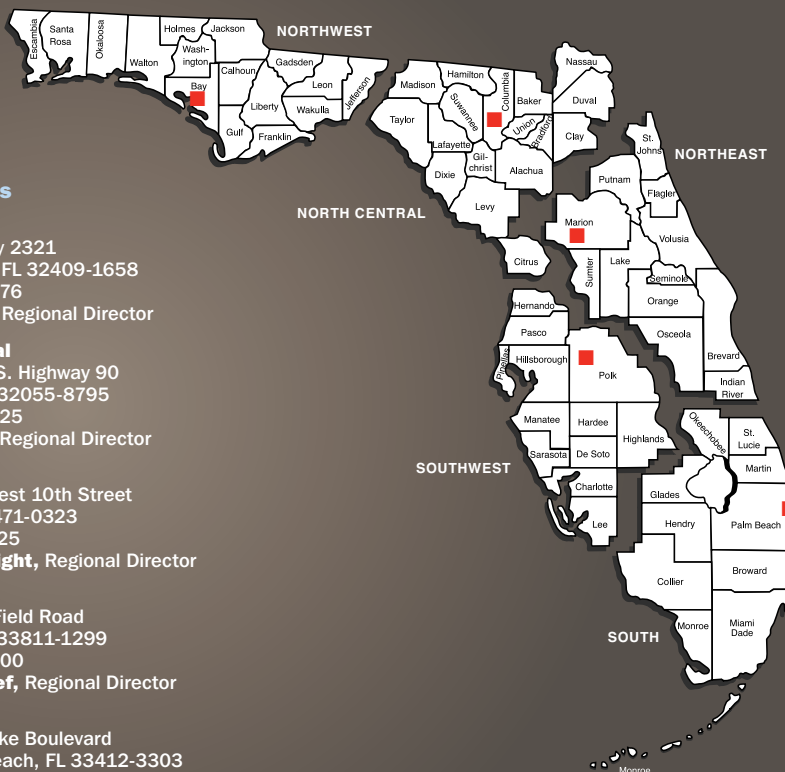
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**Tom Champeau**  
Director, Freshwater  
Fisheries Management

### FWC Offices

- **Northwest**  
3911 Highway 2321  
Panama City, FL 32409-1658  
(850) 265-3676  
**Steve Shea**, Regional Director
- **North Central**  
3377 East U.S. Highway 90  
Lake City, FL 32055-8795  
(386) 758-0525  
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Lakeland, FL 33811-1299  
(863) 648-3200  
**Thomas Graef**, Regional Director
- **South**  
8535 Northlake Boulevard  
West Palm Beach, FL 33412-3303  
(561) 625-5122  
**Thomas Reinert**, Regional Director





## 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 10 for fishing license exemptions, but remember, anyone can buy a license to contribute to conservation.

### Resident Freshwater Fishing Licenses

For purposes of fishing in Florida, a "resident" is defined as any person who has declared Florida as his or her only state of residence as evidenced by a valid Florida driver license or identification card with both a Florida address and a Florida residency verified by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (HSMV). If the person does not have a Florida driver license or identification card on record with HSMV, a Florida voter information card, declaration of domicile, or homestead exemption may be used as proof of Florida residency. 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>Youth Freshwater Fishing</b> (optional for children under the age of 16 and valid until 17 <sup>th</sup> birthday—a fishing license is not required until age 16)	\$17.00
<b>BEST BUY 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 and 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 and 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>Youth Gold Sportsman's License</b> (optional for children under the age of 16 and valid until 17 <sup>th</sup> birthday—a fishing license is not required until age 16—hunter safety certificate required—includes same licenses and permits as Gold Sportsman's License)	\$100.00
<b>Military Gold Sportsman's License</b> (sold only at tax collector's office—includes same licenses and permits as Gold Sportsman's License) (valid 12 months from specified start date)	\$20.00
<b>5-Year Gold Sportsman's License</b> (includes Freshwater Fishing, Hunting and Saltwater Fishing licenses; and Wildlife Management Area, Archery, Muzzleloading Gun, Crossbow, Deer, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl, Snook and Lobster permits)	\$494.00

### 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.

<b>LIFETIME SPORTSMAN'S LICENSE</b> (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</b>	\$401.50
<b>5-12 years</b>	\$701.50
<b>13 years and older</b>	\$1,001.50
<b>LIFETIME FRESHWATER FISHING LICENSE</b>	
<b>4 years or younger</b>	\$126.50
<b>5-12 years</b>	\$226.50
<b>13 years or older</b>	\$301.50



# Tips from the Pros

## Know Your Knots

**Bobby Lane, Elite Pro Angler and Bassmaster Contender**



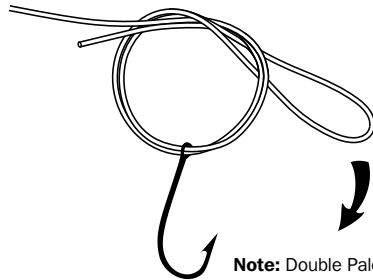
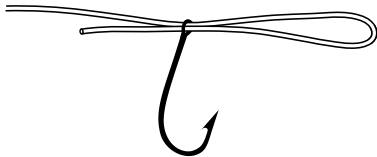
When I'm fishing with SpiderWire braid, there are two main knots that I use depending on the cover that I'm fishing: the Snell knot and the double Palomar knot.

Use the Snell knot when flipping matted vegetation like hydrilla or milfoil. In grass, bass usually hit the bait aggressively and then quickly swim either towards the boat or to the side. Nine times out of 10, you won't get a solid hook in the fish until you catch up to it with the reel. The Snell knot is tied around the shank, not just to the eyelet, so when the hook

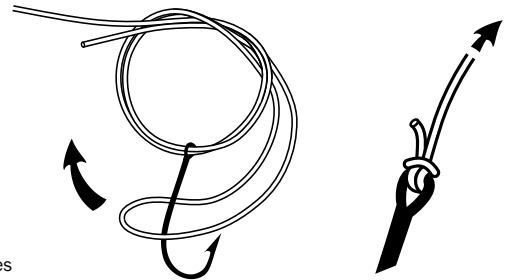
is set it rotates the hook to the roof of the bass' mouth with very little pressure and forces the bait out of the bass' mouth.

When fishing bushes or wood cover, try a double Palomar knot. In most instances, a bass in a bush isn't going to swim very far after it bites, so pause a moment before setting the hook. The double Palomar knot is one of the best all-around knots and produces the best hookup percentage when you are able to use a strong, direct hookset.

### Palomar Knot



**Note:** Double Palomar uses two overhand wraps here.



## Flipping Tips

**Brian Coleman, FLW Pro, VexanFishing.com**

Flipping is intended for pinpoint presentation to visible, thick cover between 10 and 25 feet away. I use a heavy-action Vexan, I prefer a 7'4" H to 7'10" XH rod. Use 40- to 85-pound braided line, such as SpiderWire, for bait casting rods; downsize your line on spinning reels

for smaller baits (like finesse baits) or during cold fronts. Let out about 7 feet of line. With your free hand, grasp the line between the reel and the first rod guide and straighten your arm to the side. There should now be about 7 feet of line past the front tip. Raise the rod to make the lure swing back close to your body. Lower the rod tip to make the lure swing forward. Use only your wrist, and roll the butt of the rod to the inside of your arm. As the lure moves past the rod tip, continue raising the rod as you feed line with your free hand. As the lure nears the water, lower the rod tip again and make the bait touch down precisely on target by stopping the bait just before it enters the water. Tighten your drag all the way for increased hookset ratios and when you think there's a strike, reel down until your rod is in



hookset position before setting the hook. One last tip from a pro, use scent when trying to penetrate thick cover — it acts as a lubricant to allow the bait to ease into the cover.





## Largemouth on a Fly

**Brian “Beastman” Eastman** is a regular blog contributor, and author of a monthly newsletter for Bass Pro Shops Orlando, where he works in the White River Fly Shop.

Largemouth on a fly? Absolutely! Largemouth are plentiful in Florida, inhabiting just about every lake, pond, river, creek, spring, and mud puddle across the state. Their behavior is dictated by very basic instincts and a mouth capable of engulfing prey much larger than seems possible. So, like I tell people that wander into the shop, “If it swims, I’ll throw a fly at it,” making largemouth a large percentage of my yearly catches.

Due to their varied sizes and diets, largemouth can be pursued with fly tackle normally associated with freshwater trout, or up to rods that saltwater anglers reach for when targeting redfish or snook. Four and five weights are great fun on smaller fish with relatively light and easy to throw flies, but you better be digging out the big guns (eight to ten weights) if you plan on tackling giants over 12 pounds, throwing gigantic flies, or fishing heavy cover.

A sweet casting 9’ six weight with a decent amount of backbone is my personal favorite, closely followed by a 7’11” eight weight when I need the bigger stick.

Seasonal variables like bait availability and water temperature determine where the fish hang out and how you should fish for them, but you’ll rarely go wrong with deer-hair, foam or cork poppers and divers for heart-stopping topwater strikes; or a well-presented streamer/baitfish pattern fished slow and deep. Catching largemouth on a fly isn’t rocket science and in many cases it’s a whole lot simpler and less costly than carrying a plethora of lures, hooks, and other paraphernalia associated with casting or spinning tackle.

So grab your fly rod and seek out one of Florida’s most plentiful and widespread gamefish. You’ll wish you’d tried it sooner!



## Dippin’ the Pads for Big Florida Crappie

**Ron Presley**, Freelance writer and past president of Florida Outdoor Writers Association, with Bass Pro Shops Pro Fishing Team Don and Toni Collins.



Nothing is more fun than pulling big crappie out of the lily pads and grasses that are so abundant in Florida. The Bass Pro Shops Pro Fishing Team of Don and Toni Collins use the technique of dipping when crappie congregate under pads. Look for small groups of pads and start out in water that is 5- to 6-foot deep and shallows out to maybe 2 feet. You want to be able to reach far back with a 10-foot crappie rod, such as the Wally Marshall series.

Team Collins moves the boat right up to the pads to capitalize on groups of crappie once located. They are going to stay there, so you can go back each day for two or three weeks and probably find fish again, especially during late winter and early spring.

Start jiggling on the outside pads. Fish from 2-foot deep and work it all the way down to the bottom, fishing one pad at a time. Pull the jig all

the way up to the tip of the rod with your left hand (if you are right handed) holding the line. Place the tip on the top of the water where you want it to go and let it down. Raising and lowering the jig by hand will keep you from tangles and get you precisely where you want to fish.

A good rule of thumb on colors is light on a sunny day and dark on overcast days. I like the Pro-Series Road Runner jighead with a chartreuse Lake Fork plastic. The Lake Fork jigs have a little bit of scent that attracts fish and the Road Runner attraction is the noise and the flash it’s making.

When crappie are in cover it is up close and personal; once the fish hits, you feel the thump and set the hook. That’s why you hear us crappie anglers say, “We live for the thump!”

**Note:** Neither the FWC nor the State of Florida endorse any individual company or product.

## 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 nongame 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 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.

**\*NOTE:** Statutory provisions (790.052(3), F.S.) made it lawful for persons to own, possess, and lawfully use firearms and other weapons, ammunition, and supplies for lawful purposes including fishing, camping, or lawful hunting or going to or returning from a fishing, camping, or lawful hunting expedition. Consequently, although firearms may **not** be used to take fish, they can be in possession of someone with legally taken fish.


### Nongame fish may be taken:

- With pole-and-line, or rod-and-reel, and 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 on the

spillway of the Jim Woodruff Dam on the Apalachicola River or in Miami-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 Northwest 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 bow-fishing 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 Northwest Florida. Nets used to take nongame fish (typically suckers) 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 (Page 6).
- 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 waters of the state.

## 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 65 years of age or older and you possess proof of age and residency, such as a Florida driver's license or ID, or an optional no-cost Resident Senior Citizen Hunting and Fishing Certificate.
- 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 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 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 Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The agency must furnish proof to such clients.
- You possess a Resident Freshwater Commercial Fishing License.
- You are freshwater fishing on License-Free Freshwater Fishing Days: first weekend in April (April 2-3, 2016) and the second weekend in June (June 11-12, 2016).

**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 less that is located entirely within the private property of its owner.
- 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.



## 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; however, gigging from above water is permitted.

## 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 by the following methods, unless specifically prohibited:

- 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.

## 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 27).

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

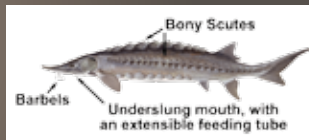
Species of freshwater mussels from other families, such as the Asian clam, have no bag or possession limits.



1½ inches

## Protected Sturgeons

The species of sturgeon found in Florida—Atlantic (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*), Gulf (*A. o. desotoi*), and shortnose sturgeons (*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 must 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.



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

**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.





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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 19–26). Other fishes considered to be nongame fishes have no bag or possession limits, except as noted in individual Fish Management Area regulations.

**No person shall take in any one day more than the following bag limits of freshwater game fish:**

- **5 Black bass** (including largemouth, Suwannee, spotted, Choctaw and shoal bass, individually or in total), only one of which may be 16 inches or longer in total length. There is no minimum length limit for largemouth bass.
  - » No person shall kill or possess any Suwannee, shoal, spotted, or Choctaw bass that is less than 12 inches in total length.
  - » **Chipola River:** No person shall kill or possess any shoal bass in the section between Peacock Bridge (Peacock Bridge Road; County Road 278, Jackson County) and Johnny Boy Landing (Johnny Boy Landing Road, Calhoun County).
- **50 Panfish** including bluegill, redear sunfish (shellcracker), flier, longear sunfish, mud sunfish, shadow bass, spotted redbreast (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) (See map page 18).
- **2 Butterfly peacock bass**, only one of which may be 17 inches or longer in total length.
- **25 American eels**, must be nine inches or greater in total length. The recreational bag limit for American eels is 25 per angler per day. Wholesale/Retail purchase exemption. Recreational anglers purchasing American eel as bait may possess more than the legal bag limit provided that the eels were purchased from a licensed dealer.

### Notes:

- No person shall have in his possession more than two days' bag limit of freshwater game fish (see Rule 68A-23.005 for details).
- Each angler is responsible for his or her own 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.

- It is illegal to possess grass carp or alligator gar without a permit; these fish must be released immediately (see Page 11).
- Anglers participating in TrophyCatch, who are in compliance with TrophyCatch rules and fish handling guidelines, may be in temporary possession of one bass 13 pounds or greater over the legal length limit and bag limit while waiting for FWC staff certification. The fish must then be live-released in the water body where it was caught.
- **Keep game fish intact:** black bass, striped bass and white bass or their hybrids, peacock bass, or black crappie and panfish (for black 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 the angler has completed 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 19–26).

- **Jim Woodruff Reservoir, Lake Seminole.** In the waters of and on the banks of the waters of Lake Seminole — bounded on the west by Florida State Road No. 271, on the south by the Jim Woodruff Dam, on the east by a line immediately east of the Chattahoochee Marina, also known as the Booster Club, running northwest across the lake to the tip of land at the junction of the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, west of Spring Creek; and on the north by the Herman Talmadge Bridge across the Chattahoochee River: 10 black bass, each must be 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); 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, each must be 12 inches or greater 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 panfish (does not include crappie); 15 pickerel (chain, grass and redbfin).
- **Lake Talquin, Leon and Gadsden counties** (including that portion of the Ochlockonee River lying between Lake Talquin and the railroad trestle that is located immediately below U.S. Highway 90, that portion of the Little River lying between Lake Talquin and County Road 268, that portion of the Rocky Comfort Creek lying between Lake Talquin and County Road 65-B, and that portion of Bear Creek lying between Lake Talquin and Bear Creek Road, those portions of Ocklawaha and

**Hammock creeks lying between Lake Talquin and State Road 267, those portions of Blount's, Freeman [Stoutamire], and Harvey and Polk creeks lying between Lake Talquin and State Road 20):** Crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.

- **Silver Glen Springs in Lake and Marion counties and in Salt Springs in Marion County:** Fishing is prohibited in within 50 yards of the springs and from the headwaters of **Rainbow Springs** to a point one mile downstream on Rainbow River within Marion County.
- **Wildcat Lake, Marion County (Ocala National Forest):** Black bass must be released immediately.
- **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 Okeechobee:** Crappie (speckled perch) less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately. Lake Okeechobee, for purposes of these rules, is defined as any point lakeward of a boundary line delineated by the following points:
  - » Intersection of St. Rd. 78 and U.S. 441
  - » U.S. 441 SE to St. Rd. 5 ("80")
  - » St. Rd. 5 ("80") to St. Rd. 25 (U.S. 27)
  - » St. Rd. 25 (U.S. 27) to St. Rd. 78
  - » St. Rd. 78 to U.S. 441**Including:**
  - » Harney Pond Canal (C-41) north of St. Rd. 78 to South Florida Water Mgmtnt. District (SFWMD) structure S-71
  - » C-41-A Canal, southeast of S-84
  - » Indian Prairie Canal (C-40) north of St. Rd. 78 to SFWMD structure S-72
  - » All of Taylor Creek and Nubbin Slough in Okeechobee County
  - » C-38/Kissimmee River south of SFWMD structure S-65E to St. Rd. 78
  - » All of L-50 Canal in Glades County
  - » Fisheating Creek to U. S. 27
  - » All of Sportsman's Canal (LD-3) in Glades County
- **Perdido River:** 10 black bass (no more than 5 of which may be smallmouth bass); 15 striped bass, white bass and sunshine bass (only 5 of which may be 22 inches or longer in total length); 30 crappie (speckled perch, all of which must by 9 inches or longer); 50 panfish (does not include crappie, possession limit is 50 fish total, regardless of species).
- **Lake Jackson (Walton County):** 5 black bass (all of which must be 12 inches or greater in total length, only one of which may be longer than 22 inches in total length); 15 striped bass, white bass and sunshine bass (only 5 of which may be 22 inches or longer in total length); 30 crappie (speckled perch, all of which must by 9 inches or longer); 50 panfish (does not include crappie, possession limit is 50 fish total, regardless of species).



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# FLORIDA FRESHWATER FISH

Florida freshwater fishes are divided into game fish that have specific bag and length limits and may only be taken with pole-and-line or rod-and-reel, and nongame fish, which are all others. A license is required to take nongame fish, but additional gear types are allowed (see Page 10). Non-native fish are those that do not occur in Florida naturally; most should be harvested and never released. Exceptions are peacock bass, which is a game fish, and triploid grass carp, which are stocked for vegetation control (see Page 11). Where applicable, state record (SR) weights and the Big Catch (BC) qualifying length or weight for adults are provided. See Page 4 or MyFWC.com/BigCatch for more details including youth qualifying sizes, slams, specialist, master, elite angler and the TrophyCatch citizen-science rewards program.

## BLACK BASS



**Largemouth bass:**  
SR 17.27 lbs; BC 24"/8.0 lbs



**Spotted/Choctaw bass:**  
SR 3.75 lbs; BC 16"/2.0 lbs



**Shoal bass:**  
SR 4.85 lbs; BC 16"/2.0 lbs



**Suwannee Bass:**  
SR 3.89 lbs; BC 14"/1.5 lbs

## PANFISH



**Black crappie:**  
SR 3.83 lbs; BC 14"/2.0 lbs



**Bluegill:**  
SR 2.95 lbs; BC 10"/1.0 lb



**Redear sunfish:**  
SR 4.86 lbs; BC 11"/1.25 lbs



**Flier:**  
SR 1.35 lbs; BC 8"/0.5 lb



**Redbreast sunfish:**  
SR 2.08 lbs; BC 9"/0.5 lb



**Warmouth:**  
SR 2.44 lbs; BC 9"/0.5 lb



**Spotted sunfish:**  
SR 0.83 lbs; BC 7"/0.5 lb

## TEMPERATE BASS



**Striped bass:**  
SR 42.25 lbs; BC 30"/12.0 lbs



**White bass:**  
SR 4.69 lbs; BC 15"/2.5 lbs



**Sunshine bass:**  
SR 16.31 lbs; BC 20"/5.0 lbs



**Butterfly peacock bass:**  
SR 9.08 lbs; BC 18"/4.0 lbs

## CICHLID

## CATFISH



**Channel catfish:**  
SR 44.50 lbs; BC 25"/12.0 lbs



**White catfish:**  
SR 18.88 lbs; BC 22"/5.0 lbs



**Yellow bullhead:**  
SR 5.05 lbs; BC 14"/1.5 lbs



**Brown bullhead:**  
SR 7.02 lbs; BC 16"/2.0 lbs

## BOWFIN, SHAD, PICKEREL & GAR



**Bowfin:**  
SR 19.00 lbs; BC 28"/8.0 lbs



**American shad:**  
SR 5.19 lbs; BC 18"/3.0 lbs



**Chain pickerel:**  
SR 6.96 lbs; BC 22"/3.0 lbs



**Longnose gar:**  
SR 41.00 lbs; BC 40"/15.0 lbs



**Florida/Spotted gar:**  
SR 9.44 lbs; BC 28"/4.0 lbs

GAME FISH

NONGAME FISH

Fish art by Duane Raver, Jr., and Diane R. Peebles.

For details on state records and angler recognition programs visit: [MyFWC.com/BigCatch](http://MyFWC.com/BigCatch)



**NONNATIVE-NONGAME FISH**



**Flathead catfish:**  
SR 57.50 lbs; BC 36"/25.0 lbs



**Blue catfish:**  
SR 69.50 lbs; BC 36"/25.0 lbs



**Jaguar guapote:**  
SR Open 2.0 lbs; BC 13"/1.5 lbs



**Mayan cichlid:**  
SR Open 2.0 lbs; BC 11"/1.0 lb



**Oscar:**  
SR 2.34 lbs; BC 11"/1.25 lbs



**Yellow perch:**  
SR 1.47 lbs; BC 12"/0.75 lb



**Common carp:**  
SR 40.56 lbs; BC 30"/20.0 lbs



**Blue tilapia:**  
SR 9.57 lbs; BC 18"/5.0 lbs



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# New Rules for Black Bass Enhance Fishing Opportunities



New black bass rules are in effect throughout Florida, beginning July 1, 2016 to streamline regulations, allow anglers to keep smaller, more abundant bass, and protect larger bass desired by most anglers. These rules were developed with a tremendous amount of public involvement and decades of research on the effectiveness of various regulations.

Black bass are the most popular recreational fish in North America. Black bass include all of the sunfishes in the genus *Micropterus*, which in Florida are represented by the largemouth, spotted, shoal, Suwannee and Choctaw basses. The largemouth bass is the most abundant and the only one that grows to weights heavier than eight pounds. Largemouth bass in Florida have exceptional growth potential to reach trophy size compared to northern strains. As a result, anglers from all over the world travel to Florida in hopes of catching a lifetime memory (see the TrophyCatch program on page 4). The other species reside primarily in the panhandle of Florida, thrive in river systems and seldom exceed four pounds, but provide exciting challenges and variety for fishing enthusiasts (see the Big Catch bass slam at BigCatchFlorida.com).

FWC staff considered both biological data and the advice and opinions of anglers and fishing businesses to come up with these innovative new conservation measures. The goal is to provide “Optimal sustainable use of Florida’s

bass fisheries with an emphasis on production of high quality and trophy bass.”

Following a review of decades of data from Florida lakes managed under special regulations and studies of bass regulations from across the nation, FWC staff in collaboration with other fisheries experts reviewed several options to manage bass statewide. Our objective was to recommend the least restrictive regulations to provide simplicity with the greatest potential to provide high quality bass fishing and enhance trophy bass abundance. Working with university human dimensions experts, the FWC then sought opinions from as many anglers as possible representing diverse backgrounds and fishing preferences through a series of open house meetings around the state and an angler survey. More than 8,000 individuals provided feedback.

Gene Gilliland, B.A.S.S. Conservation Director and a national recognized bass expert said about the proposal: “FWC’s Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management staff has done an outstanding job collecting data that supports this recommendation. Statewide regulations that are simple for the public to understand are more likely to be accepted and followed.”

Based on both biological realities and anglers’ preferences the FWC developed, advertised and approved these regulations (see [bit.ly/BassRegs](http://bit.ly/BassRegs), for more background). The new regulations shift angler harvest from

larger bass to smaller, more abundant sizes while conserving bass species in Florida’s panhandle rivers.

“This new approach is very innovative and I anticipate that many states will follow suit,” said Dr. Michael Allen, professor of freshwater fisheries ecology at the University of Florida.

Here is a summary of the new black bass regulations found throughout this publication that are in effect from July 1, 2016 onward. The previous three geographic zones and 40 areas with special bass regulations have been eliminated.

**Daily Bag Limit for Black Bass:** All species (largemouth, Choctaw, shoal, Suwannee, and spotted) are included in the five fish daily aggregate black bass bag limit. This is the same as the previous statewide rule.

- Largemouth bass: Only one may be 16 inches or longer in total length per angler per day, with no minimum length limit.
- Suwannee, shoal, Choctaw, and spotted basses: 12-inch minimum size limit, only one may be 16 inches or longer in total length.

**Shoal Bass Conservation Zone:** In the Chipola River between Peacock Bridge (County Road 278) and Johnny Boy Landing shoal bass must be released immediately. This is a catch-and-release conservation zone for shoal bass to further protect this relatively rare species that depends on a limited area of unique habitat.

## Largemouth bass are easily distinguished from other black basses by the following characteristics

- The first and second dorsal fins on Shoal, Choctaw, Suwannee, and Spotted Bass are connected. The dorsal fins appear separated in Largemouth Bass.



Shoal, Choctaw, Suwannee and Spotted Bass



Largemouth Bass

- The upper jaw of Shoal, Choctaw, Suwannee, and Spotted Bass does not extend past the eye as it does in Largemouth Bass.



Shoal, Choctaw, Suwannee and Spotted Bass



Largemouth Bass

- Choctaw, Spotted, and Suwannee bass have a patch of teeth on their tongue while Largemouth and Shoal bass do not have a patch of teeth on their tongue.



Choctaw, Suwannee and Spotted Bass



Largemouth and Shoal Bass



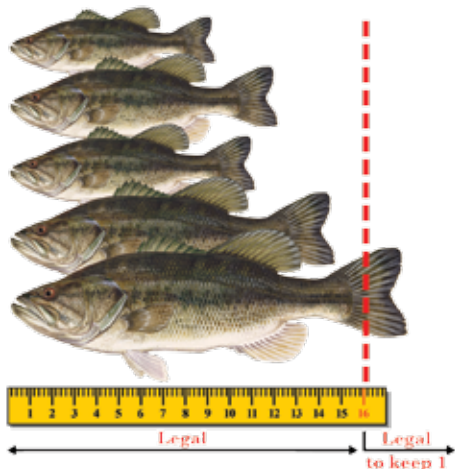
**Tournament Fishing:** The bass-tournament permit program will continue to allow anglers participating in permitted tournaments temporary possession of five bass of any size. This program has been ongoing for over 20 years and allows delayed-release bass tournaments to take place while ensuring the proper care, handling and release of all bass caught during the tournament (see details at [bit.ly/bass-tournament](http://bit.ly/bass-tournament)).

**TrophyCatch:** TrophyCatch continues to reward anglers for voluntarily releasing bass heavier than eight pounds (see [TrophyCatch-Florida.com](http://TrophyCatch-Florida.com) and page 4 for details). By requiring documentation to verify the bass weight, FWC biologists can use data collected by anglers who catch, document and release these bass, as a form of citizen science. This information is important to determine what

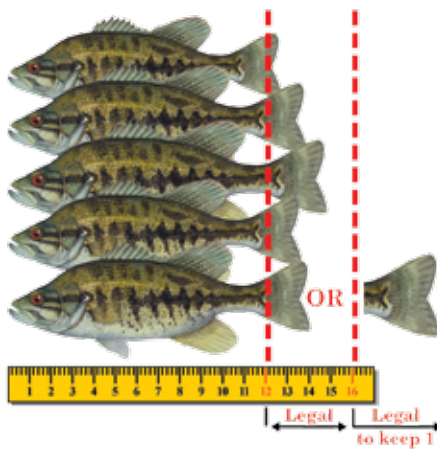
conservation management programs such as habitat restoration, vegetation management, fish stocking, or these new regulatory controls are most successful in improving anglers' opportunities to catch trophy bass.

The FWC will continue to update you as we implement these rules and other cutting-edge technology to improve your fishing and maintain Florida's status as the "Fishing Capital of the World." Please check our website, [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing), and sign up for newsletters. Be sure to follow [Facebook.com/TrophyCatch-Florida](https://www.facebook.com/TrophyCatch-Florida) for great insights into when and where the best fishing is.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) mission is "Managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people."



For largemouth bass only one may be 16 inches or longer in total length per angler per day, with no minimum length limit.



For Suwannee, shoal, Choctaw, and spotted basses: 12-inch minimum size limit, only one may be 16 inches or longer in total length.

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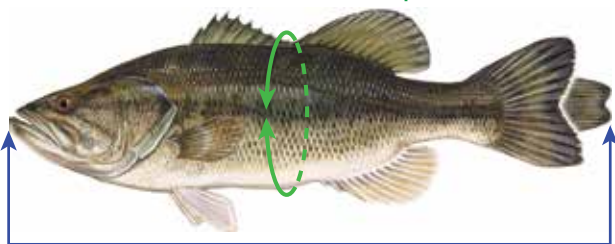
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## How to measure your catch

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. Girth is the circumference around the fattest part of the fish. For a bass weight calculator based on length and girth visit [MyFWC.com/Bass-Formula](http://MyFWC.com/Bass-Formula).

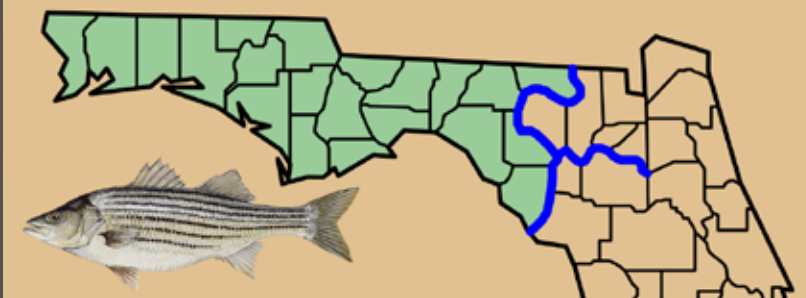
Measure **Girth** around the fattest part of the fish



Measure **Total Length** with mouth closed and tail squeezed together

### Striped bass map

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).



### 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 who 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 Sport Fish Restoration money and brings tackle and motor boat fuel taxes home to Florida.

The new youth license (Page 7) can be purchased for any age youth. It is good until they are 17 years old. It is a way for them to take pride in being an angler, learn about conservation and help Florida obtain more dollars for Sport Fish Restoration.

In addition, when you buy your license, you may make a voluntary donation to youth fishing and hunting programs in Florida (GoOutdoorsFlorida.com).

Say "I DO" care for fish and wildlife and buy your license today.



### Entanglement is a "REEL" issue

#### If you hook a bird, DON'T CUT THE LINE!

Reel in slowly.  
Remove the hook.  
Release the bird.

For more information on bird entanglement, visit [www.MyFWC.com/unhook](http://www.MyFWC.com/unhook).



# Help Protect

Report fishing, boating or hunting law violations.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
[MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)

Call 888-404-FWCC (3922); on cell phones, dial \*FWC or #FWC; or at [MyFWC.com/Law](http://MyFWC.com/Law).

At the FWC, it pays to love the outdoors!



Visit [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) to learn how to become an FWC officer.





## Regulations for Fish Management Areas

1. A fishing license is required for residents from 16 to 64 years of age, and for nonresidents 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 (Pages 7 and 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.

- 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.

**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.

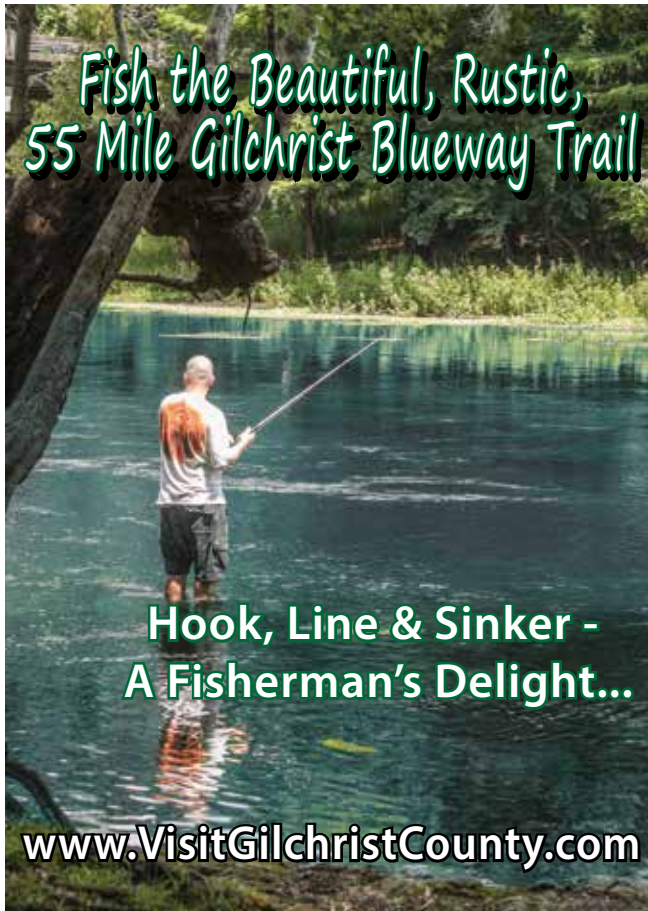
**Lake Stone, Escambia County:** open to fishing.

- 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.

*(Continued on Page 20)*



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(Continued from Page 19)

**Joe Budd Pond, Gadsden County:** Closed to fishing, except as authorized by permit for Commission-sanctioned events (see 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

**Baymeadows, 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, possession of alcoholic beverages or use of cast nets is prohibited.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**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

**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

**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

**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

**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

**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 Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

- 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

**Camp Blanding area, Clay County:** Open to fishing. 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 access 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.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lake Lochloosa, Orange Lake, Alachua and Marion counties:** open to fishing.

- 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.

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**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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
- 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.

- Nongame fish may be taken by castnets, dip nets, seines, trotlines, set lines, bush hooks, and traps as specified in Rules 68A-23.002, 68A-23.003 and 68A-23.004, F.A.C.

**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.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Nongame fish may be taken by castnets, dip nets, seines, trotlines, set lines, bush hooks, and traps as specified in Rules 68A-23.002, 68A-23.003 and 68A-23.004, F.A.C.

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

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


(Continued on Page 22)

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(Continued from Page 21)

**Clermont 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 Oct. 31.
- No trotline may be secured to or fished within 50 yards of a private pier or dock.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Black crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.

**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

**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.

## Summer Fishing Camps for Youth

The FWC is combating the tendency for today's youth to disconnect from nature and the outdoors, through the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network (FYCCN). This initiative is providing "Fishing and Basic Boating Skills Camps" (Fish Camps) throughout the state.



Fish Camps, for youth ages 9–15, combine teaching and practical application of angling and boating skills. An instructor provides a fish identification and anatomy lesson, and a law enforcement officer conducts a boating safety demonstration. The goal of Fish Camp is to establish individuals as life-long anglers and stewards of aquatic and fisheries resources, so they can benefit from a healthy, active connection with nature.

This unique program utilizes partners to expand the reach and cost-effectiveness of the camps. Plans are to establish at least one Fish Camp in each county. There are currently about 20 camps; two of the best established are the Ocala and Everglades camps. To locate a camp, or to help start a camp at a new location, email [FYCCN@myfwc.com](mailto:FYCCN@myfwc.com).

FWC staff developed and tested the Fish Camp model using Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds. Expanding the program relies on anglers, who voluntarily donate when buying a fishing license. FWC assists cooperators with startup costs for new camps and trains non-FWC trainers to ensure quality experiences. FWC staff also assists with evaluating camps to ensure positive impacts on campers' environmental awareness, fishing skills, and long-term participation.

Fish Camps are fun and exciting for kids and what they learn will help them to live happier and healthier lives and become advocates for sustaining our environmental resources.





**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

**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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

- Cast nets are prohibited.
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

**Lakes Hatchineha and Kissimmee, Polk County:** open to fishing.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Nongame fish may be taken by castnets, dip nets, seines, trotlines, set lines, bush hooks, and traps as specified in Rules 68A-23.002, 68A-23.003 and 68A-23.004, F.A.C.

**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.

*(Continued on Page 24)*

# Need to Know On the Go?

The Florida Freshwater  
Fishing Regulations are  
now available online through  
your mobile devices!



eRegulations



[www.eRegulations.com](http://www.eRegulations.com)

(Continued from Page 23)

**Edward Medard Park Reservoir, Hillsborough County:** open to fishing.

- No person shall use any gear other than hook and line or rod and reel to take and possess game fish and nongame fish species.
- Persons possessing a valid freshwater commercial fishing license may use cast nets to catch nongame fish other than channel catfish from 12:01 AM Tuesday to 12:01 AM Friday.
- Days and hours of operation, park entrance and other user fees shall be designated by Hillsborough County and posted at the park main entrance.

**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.
- 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

**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

**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 management 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.
- 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.

## 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 MyFWC.com). Between 1941 and 1950, sport-fishing businesses paid a federal excise tax 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 Restoration Program (aka: SFR, Dingell-Johnson or Wallop-Breaux).

The concept was to restore sportfish populations and improve public access, so more people can enjoy fishing and so 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 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 percent more anglers than in 1950. Purchases of tax-related items by anglers have increased by nearly 200 percent in dollars (adjusted for the consumer-price index) 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 percent in 1970 to 2,643 percent in 1980.

In Florida alone, SFR provided \$11 million in 2014, of which 15 percent (\$1.8 million) went to boating access. Freshwater fisheries conservation

received \$4.5 million (down from \$5 million in recent years). 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.



Your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels supports Sport Fish Restoration and boating access facilities.



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

**Lakes A, Butterfly, C, E, Fish Hook, G, Half-Moon, Horseshoe, Hydrilla, Legs Lost, Lake East, Lost Lake West, Tern, 2, 3, and 4 (primitive launch only on Butterfly, E, 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:** Check online regulations at [bit.ly/FLFWReqs](http://bit.ly/FLFWReqs) for possible changes.

- 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 developmental disabilities services by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. 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.
- Derby Lake: Daily bag limit for black bass shall be five per day, only one of which may be 16 inches or greater in total length.

**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, Polk County:**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

- Cast nets or minnow seines are prohibited.

*(Continued on Page 26)*

**It matters to us  
which plate  
you buy**

**New! Give the bass plate as a gift.**

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Make a difference for Florida's freshwater fisheries--buy a "Go Fishing" bass plate. Help support hatcheries, habitat improvement, youth education, boating access and more.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
[MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)



Available at tax collector's offices and online at <http://bit.ly/Bass-Tag>.

(Continued from Page 25)

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Bluegill and redear aggregate bag limit: 20
- Crappie bag limit: 10
- 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

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

- Watercraft shall be operated at idle speed only.
- The following are prohibited within 150 feet of the boat launch site; swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms, camping, or open fires.
- Bluegill and redear aggregate 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.
- 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.

- 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 Okechee, Palm Beach County:** open to fishing.

- 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.

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

- 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.

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



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



## Frequently answered questions

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

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, even though they are normally considered a saltwater species.

### What regulations apply to frogs?

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 68A-26.002, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), including use of gigs—provided gigs are not specifically prohibited in the area.

### What regulations apply to freshwater crayfish?

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 state-listed crayfish (Panama City, Sims Sink and Black Creek crayfishes) and all cave-inhabiting crayfish.

### What regulations apply to freshwater turtles?

Licenses and permits are not required to take a recreational bag limit of turtles in accordance with rules provided below. Freshwater turtles can only be taken by hand, dip net, minnow seine or baited hook.

Freshwater turtles taken from the wild may not be sold, but freshwater turtles raised on turtle aquaculture facilities or purchased from licensed vendors can be sold. There is a take and transportation limit of one (1) turtle per person unless the individual transporting the turtles has

a receipt indicating the purchase date; quantity and species of turtles acquired; and the name and address of supplier. Snapping turtles, cooters and map turtles may not be taken from the wild because of similarity to alligator snapping turtles, Suwannee cooters, Barbour's map turtles, respectively. Additionally, alligator snapping turtles, Suwannee cooters and Barbour's map turtles may not be possessed without a Scientific Collecting Permit and then, only if they were obtained prior to July 20, 2009.

The following species have a possession limit of two: loggerhead musk turtles, box turtles, Escambia map turtles and Diamondback terrapins. Turtle eggs may not be possessed without a permit. For all other freshwater turtles, take is limited to one turtle per person per day 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 ([GoOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://GoOutdoorsFlorida.com)) from the FWC, or a valid Aquaculture Certificate of Registration from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS: [FloridaAquaculture.com](http://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](http://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 [GoOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://GoOutdoorsFlorida.com). Rules subject to change; see [FLrules.org](http://FLrules.org) for the latest.

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

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 per day. Additionally, no person may possess more than two days' bag limit (20 individuals, 40 half-shells) of any mussels of these families. Any deviation requires a permit from the Executive Director, in accordance with 68A-9.002 FAC (see illustrations, Page 11).

- Freshwater mussels from families other than the two mentioned above, such as Asian clams, 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?

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](http://MyFWC.com/WildlifeHabitats).

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

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 ( $22 \times 22 \times 15 / 1200 = 6.1$ ). See [MyFWC.com/Bass-Formula](http://MyFWC.com/Bass-Formula) for an online calculator.

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

Generally, noncriminal infractions involve license or permit violations, or motor size issues. 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 and size or bag limit violations. Failure to pay a noncriminal penalty (similar to a traffic ticket) within 30 days 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 (379.401) 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?

Although the value of recreational fisheries extends far beyond its economic impact, it is important to note that Florida's famed fisheries continue to be a major job creator and to attract millions of tourists.

Southwick Associates published "Sportfishing in America: An Economic Force for Conservation, 2013" for the American Sportfishing Association. This report documents that Florida ranked No. 1 with 3.1 million anglers. Florida's role as the fishing destination for travelers was reaffirmed, with 2 million nonresident anglers visiting the state. The ripple effect of these dollars was an \$8.7 billion economic impact from Florida's recreational fisheries that supported 80,211 jobs.

Specific to freshwater in 2011, Florida had 1.2 million anglers. They enjoyed 25.7 million days fishing, spending almost a billion dollars and generating an economic impact of \$1.7 billion, which supported more than 14,000 jobs.

## Fish consumption advisories for freshwater anglers

Florida's freshwater and marine fishes are generally considered safe to eat. The American Heart Association recommends eating two meals of fish or seafood every week, though eating certain fish can be unhealthy, as they can accumulate mercury and other contaminants from their environment. Mercury poses little danger at the low to moderate levels found in most Florida fish. However, developing fetuses and young children are more sensitive to the harmful effects mercury has on the brain. As a result, women of childbearing age and young children should eat fish with lower mercury levels. By choosing a variety of fish, both low in mercury and from different water bodies, anglers can enjoy the health benefits without significant risk.

### Count all fish meals from all water bodies

A fish meal is 6 ounces of cooked fish. Fish eaten from different sources count toward the consumption guidelines and should be added together.



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

Fish and shellfish have been tested for mercury and other contaminants in many Florida waters. For detailed location and species information, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) website offers specific consumption advice for both freshwater and marine fish: [bit.ly/EatingFish2016](http://bit.ly/EatingFish2016) or call DOH at 850-245-4250.

## Mercury questions and answers

### Where does mercury come from?

Natural sources of mercury come from things like volcanoes and forest fires. Most man-made sources come from burning of fossil fuels and waste incineration.

### How does mercury get into fish?

Mercury is found in virtually all water bodies in the state. Naturally occurring bacteria convert it into a form called methyl mercury which accumulates in tiny organisms eaten by fish. Fish may contain different levels of contaminants based on what they eat and their location, size, and age.

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

No. Mercury accumulates in the muscle tissue of fish. Therefore, trimming excess fat and skinning do not reduce the amount of mercury you consume.

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

Small, short-lived species of fish are generally lower in mercury. Freshwater fish such as sunfish (e.g., bluegill, redear sunfish, redbreast sunfish or spotted sunfish) and brown bullhead are usually lower in mercury. Marine fish such as mullet, snappers, pompano, flounder and dolphin are also typically low in mercury. For guidance on choosing fish to eat from restaurants, grocery stores or that you caught please visit the Department of Health Seafood Consumption web page at [bit.ly/EatSeafood](http://bit.ly/EatSeafood), or contact DOH at 850-245-4250 or [phtoxicology@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:phtoxicology@doh.state.fl.us).

### For more information

Check the FWC website: [bit.ly/FWCMercuryTesting](http://bit.ly/FWCMercuryTesting).

## Basic Guidelines for Eating Freshwater Fish

The following Basic Eating Guidelines provide general advice to anglers from all untested fresh waters in the state. For more detailed guidance for all untested fresh waters, consult the Florida Department of Health publication *Basic Guidelines for Eating Freshwater Fish* ([bit.ly/FreshwaterAdvice](http://bit.ly/FreshwaterAdvice)) or call 850-245-4250.

### WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE & YOUNG CHILDREN

Eat 1 meal per week of these fish with very low mercury:



Bluegill



Redear sunfish



Brown bullhead

Eat 1 meal per month of these fish with low mercury:

- Black crappie
- White catfish
- Spotted sunfish
- Mayan cichlid
- Channel catfish
- Redbreast sunfish
- Warmouth

Women of childbearing age and young children should consume no more than one meal per month of black bass and largemouth bass. They should also avoid eating bass larger than 14 inches from certain areas. They should avoid eating bowfin and gar. For specific location guidelines for black bass and other species not listed here see *Your Guide to Eating Fish Caught in Florida* at [bit.ly/EatingFish2016](http://bit.ly/EatingFish2016).

### WOMEN NOT PLANNING TO BE PREGNANT & MEN

Eat 2 meals per week of these fish with very low mercury:



Bluegill



Redear sunfish



Brown bullhead



Redbreast sunfish

Eat 1 meal per week of these fish with low mercury:

- Black crappie
- White catfish
- Warmouth
- Chain pickerel
- Channel catfish
- Spotted sunfish
- Mayan cichlid

Eat black bass and largemouth bass up to once per week. Eat fewer meals of bass larger than 14 inches from certain areas. Avoid eating bowfin and gar. For specific location guidelines for black bass and other species not listed here see *Your Guide to Eating Fish Caught in Florida* at [bit.ly/EatingFish2016](http://bit.ly/EatingFish2016).



# Catch the **BIG**

## WHERE FISHING STORIES AREN'T EXAGGERATED

Lake County, Central Florida's  
premier fishing destination.



### TOP 5 MUST-FISH LAKES in FL:

LAKE EUSTIS  
LAKE HARRIS  
LAKE GRIFFIN  
JOHNS LAKE  
LAKE DORA



“As a professional bass fisherman there is no better place to live and practice than in Lake County, Florida. With well over 1,000 named lakes and countless miles of rivers and canals, Lake County is an ideal location to hone my skills and test new equipment.”

**Tim Frederick**, *FLW Tour Angler*

To plan your next fishing trip, visit [www.LakeBigBass.com](http://www.LakeBigBass.com).



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