

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 non-game 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 and nongame 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.

Black bass, striped bass and white bass or their hybrids, peacock bass, or crappie and panfish (for 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 you are done fishing for the day.

Nongame 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 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 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 Southwest 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 bowfishing 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 five Northwest Florida counties only. Nets used to take nongame fish 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.
- 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 the waters of the state.

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.

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, un-

less specifically prohibited, by the following methods:

- 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.

Release/Movement of fish

Non-native fishes, except for peacock bass and triploid grass carp, must not be returned to the water nor may they be used as live bait, and should be consumed or disposed of properly.

Northern black bass (*Micropterus salmoides salmoides*) has been added to the conditional non-native species list. Possession, importation into Florida, sale or transportation of any live specimens or eggs of this species of black bass is prohibited except by special permit from the FWC. Hybrids of the northern black bass and Florida sub-species (*Micropterus salmoides salmoides* x *Micropterus salmoides floridanus*) are legal to possess in the Suwannee River and its tributaries and north and west of the Suwannee River. (Note: 68-5.002 pertaining to Northern bass is under review and expected to be implemented in 2010; see FLrules.org for updates).

Statewide bag and length limits

Special bag and length limits apply to some lakes, rivers (this page) and Fish Management Areas (pages 21–28). Other fishes considered to be nongame fishes have no bag or possession limits, except as noted in individual Fish Management Area regulations.

Possession limit is two days' 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.

- **5 Black bass** (largemouth, Suwannee, spotted, and shoal bass, individually or in total), only one of which may be 22 inches or longer in total length.
 - In south Florida (see page 20 for map): only one bass may be 14 inches in total length or longer.
 - South and east of the Suwannee River (see page 20 for map): black bass less than 14 inches in total length must be released immediately.
 - In the Suwannee River (see page 20 for map), areas north and west of the Suwannee River, and in any tributary river, creek or stream of the Suwannee River: black bass less than 12 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **50 Panfish** including bluegill, redear sunfish (shellcracker), flier, longear sunfish, mud sunfish, shadow bass, spotted sunfish (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).
- **2 Butterfly peacock bass**, only one of which may be 17 inches or longer in total length.

NOTES: It is illegal to possess grass carp or alligator gar without a permit; these fish must be released immediately (see page 13). Black bass, striped bass and white bass or their hybrids, peacock bass, or crappie and panfish (for 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 you are done 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 21–28).

- **Jim Woodruff Reservoir, Lake Seminole:** 10 black bass, each must be at least 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), in total; 50 panfish (does not include crappie); 15 pickerel (chain, grass and redbin). Possession limit is 50 fish total, regardless of species.

- **St. Marys River and its tributaries:** 10 black bass, all of which must be at least 12 inches 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 total panfish (does not include crappie); 15 pickerel (chain, grass and redbin).
- **Lake Talquin, Leon and Gadsden counties:** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length and crappie less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **Lake Jackson, Leon County:** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **Lake Kerr, including Little Lake Kerr:** Black bass caught from 15 to 24 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is three, of which only one may be 24 inches or longer in total length.
- **Wildcat Lake, Marion County (Ocala National Forest):** Black bass must be released immediately.
- **Edward Medard Reservoir, Hillsborough County:** Black bass caught from 15 to 24 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is three.
- **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 Weohyakapka (Walk-in-Water), Polk County:** Black bass from 15 to 24 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is three, only one of which may be 24 inches in total length or longer.
- **Lake Okeechobee**, including Harney Pond Canal (C-41) north of S.R. 78 to water control structure S-71; Indian Prairie Canal (C-40) north of S.R. 78 to water control structure S-72; all of Taylor Creek and Nubbin Slough; C-38 Canal/ Kissimmee River south of water control structure S-65E to S.R. 78, and C-41-A Canal, from the intersection of the C-38 Canal upstream to the S-84 structure, Okeechobee County: Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately; crappie (speckled perch) less than 10 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- **Lake Trafford (Collier County):** Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately. Black bass bag limit is five, only one of which may be 22 inches in total length or longer.



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.

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.



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.

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



Largemouth Bass



Butterfly Peacock Bass



Warmouth



Striped Bass



White Bass



Sunshine Bass



Bowfin



Chain Pickerel



Yellow Bullhead



Gar



Redbreast Sunfish



Spotted Sunfish



Redear Sunfish



Blue Tilapia



Channel Catfish



Black Crappie



Bluegill

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 32).

Mussels shall be taken by hand-picking only. Use of brailles, crow-foot bars, or other mechanical methods is prohibited. Freshwater mussels, live or dead, may not be taken for later sale.

Other clams

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

Sizes indicated are average adult dimensions for identification purposes only.

Fish art by Duane Raver, Jr.; blue tilapia by Diane R. Peebles.



3 inches
Florida Shiny Spike

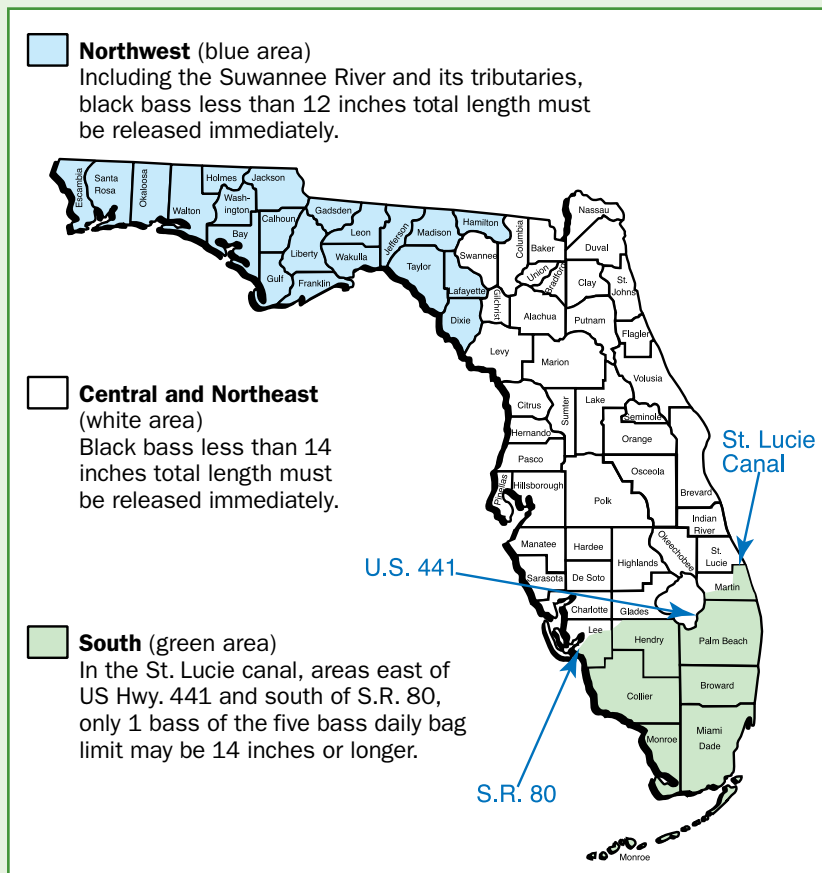


3½ inches
Paper Pondshell



1½ inches

Black bass fishing zones



Northwest (blue area)
Including the Suwannee River and its tributaries, black bass less than 12 inches total length must be released immediately.

Central and Northeast (white area)
Black bass less than 14 inches total length must be released immediately.

South (green area)
In the St. Lucie canal, areas east of US Hwy. 441 and south of S.R. 80, only 1 bass of the five bass daily bag limit may be 14 inches or longer.

Note: These are general black bass fishing zones. See the Specific Fish Management Area, and Special Bag and Length Limit sections for more local rules, including details about Lake Okeechobee.

- 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.

- 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.

Regulations for Fish Management Areas

1. A fishing license is required for residents from 16 to 64 years of age, and for non-residents 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 (page 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.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.



- 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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

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 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 accep-

tance as a client for developmental services by the Department of Children and Family Services.

- 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
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.

Camp Blanding area, Clay County: Indefinitely closed by the Army National Guard for security reasons. If the area is reopened to fishing, the following rules are in effect: 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.
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

Lake Lochloosa, including Tadpole and Lochloosa creeks; Orange Lake, including Orange Lake proper, and waters south and east of CR 346, and west of U.S. Highway 301; and Cross Creek; Alachua and Marion counties: open to fishing.

- Black bass 15 inches or more in total length and less than 24 inches must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 3
- 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.

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.
- Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass less than 16 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- 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
- Black bass less than 18 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Minnow lift nets and trotlines may be used.

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.
- Minnow lift nets, fish traps and trotlines may be used.

Lake Panasoffkee, Sumter County: open to fishing.

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

Chain of Lakes, Lake County (Cook, Winona, Palatlahaha, 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 October 31.
- No trotline may be secured to or fished within 50 yards of a private pier or dock.
- No bag limit for channel catfish.

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.

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
- Black bass must be released immediately.

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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.

- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass 15 inches or more in total length and less than 24 inches in total length must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 3
- Channel catfish bag limit: 6

Lakes Tohopekaliga (West Lake Tohopekaliga), Cypress, Hatchineha, and Kissimmee), Polk and Osceola counties: open to fishing.

- No bag limit for channel catfish.
- Minnow lift nets, fish traps and trotlines may be used.

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.

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.
- Black bass 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
- Black bass must be released immediately.

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
- Black bass must be released immediately.

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.

Regulations for Tenoroc lakes are as follows:

Lakes A, Butterfly, C, F, Fish Hook, G, Half-Moon, Horseshoe, Hydrilla, Legs Lost, Lake East, Lost Lake West, Tern, 2, 3, and 4 (primitive launch only on Butterfly, F, 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:

- 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 retardation services by the Department of Children and Family Services. 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.

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:

- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- Swimming, and taking of fish or wildlife with firearms or possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Gasoline motors may not be used on boats.
- Panfish bag limit: 20
- 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
- Crappie bag limit: 10

Middle Lake, Pasco County: open to fishing.

- Watercraft shall be operated at idle speed only.
- Swimming, taking of fish or wildlife with firearms, camping or open fires at the boat launch site are prohibited.
- Panfish 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.
- Black bass 15 inches or more in total length and less than 24 inches must be released immediately.
- Black bass bag limit: 3
- Only 1 black bass may be 24 inches or greater in total length.
- 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.
- Black bass must be released immediately.
- 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.
- 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.

The northern-most Tropical Park Lake, Miami-Dade 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.

Plantation Heritage Park Lake, Broward 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.



"Big Catch" Angler Recognition Program

QUALIFYING SIZES				
SPECIES	TOTAL LENGTH		TOTAL WEIGHT	
	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth
Largemouth Bass	24"	18"	8.00	6.00
Suwannee Shoal, or Spotted Bass	16"	12"	2.00	1.50
Striped Bass	30"	22"	12.00	9.00
Sunshine Bass	24"	18"	7.00	5.25
White Bass	15"	11"	2.50	1.75
Black Crappie	14"	10"	2.00	1.50
Bluegill	11"	8"	1.25	0.75
Redbreast Sunfish	10"	7"	0.75	0.50
Redear Sunfish	12"	9"	2.25	1.50
Warmouth	10"	7"	0.75	0.50
Spotted Sunfish	8"	6"	0.50	0.40
Flier	9"	6"	0.75	0.50
Channel Catfish	31"	23"	15.00	11.25
Flathead Catfish	36"	27"	25.00	18.75
White Catfish	22"	16"	5.00	3.75
Blue Catfish	34"	25"	20.00	15.00
Brown Bullhead	16"	12"	2.00	1.50
Yellow Bullhead	14"	10"	1.50	1.00
Longnose Gar	50"	37"	20.00	15.00
Florida/Spotted Gar	28"	21"	5.00	3.75
Alligator Gar	68"	51"	70.00	52.50
Chain Pickerel	27"	20"	4.00	3.00
Redfin Pickerel	12"	9"	0.63	0.50
Common Carp	30"	22"	20.00	15.00
Butterfly Peacock Bass	18"	13"	5.00	3.75
Oscar	11"	8"	1.25	0.75
Blue Tilapia	18"	13"	5.00	3.75
Bowfin	30"	22"	10.00	7.50

The "Big Catch" Angler Recognition Program rewards anglers who catch a memorable-sized fish. Qualifying anglers receive a colorful citation showing the type fish they caught and a window sticker to proudly display their prowess. In addition, anglers who release their fish get special recognition. An angler catching five "Big" fish of the same species will be recognized as a "Specialist," fish of five different species qualifies as a "Master Angler," and 10 different species as an "Elite Angler." A special youth citation and pin is given to an angler under age 16 for catching a fish that is at least 75 percent of the qualifying size (see table above for specific sizes). Total length is maximum length in inches; weights are in pounds. Participants are encouraged to submit photographs. To qualify, the fish must be legally caught and exceed the minimum qualifying length or weight. The catch must be witnessed and a "Big Catch" form completed.

OFFICIAL "Big Catch" PROGRAM APPLICATION

NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: ___/___/___
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY, STATE, AND ZIP CODE: _____
 PHONE: (____) ____-____ E-MAIL: _____
 DATE FISH WAS CAUGHT: ___/___/___
 WHERE FISH WAS CAUGHT: _____
 COUNTY IN WHICH FISH WAS CAUGHT: _____
 TIME OF CATCH: _____:____ [] AM [] PM

METHOD USED TO CATCH FISH:

Rod and Reel with Artificial Lure, Lure Used: _____
 Rod and Reel With Natural Bait, Natural Bait Used: _____
 Cane Pole With Natural Bait, Natural Bait Used: _____
 Fly Rod and Reel with Artificial Fly, Fly Used: _____
 Other Fishing Method (Describe): _____

IDENTIFICATION AND WEIGHT/LENGTH OF FISH:

*SEE CHART ON THIS PAGE FOR ELIGIBLE FISH SPECIES AND MINIMUM QUALIFYING WEIGHTS AND LENGTHS.

SPECIES: _____ WEIGHT: _____
 GIRTH: _____ LENGTH: _____

WAS FISH RELEASED? Yes _____ No _____

TYPE OF AWARD:

ANGLER RECOGNITION YOUTH AWARD SPECIALIST AWARD
 MASTER AWARD ELITE AWARD

The fish described in the application was legally caught in the state of Florida, by myself, and the above information is true and correct. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission may use this information and any photos for research, informational and other public purposes.

Applicant's Signature: _____

Fishing License Number: _____

IF EXEMPT, CHECK ONE: Younger than 16, Older than 65,
 Permanently disabled, Used Cane Pole in County of Residence,
 Military Home on Leave, Other: _____

Witness Signature: _____

MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 "Big Catch" Program
 620 South Meridian Street
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Fish consumption advisories for freshwater anglers

Florida's freshwater and marine fishes are generally considered safe to eat. Fish is an excellent source of protein and nutrients. The American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least twice a week to help maintain cardiovascular health. However, certain fish can be potentially unhealthy to eat, because they can take up contaminants from the water and from the food they eat.

At low to moderate levels found in most Florida fish, mercury poses little danger, and fish can be consumed safely in reasonable amounts. However, developing fetuses and young children are more sensitive to the harmful effects mercury has on the brain than adults. As a result, women of childbearing age and young children should eat less fish than others to avoid higher health risks.

By choosing a variety of fish low in mercury from different water bodies and not eating only one type, anglers can enjoy health benefits without appreciable risks. Consumption advisories have been issued to help anglers choose fish lower in mercury while limiting consumption of some species of fish from certain waters.

Count all fish meals from all water bodies

Fish eaten from different water bodies count toward the consumption guidelines. For example, a woman of childbearing age should not eat more than six ounces of cooked largemouth bass, combined, from all water bodies per month. Any additional fish meals eaten during the recommended time period should have low or no mercury levels.

Other department of health fish consumption advisories

Lake Apopka (Lake and Orange counties): brown bullhead should not be eaten due to pesticide contamination.

Lake Munson (Leon County): Largemouth bass 19 inches or more should not be eaten more than one time per month due to PCBs.

Mercury questions and answers

Where does mercury come from?

Mercury is released into the environment from natural deposits in rocks, volcanoes and soils. It is also released into the environment when power plants burn coal, incinerators burn mercury-containing wastes, and during production of other industrial chemicals. Airborne mercury attaches itself to dust and water particles and enters Florida waters with rain and runoff.

How does mercury get into fish?

Mercury is found in virtually all waters in the state, usually at extremely low concentrations. Naturally occurring bacteria, which decompose dead plant and animal material in lakes and wetlands, convert mercury into a form called methyl mercury. Methyl mercury accumulates primarily from organisms eaten by fish. Fish may contain different levels of contaminants based on their location, size, age, and feeding habits.

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

No. Mercury accumulates in the muscle tissue of fish, the part you eat. Therefore, trimming excess fat and skinning do not reduce the amount of mercury you consume. The only way to reduce mercury consumption is to eat fish from less contaminated water bodies and to select species that are lower in mercury.

How do I choose which fish to eat?

Small, short-lived species such as sunfish (e.g., bluegill, redear sunfish, redbreast sunfish, or spotted sunfish) and brown bullhead are generally lower in mercury. Generally, smaller largemouth bass contain less mercury than larger individuals. To help you select fish to eat, refer to the Safe Eating Guidelines, below, for statewide advice from untested waters. If you don't see your favorite sport fish or for recommendations for tested waters, please consult the

"Your Guide To Eating Fish Caught In Florida"

Fish and shellfish have been tested for mercury in many Florida waters. For these, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Web site offers specific consumption advice: doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice or call DOH at (850) 245-4299.

In a few locations, some species have high mercury levels and should not be eaten, while others are recommended for limited consumption (one meal per week or one meal per month).

publication "Your Guide to Eating Fish Caught in Florida" available at doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/ or by calling (850) 245-4299.

EPA/FDA advice for women of childbearing age and young children

Women of childbearing age and children are more sensitive to mercury, and should take special precautions. Guidelines have been established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to protect this segment of the population. Please refer to the EPA Fish Advisories Web page for additional information: epa.gov/waterscience/fish/. EPA, along with FDA, recommend that when selecting and eating fish, women and young children reduce their exposure to the harmful effects of mercury by following these recommendations.

1. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.
2. Eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury, such as shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish. Albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to 6 ounces of albacore.
3. Check Florida Safe Eating Guidelines about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in Florida lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. The Florida statewide consumption advisory provides general guidelines for consumption of largemouth bass, bowfin and gar. For other fish from local water bodies that are not listed, consume no more than 6 ounces per week.

For more information

Check the FWC Web site: research.MyFWC.com/Mercury, or doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice.

Safe eating guidelines

These Safe Eating Guidelines provide general advice to anglers from all untested waterbodies in the state. See pages 16–17 for fish identification illustrations.

For additional species information and for specific guidance for all tested marine and fresh waters, consult the Florida Department of Health publication Your Guide to Eating Fish Caught in Florida [See: doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/ or call (850) 245-4299].

MODERATE GUIDELINES generally apply to these species.

- Limits for women of childbearing age and young children are: **one** 6-oz meal per week.
- For everyone else: **two** 6-oz meals per week.

STRICTER GUIDELINES generally apply to these species.

- Limits for women of childbearing age and young children are: **one** 6-oz meal per month.
- For everyone else: **one** 6-oz meal per week.

Frequently answered questions

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

Answer: 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.

What regulations apply to frogs?

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

What regulations apply to freshwater crayfish?

Answer: 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 imperiled crayfish (Panama City, Sims Sink and Black Creek crayfishes) and all cave-inhabiting crayfish.

What regulations apply to freshwater turtles?

Answer: There are limits on freshwater turtle harvest, sale and possession established in 68A-25.002 F.A.C., commercial harvest gear restrictions are addressed in 68A-23.003 F.A.C, special turtle limits for Lake Okeechobee are established in 68A-23.012 F.A.C, and 68A-27 F.A.C. deals with listed species of turtles (see www.FLrules.org).

Take/Possession – No person shall take, transport, or possess any turtle listed in Rule 68A-27.005, F.A.C. [alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*), Barbour's map turtle (*Graptemys barbouri*) or Suwannee cooter (*Pseudemys swanniensis*)], their eggs, or parts thereof except as provided in Rule 68A-27, F.A.C. For turtles not listed in Chapter 68A-27, F.A.C., a license is not needed but each person shall not take more than one turtle per day (unless authorized by permit from the executive director). Turtle eggs may not be taken from the wild. Turtles may only be taken by hand, baited hooks, minnow seine nets or dip nets. No person shall take Escambia map turtles (*G. ernsti*), cooters (*Pseudemys spp.*) or snapping turtles (*Chelydra spp.*) from the wild. No softshell turtles (*Apalone spp.*) may be taken from the wild between May 1 and July 31. No person shall possess more than two Escambia map turtles (*G. ernsti*), two diamond-backed terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*), two box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*), or two loggerhead musk turtles (*Sternotherus minor*).

Transport – No person shall transport more than one turtle or any turtle eggs unless authorized by one of the following and must have a copy of the authorization in possession: (1) A permit from the executive director (Rule 68A-9.002, F.A.C.). (2) An aquaculture facility certification from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Section 597.004, F.S.; Chapter 5L-3, F.A.C.). (3) A license for sale or exhibition of wildlife (Section 379.3761, F.S.).

Sale – No person shall buy, sell, or possess for sale turtles, their eggs or parts thereof that have been taken from the wild.

Rules subject to change; see www.FLrules.org.

What regulations apply to clams, mussels and other mollusks?

Answer: 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 (phylum Mollusca, Class Pelecypoda) per day. Additionally, no person may possess more than two days' bag limit (20 individual, 40 half-shells) of any mussels of these families. Any deviation to these restrictions requires a permit from the Executive Director, in accordance with 68A-9.002 FAC (see illustrations, page 13).

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

Answer: The 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.

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

Answer: 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 ($22 \times 22 \times 15 / 1200 = 6.1$).

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

Answer: Generally, noncriminal infractions involve license or permit violations, motor size issues or measurement violations related to fish. 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 or counting violations (more than the bag limit). Failure to pay a noncriminal penalty (similar to a traffic ticket) within 30 days also 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 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?

Answer: In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau did a "National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Related Recreation" to determine the amount of participation and economic impact of these outdoor activities nationwide. Freshwater fishing in Florida was estimated to generate \$1.4 billion in retail sales, which produced an economic impact of \$2.4 billion. This economic boon to the state of Florida sustains 23,480 jobs and provided recreation for 1.4 million anglers (resident and nonresident), who spent 24.5 million days fishing.

Overall (freshwater and saltwater combined) Florida ranks number one in In-State Anglers (2.8 million vs. #2 Texas with 2.5 million), Days of Fishing in State (46.3 million vs. #2 Texas with 41.1 million), Days of Fishing by Nonresidents (4.8 million vs. #2 Wisconsin with 3.8 million), Number of Nonresident Anglers (885 thousand vs. #2 Wisconsin with 381 thousand) and total angler expenditures (\$4.4 billion vs. #2 Texas with \$3.4 billion).

**No wonder Florida is the
"Fishing Capital of the World!"**