Florida Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Issued: January 2019
New regulations are highlighted in red
Regulations apply to state waters of the Gulf and Atlantic
(please visit: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational for the most current regulations)

All art: © Diane Rome Peebles, except snowy grouper (Duane Raver)

Reef Fish

Snapper

General Snapper Regulations:

- **Snapper Aggregate Bag Limit - Within state waters of the Atlantic and Gulf, all species of snapper are included in a 10 fish per harvester per day aggregate bag limit in any combination of snapper species, unless stated otherwise.**
- **Seasons – If no seasonal information is provided, the species is open year-round.**

Snapper, Cubera ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 12" (see remarks)

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester under 30", included within snapper aggregate bag limit
- May additionally harvest up to 2 per harvester or vessel-whichever is less-over 30", and these 2 fish over 30" are **not** included within snapper aggregate bag limit

Snapper, Red ▲◆●X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 20"
- Gulf - 16"

Season:
- Atlantic - Open year-round
- **Gulf - Closed, check MyFWC.com for 2019 season**

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 2 per harvester
- Gulf - Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.

Snapper, Vermilion ▲◆●X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 12"
- Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 5 per harvester **not** included within snapper aggregate bag limit
- Gulf - 10 per harvester **not** included within snapper aggregate bag limit

Snapper, Lane ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 8"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 10 per harvester
- Gulf - 100 pounds per harvester, **not** included within snapper aggregate bag limit

Other Snapper ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 12"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

Remarks
- Includes: Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany, Queen, Silk and Yellowtail

Snapper, Gray (Mangrove) ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per harvester

Snapper, Mutton ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 18"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per harvester

Snapper, Schoolmaster ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

Snapper, Black & Wenchman ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - None

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

Grouper

Atlantic Grouper General Regulations:

- Atlantic grouper regulations apply to all state waters of the Atlantic and all state waters off Monroe County (Gulf and Atlantic sides).
- **Atlantic Grouper Aggregate Bag Limit - all species of grouper plus golden tilefish in the Atlantic are included in a 3 fish per harvester per day aggregate bag limit in any combination of grouper/golden tilefish species.**
- **Seasons – If no seasonal information is provided, the species is open year-round.**

Gulf Grouper General Regulations:

- Gulf grouper regulations apply to all state waters of the Gulf except off Monroe County (where Atlantic rules apply).
- **Gulf Grouper Aggregate Bag Limit - all species of grouper in the Gulf are included in a 4 fish per harvester per day aggregate bag limit in any combination of grouper species.**
- **Seasons – If no seasonal information is provided, the species is open year-round.**

* Zero bag limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels applies to gag, black, and red grouper only.

Grouper, Black ▲◆●X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 24"
- Gulf - 24"

Season:
- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1–April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 1 per harvester. Only 1 fish can be gag or black
- Gulf - 4 per harvester*

Grouper, Snowy ▲●

Minimum Size Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - None

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 1 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

Grouper, Red ▲◆●X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 20"

Season:
- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1–April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 2 per Harvester*

Grouper, Warsaw & Speckled Hind ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - None

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 1 per vessel per day of each species

Grouper, Scamp ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 20"
- Gulf - 16"

Season:
- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1–April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

Gag Grouper ▲◆●X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 24"
- Gulf - 24"

Season:
- Atlantic - Closed: Jan. 1–April 30
- Gulf - State waters off Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson and Taylor counties: Open April 1 –June 30, & Sept 1–Dec. 31.
- Gulf - State waters off all other counties: Open June 1–Dec. 31

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 1 per harvester. Only 1 fish can be gag or black
- Gulf - 2 per harvester*

Other Grouper ▲●

Other Grouper includes:
- Rock Hind, Red Hind, Coney and Graysby

Minimum Size Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - None

Season:
- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1–April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Aggregate bag limits apply

Grouper, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 20"

Season:
- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1–April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

All art: © Diane Rome Peebles, except golden tilefish (Duane Raver); lionfish (FWC)

Reef Fish

Other Reef Fish (If no season information is provided, the species is open year-round)

Amberjack, Greater ▲ ● X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 28" fork length
- Gulf - 34" fork length

Season:
- Atlantic - Open year-round
- **Gulf - Open May 1–31 and Aug. 1–Oct. 31**

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 1 per harvester

Great Barracuda ▲ ■

Regulations only apply in Collier, Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties.

Minimum Size Limits:
- Not less than 15" or more than 36"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 per person or 6 per vessel
- May possess one over 36" per vessel.
- Unregulated in all other areas.

Remarks
- Unregulated in all other areas see pg. 15

Hogfish ▲ ●

Atlantic regulations apply to Monroe county

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 16" fork length
- Gulf - 14" fork length

Season:
- Atlantic - Open May 1–Oct. 31
- Gulf - Open year round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 1 per harvester
- Gulf - 5 per harvester

Triggerfish (Gray) ▲ ● X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic – 12" fork length
- Gulf - 15" fork length

Season:
- Atlantic - Open year-round
- **Gulf - Open March 1–May 31 & Aug. 1–Dec. 31**

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 10 per harvester
- Gulf - 1 per harvester

Red Porgy ▲ ◆ ●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 14"
- Gulf - None

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 100 pounds

Tilefish, Golden ▲ ●

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 1 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

Remarks
- Golden tilefish included within Atlantic and Gulf Grouper aggregate bag limits

Amberjack, Lesser & Banded Rudderfish ▲ ● X

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic and Gulf - Cannot be less than 14" or greater than 22" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per person aggregate of the two species

Black Sea Bass ▲ ◆ ●

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 13"
- Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic - 7 per harvester
- Gulf - 100 pounds per harvester

Pelagics

Billfish ▲ ★

Minimum Size Limits:
- Sailfish 63";
- Blue Marlin 99";
- White Marlin 66";
- Roundscale Spearfish 66"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 per harvester aggregate bag limit

Remarks
- Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528 or hmspermits.noaa.gov.
- HMS permit required in federal waters.

Swordfish ★

Minimum Size Limits:
- 47" lower jaw fork length with head attached or 25" cleithrum to keel length if head removed

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 per harvester per day, not to exceed a maximum of 4 per recreational (not for-hire) vessel or 15 per for-hire vessel

Remarks
- All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528. HMS permit required in federal waters. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels.

Mackerel, King ▲

Minimum Size Limits:
- 24" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Atlantic (excluding Monroe) - 2 per harvester
- Gulf (including Monroe) - 3 per harvester

Remarks
- Bag limit reduced to 1 in some state waters if federal waters are closed to recreational harvest.

Mackerel, Spanish ▲

Minimum Size Limits:
- 12" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 15 per harvester

Wahoo ▲

Minimum Size Limits:
- None

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 per harvester

Cobia (Ling) ▲

Minimum Size Limits:
- 33" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- **Atlantic - 1 per harvester not to exceed 6 per vessel**
- **Gulf - 1 per harvester, not to exceed 2 per vessel**

Tripletail ▲ ★ ◆ T ■

Minimum Size Limits:
- **18"**

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 per harvester

Remarks
- Hook and line only. No snatch hooks.

Dolphinfish ▲

Minimum Size Limits:
- Atlantic - 20" fork length
- Gulf - None

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 10 per harvester per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel per day. Vessel limit does not apply to for-hire vessels.

Coastal Species

Bluefish ▲■

Minimum Size Limits:
- 12" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 10 per harvester

Permit ●▲★T■

Size Limits:
- 22" fork Special Permit Zone (SPZ); Not less than 11" or more than 22" fork length all other areas

Closed Season:
- April 1–July 31 SPZ Only

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 per harvester, not to exceed 2 per vessel SPZ;
- 2 per harvester all other state waters

Remarks
- May possess 1 over 22" fork length outside the SPZ, not to exceed 2 over 22" fork per vessel per day. For map of SPZ, please see: MyFWC.com.
- Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels

Black Drum ▲◆T■

Size Limits:
- Not less than 14" or more than 24"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 5 per harvester

Remarks
- May possess one over 24". Snatching prohibited.

Flounder ▲◆T

Minimum Size Limits:
- 12"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 10 per harvester

Remarks
- May be harvested by spearing. Snatching prohibited.

Weakfish ▲★◆

Minimum Size Limits:
- Weakfish Management Area (WMA) in Nassau County - 12"
- All other areas - no minimum

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- WMA - 1 per harvester
- All other areas - 100 pounds per harvester

Remarks
- Regulations apply in parts of Nassau County only.
- See map at: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Weakfish

Pompano, Florida ▲★T■

Minimum Size Limits:
- 11" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 6 per harvester

Remarks
- Hook and line, cast net and beach or haul seine ONLY.

Bonefish ★■

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 0 per harvester

Remarks
- Catch and release only
- Hook and line only

Spotted Seatrout ●★▲◆T■

Size Limits:
- Not less than 15" or more than 20" (See remarks)

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 5 per harvester per day N.W. Zone
- 4 per harvester per day S.W. Zone
- 4 per harvester per day S.E. Zone
- 6 per harvester per day N.E. Zone

Remarks
- May possess no more than 1 over 20"; included in the regional bag limit. See management zone map at MyFWC.com.

Mullet, Striped (Black) & Silver

Minimum Size Limits:
- No minimum size

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 50 aggregate per harvester;
- **Aggregate vessel limits** Feb. 1–Aug. 31: 100 per vessel; Sept. 1–Jan. 31: 50 per vessel

Pompano, African ●★▲T■

Minimum Size Limits:
- 24" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel

Snook (All species) ▲★◆T■

Size Limits:
- Not less than 28" or more than 32" Atlantic excluding Monroe
- Not less than 28" or more than 33" Gulf and Monroe County

Closed Season:
- Atlantic (excluding Monroe) closed Dec. 15–Jan. 31 and June 1–Aug. 31.
- Gulf including Monroe County, Dec. 1–end of February, and May 1–Aug. 31.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 per harvester

Remarks
- Snook permit required for harvest when saltwater license required. See MyFWC.com for snook permit details. Snatch hooks and spearing prohibited.
- Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels
- **Catch and release only in SW region, see MyFWC.com for more information**

Blue Runner ■

Minimum Size Limits:
- No minimum

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 100 fish per harvester

Sheepshead ●▲◆T■

Minimum Size Limits:
- 12"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- **8 per harvester**

Remarks
- Snatching prohibited
- **Vessel limit of 50 fish during March and April**

Tarpon ●★T■

Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 per harvester per year. $50 harvest tag required. Vessel limit of one fish. Harvest tag can only be used when fish is retained for potential IGFA record.

Remarks
- Tarpon over 40 inches must remain in the water during release. Spearing and snatch hooking prohibited. Bottom weighted jigs prohibited in Boca Grande Pass. See: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Tarpon for additional information.

Red Drum (Redfish) ▲★◆T

Size Limits:
- Not less than 18" or more than 27"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 per harvester per day in the NE zone, and 1 per harvester in the NW and S zone. See map on p. 6
- Off the water possession limit of 6 fish

Remarks
- Gigging, spearing, snatching prohibited. Harvest in Federal waters prohibited.
- **Catch and release only in SW region, see MyFWC.com for more information**

Can't find your fish in the regulations?

Florida's coastal waters are home to thousands of marine species, and the majority of these species have no specific regulations with regard to bag limits, size limits, gear restrictions or closed seasons. These species are often referred to as "unregulated species," although the name can be a bit misleading. State law provides that for any marine species that does not have specific regulations, harvesting more than 100 pounds or two fish (whichever is the greater amount) constitutes a commercial quantity and requires a commercial license. This means the recreational harvest limit for any unregulated species is 100 pounds or two organisms if the combined weight of the two organisms exceeds 100 pounds.

Gulf Kingfish

Jack Crevalle

Lionfish

Hardhead Catfish

Examples of "unregulated species" include:
Ladyfish, bonito, menhaden, white grunt, southern stingray, gulf kingfish (whiting), pinfish, Atlantic croaker, jack crevalle, cero mackerel, hardhead catfish, gafftopsail catfish, lionfish and blackfin tuna.

* No license is required to harvest lionfish by dipnet, pole spear or Hawaiian sling and lionfish bag limit is unlimited for both Gulf and Atlantic state waters .

★ Spearing Prohibited

▲ Must remain in whole condition (removal of gills and guts allowed).

◆ Measured as total length. Total length is the straight line distance from the most forward part of the head with the mouth closed to the farthest tip of the tail with the tail compressed or squeezed together while the fish is lying on its side.

■ State regulations apply in federal waters.

● Additional gear rules apply, please see: MyFWC.com

T Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook (any hook with two or more points and a common shaft) in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

X Gulf reef fish survey required when fishing for selected reef species from a private vessel in the Gulf of Mexico.

Crustaceans and Mollusks

Bay Scallops ●

Season:
- **Closed, check MyFWC.com for 2019 season**

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per harvester; no more than 10 gallons whole, or ½ gallon meat per vessel anytime

Remarks
- Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pinellas - Pasco county line, to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County. It is illegal to harvest, possess and land bay scallops on waters outside open harvest area.

Spiny Lobster ★ ▲

Minimum Size Limit:
- Carapace must be greater than 3" measured in the water

Seasons:
- Sport Season open July 24-25, 2019
- Regular Season opens Aug. 6 through March 31

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- Sport Season: 6 per harvester per day in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park, 12 in all other harvest areas.
- Regular Season: 6 per harvester in all areas

Remarks
- Recreational trapping prohibited. Spiny lobster permit required when license required. Harvest of egg-bearing females prohibited.

Crab, Stone ★ ■

Minimum Size Limits:
- 2¾" claw

Closed Season:
- May 16–Oct. 14

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 gal. claws per harvester or 2 gal. per vessel, whichever is less

Remarks
- 5 traps maximum. Visit MyFWC.com for statewide trap construction requirements and specific requirements that apply in Miami-Dade, Monroe and Collier. Illegal to possess whole crab. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited. See how to properly de-claw on our website.

Oysters

Minimum Size Limit:
- 3"

Closed Season:
- June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties.
- July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas except Apalachicola Bay which has open areas year-round.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 2 bags per harvester or vessel except Apalachicola Bay

Remarks
- **Aplachicola Bay: special bag limits and other harvest restrictions apply. See MyFWC.com for detailed information.**
- Apalachicola Bay has summer & winter seasons/areas.
- Harvest from approved shellfish areas during daylight hours only.
- Go to FloridaAquaculture.com to determine the Open or Closed status of shellfish harvesting areas.
- May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise.
- 1 Bag = 60 lbs. or two 5 gal. buckets (whole in shell)
- Harvest prohibited in any harvest area that is in the Closed status as determined by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- Bay County: Harvest and possession prohibited in West Bay Estuarine Habitat Restoration Project Zone

Shrimp ▲

Closed Season:
- April & May closed in Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler & Clay counties

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 5 gallons heads on per harvester or vessel, whichever is less

Remarks
- Visit: MyFWC.com/Fishing and select "Saltwater", "Regulations" and "Shrimp" for additional regulations specific to Dade, Nassau and Duval

Clams (Hard) ●

Minimum Size Limits:
- 1" thick across hinge

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- One 5 gal. bucket per harvester or 2 per vessel (whole in shell)

Remarks
- Illegal to harvest from closed areas.
- Go to www.FloridaAquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas.
- May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise.

Crab, Blue ★

Closed Season:
- Regional trap closures apply. See map on page 6 or visit MyFWC.com for 2019 trap closure dates and locations.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 10 gallons whole per harvester

Remarks
- 5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.

Sharks

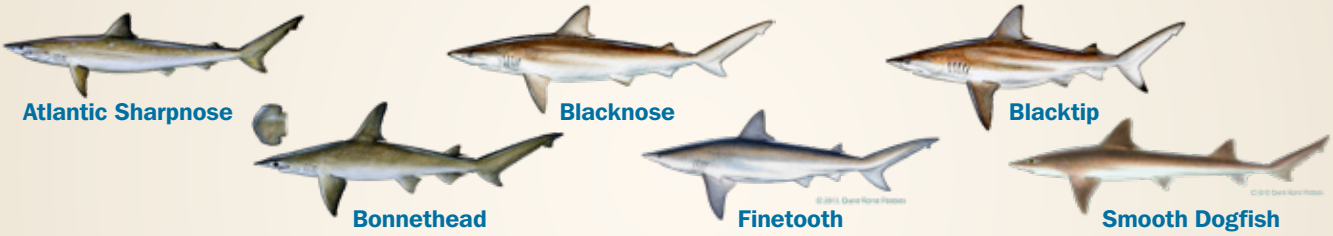
Daily Recreational Bag Limit:
- 1 per harvester or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less.

Remarks
- The retainable sharks are managed as a group for bag limit purposes. In other words, you can only harvest one shark per day and the shark that you harvest must be one of the retainable species.
- Hook-and-line gear only.
- See list of prohibited species below.

Retainable Sharks with a 54" fork length minimum ▲ ★ T

Blue, oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, shortfin mako (not illustrated).

Retainable Sharks with no minimum size limit ▲ ★ T



Prohibited Species

It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell or exchange the following species:

Goliath Grouper (Jewfish), Nassau Grouper, Sawfish, Atlantic Angel Shark, Basking Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Sixgill Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Bignose Shark, Caribbean Reef Shark, Caribbean Sharpnose Shark, Dusky Shark, Galapagos Shark, Lemon Shark, Longfin Mako Shark, Narrowtooth Shark, Night Shark, Silky Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Sandbar Shark, Sevengill Shark, Sixgill Shark, Smalltail Shark, Spiny Dogfish, Whale Shark, White Shark, Tiger Shark, Greater, Scalloped and Smooth Hammerhead Shark, Manta Ray, Devil Ray, Spotted Eagle Ray, Longbill Spearfish, Mediterranean Spearfish, Sturgeon, Queen Conch, Calico Scallop, Stony, Hard, Black and Fire Corals, Sea Fans, Bahama Starfish, and Longspine Urchin. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited. Puffer fish harvest is prohibited in Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties.

FWC – Division of Marine Fisheries Management, 2590 Executive Center Circle East, Tallahassee, FL 32301 Phone: 850-487-0554

This publication is provided as a guide to Florida fishing laws and regulations. The Florida Administrative Code is the final authority on fishing laws. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) strives to ensure information in this booklet is accurate, but assumes no liability for any errors that occur in this publication.