

## FISHING LICENSES

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 seatrout, red drum, snook, or American shad) need a saltwater license to possess these species if otherwise not exempt. For the purpose of fishing in Florida, a person is a resident if he or she has lived in Florida for six continuous months prior to applying for licenses and claims Florida as his or her primary residence. Active-duty military personnel stationed in Florida, including their dependents residing in the household, are considered residents when purchasing fishing licenses. See [www.MyFWC.Com/License](http://www.MyFWC.Com/License) to order online and for additional options. These are only some of the variations that are available for fishing. Purchasing a license online or via a toll free call (888) FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356) allows you to begin fishing immediately (a surcharge applies). Licenses are also sold by agents at many sports retail stores, bait-and-tackle shops and marinas. In addition to license and stamp fees listed below, agents are entitled to an additional \$.50. Local tax agencies also sell licenses, including life-time options. License fees are set by the Florida Legislature and are subject to change. Check [www.MyFWC.com/licenses](http://www.MyFWC.com/licenses) for updates.

### FLORIDA RESIDENT LICENSES

#### FRESHWATER OR SALTWATER LICENSES

Annual License: \$13.50  
Five-year License: \$61.50

#### ADDITIONAL PRIVILEGE PERMITS

Additional Privilege Permits:  
Annual Crawfish Permit: \$2  
Annual Snook Permit: \$2  
Annual Tarpon Tag: \$51.50

#### FRESHWATER & SALTWATER ANNUAL LICENSE

\$25.50

#### FRESHWATER & HUNTING ANNUAL LICENSE

\$23.50

#### FRESHWATER, SALTWATER & HUNTING ANNUAL LICENSE

\$35.50

#### ANNUAL SPORTSMAN'S LICENSE

\$67.50

(Includes freshwater fishing and hunting licenses; and type I wildlife management area, archery, muzzleloading gun, turkey and Florida waterfowl permits)

#### ANNUAL GOLD SPORTSMAN'S LICENSE

\$83.50

(Includes hunting, saltwater Fishing and freshwater fishing licenses; and type I wildlife management area, archery, muzzleloading gun, turkey and Florida waterfowl, snook and crawfish permits)

### NON-RESIDENT LICENSES

#### FRESHWATER & SALTWATER LICENSES

Three-Day License (saltwater only): \$6.50  
Seven-Day License: \$16.50  
Annual License: \$31.50

#### ADDITIONAL PRIVILEGE PERMITS

Annual Snook Permit: \$2  
Annual Crawfish Permit: \$2  
Annual Tarpon Tag: \$51.50

## FLORIDA FRESHWATER FISHING REGULATIONS

### METHODS OF TAKING FRESHWATER FISH

Game fish and non-game fish may 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 use of 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 non-game fish or bait. An exception is game fish may be possessed together with cast nets having a stretched mesh size not greater than one inch; minnow dip nets not more than 4 feet in diameter; minnow seines having a stretched mesh size not greater than one inch, a length not more than 20 feet and a depth not more than four feet; and minnow traps not more than 24 inches in length and 12 inches in diameter, with a funnel entrance not more than one inch in spread.

It is illegal to fillet or remove the head or tail fin of black bass, striped bass, white bass, Sunshine bass (striped bass x white bass hybrid), peacock bass, black crappie and panfish (where special black crappie or panfish size or bag limits are in effect) until you have completed fishing for the day.

#### NON-GAME FISH MAY BE TAKEN

- 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 non-game fish for personal use, but only in those areas where trotlines may be lawfully used in accordance with the Florida Administrative Code. Refer to the

"Commercial Freshwater Fisheries Rules and Regulations Summary."

- By manually operated spears, gigs, snatch hooks, crossbows or bows during daylight hours except on the Jim Woodruff Dam spillway, in Dade County canals south of C-4 and east of L-31N or L-31W, and at the spillways of the Eureka and Rodman dams. Non-game fish may be taken at night using gigs or bow and arrow.

- Non-game fish may be taken by the use of cast nets in the Southwest Region, except that cast nets may be prohibited in designated Fish Management Areas. Non-game fish may be taken with cast nets in the Northeast Region, except in Indian River County. Non-game fish may be taken by use of cast nets in Citrus and Glades counties.

- 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 in Northwest Florida. Nets used to take non-game fish in these specified waters must be less than 100 feet in length, have a minimum three inch stretched mesh and shall be continuously attended to ensure immediate release of any trapped game fish. Contact the Northwest Regional office for details.

#### GAME AND NON-GAME FRESHWATER FISH

Game Fish – black bass, black 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.

Non-game Fish – bowfin, common carp, catfish, pickerel, eels, gar, threadfin shad, gizzard shad, shiners, tilapia (Nile perch), killifish, suckers, topminnows and fishes not listed as freshwater game fish and not taken for sport.

#### PROHIBITED GEAR FOR TAKING MARINE SPECIES IN FRESHWATER

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.

#### METHODS OF TAKING BAIT

Freshwater shrimp and minnows of non-game fish (except catfish) may be taken by:

- Cast nets having a stretched mesh size not greater than one inch.
- Minnow dip nets not more than four feet in diameter.
- Minnow seines having a stretched mesh size not greater than one inch, a length not more than 20 feet, and a depth not more than four feet.
- Minnow traps not more than 24 inches in length and 12 inches in diameter, with a funnel entrance not more than one 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 goldfish or carp may not be used as bait.
- Whole pickerel or panfish (e.g., bluegill, redear sunfish, redbreast sunfish, spotted sunfish, flier, warmouth) or parts thereof may be used as bait for sport fishing 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.

#### GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR FISH MANAGEMENT AREAS EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2005

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.

2. The possession of fishing tackle is

prohibited on any Fish Management Area that is closed to fishing.

3. Daily 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.

For limits at specific bodies of water throughout Florida visit [www.MyFWC.com/fishing/rules.html](http://www.MyFWC.com/fishing/rules.html).

## SALTWATER FISHING REGULATIONS

There is a brief summary of regulations governing the taking of saltwater species in Florida for personal use at [www.floridafishing-boating.com](http://www.floridafishing-boating.com). It is not intended or designed to provide specific information on commercial harvesting of these species. The failure to include complete laws, rules and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from abiding by those laws, rules or regulations. State waters extend to three nautical miles on the Atlantic Ocean and 9 nautical miles on the Gulf of Mexico. Federal rules apply beyond state waters. For species that do not have an established bag limit, more than 100 pounds or two fish per person per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial quantities. A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration is required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species.

For information on species, minimum size, limits, closed seasons, recreational bag limits, and remarks visit:

[WWW.FLORIDAFISHING-BOATING.COM](http://WWW.FLORIDAFISHING-BOATING.COM) • [WWW.MYFWC.COM/MARINE](http://WWW.MYFWC.COM/MARINE) • [WWW.MYFWC.COM/MARINE/REGULATION.HTM](http://WWW.MYFWC.COM/MARINE/REGULATION.HTM)

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

## BOATING REGULATIONS

The following state-specific boating safety information must be incorporated into all boating safety course curriculums taught in Florida. This requirement is in conjunction with the current National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) National Boating Education Standards. For information regarding these standards and procedures for obtaining NASBLA and/or state approval, see [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org).

**VESSEL REGISTRATION:** All vessels operating with mechanical propulsion devices (such as gas or electric outboards) are required to be registered. • Vessels must be registered and numbered within thirty (30) days of purchase. • Registration numbers must be displayed on the forward half of the vessel on both sides above the waterline. The numbers must be bold block letters at least 3" high in a color contrasting to the hull. • The vessel registration decal must be renewed annually and is to be displayed within six (6) inches of, either before or after, the registration numbers on the port (left) side. • Documented vessels without a state registration in full force and effect, must also obtain a Florida registration and display the validation decal on the port side of the vessel when using Florida waters.

**BOATING ACCIDENTS:** The operator of a vessel involved in a boating accident where there is personal injury beyond immediate first-aid, death, disappearance of any person under circumstances which indicate death or injury, or if there is damage to the vessel(s) and/or personal property of at least \$2000, must, by the quickest means possible, give notice to one of the following: the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the sheriff of the county in which the accident occurred, or the police chief of the municipality in which the accident occurred, if applicable. • It is unlawful for any person operating a

vessel involved in a boating accident to leave the scene without giving all possible aid to the involved persons and without reporting the accident to the proper authorities.

**RECKLESS AND CARELESS OPERATION:** Operation of a vessel with willful disregard for the safety of persons or property is considered reckless operation (a first-degree misdemeanor). • All operators are responsible for operating their vessel in a reasonable and prudent manner with regard for other vessel traffic, posted restrictions, the presence of a divers-down flag, and other circumstances so as not to endanger people or property. Failure to do so is considered careless operation (a non-criminal infraction). • A violation of the Federal Navigation Rules is also a violation of Florida law.

**VESSEL SPEED RESTRICTIONS:** Any vessel operating in a speed zone posted as "Idle Speed—No Wake" must operate at the minimum speed that will maintain steerageway. • Any vessel operating in a speed zone posted as "Slow Down—Minimum Wake" must operate fully off plane and completely settled in water. The vessel's wake must not be excessive nor create a hazard to other vessels.

**BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE:** It is a violation of Florida law to operate a vessel while impaired by alcohol or other drugs. A vessel operator suspected of boating under

the influence must submit to sobriety tests and a physical or chemical test to determine blood or breath alcohol content. • In Florida, a vessel operator is presumed to be under the influence if their blood or breath alcohol level is at or above .08. • Any person under 21 years of age who is found to have a breath alcohol level of .02 or higher and operates or is in actual physical control of a vessel is in violation of Florida law.

**WATER SKI REGULATIONS:** The operator of a vessel towing someone on skis or another aquaplaning device must either have an observer, in addition to the operator, on board who is attendant to the actions of the skier or have and use a wide-angle rear view mirror. • No one may ski or aquaplane between the hours of 1/2 hour past sunset to a 1/2 hour before sunrise. • No one may water ski or use another aquaplaning device unless they are wearing a U.S.C.G. approved non-inflatable Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device (PFD). Inflatable personal flotation devices are prohibited. • No one may ski or use another aquaplaning device while impaired by alcohol or other drugs. • The operator of a vessel towing a skier may not pull the skier close enough to a fixed object or another vessel that there is risk of collision.

**PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REGULATIONS:** Each person operating, riding on, or being towed behind a personal watercraft must wear an

## BOATING REGULATIONS

approved non-inflatable Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device. Inflatable personal flotation devices are prohibited. • The operator of a personal watercraft must attach the engine cutoff switch lanyard (if equipped by the manufacturer) to his/her person, clothing, or PFD. • Personal watercraft may not be operated from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise. • Maneuvering a personal watercraft by weaving through congested vessel traffic, jumping the wake of another vessel unreasonably close or when visibility around the vessel is obstructed, or swerving at the last possible moment to avoid collision is classified as reckless operation of a vessel (a first-degree misdemeanor). • A person must be at least 14 years of age to operate a personal watercraft in this state. • A person must be at least 18 years of age to rent a personal watercraft in this state. • It is unlawful for a person to knowingly allow a person under 14 years of age to operate a personal watercraft (a second-degree misdemeanor).

**INTERFERENCE WITH NAVIGATION:** Except in the event of an emergency, it is unlawful for any person to anchor or operate a vessel in a manner that will unreasonably interfere with the navigation of other vessels.

**MOORING TO MARKER OR BUOYS:** Except in the event of an emergency, it is unlawful to moor or fasten to any lawfully placed navigation aid or regulatory marker.

**BOATER SAFETY EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:** Anyone 21 years of age and under who operates a vessel powered by 10 horsepower or more must pass an approved boater safety course and have in his/her possession photographic identification and a boater safety identification card issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. A person is exempt from this requirement if there is a person on board who is not affected by this law or is at least 18 years of age and holds a boater education I.D. card. This person must be attendant to and take responsibility for the safe operation of the vessel. • Anyone who is convicted of a criminal boating violation, any boating infraction resulting in a reportable boating accident, or two non-criminal boating safety violations within a 12-month period must attend and successfully complete an approved boating safety course and file proof with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The violator's privilege to operate a vessel in the state will be suspended until proof of course completion is filed.

**DIVERS-DOWN FLAG:** The size of divers-down flags displayed on vessels must be at least 20 inches by 24 inches, and a stiffener is required to keep the flag unfurled. Dive flags carried on floats may still be 12 inches by 12 inches. Also, divers-down flags on

vessels must be displayed above the vessel's highest point so that the flag's visibility is not obstructed in any direction. • Divers must make reasonable efforts to stay within 300 feet of a divers-down flag on open waters (all waterways other than rivers, inlets, or navigation channels) and within 100 feet of a flag within rivers, inlets, or navigation channels. • Vessel operators must make a reasonable effort to maintain a distance of at least 300 feet from divers-down flags on open waters and at least 100 feet from flags on rivers, inlets, or navigation channels. Vessels approaching divers-down flags closer than 300 feet in open water and 100 feet in rivers, inlets, and navigation channels must slow to idle speed. • Vessel speed restrictions are displayed on regulatory markers (signs) and/or bouys.

**EQUIPMENT AND LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS:** The owner and/or operator of a vessel is responsible to carry, store, maintain, and use the safety equipment required by the U.S.C.G. safety equipment requirements. • A child under the age of six (6) must wear a U.S.C.G. approved Type I, II, or III personal flotation device while onboard a vessel under 26 feet in length while the vessel is underway. "Underway" is defined as anytime the vessel is not anchored, moored, made fast to the shore, or aground. • The use of sirens or flashing, occulting, or revolving lights is prohibited except where expressly allowed by law.

**MAXIMUM LOADING AND HORSEPOWER:** No person may operate a monohull boat of less than 20 feet in length while exceeding the maximum weight, persons, or horsepower capacity as displayed on the manufacturer's capacity plate.

**LIVERIES (BOAT/PWC RENTAL FACILITIES):** The facility is prohibited from renting a vessel that does not have proper safety equipment, exceeds the recommended horsepower or load capacity, or is not seaworthy. • The facility must provide pre-rental or pre-ride instruction on the safe operation of the vessel with a motor of 10 horsepower or more. This instruction must include, at a minimum, operational characteristics of the vessel, safe operation and right-of-way, operator responsibilities, and local waterway characteristics. The person delivering this information must have completed a NASBLA/state-approved boater safety course.

• All renters required by law to have a boater education ID card must have the card or its equivalent before the facility may rent to them. • PWC liveries must conduct an on-the-water demonstration and a check ride to evaluate the proficiency of renters. • PWC liveries may not rent to anyone under the age of 18. • A PWC livery must display safety information in one of the following ways: Post and review a boating safety poster, and

review a boating safety brochure; or show a safe-operation instruction video.

**MARINE SANITATION DEVICES:** Vessels operating in Florida waters must comply with the U.S.C.G. requirements relating to marine sanitation devices, if applicable.

**MUFFLING DEVICES:** The exhaust of an airboat's engine must be muffled using automotive-style mufflers. • All vessels must be equipped with an effective muffling device. • The use of cutouts is prohibited, except for vessels competing in a regatta or official boat race and such vessels while on trial runs.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY:** Law enforcement officers of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Sheriff's deputies of the various counties, and any other authorized enforcement officer, shall have the authority to order the removal of vessels deemed to be an interference or hazard to public safety, enforce all boating safety laws, or cause any inspection to be made of all vessels in accordance to state law. • A law enforcement officer may stop any vessel for the purpose of checking for compliance with boating safety equipment requirements.

**MANATEE AWARENESS:** Manatees are protected by state and federal law. • It is illegal to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal, including manatees. Anything that disrupts a manatee's normal behavior is a violation of law, punishable under federal law up to a \$50,000 fine, one-year imprisonment, or both. • Boaters must observe all manatee protection zone requirements.

**SEA GRASS AWARENESS:** Sea grasses are the principal food source for endangered marine herbivores such as manatees and green sea turtles, and act as natural filters to help purify the water. They provide a suitable environment for a wide variety of marine life. • Boaters should make all available attempts to avoid running through sea grass beds. • Navigation charts identify sea grass beds as light green or marked as "grs" on the chart. • Boaters should make all possible attempts to stay within channels when unfamiliar with a waterway. Avoid taking shortcuts through sea grass beds to avoid causing propeller scars. • It is a violation of Florida law to damage sea grass beds in some areas within state waters.

*Note: This information is subject to change. Please call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Boating and Waterways Section at (850) 488-5600, or visit [www.MyFWC.com](http://www.MyFWC.com), for annual updates to this information or questions regarding course requirements.*