

Basic recreational saltwater fishing regulations for state waters of Florida

This brief summary of regulations governs the taking of saltwater species in Florida state waters for personal use. It is not applicable to the commercial harvesting of these species. The absence of complete laws, rules and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from compliance with those laws, rules or regulations. **State waters ex-**

tend to 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic and 9 nautical miles on the Gulf. Federal rules apply beyond state waters unless expressly stated otherwise. For species that do not have an established bag limit, more than 100 pounds or two fish per harvester per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial

quantities. A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration are required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species. It is illegal to sell recreationally harvested fish without compliance with commercial license requirements. Issue Forty Four, January, 2014.

Harvester: Regardless of what species you are fishing for, bag limits are only for properly licensed individuals and those people exempt from licensing requirements who are actively harvesting. People harvesting may not exceed the individual bag limit and take someone else's bag limit. That is, people (including children) who are not actively harvesting or are not properly licensed (if license is required) may NOT be counted for the purpose of bag limits.

For information on bag limits during multi-day trips, returning with fish from the Bahamas and spearing, please see "Other Information" at MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational

- ▲ 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. See *Reef Fish Gear Rules* page 11.
- † Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

Reef Fish

Please let us know what you think of the new regulations chart format! Email: Saltwater@MyFWC.com

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 is 3 fish which means that no harvester shall retain more than 3 Atlantic groupers in any combination of species.
- Zero bag limit for captain and crew of for hire vessels applies to all species of grouper

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 is 4 fish which means that no harvester can retain more than 4 gulf grouper in any combination of species.
- Zero bag limit for captain and crew of for hire vessels applies to Gag, Black, and Red Grouper only.

Specific Grouper Species Regulations



Gag ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 24"
- Gulf - 22"

Gag Grouper Seasons:

- Atlantic - Closed: Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - State waters off Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson and Taylor Counties: Open April 1 - June 30.
- Gulf - State waters off all other counties: Open July 1 - Dec. 3

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 1 per harvester. Only 1 fish can be gag or black
- Gulf - 2 per harvester



Grouper, Black ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 24"
- Gulf - 22"

Closed 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, Red ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 20"

Closed Season:

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

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



Grouper, Snowy ▲●

Minimum Size Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - No minimum

Closed Season:

- Atlantic and Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 1 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



Grouper, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 20"

Closed Season:

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

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



Grouper, Warsaw & Speckled Hind ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - No minimum

Closed Season:

- Atlantic and Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 1 per vessel per day of each species



Grouper, Scamp ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 20"
- Gulf - 16"

Closed Season:

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

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

Other Grouper ▲●

Other Grouper includes:

- Tiger, Rock Hind, Red Hind, Coney and Grasyby

Minimum Size Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - No minimum

Closed Season:

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

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

Snappers

General Snappers Regulations:

- Within state waters of the Atlantic and Gulf, the snapper aggregate bag limit is 10 fish per harvester unless the species rule specifies that it is not included in the aggregate. This means that a harvester can retain a total of 10 snappers in any combination of species. Exceptions are noted below.

Specific Snappers Species Regulations



Snapper, Black & Wenchman ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - No minimum size

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester



Snapper, Cuba ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 12" (see remarks)

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

Remarks

- May possess no more than 2 Cuba Snapper over 30" per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less. 30" or larger not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.



Snapper, Gray (Mangrove) ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per harvester



Snapper, Lane ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 8"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 10 per harvester
- Gulf - 100 pounds (see remarks)

Remarks

- Gulf not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.

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Photo: Joe Marino



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Reef Fish

Snappers (Continued)



Snapper, Red ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 20"
- Gulf - 16"

Open Season:

- New State Waters: Open the Saturday before Memorial Day May 24, 2014 through July 14th
- Please visit MyFWC.com for harvest season information.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 2 per harvester

Remarks

- Gulf - Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.



Snapper, Vermilion ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 12"
- Gulf - 10"

Closed Season:

- Atlantic and Gulf - Open year-round

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 5 per harvester
- Gulf - 10 per harvester

Remarks

- Vermilion Snapper **not** included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit.
- Atlantic: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.



Snapper, Mutton ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 16"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester



Snapper, Schoolmaster ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

All 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 & Yellowtail.

Other Reef Fish



Amberjack, Greater ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 28" fork length
- Gulf - 30" fork length

Closed Season:

- Atlantic - Open year-round
- Gulf - Closed June 1–July 31

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 1 per harvester



Amberjack, Lesser & Banded Rudderfish ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 14" to 22" slot size limit

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 aggregate of the two species



Black Sea Bass ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 13"
- Gulf - 10"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 5 per harvester
- Gulf - 100 pounds per harvester



Triggerfish (Gray) ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 12" fork length
- Gulf - 14" fork length

Closed Season:

- Atlantic - Open year-round
- Gulf - Closed June 1–July 31

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 100 pounds
- Gulf - 2 per harvester



Hogfish ▲●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 12" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per harvester



Red Porgy ▲◆●

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 14"
- Gulf - No minimum size

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
- Atlantic: Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels



Lionfish

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - no minimum

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - unlimited

Remarks

- No license required to harvest by dip net, pole spear, Hawaiian sling.
- Divers are encouraged to safely remove lionfish whenever they are found.

▲ 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. See *Reef Fish Gear Rules* page 11.

† Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

Pelagics

Regulations for pelagics, coastal species, crustaceans and mollusks and sharks apply to both Atlantic and Gulf unless otherwise noted.



Billfish

Minimum Size Limits:

- Sailfish 63";
- Blue Marlin 99";
- White Marlin 66";
- Roundscale
- Spearfish 66"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 per harvester per day 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 per day

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.



Tripletail

Minimum Size Limits:

- 15"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Hook & line gear only. No snatch hooks.



Dolphin

Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 20" fork length
- Gulf - No minimum size

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 10 per harvester per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel per day



Cobia (Ling)

Minimum Size Limits:

- 33" fork

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 per harvester or 6 per vessel per day, whichever is less



Wahoo

Minimum Size Limits:

- No minimum

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 per harvester per day



Mackerel, Spanish

Minimum Size Limits:

- 12" fork

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 15 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Transfer of Spanish Mackerel to other vessels at sea is prohibited.



Mackerel, King

Minimum Size Limits:

- 24" fork

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Bag limit reduced to 1 in some state waters when federal waters are closed to all harvest.

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Black Drum

▲ ♦ T ■

Minimum Size Limits:

- Not less than 14" or more than 24"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 5 per harvester per day

Remarks

- May possess one over 24". Snatching prohibited.



Bluefish

▲ ■

Minimum Size Limits:

- 12" fork

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 10 per harvester per day



Blue Runner

■

Minimum Size Limits:

- No minimum

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 100 fish per harvester per day



Bonefish

■

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 0 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Catch and release only.
- Hook and line gear only.



Permit

▲ T ■

Minimum Size Limits:

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

Closed Season:

- May 1–July 31 SPZ Only

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel per day SPZ;
- 2 per harvester per day all other state waters

Remarks

- May possess 1 over 22" fork length in all other areas, not to exceed 2 over 22" fork per vessel per day. For map of SPZ, please see: MyFWC.com.



Pompano, African

▲ T ■

Minimum Size Limits:

- 24" fork

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel per day.



Pompano, Florida

▲ T ■

Minimum Size Limits:

- 11" fork length

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 6 per harvester per day

Remarks

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



Red Drum (Redfish)

▲ ♦ T

Minimum Size Limits:

- Not less than 18" or more than 27"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 per harvester per day in NE and NW zones, 1 per harvester per day in S zone. See map on page 8.
- Vessel limit of 8 fish, on-shore possession limit during transport 6 fish

Remarks

- Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited. Harvest in Federal waters prohibited.



Snook (All species)

▲ ♦ T ■

Minimum 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, December 1 - end of February, and May 1 - Aug. 31.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Snook permit required for harvest when saltwater license required. See page 22 for snook permit details. Snatch hooks and spearing prohibited.



Spotted Seatrout

▲ ♦ T ■

Minimum 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 on page 8.



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.



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 day

Remarks

- Regulations apply in parts of Nassau County only.
- See map at: Myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/weakfish

▲ 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. See *Reef Fish Gear Rules* page 11.

T Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

Crustaceans and Mollusks



Flounder



Minimum Size Limits:

- 12"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 10 per harvester per day

Remarks

- May be harvested by spearing. Snatching prohibited.



Mullet, Striped (Black) & Silver

Minimum Size Limits:

- No minimum size

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 50 aggregate per harvester per day;
- Aggregate vessel limits
Feb. 1–Aug. 31: 100 per vessel;
Sept. 1–Jan. 31: 50 per vessel



Shad



Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 10 aggregate per harvester per day

Remarks

- American, Alabama & Hickory are part of aggregate limit. Hook & line gear only.



Sheepshead



Minimum Size Limits:

- 12"

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 15 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Snatching prohibited.



Bay Scallops



Closed Season:

- Sept. 25–June 30

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per harvester per day; 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 Pasco-Hernando 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.



Clams (Hard)



Minimum Size Limits:

- 1" thick across hinge

Closed Season:

- May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- One 5 gal. bucket per harvester or 2 per vessel, whichever is less per day (whole in shell)

Remarks

- Illegal to harvest from closed areas.
- Go to www.floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas.

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eRegulations.com/FL/fishing/saltwater

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Pole Barn Kits

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16' x 48' - \$2,525	24' x 48' - \$3,285	32' x 36' - \$3,310	36' x 72' - \$7,225
16' x 60' - \$3,050	24' x 60' - \$3,950	32' x 48' - \$4,165	40' x 48' - \$5,535
20' x 30' - \$2,150	30' x 30' - \$2,835	32' x 60' - \$5,020	40' x 60' - \$6,735
24' x 24' - \$1,920	30' x 36' - \$3,050	36' x 36' - \$4,015	40' x 72' - \$7,865

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Crustaceans and Mollusks



Crab, Blue

Closed Season:

- Regional trap closures apply. See page 8 for 2014 trap closure dates and locations.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 10 gallons whole per harvester per day

Remarks

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



Crab, Blue Land

Closed Season:

- July 1–Oct. 31

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 20 per harvester per day

Remarks

- Trapping prohibited, harvest of egg-bearing females prohibited, harvest prohibited in state parks and from the right-of-way of federal, state or county maintained roads.



Crab, Stone

Minimum Size Limits:

- 2 3/4" claw

Closed Season:

- May 16–Oct. 14

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 gal. Stone Crab claws per harvester or 2 gal. per vessel, whichever is less

Remarks

- 5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Illegal to possess whole crab. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.



Shrimp

Closed Season:

- April & May closed to Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler & Clay counties

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 5 gallons heads on per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less



Oysters

Minimum Size Limit:

- 3"

Closed Season:

- June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties.
- July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas.

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 bags per harvester or vessel, whichever is less per day.
- 1 Bag = 60 lbs. or two 5 gal. buckets (whole in shell)

Remarks

- Apalachicola Bay has summer & winter seasons/areas.
- Harvest from approved shellfish areas during daylight hours only.
- Go to Floridaaquaculture.com for allowable harvesting areas.



Spiny Lobster

Minimum Size Limit:

- Carapace must be greater than 3" measured in the water

Seasons:

- Regular Season Closed April 1 - August 5
- Sport Season Open July 30-31, 2014

Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 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. Special bag limit for 2-day Sport Season.

Sharks

Illustrations courtesy of Diane Rome Peebles and Duane Raver

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 on page 19.

Retainable Sharks

(With no minimum size limit)



Atlantic Sharpnose



Blacknose



Blacktip



Bonnethead



Finetooth



Smooth Dogfish



Retainable Sharks

(With a 54" Fork length minimum)



Bull



Spinner



Nurse



Common Thresher

▲ 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. See *Reef Fish Gear Rules* page 11.

† Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.