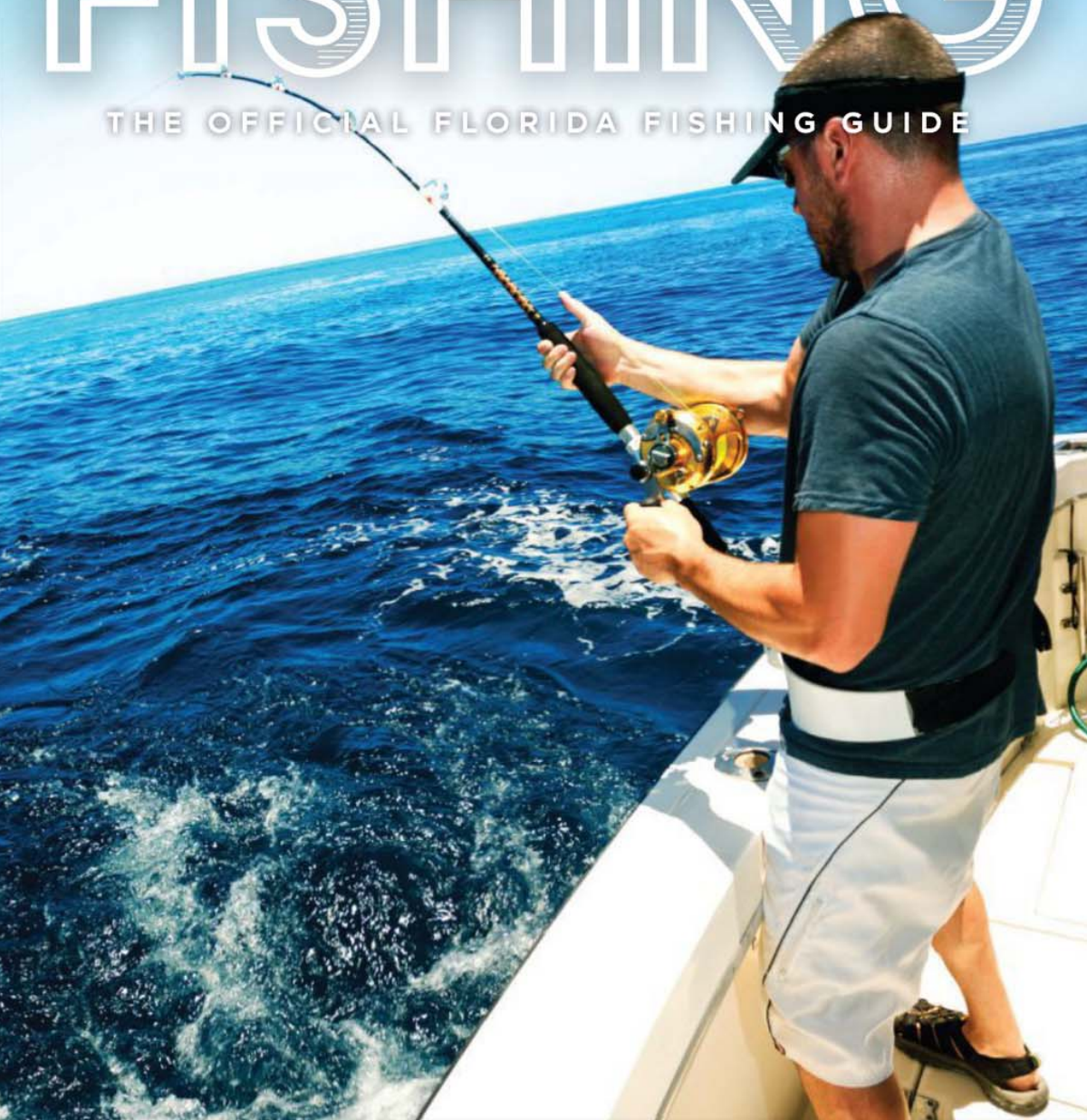


# FLORIDA FISHING

THE OFFICIAL FLORIDA FISHING GUIDE



FLORIDA SPORTS  
FOUNDATION

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**John Webb**  
President

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Terry Gibson, *Writer*

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*Photo on right: Panama City Beach*

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## WELCOME

Florida has earned the title of Fishing Capital of the World with its abundance of tidal shoreline, lakes and rivers and streams, all waiting to be explored. In addition to our beautiful waterways, outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy Florida's award-winning park system, a multiple-time award winner of the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence. After a day of plentiful fishing, I invite you to learn more about how we are making Florida the best place in the world for families to work, live and pursue the American Dream.

**Rick Scott,**  
*Governor of Florida*



One of the reasons people visit the state of Florida is because it is the perfect place for a day on the water to enjoy the vast natural resources the state offers.

On any given day between January and December, the temperate year-round climate allows for fishing along 2,276 miles of tidal shoreline on the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Inland areas offer 7,750 lakes and 10,500 miles of rivers and streams. You'll see our fishing and boating is second to none.

Florida offers a great diversity of saltwater fishes and an equally impressive amount of freshwater fish. Once you're done on the water there are many other attractions, like the International Game Fish Association Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum in Dania Beach and a variety of natural resources.

**John Webb,**  
*President, Florida Sports Foundation*





NO 26

The best fishing stories start  
with you getting away.

*That's*

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# THE BEST OF FLORIDA FISHING



Approximately one million registered Florida boaters and 100,000 out-of-state boaters turn to the Sunshine State for fishing and recreation. A statewide favorite pastime, fishing is easily enjoyed year round thanks to the state's diverse species and habitats, the ideal climate and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's hands-on conservation efforts.

*Panama City Beach*



# FLORIDA FISHING BY THE NUMBERS



Destin

2,276  
MILES  
OF TIDAL  
SHORELINE

644  
MARINE  
RAMPS



Everglades City



Port Canaveral

1,229  
FRESHWATER  
RAMPS



12,500+  
MILES OF  
STREAMS  
AND  
CANALS



*Cape Coral*



*Naples Pier*



*Photo by VisitStPeteClearwater.com*

7,700  
LAKES



*Jacksonville*

4,000+  
INTERNATIONAL  
GAME FISH  
ASSOCIATION  
WORLD RECORDS-  
MORE THAN ANY  
OTHER STATE  
OR COUNTRY



# SALTWATER FISHING

Florida's diverse saltwater habitats make for an abundance of fishing experiences. Anglers reel in everything from tarpon and redfish to the Goliath Grouper and Dolphinfinh. Types of saltwater fishing include pier and surf fishing, backwater and flats fishing, bay fishing and deep-sea fishing. Sport fishing is available inshore and offshore.



*Tarpon in Islamorada*

*Tarpon fishing near Boca Grande*







*Bass fishing in Okeechobee*

*Photo by Bass 2 Billfish*

## FRESHWATER FISHING

Each year, more than a million anglers fish Florida's 3 million acres of lakes, ponds and reservoirs, and approximately 12,500 miles of fishable rivers, streams and canals. Common freshwater catches include the American Shad, Bluegill, Florida Gar, Redbreast Sunfish, Spotted Bass, Striped Bass and Largemouth Bass.









*Bridge fishing in the Florida Keys*

## DIVERSE HABITATS

Florida's inland and coastal waters vary drastically, housing an abundance of fish species from bass to tarpon. Anglers can cast a line in freshwater lakes, rivers and streams, go inshore fishing from piers or from shore, and go deep-sea fishing or coral-reef diving. The Everglades is an especially unique habitat. About one-third of these tropical wetlands is covered by water, housing snapper, redfish, sea trout and more.

*Christ of the Deep, Coral Reef State Park*



*The Everglades*



# FISHING VILLAGES

Explore Florida's historic fishing communities for a taste of fresh seafood and picturesque views. Tarpon Springs is known for its Greek heritage and storied sponge docks, while in Cortez, you'll get a dose of waterfront Old Florida, including the Florida Maritime Museum. Other notable fishing towns include Apalachicola, Cedar Key, Steinhatchee, St. Marks, Boca Grande, Punta Gorda, Matlacha, Goodland and Everglades City.



*Apalachicola*







*A Cortez marina, Photo by Rick Schwartz*



# HOW TO HIRE A FISHING GUIDE

Learning new waters can be challenging. With so many unique habitats and different bodies of water in Florida, charters are often the best bet for yielding the most rewarding catches without the hours of research and planning. Here are some tips for securing a charter that best suits your desired fishing experience.



## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Before scheduling a charter, decide whether you are fishing for a certain species, maybe tarpon or grouper, and whether you have a specific location in mind. If you're targeting a type of fish such as bonefish or permit, that narrows your search considerably. Head to the Florida Keys, the best place in the state to fish for both species. If you are travel-limited and still want to wet a line, let the season determine what you fish for. If the kingfish are running, fish for kingfish.

## FRESHWATER VS. SALTWATER

Florida is the fishing capital of the world for good reason. With more than 7,750 lakes, 10,500 miles of rivers, 2,276 miles of shoreline and more world records than any other state (or country for that matter), fishing opportunities are rich and varied in the Sunshine

State. While it is possible to catch both freshwater and saltwater species in the same day, most anglers choose one or the other.

## SIZE OF PARTIES & LICENSES

Bass guides, the pros who work the rivers and lakes in the interior of the state, usually limit their trips to one or two paying customers. Saltwater guides, of two varieties—either inshore or offshore—vary on number of passengers depending on the size of the vessel and location. Most fishing guides and charter boat captains have a U.S. Coast Guard-issued license allowing up to six passengers. In addition, most, but not all, charter boat captains also have a fishing license issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which covers their passengers as well. When

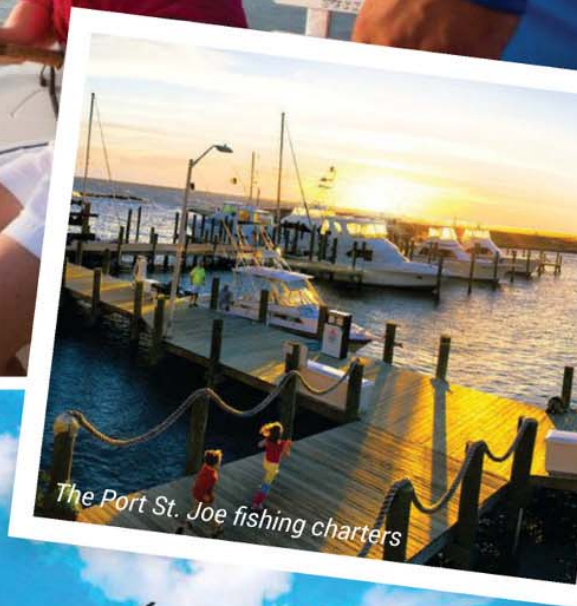




*Tarpon fishing, Boca Grande*



*Family fishing charters, St. Pete/Clearwater*



*The Port St. Joe fishing charters*





*Bass fishing charters, Polk County*







Key West Bight Marina



## NEED A GUIDE?

Find a guide at  
**[florida-guides.com](http://florida-guides.com)**

hiring a guide, feel free to ask if they have the appropriate licenses, how long they have been guiding and if they are a full-time or part-time charter boat captain.

### BAIT & EQUIPMENT USAGE

Most fishing guides will do whatever it takes to catch fish. Some, however, are purists and fish only with artificial lures. Make your intentions clear before you hire a guide. If you want to fish with a fly rod, choose a captain who specializes in fly fishing. Generally speaking, a captain who uses live bait will catch more fish than a captain who does not. Most captains also provide rods and reels as well as tackle.

### TAKE HOME RULES

If you're looking to feast on your finds, double check with your guide before booking the charter. While most guides allow their customers to take home fish, some are strictly catch and release. Many offshore captains do not let their clients "catch their limit." The regulations may allow you to keep a certain number of fish, but the captain may say that you can only take one home.

### PRICING

Fishing charter prices vary, but count on paying at least \$200 for a half-day inshore or freshwater charter; more if you plan to book the captain for the whole day. The price of offshore charters will vary depending on the distance required to catch fish. If you find the fishing experience a good one, the captain and mate will appreciate a tip. Use the same standards you would for a fine dinner—15 to 20 percent.



# PLEDGE TO TRAVEL GREEN

UNITED STATES TRAVEL CARE CODE



**Every year, 8 billion plastic bags are thrown away in the U.S. Bring a reusable bag on your vacation, or buy one as a souvenir.**



1. Learn about Your Destination – Enjoy a rewarding experience by learning more about the natural environment, culture and history that make every destination unique.



2. Don't Leave Your Good Habits at Home – While traveling, continue to recycle; use water wisely, and turn off lights as you would at home.



3. Be a Fuel-Efficient Traveler – Book direct flights, rent smaller cars, and keep your own vehicle operating at maximum efficiency. Once in your destination, walk or bike as much as possible.



4. Make Informed Decisions – Seek out destinations or companies that engage in energy efficiency or recycling programs and that take actions to preserve their communities and natural environment.



5. Be a Good Guest – Remember that you are a guest in your destination. Engage with locals, but respect their privacy, traditions and local community.



6. Support Locals – As a visitor, the money you spend on your trip can help support the local artisans, farmers and business owners whose livelihoods depend on tourism.



7. Dispose of Your Waste Properly – Leave a beautiful place for others to enjoy. Recycle where possible, and always dispose of your waste with care.



8. Protect Your Natural Surroundings – Be mindful of the plants, animals and ecosystems that you impact. Avoid feeding wildlife; stay on designated trails, and strictly follow all fire restrictions.



9. Make Your Travel Zero Emissions – As an additional step, consider the option of purchasing carbon credits to fully offset your travel's impact on climate change.



10. Bring Your Experiences Home – Continue practicing your sustainable habits at home, and encourage friends and family to travel with the same care.

For more tips and resources on traveling with care – see: [www.TravelCareCode.org](http://www.TravelCareCode.org)



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# TIPS & INFO TO KNOW

Thanks in part to Florida's wildlife conservation efforts, fishing remains a favorite pastime. Before hitting the water, here are some tips and restrictions from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). For more information, visit [myfwc.com/fishing](http://myfwc.com/fishing).

## FISHING LICENSES

Florida residents and visitors are required by the FWC to have a Florida freshwater or saltwater fishing license on them while fishing. This includes all actions from casting a line to catching and releasing. A saltwater fishing license is also required to attempt to take any native or non-native marine organisms, such as crabs, lobsters and marine plants from the ocean. For several exemptions to the rules, visit the FWC's website.

## FISHING SEASONS & REGULATIONS

Florida's fishing laws help to manage natural resources and ensure the future of fishing. Regulations vary based on the species and type of fishing. For a full list of seasons and regulations, visit the FWC's website.

## TIPS FOR HIRING A GUIDE

Hiring a fishing guide or a charter are great ways to hit the water and find the best fishing spots. Experienced guides will ensure you are properly equipped and following FWC guidelines. For more information, go to [florida-guides.com](http://florida-guides.com) or visit local convention and visitors bureau websites to find recommended guides or charters for a specific area.



## PUBLIC BOAT RAMP ACCESS

Want to head out on the water without a guide? Accessing the water is easy with more than 1,800 public boat ramps located around the state. Visit [myfwc.com/boatramps](http://myfwc.com/boatramps) to find a convenient public boat ramp near you.

## FLORIDA REGULATIONS

For a full list of rules, regulations and seasons, visit [myfwc.com/fishing](http://myfwc.com/fishing)



# 2017 EVENTS

## JANUARY

### **Silver Sailfish Derby (Saltwater)**

*Jan. 5-6 | West Palm Beach*

### **Invitational Gold Cup Team Fishing Tournament (Saltwater)**

*Jan. 8-12 | Palm Beach*

### **The Sailfish 400 (Saltwater)**

*Jan. 11-15 | Miami/Biscayne Bay*

### **The Sailfish Tournament (Saltwater)**

*Jan. 14-15 | Palm Beach Shores*

## FEBRUARY

### **The Sailfish Challenge (Saltwater)**

*Feb. 22-26 | Fort Lauderdale*

## MARCH

### **Salty Fly Tournament**

*March (Date TBD) | Tampa*

### **March Merkin**

*March 13-16 | Key West*

## MAY

### **Keymorada Invitational Fly-Spin Tournament**

*May 9-12 | Islamorada*

### **The Grove Slam! Dolphin Tournament**

*May 11-13 | Miami*

### **Saltwater Shootout (Saltwater)**

*May 11-14 | Pompano Beach*

### **52nd Pompano Beach Fishing Rodeo**

*May 17-21 | Pompano Beach*

### **World's Richest Tarpon Tournament**

*May 25-26 | Boca Grande*

## JUNE

### **Ed Alber Tarpon Rodeo (Saltwater)**

*June 8-9 | Tierra Verde*

### **Golf Cup Tarpon Tournament**

*June 19-23 | Islamorada*

### **Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic**

*June 21-25 | Sandestin*

## JULY

### **ICAST 2017**

*July 11-14 | Orlando*

### **Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament**

*July 17-22 | Jacksonville*

### **Lobster Season & Mini Season**

*July 26-27*

## AUGUST

### **Regular Lobster Season**

*August 6 – March 31*

## OCTOBER

### **Destin Fishing Rodeo**

*October 1-31 | Destin*



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# NORTH

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From surf fishing on the white sands of Fernandina Beach to fishing the state's largest river near Apalachicola, North Florida is teeming with diverse fishing environments. Reel in a smorgasbord of species at a state park or head deep into the Gulf of Mexico for charter-led adventures for billfish and tuna. It's not all far-out gulf angling and lake dives though—inshore fishing yields everything from grouper and snapper to cobia, depending on the season.

# NORTHWEST



Whether surf fishing on white-sand beaches, paddling a blackwater creek or trolling across the sapphire Gulf of Mexico, Northwest Florida offers a unique combination of places to score great fishing in stunning habitats.

## TOP FISHING SPOTS

### Gulf Islands National Seashore

encompasses pristine barrier islands, the clear, green surf of the Gulf of Mexico and grass-bottomed bayous. Tarpon and cobia migrate along these beaches, as do pompano and Spanish mackerel. Giant red drum stack up in the passes that connect the bayous to the Gulf. The bayou's lush seagrass meadows yield spotted sea trout, red drum and flounder.

The **Escambia River**, near Pensacola, is accessible from three fish camps along Hwy. 90 near Pace. It boasts the largest diversity of freshwater fish species (85) in Florida, including the iconic largemouth and spotted bass. Lower reaches offer redfish, trout and flounder.

Vast **Pensacola Bay** is so deep in places that anglers—even kayaking anglers—actually catch red snapper (typically a deepwater, offshore reef fish) inside the bay. Skinny-water aficionados explore grassy shorelines in search of trout, redfish and flounder. Shore anglers, check out the Pensacola Bay Fishing Bridge.

Highly migratory species such as tunas and billfish return to the **Gulf of Mexico** each spring and summer to spawn in the Gulf's gyre currents, while snappers, groupers and amberjacks thrive year-round on the natural and man-made reefs. Day and multi-day adventures in Destin, Pensacola or Panama City will wear out your arms. Capt. Gary Jarvis, out of Destin, is one of the best.





*Panama City Beach*



*Mexico Beach*



*Grilled Mackerel*

**Choctawhatchee Bay**, near Destin, offers consistent action for redfish, trout and flounder.

Off **Panama City Beach**, the water gets deep in a short distance, luring offshore species close to shore. While anglers fishing from any of PCB's immaculate piers catch the usual suspects in the surf zone, such as croaker, whiting and pompano, they also intercept cobia and king mackerel. Every now and then, someone lands a sailfish. Inshore waters offer excellent flats fishing, while offshore anglers bout with tunas, marlin and reef fish, especially red snapper and gag grouper.

For those who love sight fishing for giant migrating tarpon, the nearshore waters on **Mexico Beach** offer some of one of

the best-kept secrets in the pursuit of the Silver King. Capt. Christian Yergens is an eagle-eyed fly fishing guide who spends the season in hot pursuit of the King. Offshore anglers wrestle snappers, groupers and amberjacks off a complex of artificial reefs.

**St. George Island State Park** is a gem. Catch a smorgasbord of fish along the east end of St. George's Island right from shore. Mackerel, flounder, trout and pompano are all in the mix. Apalachicola Bay is synonymous with oysters, and redfish, trout and flounder hide among oyster reefs in the Bay.

**Dead Lake** offers excellent panfish action for redear sunfish and bluegill, especially during the spring and summer months. 🐟

# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS

- 1 Pensacola Beach Marina, *Pensacola Beach*
- 2 Quintette Landing, *Pace*
- 3 HarborWalk Marina, *Destin*



- 4 Bud & Alley's Waterfront Restaurant, *Seaside*
- 5 Russell Fields and M.B. Miller piers, *Panama City Beach*
- 6 Perdido River Wildlife Management Area



## SCALLOPING

Scalloping is a fun, full-immersion experience. Scallopers snorkel in the calm Gulf shallows over waving seagrass meadows in search of the succulent bay scallop. In North Florida, go scalloping in St. Teresa, Alligator Point and Panacea. Farther south, favorite scalloping destinations include Steinhatchee, Cedar Key, Crystal River and Homosassa. The season typically lasts through the summer into the early fall. Season dates and possession limits are subject to change. For up-to-date info, visit [myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/bay-scallops](https://myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/bay-scallops).







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Help drive the Olympic dream while showing your support of TEAM USA by purchasing a U.S. Olympic license tag for your vehicle(s). These license tags feature the USA/5-Ring logo in full color, and most states include the tag-line "Go Team USA" while others use the tag-line "Olympic Spirit".

*Your U.S. Olympic license tag purchase may be tax deductible. Please consult a tax advisor for more information.*



### Support Florida's Amateur Sports and Olympic Dreams

By purchasing an Olympic Spirit License plate, 50% of the annual fees collected for the sale and renewal of the tag support the Florida Sports Foundation's amateur sports efforts — The Sunshine State Games and Florida Senior Games.

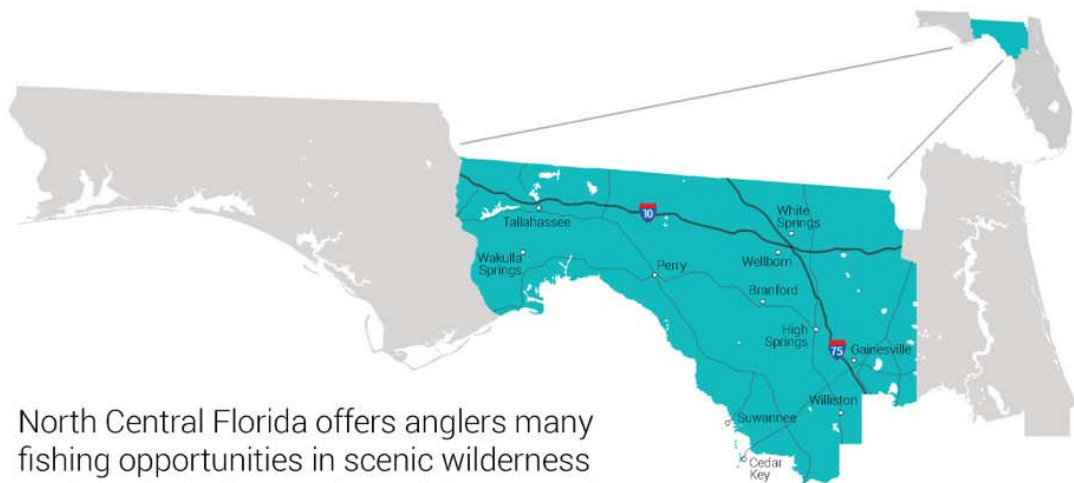
The remaining funds support the United States Olympic Movement and Florida's Olympians. For questions about these programs, call the Florida Sports Foundation at (727) 724-3082.

**Annual Use Fee:** \$15 (plus normal tag fees)

Visit [www.flasportstags.com](http://www.flasportstags.com) or your local tag agency for purchase.

[teamusa.org/LicensePlates](http://teamusa.org/LicensePlates)

# NORTH CENTRAL



North Central Florida offers anglers many fishing opportunities in scenic wilderness settings, including creeks and rivers passing through hardwood hammocks, verdant salt marshes and unique sinkhole lakes.

## TOP FISHING SPOTS

**Lake Talquin**, near Tallahassee, offers superb fishing for largemouth bass, plus one of the healthiest striped bass fisheries in the state. These fish grow to more than 40 pounds. Panfish are abundant here, too.

**Lake Jackson**, also near Tallahassee, is a "sinkhole lake" that's a source of community pride and is nationally renowned for its largemouth bass. This aquatic preserve has benefited tremendously from quite a bit of stewardship and is one of the region's most beautiful, productive and interesting places to fish. During the summer, big bass smash topwater lures in the pitch dark.

**St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge** and adjacent Apalachee Bay are part of the "Forgotten Coast." Anglers enjoy solitude and fish that get little pressure in a wilderness setting. There's an excellent

seasonal tarpon and cobia fishery, and lots of redfish, trout and flounder, among other hard-fighting and tasty species available year-round.

**Suwannee River State Park** offers anglers access to excellent freshwater fishing, and it's about the only place you can catch the endemic Suwannee bass. This stunning river's also full of catfish, largemouth bass and panfish.

**Steinhatchee Falls** is a beautiful place to camp and enjoy great light-tackle fishing for a variety of freshwater species. It's family-friendly, too. Be sure to bring ultra-light tackle and lightweight fly rods. Downstream, where the Steinhatchee River meets the Gulf of Mexico, enjoy some of the state's best shallow-water fishing for redfish and trout.





Suwannee River



Lake Jackson



St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Catch a mess of fish and soak up Florida's literary history at **Lake Lochloosa** and **Orange Lake**, near Gainesville. Lochloosa tends to be more productive. Work the lily pads for crappie and heavier vegetation for bass. Cross Creek connects these two productive lakes, which is where Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings penned *The Yearling* and *Cross Creek*.

**Newnan's Lake**, near Gainesville, is best known for bream and catfish, but this special fish management area is a

well-kept bass fishing secret. Crappie fishing can be excellent in open water.

**Cedar Key's** glorious coastal marshes and seagrass flats offer excellent inshore fishing for trout and redfish. Offshore, anglers experience some of the Gulf's best grouper and snapper fishing, with cobia seasonally in the mix. Late-June to July through September, Cedar Key is also a very popular destination for scallop hunters. 🐟



# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS

- 1 Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park & Campground, *Live Oak*
- 2 K & K Fish Camp, *Tallahassee*
- 3 Cedar Key Fishing Pier, *Cedar Key*



*Florida Folk Festival at  
Suwannee Music Park*



## BOTTOM-FISHING TIPS

Bottom-fishing is a popular method for reeling in fish along the bottom of the sea floor, including grouper and snapper. Bottom-bouncing is one technique where a lure is dragged along the sea or lake floor, creating clouds of sand or mud and attracting bottom fish. For stronger currents, use a heavier weight to sink the bait to the bottom. Always rig your weight below your bait and check the bait regularly to ensure it is still on the hook.



*Florida Grouper*





# WHAT'S BITING NOW AROUND FLORIDA?



Florida's fishing scene varies drastically based on location and season – water temperatures and migration patterns can affect what fish species you catch. Use our seasonal fishing calendar to find out what to expect in your region before hitting the water.



SEE THE

**SEASONAL FISHING CALENDAR**

at [flasports.com/fishing/seasonal-fishing](https://flasports.com/fishing/seasonal-fishing)

# NORTHEAST



Northeast Florida is the picture of diversity for anglers. Troll the wild Atlantic, stalk the salt marshes or explore the mighty St. Johns River and its teeming lakes.

## TOP FISHING SPOTS

An ideal destination for families, **Fernandina Beach** is surrounded by a maze of salt creeks and marshes full of redfish, trout and flounder. It's one of the few places on the Atlantic Coast where surf fishermen catch spotted seatrout, plus pompano, croakers and whiting. Summer baitfish runs attract tarpon and cobia just outside the surf line.

**Amelia Island State Park** offers surf fishermen easy access. Pompano, trout, whiting, bluefish and Spanish mackerel are all on the menu. Check out the mile-long George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier, which spans Nassau Sound. Pier fishing yields tarpon, red and black drum, plus tasty saltwater panfish.

**Guana River Wildlife Management Area/ Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve** includes a landlocked lake brimming with saltwater

species. Shore anglers catch plenty of flounder, trout and redfish near the dam. This ecological gem is great for paddle craft. Marshes produce trophy trout, jumbo redfish and "doormat" flounder.

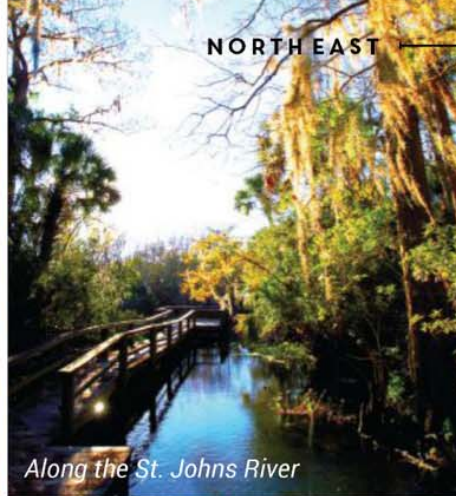
Off the shore of **St. Augustine**, long after you lose sight of land, you encounter the edge of the continental shelf and the Gulf Stream's sapphire-blue waters. The "ledge," as it's called, offers some of the world's best big-game fishing. Trolling yields massive marlin, huge yellowfin tuna, speedy wahoo and acrobatic mahi mahi. Bottom-fishing yields bruiser amberjacks, snappers and burly groupers. Capt. Robert Johnson at Jodie Lynn Charters is one of the best big-game captains in the area.

The long pole brigade carts down **Flagler Beach** after pompano, croakers and whiting, as well as bluefish and





*Fernandina Beach, photo by Dupain Charles*



*Along the St. Johns River*



*Crab crumble in St. Augustine*

*Flagler Beach*



Spanish mackerel. Pier anglers also catch these surf-zone species, plus red drum, cobia and king mackerel. From the Intracoastal Waterway, anglers explore vast salt marshes full of redfish, trout and flounder, as well as sheepshead and black drum.

The **St. Johns River** is one of the few north-flowing rivers in the eastern U.S. Its headwaters are west of Vero Beach in Central East Florida and it pours out into the ocean in Mayport, north of Jacksonville. Sections in the vicinity of Cocoa/Orlando boast one of the few remaining shad fisheries. They're a blast on fly and light tackle. The St. Johns flows through many lakes filled with bass, crappie and bream. Its lower reaches near Jacksonville produce trophy seatrout, red drum and flounder, plus gigantic black drum and sheepshead.

**Doctors Inlet** is just upstream on the St. Johns River from downtown Jacksonville. From shore or by boat, this stretch of river offers great fishing along with a diverse population of species. Fishing for largemouth bass, shellcrackers and crappie can be exceptional year-round. Springs cool parts of this stretch and keep the fish frisky and feeding even in the heat of summer. Striped bass are present, as well as estuary residents such as redfish and trout. You never know what's going to hit next.

Located southwest of Palatka, **Rodman Reservoir** is arguably Florida's best lunker bass fishery. Double-digit fish are common. Rodman also supports strong populations of jumbo bream and crappie. 🐟

# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS

- 1 Beach Marine, *Jacksonville Beach*
- 2 Conch House Marina Resort, *St. Augustine*
- 3 Crystal Cove Marina, *Palatka*
- 4 Georgetown Marina & Lodge, *Georgetown*
- 5 BlackFly Outfitter, *Jacksonville*
- 6 Saltwater Flytyers at Oyster Creek Outfitters, *St. Augustine*
- 7 Jacksonville Beach Fishing Pier, *Jacksonville Beach*
- 8 Flagler Beach Fishing Pier, *Flagler Beach*



## FLYFISHING

The sport of flyfishing has a strong but underground presence in this part of the Sunshine State. Northeast Florida is a great destination for all skill levels. The freshwater lakes and rivers are great places to cast popping bugs at explosive bass and bream. The salt marshes offer exciting sight fishing for redfish waving their blue-tinged tails in the air while feeding in inches of water. You can also sight cast for tarpon, jumbo jacks and cobia along the beaches.





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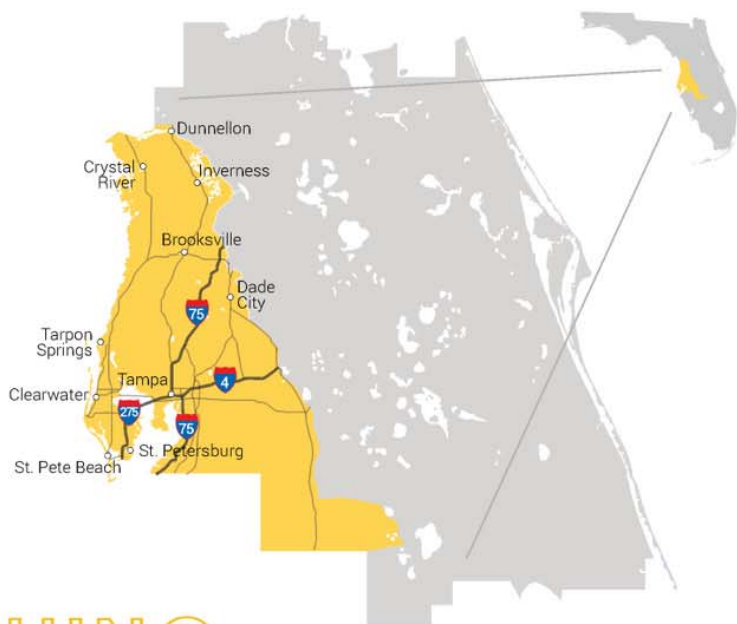


# CENTRAL

Central Florida is rich in national parks, many with premium boating amenities. The lakes and rivers here claim some of the most notable fishing in the state. Fish the Great Lakes region for bass, panfish and crappie. To the east, fish from Fort Pierce Inlet State Park or the Indian River Lagoon, the Northern hemisphere's most biodiverse lagoon. To the west, head to the Nature Coast to catch scallops in the seagrass. From Clearwater Beach, board a charter into Tampa Bay in search of snapper and grouper, or opt to stay inshore for snook, redfish and trout—not to mention the giant tarpon.

# CENTRAL WEST

Central West Florida fishing is synonymous with the Tampa Bay watershed, one of the greatest urban fisheries in the nation. Rural lakes, quiet rivers and the wild blue Gulf of Mexico also beckon.



## TOP FISHING SPOTS

Near Tarpon Springs, **Lake Tarpon** produces big bass and high numbers of fish that get little pressure. It's ranked among the state's top 10 bass fisheries. Anglers score working the vegetation and in open water when bass are chasing showering shad. The lake also produces big stringers of panfish and crappie.

In **Clearwater Beach**, The Clearwater Beach Marina is an epicenter of sportfishing. Hop on a half-day or full-day headboat charter and be assured of a mess of grunts, snapper and grouper. World-class charter captains such as Capt. Mike Colby and the Double Hook Charterboat team operate out of the Clearwater City Municipal Marina. They'll put you on snappers, groupers

and king mackerel, among other hard-fighting, delicious deep-sea denizens. Inshore/nearshore guides put you on snook, redfish and trout, plus giant tarpon. Catch pinfish for bait right off the dock before hitting the water.

On the northern end of Tampa Bay, **Safety Harbor's** shorelines are lined with mangroves and crisscrossed by creeks. The town hosts an epic tarpon fishery May through July. Redfish and trout are abundant, as are snook. It's one of the best places to catch an "inshore slam."

**John's Pass Village & Boardwalk** in **Madeira Beach** is a lively waterfront where residents and visitors dine and depart on inshore and offshore fishing





*John's Pass, Madeira Beach*



*Fort De Soto Park, Photo by VisitStPeteClearwater.com*



*Sunshine Skyway Bridge, Photo by CityofStPete*

adventures. Offshore, the focus is generally on bottom-fishing for delicious snappers, grunts and groupers. King mackerel and cobia are also prizes. Nearshore and inshore, anglers tangle with Spanish mackerel and tarpon, as well as redfish, trout and snook in the Intracoastal Waterway.

**Fort De Soto Park** offers one of the state's nicest boat ramps. The mangrove islands and seagrass meadows surrounding it produce a bevy of speckled trout, redfish and snook. The Gulf Pier, Bay Pier and nearby beaches offer great surf fishing for Spanish mackerel, pompano and snook. You never know what you'll catch fishing near the gateway to Tampa Bay.

When the new **Sunshine Skyway Bridge** was built over Tampa Bay, planners turned the old bridge into the world's longest fishing pier. The Skyway Fishing Pier State Park serves up snook, tarpon, grouper, black sea bass, Spanish mackerel, king

mackerel, cobia, sheepshead, snapper, pompano and more. Find snacks, drinks, bait and fishing supplies onsite.

**Tampa Bay** is Florida's largest open-water estuary. Most species caught offshore, such as gag grouper, grow up in the Bay. Big migratory fish like tarpon and cobia constantly move in and out, while redfish, snook and trout are caught inside year-round. Book an offshore charter, take a nearshore trip along the beaches (especially in spring) and explore the grassy coves and mangrove shorelines inside the Bay.

To the north, **Crystal River** is best known for its seasonal tarpon fishery and flyfishing for some of the largest Silver Kings. The shallows teem with redfish and trout. The offshore topography consists of towering rock ledges and hollowed-out limestone that offer excellent bottom-fishing and action for smoker kingfish and cobia. 🐟

# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS



- 1 Clearwater Beach Marina, *Clearwater Beach*
- 2 Bar Fly Safety Harbor, *Safety Harbor*
- 3 John's Pass Village & Boardwalk, *Madeira Beach*
- 4 Tierra Verde Boat Rentals, *Tierra Verde*
- 5 Capt. K's Bait, Tackle & Fishing Charters, *St. Petersburg*
- 6 Plantation on Crystal River, *Crystal River*



## KAYAK FISHING

River systems draining down into the Gulf of Mexico create a myriad of immersions for the paddling angler. In blackwater creeks flowing through towering hardwood hammocks, anglers release almost every species of bass found in North America. In brackish lower reaches, paddlers maneuver between marshy islands in stealthy pursuit of redfish and spotted seatrout. A few popular paddles include the Perdido River, Basin Bayou and the Chipola Paddling Trail.





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## GET YOUR FLORIDA FISHING LICENSE

Before casting out, remember to purchase your Florida fishing license from any Florida tax collectors' office or online. Florida residents and visitors are required to have a fishing license provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to attempt to take fish, whether it be casting a line, catch and release, or catch and keep.

### GET A LICENSE

For more information or to purchase your Florida fishing license visit [flsports.com/fishing/licensing](https://flsports.com/fishing/licensing).

#### DID YOU KNOW...

### LICENSE-FREE FISHING DAYS

The waters are open to all fishermen on license-free fishing days without a Florida fishing license. These days, planned by the FWC, are intended to promote boating and fishing across the state as fun and healthy outdoor activities.

#### SALTWATER LICENSE-FREE FISHING DAYS:

- First Saturday & Sunday in June
- First Saturday in September
- Saturday following Thanksgiving

#### FRESHWATER LICENSE-FREE FISHING DAYS:

- First Saturday & Sunday in April
- Second Saturday & Sunday in June

# Immerse Yourself in Underwater Adventures

Catch the true spirit of the natural Florida Gulf Coast lifestyle in Crystal River. Whether you are looking for freshwater fishing, a calm day of inshore angling, or the thrill of the offshore - Citrus County has got what you need.

Now's the time to kick off those shoes, get your feet wet and catch an adventure.



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[www.discovercrystalriverfl.com/visitors-guide](http://www.discovercrystalriverfl.com/visitors-guide), or call **800.587.6667** to learn more.





## Recommended fishing guides in Crystal River

Captain Shawn Walker  
Salt River Outfitters  
(352) 427-3610  
[www.saltriveroutfitters.com](http://www.saltriveroutfitters.com)  
[shawn@saltriveroutfitters.com](mailto:shawn@saltriveroutfitters.com)  
[www.facebook.com/saltriveroutfitters](https://www.facebook.com/saltriveroutfitters)

Captain Glen Touchton  
Southern Fishing Guide Service  
(352) 422-6838  
[southernfishing@earthlink.net](mailto:southernfishing@earthlink.net)  
[www.southernfishingguide.net](http://www.southernfishingguide.net)

Captain Jeremiah Carlucci  
Crystal River Fishing Charters  
(352) 228-7873  
[jeremiahcarlucci@gmail.com](mailto:jeremiahcarlucci@gmail.com)

Captain Randy Hodges's  
Reel and Squeal Outfitters  
(352) 422-7586  
[reelandsquealoutfitters@gmail.com](mailto:reelandsquealoutfitters@gmail.com)  
[www.reelandsqueal.wix.com/reelandsqueal](http://www.reelandsqueal.wix.com/reelandsqueal)  
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discovercrystalriver

# CENTRAL

Thousands of lakes, rivers and creeks drain the Florida peninsula's interior, offering some of the world's best bass, panfish and crappie fisheries. Here are some of the highlights.



## TOP FISHING SPOTS

Magnificent **Ocala National Forest** includes approximately 600 lakes, two of which are Florida's top "lunker lakes," Lake George and Lake Kerr. You may enjoy fishing the smaller lakes in perfect solitude. Lake Bryant is particularly good for panfish. Cabins are available, and camping opportunities range from setting up a tent in the woods to RV camping.

**Lake Panasoffkee** is a unique 4,460-acre special Fishery Management that connects with the Withlacootchee River, which runs almost 160 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. Four spring creeks flow into the lake, which is rarely deeper than four feet. Anglers encounter large numbers of school-sized bass, up to five pounds along with the occasional bigger fish. Panfish are abundant as well.

The pride of quaint towns such as Tavares, Leesburg and Mount Dora, the

**Harris Chain of Lakes** is also a favorite destination for top-tier tournament bass-fishing pros and for folks just looking for lunkers. These lakes are challenging to fish but yield some of the stockiest bass you'll ever catch. Fishing for bream and crappie is also exceptional. Enjoy the quaint surrounding towns of Tavares, Leesburg and Mount Dora.

**Tenoroc Fish Management Area**, near Lakeland, offers a limited access, catch-and-release bass fishery in reclaimed phosphate pits. Residual phosphate left in the pits after mining fertilizes the ecosystem, which produces higher-than-normal growth rates for bass and other fish. Tenoroc is one of the state's official top 10 bass fisheries. Its bank fishing opportunities are perfect for kids.

Kissimmee is a quaint, family-oriented town with many fishing adventures.





Ocala National Forest



Kissimmee Chain of Lakes



Lake Harris

The greater **Kissimmee Chain of Lakes** watershed just south of Orlando forms the headwaters of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades system and consists of more than two-dozen lakes, including 18,810-acre **Lake Tohopekaliga**. This easily accessible lake makes for excellent bass and crappie fishing near the Kissimmee Marina. Toho experts fish the moving water near the mouths of its tributaries. Nearby **Lake Kissimmee** offers more remote, beautiful and productive waters. Paddling anglers should explore Arbuckle Creek.

The restored **Kissimmee River** is a haven for big bass. Anglers in the know target the river's deep oxbows, which are especially productive toward the lower reaches of the river.

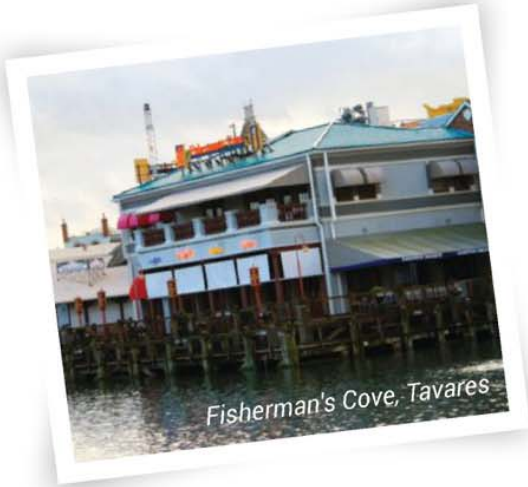
**Mosaic Fish Management Area**, near Fort Meade, offers anglers the choice of 12 reclaimed phosphate pits ranging

from 12 to 200 acres. To keep fishing pressure down and catch rates up, Mosaic is only open four days per week. It's another top lunger destination in a state full of bass.

**Winter Haven Chain of Lakes** includes nine interconnected lakes totaling 6,000 acres within the city limits. The lakes are chock full of bass, bream and crappie. Anglers blind cast to docks and vegetation, or sight fish to bedding fish in the sandy shallows.

**Lake Walk-in-Water**, near Lake Wales, is arguably the region's best producer of both lunkers and bass. Don't come undergunned. The vegetation is thick and some of the biggest fish are caught off the tangled brush fish attractors installed by fishery managers. 🐟

# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS



1 Kissimmee River Park  
& Marina, *Kissimmee*

2 Fisherman's Cove, *Tavares*

3 Wekiva Island, *Longwood*

4 Camp Mack's River Resort,  
*Lake Wales*

## FWC'S TROPHYCATCH

The Kissimmee River is one of the best black crappie fisheries in the region. The most catches occur in the winter, when temperatures drop. Anglers in the know focus on deep oxbows and the lowest stretch of the river before it flows toward Lake Okeechobee. Night fishing with minnows around lights is a top tactic.







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Great fishing and easy access is readily available spring, summer, fall and winter. Lake Istokpoga leads the state in the most 10+ pound bass caught, and the lake is ranked #6 in the Southeast by BassMaster.

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# CENTRAL EAST

Teeming bays and estuaries and verdant marshes are typical of Central East Florida's fish-filled waters. Offshore, the mighty Gulf Stream current—an ocean river—serves as a highway for the biggest, strongest fish in the Atlantic.



## TOP FISHING SPOTS

The **Tomoka River Basin**, near Ormond Beach, is one of the state's most underrated estuaries. Fly fishermen and anglers using light tackle work the shorelines of a beautiful and complex salt marsh ecosystem, focusing especially on flowing creek mouths. Acrobatic snook and tarpon, as well as dogged redfish, ambushing trout and flounder, let the creeks carry shrimp and minnows to them.

**Cape Canaveral National Seashore**, specifically Playalinda beach, offers exceptional surf fishing along natural beaches. It's a beautiful place for adults and kids to wet a line. Delicious pompano are a favorite target, along with tasty whiting. Much of the year, Spanish mackerel and bluefish invade the surf zone.

Within the Cape Canaveral National Seashore and **Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**, anglers explore the northern reaches of the 156-mile Indian River Lagoon complex, which includes the Banana, Mosquito and Indian River lagoons. Those waters boast diverse fishing for trophy redfish and speckled trout. Snook, giant black drum and tarpon are also in the mix.

**Sebastian Inlet** and the waters surrounding the state park offer anglers access to surf fishing, piers and jetties. Wade fishing in the Indian River Lagoon, not to mention fishing in the rowdy waters of the inlet itself, is also a big draw. Fishing from the north jetty pier, anglers catch brutes including bull redfish, humongous black drum and goliath groupers. Snook fishing





Tomoka River Basin

is unmatched in any of the waters surrounding the park. The inlet produces doormat-sized flounder, tasty mangrove snappers year-round and plenty of bluefish and Spanish mackerel. Trophy speckled trout lurk inside the Indian River Lagoon.

The St. Sebastian River flows into the Indian River Lagoon just north of Sebastian Inlet at **St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park**. Upriver, snook and tarpon mix in with largemouth bass and panfish. It's great for anglers fishing from paddle craft. The wider, saltier lower river produces more redfish and trout. The preserve allows primitive camping.

**Stick Marsh/Farm 13**, near Fellsmere, is a 6,500-acre impoundment managed as a catch-and-release-only bass fishery. Consequently, it's attained top 10 status among Florida's trophy bass lakes. Boaters exploring the marsh should exercise caution due to the many submerged stumps.

**Fort Pierce Inlet State Park** is perfect for surf fishing and wade fishing in the Indian River Lagoon, not

Cape Canaveral National Seashore



to mention fishing in the deep waters of the inlet itself. The beaches and jetty on the north side are legendary snook spots. Anglers catch quite a few snook from the pier on the south jetty, plus flounder and sheepshead. Surf fishermen target pompano and whiting on South Hutchinson Island beaches.

**Lake Garcia** is a productive shallow marsh lake near Fellsmere. Its bass get little pressure. It's close to gorgeous Blue Cypress Lake, which also offers accommodations and great fishing.

The mighty Kissimmee River drains into **Lake Okeechobee** near Buckhead Ridge. In winter, the area boasts one of America's best black crappie fisheries. Big bass are also caught in the glorious marshes of this legendary lake. 🐟

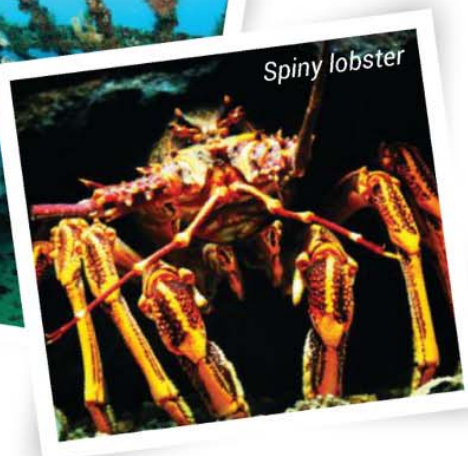
# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS

- 1 Daytona Beach Boardwalk & Pier, *Daytona Beach*
- 2 Fort Pierce City Marina, *Fort Pierce*
- 3 Capt. Hiram's Resort, *Sebastian*
- 4 Middleton's Fish Camp, *Vero Beach*
- 5 Playalinda Beach, *Canaveral National Seashore*
- 6 Eddy Creek Fishing Pier, *Canaveral National Seashore*
- 7 Sebastian Inlet State Park, *Melbourne Beach*
- 8 Deep Six Dive & Watersports, *Vero Beach*




## SCUBA SCOUTING

Free diving and scuba diving for giant spiny lobsters is popular from Fort Pierce Inlet State Park to North Hutchinson Island. A continuous line of towering limestone reef runs just about the entire length of the island, in about 10 to 30 feet of water. Florida's regular lobster season runs August 6 through March 31.






Visit the  
*Sebastian River Area*  
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# SOUTH

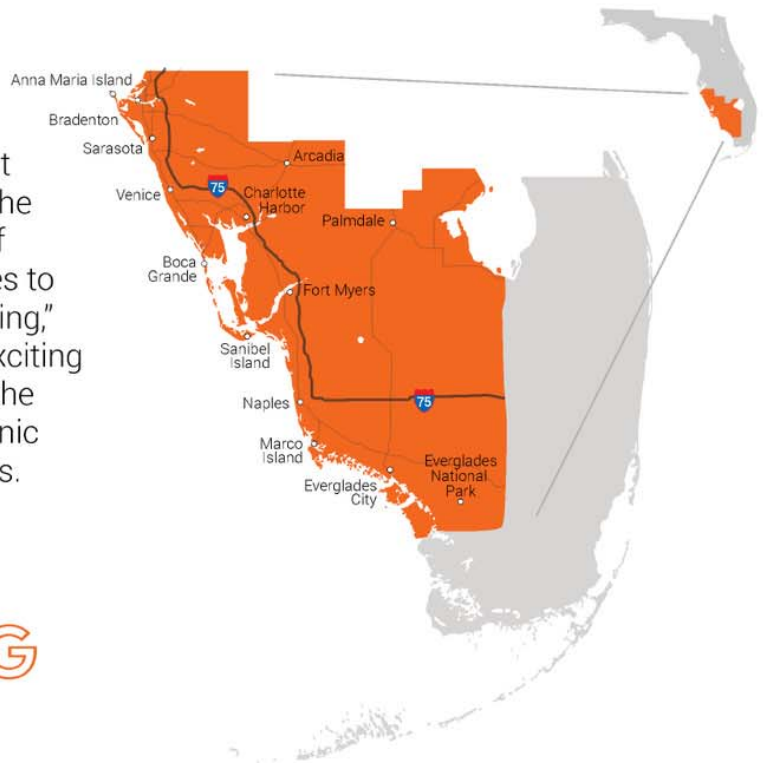
From the uninhabited shores of the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge in Southwest Florida to Lake Istokpoga (which has one of the state's highest largemouth bass catch rates) in the Southeast, fishing this region of Florida is known to be exciting. In the Florida Keys, reel in the big catches, from mahi to marlin. Islamorada is known as the sport fishing capital of the world. Here, you can cast out on the flats, catch spiny lobsters and even dive the reefs and wrecks for a shot at spearfishing.

*The Florida Keys*

# SOUTHWEST

Tarpon put Southwest Florida on the map. The region remains one of the world's best places to intercept the "Silver King," among many other exciting species found along the Gulf Coast and in scenic Everglades waterways.

## TOP FISHING SPOTS



The **Manatee River** offers up about 46 miles of productive waters before pouring out into Tampa Bay. The lower river, near Bradenton, produces plenty of tarpon, snook and redfish. Pier anglers reel in their catches from the Green Bridge Fishing Pier. The stunning upper river begins at Fort Hamer Park. Upriver, anglers score great fishing for snook, bass and redfish, as well as trout, especially in the cooler months.

**Sarasota Bay** is renowned for fishing. The Bay's vast seagrass meadows and mangroves offer snook, trout and redfish, plus saltwater panfish including sheepshead and snappers. Wade fishermen and pier anglers enjoy ample public access at places including the Causeway Park Fishing Pier and New

Pass Fishing Piers. Anglers with boats often focus on the waters behind Lido Key. Capt. Geoff Page is a great guide with a wealth of information.

Like most great Everglades rivers, tides make the **Myakka River** saltier the closer you fish to the Gulf of Mexico. The brackish waters make for diverse fishing opportunities, ranging from bass and freshwater panfish to snook, redfish and tarpon. Fishing can be superb for snook upriver in the winter, where they mix with bass near Myakka River State Park.

Florida's second-largest open-water estuary, **Charlotte Harbor**, offers more fishing opportunities than you can imagine. Launch from quaint towns such as Punta Gorda, Matlacha and Charlotte



*Sanibel Island**Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge**Sarasota Bay*

Harbor. Check out Bokeelia Pier on Pine Island. No matter where you visit this massive fishery, Capt. Daniel Andrews will make sure you catch a ride to great fishing.

In April through June, giant tarpon flood into the notorious **Boca Grande Pass**, which also produces snook and snapper.

**Sanibel Island & J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge** protect some of the best seagrass flats and mangrove shorelines in Pine Island Sound, serving up mixed action for redfish and trout, as well as snook and tarpon. Whether you're a fly fisherman or conventional

angler, visit Norm Zeigler's Fly Shop for information on hotspots and which baits and flies are catching fish.

**Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge** is where you want to fish if you want to get "lost" in the best sense of the word. This 35,000-acre labyrinth of mangroves and water holds such an abundance of species that you never know what will hit next. Hiring a guide is strongly recommended. It's hard to beat this area for inshore and offshore fishing diversity or convenience. For fishing inshore or offshore trips out of the Naples area, contact Capt. Will Geraghty at Grand Slam Light Tackle Sportfishing.

Located on the north end of the Ten Thousand Islands, Marco Island and the adjacent **Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve** are legendary for snook, a small family of aggressive, acrobatic and delicious fish that you won't find in large numbers anywhere but South Florida.

**Lake Trafford**, a 1,500-acre lake near Immokalee, is something of a secret. It offers great fishing for panfish and bass in a gorgeous setting teeming with wildlife. Fish from shore at the County Park and pier. Contact the Lake Trafford Marina for fishing reports.

**Chokoloskee** offers great amenities for traveling anglers and access to the bountiful waters of the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Everglades National Park. Accommodations range from overnight camping to monthly rentals. Guides are available on site; contact the Chokoloskee Island Park Marina. 🐟



Gulf fishing, Photo by Bass 2 Billfish

## MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS



- 1 Rod and Reel Pier, *Anna Maria Island*
- 2 Historic Anna Maria City Pier, *Anna Maria Island*
- 3 Marina Jack, *Sarasota*
- 4 Fisherman's Wharf Marina, *Venice*
- 5 Salty Sam's Marina, *Fort Myers Beach*
- 6 Port of Naples Marina, *Naples*
- 7 Chokoloskee Island Park & Marina, *Chokoloskee*



# INSIDE TIPS ON LANDING BIG FISH

Southwest Florida is a paradise for saltwater fly fishermen. Waterways offer protection from winds along with great sight-fishing and blind-casting opportunities, plus mind-blowing visual action under the dock and bridge lights at night. During spring, the tarpon migration moves along the beaches and daisy-chaining schools of giant fish offer fly anglers shot after shot.



*Naples Pier*



# BIG FISH. BIG ADVENTURE.



**PUNTA GORDA  
ENGLEWOOD BEACH**

The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast

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Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach is all about fishing. At its heart is Charlotte Harbor, the state's second-largest marine estuary. Fed by the Peace, Myakka and Caloosahatchee rivers, the harbor flows to the Gulf through Boca Grande Pass – the tarpon fishing capital of the world. It means that from freshwater to inshore to offshore, the area has it all.

Getting on the fish is easy. You'll find guides, charters, marinas, tackle, and launch areas galore. And when the day's done and you're ready for fun, you'll find great times, dining and more all at great prices.

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**Our Best Side is Outside.<sup>SM</sup>**



# 5 TOP FISHING SPOTS IN PUNTA GORDA/ENGLEWOOD BEACH

Nestled on Florida's Southwest Gulf Coast, Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach calls fishermen with its mangrove-forested barrier islands, 830 miles of natural shoreline and one of the world's largest protected marine estuaries. Check out these top fishing spots to cast your rod:

**1 STUMP PASS BEACH STATE PARK:** This mile-long stretch of beach is layered with seashells and sprinkled with fossilized shark's teeth. Angle from the shore or launch a kayak over the flats for flounder, snook, whiting and snapper.

**2 EL JOBEAN FISHING PIER:** Reel in snook from the original pier that once connected Englewood and Port Charlotte. This spot runs aside FL-776 over the Myakka River. Be on the lookout for the endangered sawfish, and consult the Myakka River Tide Chart before venturing here.

**3 PORT CHARLOTTE BEACH PARK:** Located on the harbor, this 16 acre park is fully equipped with facilities. It features a swimming pool, picnic area, tennis courts, restrooms and more. Hand launch kayaks or drop in your boat at a ramp. Pier fishing yields snook, flounder, snapper and tarpon.

**4 GILCHRIST PARK PIER:** The fishing pier at Gilchrist Park was one of the first fixtures of Fishermen's Village. The pier is a prime spot for redfish, lady fish, toadfish and snook.



**5 BOCA GRANDE FISHING PIER:** What once served as a railway to Boca Grande is now a paradise for fishermen along Gasparilla Sound. Here, populations of grouper, black drum, white grunt and sheepshead thrive. A toll to access the island makes this a quiet and low-key fishing spot.

# SOUTHEAST

An ocean river, the Gulf Stream current comes closest to North America along Southeast Florida, lapping at the region's tawny beaches. The Gulf Stream's warmth produces some of the world's best deep-sea fishing, and its blue water fills the reefs and estuaries with diverse fish species.

## TOP FISHING SPOTS

### Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge

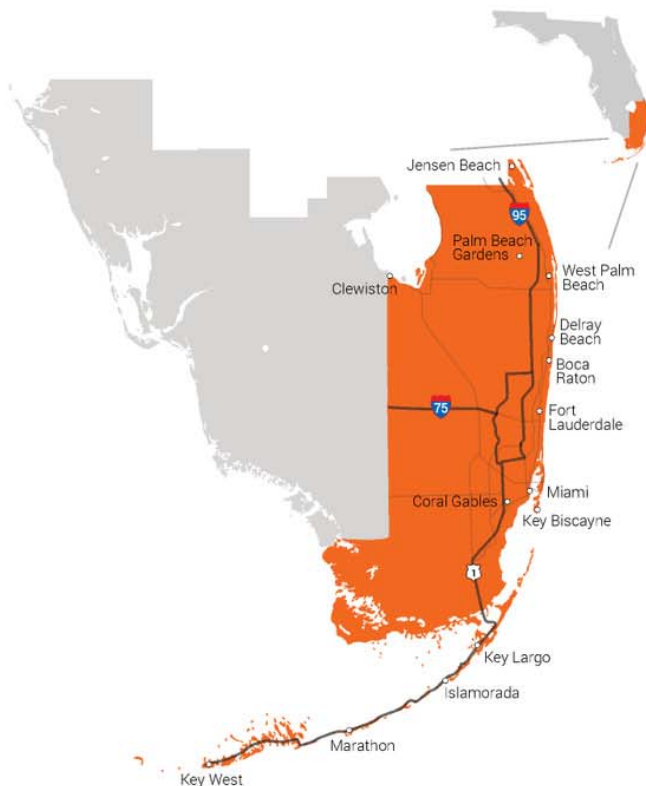
offers surf fishing and beach-stalking anglers a slice of wilderness. In the warmer months, anglers sight fish for snook and tarpon in the clear water just off the beach. Tasty croakers and whiting are always in the surf zone, while bluefish, pompano and Spanish mackerel invade the suds each fall through early spring. Capt. Mike Conner is the local surf fishing guru.

The upper **Loxahatchee River** is one of two federally designated "Wild & Scenic" rivers in Florida. Paddling anglers catch chunky largemouth bass, snook and tarpon while floating beneath towering cypress. Downriver in Jonathon Dickinson State Park, cypress gives way to mangrove forests and superb snook

and tarpon fishing. The lower river and Jupiter Inlet also hold snook and tarpon within sight of fine dining and nightlife. Contact Fishing Headquarters for guides and information about inshore and offshore fishing adventures.

**Clewiston** and **Moore Haven** sit on the southwestern shores of Lake Okeechobee, which has made a rebound as one of the nation's top bass and crappie lakes. Some of the lake's most productive marshes are short runs from the marina. Lunker bass, jumbo panfish and big stringers of crappie await. Contact the Roland & Mary Ann Martin's Marina for guides and information.

Accessible from the upper Florida Keys or the towns of Flamingo or Chokoloskee,







*Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge*



*Clewiston*



*Loxahatchee*

**Everglades National Park** encompasses the southern tip of the Florida peninsula and much of Florida Bay, which offers the nation's best flats fishing. For a true wilderness fishing adventure, explore the backcountry waters of the Shark River drainage and Whitewater Bay. Capt. Benny Blanco is a top guide out of Miami/Homestead. Marinas in the upper Keys such as Robbie's and Bud 'N Mary's can also assist you. For information on tides, guides and fishing reports, contact the Flamingo Marina.

Broadbill swordfishing is all the rage in **Pompano Beach** and in much of South Florida. Those outrageously strong and delicious fish reach 500 pounds, though the world record is nearly 1,200 pounds.

Anglers target them by day by dropping baits more than 1,000 feet deep. At night, the fish follow squid and forage fish to the service, where anglers use lights to attract them. Contact the Hillsboro Inlet Fishing Center.

**Miami** is a go-to fishing destination any time of year. In late winter, a shrimp hatch inspires a great tarpon bite, especially at night. Snook fishing is good on the right tides. Offshore, fishing for sailfish in the winter months is off the charts. Contact Capt. Bouncer Smith, one of the state's most respected inshore and offshore experts. Capt. Ray Rosher is a tournament champion who operates several boats out of Miami.



**Biscayne Bay National Park** in

Miami includes vast connected reef, seagrass and mangrove habitats. These flats offer challenging fishing for some of the biggest bonefish and permit. Contact Capt. Joe Gonzalez.

**Islamorada** is known as the sport fishing capital of the world. Flats anglers enjoy easy access to the Florida Bay, lobster hunters find spiny treasure on the reefs and offshore anglers target some of the most powerful fish in the ocean, including sailfish, mahi and marlin. Contact Bud N' Mary's Marina.

**Bahia Honda State Park** was voted one of the nation's top 10 family fishing destinations. This park in the Lower Keys offers great fishing for bonefish, tarpon and permit. You can also fill a cooler with snappers and other tasty reef fish. 🐟



Biscayne Bay National Park

# MARINAS, PIERS & RELATED ATTRACTIONS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Dania Beach Fishing Pier, <i>Dania Beach</i>                 | 5 Everglades National Park Boat Tours, <i>Homestead</i> |
| 2 Miamarina at Bayside, <i>Miami</i>                           | 6 Bud N' Mary's Marina, <i>Islamorada</i>               |
| 3 Everglades Holiday Park, <i>Fort Lauderdale</i>              | 7 Robbie's Marina, <i>Islamorada</i>                    |
| 4 Roland & Mary Ann Martin's Marina & Resort, <i>Clewiston</i> |   |







*Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary*

# SPEARFISHING & DIVING

Southeast Florida is the epicenter of the action during Florida's spiny lobster mini-season. The action continues with much less pressure throughout the fall into the winter, with the season finally closing March 31. It's also a great place to get SCUBA certified.



*Islamorada*



## Make reel memories.

Stuart, located in Martin County, is known as the Sailfish Capital of the World. Sitting on the most biodiverse estuary in the Northern Hemisphere, and the northernmost point of the South Florida Reef, Martin County is home to 100 artificial reef systems and over 800 species of fish. Its climate, waterways and natural environment make it a mecca for fishermen and nautical explorers year-round. An array of unique shops, fine restaurants, great golf courses and quiet beaches make a day ashore fun, too. Inshore, offshore, salt water or fresh, head out for an adventure and reel in the memories.

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