Please, catch a Florida bass tag for your trailer or vehicle and help ensure there are fish for tomorrow! Support Fish & Wildlife Conservation!

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is the constitutional agency responsible for managing the fish and wildlife resources of Florida for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people. In meeting this mission, the FWC helps enhance habitats, manages millions of acres of land and water, stocks appropriate fish, builds and maintains boat ramps, courtesy docks and fishing piers, develops and enforces science-based regulations, and helps ensure public safety. See MyFWC.com.

The Florida Park Service is a two-time National Gold Medal winner that offers both fresh and saltwater fishing access at many of its 159 state parks from Pensacola to Key West. This guide includes several state parks with outstanding fishing opportunities. To see other Florida State Parks with fishing and boating opportunities, visit FloridaStateParks.org. To reserve a camping space, visit ReserveAmerica.com.

The Florida Sports Foundation is charged with the promotion and development of professional, amateur and recreational sports and physical fitness opportunities that produce a thriving Florida sports industry and environment. To learn more, see flasports.com.

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving and restoring this nation’s aquatic natural resources. The foundation manages the “Take Me Fishing”™ campaign. See TakeMeFishing.org.

VISIT FLORIDA is the official tourism marketing corporation of the State of Florida that markets and facilitates travel to and within Florida for the benefit of its residents, economy and travel and tourism industry. See VISITFLORIDA.com. (Note: This project received financial assistance from VISIT FLORIDA™ and other sponsors.)

Anglers Code of Ethics
AN ETHICAL ANGLER:
1. Supports conservation efforts.
2. Practices effective catch-and-release of fish that are unwanted or prohibited to retain.
3. Doesn’t pollute, recycle and dispose of trash.
4. Practices safe angling and boating by following the laws and using common sense practices to prevent injury to themselves, others or property.
5. Learns and obeys fishing and boating rules and regulations, and purchases appropriate licenses.
6. Respects other anglers’ and boaters’ rights.
7. Respects property owners’ rights and does not trespass.
8. Shares fishing knowledge and skills.
9. Doesn’t release live bait into waters or spread exotic plants and fish.
10. Promotes ethical sport fishing and encourages others to reconnect on the water.

Fishing Licenses
Fishing licenses are generally required by law if you are between 16 and 65. However, many anglers know buying a license funds fish and wildlife conservation and voluntarily buy one as a way of showing their stewardship ethic. Instant licenses are available by calling 1-888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356).

This Publication is brought to you by:

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“Take Me Fishing”
How to use this Guide

Each inland site listed in this guide is numbered to correspond with the fold out map and designated with a letter on the map. Sites with state parks are designated by X. Descriptions of some of Florida’s most popular and some lesser known, sport fishes begin on page 18. We included time proven fishing tips to help you get started.

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Why is Florida the Fishing Capital of the World?
Florida has a huge variety of sportfish species, from largemouth bass in nearly all our fresh waters, to redfish along shorelines and sailfish offshore. More International Game Fish Association records are set in Florida, and more anglers come here to fish than anywhere else in the nation. Best of all, in the Sunshine State, fishing is great year round.

What Should I Do To Help Sustain the Resource?
Learn the rules that apply in the area you are fishing and to any species you might catch. Regulation summaries are available where you buy your tackle, or at MyFWC.com. When handling fish you don't want to keep, or can't keep legally, be gentle, use wet hands and release them quickly, so they can fight another day. Using circle hooks, or barbless hooks can improve survival of released fish. Don't litter, and pick up trash wherever you see it. Fishing line, bottles, cans and plastics should be recycled. If boating, be careful to keep gasoline and oil out of the water, and keep your prop, anchor or wake from damaging aquatic plants, animals or the shoreline. Clean your boat and trailer of any vegetation to help prevent establishing non-native plants. Never move fish between water bodies, relocating them can spread diseases and causes other detrimental impacts. Fish for a variety of species, such as catfish and bream in fresh water, or mackerel and seatrout in salt water, and try new areas to help prevent overfishing and overcrowding problems.

Where Can I Learn More?
The Internet is a great option. In addition to MyFWC.com, try FishingCapital.com, VISITFLORIDA.com, or TakeMeFishing.org for information on why, how, when and where to fish. A visit to a local bait-and-tackle shop or marina, which is always nearby in Florida, is enough to get you started on a wonderful fishing trip. Fishing provides an experience for you, your family and friends that will last a lifetime and help you forget the stress of everyday life.
How Do I Get Started?
Basic fishing tackle is reasonably priced, and enthusiasts can find the rod and reel of their dreams in specialty stores, bait-and-tackle shops or general retailers throughout Florida. Many guides or charter captains furnish them for free. Floridians from 16 to 65 generally need an inexpensive, annual fishing license (certain exemptions apply), and non-residents 16 or over need a license and can purchase a short-term or annual license to suit their needs. However, everyone is encouraged to buy a license, even if they are exempt. Fees go to the FWC, for programs to ensure healthy habitats, to sustain fish and wildlife populations, to improve access and to help ensure public safety. By purchasing a license, you also help Florida receive additional funds from Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration, a program into which anglers already pay via federal excise taxes on fishing tackle and motorboat fuel taxes. To purchase a license, go to MyFWC.com/license, call 1-888-FISH FLORida (347-4356) or buy one where you get your tackle.

What Do I Need To Be Safe?
Safety starts with awareness and common sense. When outdoors in Florida use sunscreen to reduce skin damage, be certain to drink plenty of water, be aware of your surroundings and be careful of sharp fishing hooks. Please don’t feed wildlife while enjoying the great diversity of birds and animals that you’ll see while fishing. Fish are generally very nutritious, but the Florida Department of Health occasionally issues consumption advisories (see DOH.state.fl.us). When boating, wear your life jacket, and never operate a boat under the influence of alcohol. In addition, always bring required safety equipment (floatation devices, signaling gear, fire extinguisher, etc.).

Freshwater Fishing Destinations
These 30 Florida fishing sites were selected as being consistently good destinations for quality recreational fishing. However, with 7,700 named lakes and so many rivers and streams, opportunities are nearly limitless. We urge you to explore a diversity of habitats from pristine streams to man-made canals, and from natural lakes to artificial reservoirs. During various times of year, different species will be most active, so plan to try an array of different fishing techniques. For quarterly freshwater fishing forecasts on many of these and other locations, along with local contact information and maps, see MyFWC.com/fishing/forecast.

1. APALACHICOLA RIVER-Torreya State Park
   - has boat access and camping. From Lake Seminole to the sloughs in Gulf County, the Apalachicola flows 100 miles. The river is maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and has holes and springs down to 40 feet. In summer, good stringers of largemouth bass can be caught in sloughs using live shrimp around grass flats and canals. Bass fishing in the main channel occurs in spring and early summer using plastic worms and crankbaits. Bluegill and redbreast fishing is best during spring on crickets, earthworms and catalpa worms. Best strings of shellcracker are caught around shoals using redworms. Channel catfish can be caught in the river channel, especially in May and June, but also throughout the year, using earthworms and catalpa worms. Flathead catfish are taken using bream as bait beginning in April. Outstanding sunshine bass fishing occurs in spring and fall. Many state record sunshine bass have been taken at the tailrace below Jim Woodruff Dam. Best baits include jigs, spoons and live shad. Sunshine bass, which are produced and stocked by the FWC, often school on the surface in fall, when limits are frequently caught. White bass fishing is especially good in March using small crawfish and grass shrimp while bottom fishing. Striped bass fishing is best in spring. In fall, try the Jim Woodruff Dam catwalk with small live eels. State record spotted bass, striped bass, white bass, flathead catfish and common carp all came from the Apalachicola River.

2. CHOCATHAWHATCHEE RIVER
   - The river flows 96 miles from Alabama to Choctawhatchee Bay. Popular access points are Caryville, Ebro and Black Creek, south of Freeport. When the river is low, it yields fine catches of largemouth bass, bream, catfish and sunshine bass. During winter, anglers can experience good catches of bass, sunshine bass, spotted sunfish and redear sunfish in the lower, tidal reaches of the river. Largemouth bass are most easily taken in spring and summer on crankbaits and artificial worms. Bass also can be caught around treetops and stick-ups in the river. Redear are abundant and generally spawn in quieter waters during April, then remain...
active throughout summer and early-fall. Stumpknockers will be found in smaller creeks, while redbreast bream and warmouth (both late spring and summer spawners) are more active in still waters. The Chocowhatchee is a premier channel catfish and brown bullhead site. Catch big channel cats in May and June, especially near the mouth of Holmes Creek and other tributaries. Sunshine bass (usually 1–3 pounds) can be caught in the lower sections of the river. Anglers should use shiny lures, which resemble shad or menhaden, live shrimp, or finger mullet when seeking stripped or sunshine bass. The best time to fish for larger stripers is early morning or late afternoon, preferably on an outgoing tide.

3. ESCAMBIA RIVER- The river flows from Alabama to the Escambia Bay. Access points include Century, McDavid, Molino and U.S. 90. This is an outstanding site for channel catfish, flathead catfish, blue catfish and bullhead catfish. Mid-April through June yields the biggest fish, with large numbers of smaller cats caught in spring and fall. Focus on the area north of the I-10 bridge. Striped bass and sunshine bass provide winter and spring fisheries in the lower river and delta area during periods of high flows. Trolling or casting live bait (finger mullet or shrimp) or shad-imitation lures near points and sand bars is most effective. Often stripers and hybrids are taken by fishing the "jumps" – casting topwater lures into schools of fish breaking the surface.

4. EVERGLADES WATER CONSERVATION AREAS 2 AND 3- This marsh-like area is southeast of Okeechobee. High water produces excellent largemouth bass fishing in Water Conservation Areas 2 and 3. The best fishing usually begins in late spring as water levels drop, and bass from the vast marshes congregate in canals. Plastic worms, minnow imitations and topwater poppers fished along canal edges are effective. Flipping directly into vegetation fringes is also popular. There is a no-consumption advisory on bass in this area due to mercury. Because of this, anglers routinely release their fish, which has resulted in high populations of 2- to 5-pound bass. L-67A and L-35B are two very popular canals in the area. L-67A Canal has access at the north end via Holiday Park, off U.S. 27, where camping is available, and at the south end at the S-333 water control structure off Tamiami Trail (S.R. 41). L-35B Canal access is at Sawgrass Recreation Area which, like Holiday Park, is just off U.S. 27. Boat ramps are available at all three sites.

5. FARM 13/STICK MARSH RESERVOIR- A water management reservoir near Fellsmere, west of Vero Beach, it has been one of the hottest fishing spots in the nation during the past decade. The reservoir was created in 1985 by flooding 6,500 acres of farmland. Biologists expect a large crop of fish ranging from 8 to 12 pounds. The lake is often partially covered with hydrilla. Anglers should try the south end of Farm 13, near levees, and submerged road beds. Plastic worms, spinnerbaits, crankbaits and topwater prop baits will produce good results depending on weather conditions, water levels and habitat fished. Golden shiners are the top choice for anglers looking to catch a trophy. There is a catch-and-release only rule for bass. Crappie provide excellent winter fishing opportunities and are taken by drifting minnows suspended below Corks or casting small jigs or spinners near structure. Both bluegill and shellcracker bed around palm trees and berms from April through June and will school on or near emergent structures afterward. There is one boat ramp, a parking lot and rest rooms.

6. LAKE GEORGE- Florida’s second largest lake (46,000 acres), it is northwest of Deland and east of Ocala. Lake George is one of many natural lakes on the St. Johns River. It has extensive vegetation that provides excellent habitat for largemouth bass. Wade-fishing in eelgrass with plastic worms fished on the surface, or topwater lures is productive. Fishing with shiners is excellent for trophy bass during spring spawning. Hot spots include Juniper, Salt and Silver Glen Spring runs on the eastern shoreline. In early spring, look for bass to congregate at jetties on the south end of the lake. To the north, anglers do well casting deep-diving crankbaits near old dock structures along the northeast shore and off Drayton Island. Shad-type baits are excellent for taking sunshine bass near jetties when the river is flowing during spring and fall. Striper fishing is outstanding along the bombing range targets on the east side of Lake George from October through April, while the water is cool. Just down stream in Little Lake George, check out the Croaker Hole from May through September when cooler spring water concentrates these fishes. Anglers can get to the lake through numerous fish camps. There is no pier or bank fishing access on Lake George.

7. HURRICANE LAKE- A 318-acre FMA, it is an impoundment in Blackwater State Forest north of S.R. 4 between Baker and Munson. Some large bass are taken from this reservoir each year. The best largemouth bass baits are either green or black artificial worms fished in spring and early summer. Redear sunfish spawning peaks during April. Check out the oyster shell bedding area and use live baits such as red worms, wigglers or crickets. Typically, bluegill utilize the same spawning areas as shellcracker, but about 30 days later. Catfish have been stocked and can be caught on earthworms and chicken liver. Bottom fishing is best for catfish. The lake is intensively managed to increase fish production, and camping facilities are available.

8. LAKE ISTOKPOGA- A 27,000-acre FMA situated just southeast of Sebring. Bream spawning usually occurs from April through June in both offshore and inshore cattail and bulrush areas. After bream bedding is over, anglers should fish around Big Island, Grassy Island and Bumble Bee Island, but don’t overlook shallow sandy bars, eelgrass flats, and cattail fringes. Lake Istokpoga often produces a red-hot crappie fishery.
Fishing Capital of The World

during March and early April. These fish average between 10 and 12 inches in length. Those who slow-troll or drift small jigs, Hal-flies or beetlespines in warmer months will catch both largemouth bass and specks, especially at the north end. Throughout winter, crappie move into bulrushes to bed in about 4-feet of water and will readily take Missouri minnows. There are numerous launching ramps available, including Henderson’s Fish Camp, Mossy Cove Fishing Resort and Trails End Fishing Resort.

9. **LAKE JESSUP** - A 10,000-acre shallow lake that has been culturally impacted, but still provides great bream fishing. Historically, shellcracker and bluegill spawn here in late April through July. When water levels are low, they’ll usually bed in sandy areas in or near cattails. High water will find both species in all types of vegetation. The lake’s south end is considered better than other areas. However, local, up-to-date information should be sought at fish camps around the lake.

10. **LAKE KARICK** - A 65-acre FMA, is an impoundment created by an earthen dam across Deadfall Creek in 1966. The lake has an average depth of 7 feet and a maximum depth of 18 feet. A considerable amount of flooded timber remains, and the old stream bed provides a deep-water haven for fish. Stocked sport fish include largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish. Approximately 8 miles north of Baker and 2 miles south of Blackman, Karick has concrete ramps at both the north and south campgrounds. Both campgrounds have ample parking, information kiosks, restrooms and picnic facilities.

11. **KENANSVILLE LAKE** - A shallow 2,500-acre impoundment with an average water depth of 3 feet. This area was cattle pasture prior to flooding in 1993. Boaters should navigate with caution as there are rows of submerged fence posts throughout the lake. Interior levees are also located at the north, center and south areas of the lake. A single-lane concrete boat ramp is the only facility on the site. The town of Kenansville is the closest place to obtain gas, food and bait. Although most anglers fish this area by boat, bank fishing is available along the access canal and north end of the lake for those willing to walk or ride a bicycle to those areas. The most popular fish species include: black crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass and catfish. Largemouth bass are protected by a no-harvest regulation.

12. **LAKE KISSIMMEE** - A 35,000-acre FMA. It is a natural lake south of St. Cloud. A state park offers boat access at Catfish Creek and camping. Fish camps and guides have regularly reported largemouth bass over 10 pounds since 1994. Successful anglers target deep-water peppergrass, hydrilla and grass edges during warmer months. Flipping plastic baits into heavy cover and slow-trolling shiners along hydrilla edges are productive techniques for catching big bass. Kissimmee also provides some of the best bluegill and shellcracker action in central Florida. Past drawdowns by the FWC restored 24 miles of shoreline and enhanced open water areas, giving both boaters and non-boaters a shot at impressive catches. Lake Kissimmee is proving to be a bonanza for speck fishermen, who cash in on spawners through February and early March in such cover as bulrush, cattails, lily pads and Kissimmee grass. Six fish camps, one state park and three public boat ramps are available at Kissimmee. Non-boaters can wade-fish from access points at some of the fish camps and boat ramps. Kissimmee is home to the state record bowfin.

13. **LAKE LOUISA** - Part of the Clermont chain of lakes, it is a 3,600-acre basin-shaped lake. The state park provides boat access, camping and 20 new 2-bedroom/2-bath cabins. Lake Louisa is known for catfish, especially channels, white catfish and brown bullhead. Dredge holes, along cypress trees and in the Palatlakaha River at the north end of the lake, are special hot spots.

14. **LAKE MANATEE STATE RECREATION AREA** - The 560-acre state park provides opportunity for memorable camping-fishing experiences. The park borders a 1,400-acre reservoir on the Manatee River, which is a FMA named Lake Manatee. The reservoir has a well-deserved reputation as a stellar recreational fishery for largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, sunshine bass hybrids, and large channel catfish. It is one of the few spots in the state where channel catfish regularly hit artificials, from plastic worms to crankbaits. A boat ramp is within the park. Little bank access is available; however, there is a fishing dock adjacent to the ramp.

15. **LAKE MARIAN** - A shallow 5,739-acre lake situated east of Haines City. Lake Marian is noted for its 1-pound-plus bluegill and shellcracker. It is also a popular locale for speckled perch fishing in open water during warmer months and in bulrushes, cattails or lily pads when water temperatures dip. Anglers can launch at Lake Marian Paradise.

16. **MYAKKA RIVER STATE PARK** - Within the borders of our largest state park is 975-acre Upper Myakka Lake. The lake is broad and shallow, and at times has dense hydrilla. Memorable camping-fishing experiences are possible here, along with opportunities to view a variety of native wildlife. The lake, because of its broad, shallow nature, lends itself to fly fishing for largemouth bass and bluegill better than many other areas. Kayaks or canoes are available for rent in the park. In addition to ample boat launch facilities; there is a fishing pier on the lake and a fishing bridge in the outlet to the Myakka River, as well as good fishing in the river.
17. **Ocklawaha River** - A 148-mile long tributary of the St. Johns River that includes Rodman Reservoir. This beautiful, winding, canopyed river produces consistent catches of bream (redbreast sunfish, stumpknockers and bluegill), channel and white catfish, and brown and yellow bullhead. The biggest fish are caught from May through June but good numbers are available year round especially between Rodman and the St. Johns. Bream fishing is excellent the entire length of the river during spring when water levels recede to the edge of cypress trees.

18. **Lake Okeechobee** - A 730-square-mile lake, in south central Florida. The “Big O” is accessible from Florida’s east and west coasts. Recently revered by crappie and largemouth bass anglers nationwide, Okeechobee was imperiled by environmental consequences following record-setting hurricane seasons in 2004 and 2005 when devastating storm winds repeatedly wreaked havoc on aquatic plant communities. FWC biologists continue to assist the South Florida Water Management District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and others in restoring the lake and its fishery to its glory days. Sixteen boat ramps and numerous fish camps surround the lake providing access to one of natures most unique resources. Contact local marinas and tackle stores for current conditions.

19. **Oklawaha River** - A 148-mile long tributary of the St. Johns River that includes Rodman Reservoir. This beautiful, winding, canopyed river produces consistent catches of bream (redbreast sunfish, stumpknockers and bluegill), channel and white catfish, and brown and yellow bullhead. The biggest fish are caught from May through June but good numbers are available year round especially between Rodman and the St. Johns. Bream fishing is excellent the entire length of the river during spring when water levels recede to the edge of cypress trees.

20. **Oscar Scherer State Park** - The park offers family-friendly fishing opportunities. Lake Osprey, a small (2.5 acres) fishing/swimming lake is next to the park’s nature center and is a short, convenient walk from the campground. It is stocked with channel catfish and bank fishing access is maintained around the lake’s perimeter where fish feeders draw fish in close. Largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegill and an occasional snook can be pursued there. Between the campground and Lake Osprey is South Creek, which can be fished from the bank, a footbridge or from canoes or kayaks that are available for rent. South Creek contains largemouth bass, bluegill and snook.

21. **Lake Panasoffkee** - A 4,460-acre FMA. The full-moon period around Easter generally ushers in some top-notch redear activity at Shell Point, Grassy Point and Tracy’s Point. Big bluegill are frequently encountered here and benefit from FWC-managed, lake restoration projects.

22. **St. Johns River** - Stretches 260 miles from southwest of Melbourne northward to its outlet at Jacksonville. The St. Johns is home to high concentrations of speckled perch throughout its length, with the most notable sites being lakes Jessup (See #9), Monroe and Woodruff. Lake Monroe’s 9,400 acres, due north of Sanford, recently underwent a re-vegetation project by FWC staff resulting in bulrush, eelgrass and knotgrass plantings that improved water quality and fish habitat. Speck fishing activities here usually begin in October and continue through March. Due west of De Leon Springs and immediately south of Lake George, 2,220-acre Lake Woodruff has very little shoreline development and plenty of hydrilla, water lilies and eelgrass, serving as cover for large quantities of crappie, which are particularly active from December through March. Catfishing is extraordinary in the St. Johns, especially the Puzzle Lakes area, with big channel cats being caught from late February through May. The Dunn’s and Murphy creek areas are noted for big cats a little later – May through June. State parks are located at Blue Springs, Dunns Creek, Hontoon Island and De Leon Springs.

23. **Lake Seminole** - A 37,500-acre reservoir at the juncture of Florida and Georgia, near the Alabama state line. It was formed by closure of Jim Woodruff Dam at the confluence of the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers. The lake and facilities are maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and used for navigation, hydroelectric production and recreation. Much of the reservoir is flooded timber. Approximately 80% of Lake Seminole is located in Georgia, although by agreement licensed Florida anglers can fish south and west of an imaginary line from Chattahoochee Park, on the east bank, through Navigation Mile Marker 3.0 on the Flint River, and south of Lake Seminole WMA, to Navigation Mile Marker 6.4 on the Chattahoochee River. Size and bag limits on Lake Seminole are established by Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Lake Seminole is stocked annually with striped and sunshine bass by Florida, Georgia and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Seminole is home to the state record sunshine bass.

24. **Suwannee River** - Home to the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail and state park which provides boat access, cabins, river camps and tent camping. This pristine river features steep banks and sand bars, and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The Suwannee offers excellent panfishing – especially as water recedes into the river bank following winter/spring floods. The colorful and unique Suwannee bass originated in this stream system. Suwannee’s shellcracker usually go on the beds in May and June, especially among lily pads in the upper river. When fishing for shellcracker throughout summer, key in on brush piles, which is also a good locale for those targeting redbreast sunfish and stumpknocker in the main part of the river. Redbreast are very abundant and taken on small spinners or with a long limber cane pole with live crickets. Look for
them around fallen timber, especially April through September. Catfish are abundant in the Suwannee River and its tributaries. Try late April through June for big fish, with a variety of channel and white catfish, and bullhead catfishes year-round. State record Suwannee bass, redbreast and spotted sunfish all came from here.

25. **LAKE TALQUIN**—An 8,850-acre impoundment on the Ochlockonee River, west of Tallahassee. Large numbers of shellcracker spawn around the April full moon in the upper end of the reservoir and in the back of creeks, in water depths ranging from 3 to 7 feet. Bluegill come on a month later in roughly the same areas. Fly-rodders should be in their glory throughout the summer months. The current state record for crappie was set here in January 1992, with an estimated 8-year-old female weighing an impressive 3 pounds, 13 ounces. Lake Talquin benefits from periodic drawdowns. Premier speck months are from February through April around the mouths of various feeder creeks. Hal-flies or Missouri minnows are considered the best baits. A 10-inch minimum size limit on crappie is in effect. Anglers are advised to use caution on Lake Talquin because of submerged stumps and standing timber. They can launch at several area fish camps, all located off S.R. 267, south of Quincy. The state park has boat access at Jack Vause landing road off of S.R. 20.

26. **LAKE TARPON**—A 2,534-acre FMA near Tampa. This lake has excellent largemouth bass fishing. Try flipping or pitching plastic worms along canal and bulrush edges. Offshore bass fishing is productive around coontail and eelgrass beds with plastic worms, rattling crankbaits and jerkbaits. Fishing wild shiners is also effective. There are two public boat ramps within county parks. Anderson Park boat ramp is on the west shore off U.S. 19. Chestnut Park boat ramp is on the east side of the lake off C.R. 611. Bank access, boardwalks and piers provide convenient fishing locations.

27. **TENOROC FISH MANAGEMENT AREA**—A series of phosphate pits northeast of Lakeland. Tenoroc offers some of the best bass fishing in Florida. Fifteen lakes, totaling 822 acres, are open to public fishing. Lakes range from 5 to 250 acres, and most are catch-and-release for largemouth bass. Each lake has specific regulations and angler quotas designed to produce a quality fishing experience. Bass are bigger than the statewide average, and the chance to land a trophy fish is excellent. These phosphate pits also generate quality speckled perch action. Jigs, beetlespins, Hal-flies and Missouri minnows are choices for those who fish the points and around bushes for fish that bed in 8 to 10 feet of water. Try trolling with an electric motor and ‘dibbling’ with a cane pole near vegetation. The 17-acre Derby Lake and the two 5-acre Pasture lakes have barrier-free facilities for physically challenged anglers. To make a reservation and verify hours of operation, call 863/499-2422.

28. **LAKE TRAFFORD**—At 1,500 acres, the lake is the primary freshwater fishery south of Okeechobee and is the subject of a grassroots restoration effort involving the FWC and local community. Aquatic vegetation consists of cattail, spatterdock and hydrilla. Fish species include largemouth bass, black crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish and large brown bullhead. Access to Lake Trafford is mainly by boat. However, a small county park provides some bank access and has a nice public fishing pier. Lake Trafford Marina and the park both have public boat ramps. Services at the marina include boat rentals, fishing guides, airboat tours, bait and tackle.

29. **LAKE WEOHYAKAPKA, WALK-IN-WATER**—A 7,534-acre heavily vegetated lake off S.R. 60 south of Orlando, near Lake Wales. This lake has a reputation as an outstanding fishing spot for largemouth bass. It is not uncommon for anglers to catch and release up to 50 bass a day, with some from 5 to 10 pounds. Several bass over 13 pounds were reported in the 1990s. Hydrilla often covers much of the lake. However, when water levels are up, anglers may have to use fish finders to locate submerged vegetation. Most anglers use plastic worms, rattling crankbaits, jerkbaits and topwater plugs in isolated hydrilla beds or near the edges of topped-out hydrilla. Anglers drifting wild shiners in these areas are often successful. Bluegill spawning usually takes place from April through June around the lake’s perimeter, especially at the south end, and offshore in front of bulrush patches. Several big shellcracker bedding areas are off the point at Tiger Creek. Other beds can traditionally be found on the northeast and northwest sides of the lake. There are two public boat ramps. One is on Boat Landing Road in the southwest corner of the lake. The other is on the west shore on Lake Walk-in-Water Road. There is little access for bank fishing.

30. **WEST LAKE TOHOPEKALIGA**—An 18,810-acre shallow lake south of Kissimmee. Both West and East “Toho” can provide excellent largemouth bass fishing for the knowledgeable angler. Anglers can fish either Lake Kissimmee or Lake Tohopekaliga by passing through the locks between the lakes. Medium-to-large wild shiners are effective baits for big bass. In spring, also try slowly working Carolina-rigged plastic worms, spinnerbaits and jerkbaits. Popular fishing spots in Toho are the mouth of Shingle Creek, St. Cloud Canal, North Steer Beach and Lanier Point. Two fish camps, one marina, one county park and four public boat ramps are available around Lake Toho. Two fishing piers, a boat basin, and numerous other access points are readily available for bank fishermen along the north end of the lake. Toho was the site of the national Bass Angler Sportsman Society tournaments heaviest one-day record with 45 pounds, blowing away the previous record of 35 pounds.
Saltwater Fishing Destinations

Florida’s inshore, near shore and offshore waters have a large diversity of saltwater fish available to anglers. See page 21 for a sample of some of these and angling tips. With 2,276 miles of tidal shore, Florida has the most diverse saltwater fishing on the continent. No other state offers such a range of tropical, subtropical and northern species of fish, nor more productive fishing waters. No wonder anglers worldwide are drawn by Florida’s outstanding fishing opportunities.

The map on the inside back cover, depicts four geographic regions of the state that provide tremendous fishing diversity and opportunity. The North Zone is highlighted by cobia, redfish and spotted seatrout. In the South Zone bonefish, tarpon and permit abound. Along the east coast consider redfish, spotted seatrout and tarpon; and the west coast provides snook, redfish and tarpon. We would also like to call your attention to several of the award winning Florida state parks that provide outstanding access to saltwater fishing and are designated by letters:

A. BAHIA HONDA - Henry Flagler’s railroad to Key West turned Big Pine Key into a tropical destination. Today, the island is home to one of Florida’s southernmost state parks, known for beautiful beaches and outstanding snorkeling. Anglers can surf fish or bring a boat for the bountiful fishing offshore. The park’s concession rents kayaks and snorkeling gear and offers trips to the reef. Limited grocery and marine supplies are available. Bahia Honda is an excellent place to see wading birds and shorebirds. The nature center provides an introduction to the island’s unique plants and animals. Full-facility campsites and vacation cabins are available. Located 12 miles south of Marathon.

B. JOHN PENNEKAMP - The first underwater park in the U.S., John Pennekamp encompasses 70 nautical square miles. While the mangrove swamps and tropical hammocks in the park’s upland areas offer visitors a unique experience, it is the coral reefs and their associated marine life that bring most visitors to the park for a view from a glass-bottom boat tour. Canoeing and kayaking through the park’s waters also are popular. Fishing is permitted in designated areas. The visitor center has a 30,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, and a theater shows nature videos. Full-facility and youth/group campgrounds are available. For boat tour information and reservations, call 305/451-6300. Located on U.S. 1 at Mile Marker 102.5 in Key Largo.

C. ST. LUCIE INLET - A Florida barrier island accessible only by boat—it is worth the ride. A boardwalk takes visitors across mangrove forests and hammocks of live oaks, cabbage palms, paradise trees and wild limes to a neatly preserved Atlantic beach. In summer, the island is an important nesting area for loggerhead, leatherback and green sea turtles. Visitors come to swim, sunbathe or picnic at the pavilion on the quiet beach, as well as for great surf fishing. Snorkeling and scuba diving are also popular activities. Port Salerno is on the Intracoastal Waterway, two-thirds of a mile south of the inlet.

D. FT. PIERCE - A beautiful half-mile beach with snorkeling, surfing and scuba diving. Dynamite Point is a haven for bird-watchers. Fort Pierce Inlet is especially popular for anglers. Jack Island Preserve, one mile north of the park, has trails for hiking, bicycling and nature study. From Rabbit Run Trail, visitors can climb an observation tower to get a bird’s eye view of Indian River and the island. A primitive youth/group campground is available on a reservation basis four miles east of Fort Pierce, via North Causeway.

E. SEBASTIAN INLET - The premier saltwater fishing spot on Florida’s east coast, this park is a favorite for anglers nationwide for catching snook, redfish, bluefish and Spanish mackerel from its jetties. The McLarty Treasure Museum features the 1715 Spanish treasure fleet; the Sebastian Fishing Museum tells the history of the area’s fishing industry. Three miles of beautiful beaches provide opportunities for swimming, scuba diving, snorkeling, shelling and sunbathing. Canoeing and kayaking in the Indian River Lagoon are also favorite pastimes. A ranger-led tour cruises by Pelican Island, the first national wildlife refuge in the United States. Waterfront pavilions, picnic areas, full-facility campsites and a boat ramp are available. Located on A1A 15 miles south of Melbourne Beach.

F. ST. GEORGE ISLAND - Miles of undeveloped beaches and emerald waters provide opportunities for sunbathing, swimming, canoeing, boating, hiking, camping and nature study. Two boat ramps provide access to Apalachee Bay where anglers fish for flounder, redfish, sea trout, pompano, whiting and Spanish mackerel. Few parks offer better opportunities for Gulf coast shelling. Shore birds such as the snowy plover, least tern, black skimmer and willet often nest along the park’s sandy shores and grass flats. The park has six large picnic shelters equipped with grills, tables and restrooms. The campground features full-facility campsites; a primitive campsite can be accessed by trail or by private boat. Located on St. George Island, 10 miles southeast of Eastpoint, off U.S. 98.
G. ST. JOSEPH - With miles of sugar white sand, this park has one of the top-rated beaches in the U.S. From offshore, canoeists and kayakers can take in a superb view of the high dunes and sand pine scrub. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy camping, fishing, hiking and bicycling. As a coastal barrier peninsula, St. Joseph provides excellent opportunities for bird watching. More than 240 species have been sighted in the park. A boat ramp is at Eagle Harbor on the bay side. Campers can stay in a full-facility campground, at primitive campsites in the wilderness preserve or in one of eight cabins. Located between Port St. Joe and Apalachicola on Cape San Blas Road, off S.R. 30A.

H. ST. ANDREWS - This former military reservation has over one-and-a-half miles of beaches on the Gulf of Mexico and Grand Lagoon. Water sports enthusiasts can enjoy swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking and canoeing. Two fishing piers, a jetty and a boat ramp provide ample fishing opportunities for anglers. Two nature trails wind through a rich diversity of coastal plant communities—a splendid opportunity for bird watching. Full-facility campsites, as well as primitive youth/group camping, make this park a popular overnight destination. A concession offers snacks, souvenirs and fishing amenities. Shell Island Boat Tours are available during spring and summer. Located three miles east of Panama City Beach, off S.R. 392 (Thomas Drive).

I. CAYO COSTA - With miles of beaches and acres of pine forests, oak-palm hammocks and mangrove swamps, this barrier island park is a Gulf coast paradise. The park is accessible only by private boat or ferry. Visitors may see manatees and pods of dolphins in the waters around the park, as well as a spectacular assortment of birds. Shelling is especially good during winter. Nature trails provide opportunities for hiking and off-road bicycling. Saltwater anglers can fish from their boats or throw a line out into the surf. An amphitheater provides educational programs about the island’s ecology and history. The park offers primitive cabins and tent camping. For ferry and rental information, call 239/283-0015. Located directly south of Boca Grande.

J. GEORGE CRADY BRIDGE - Located in Jacksonville, this one-mile-long, pedestrian-only fishing bridge spans Nassau Sound and provides access to one of the best fishing areas in northeast Florida. Fishermen catch whiting, jacks, drum and tarpon. The Nassau Sound Bait and Tackle shop, 904/277-9772, is on the north end of the fishing bridge. The shop is open year-round and offers live bait, rod and reel rentals, food and expert fishing advice. Accessed through Amelia Island State Park, the bridge is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Located seven miles north of Little Talbot Island State Park on A1A, or eight miles south of Fernandina Beach.

K. SKYWAY FISHING PIER - When the new Sunshine Skyway bridge was built over Tampa Bay, connecting St. Petersburg with Sarasota, the old bridge was turned into the world’s longest fishing pier. Anglers can park within a few feet of the bridge, which is lighted at night, so anglers can see to rig a line and get a good look at their catch. The light also attracts many species of fish after sundown. Common catches include snook, tarpon, grouper, black sea bass, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, cobia, sheepshead, red snapper and pompano. Snacks, drinks, bait and fishing supplies are available. The pier is open 24 hours a day year-round. Located north and south of the Skyway Bridge on I-275 (U.S. 19).
**FRESHWATER FISHES and ANGLING TIPS**

**Florida largemouth bass**
Jaw extends back behind eye  
State Record: 17.27 lbs.

**BLACK BASS**: The largemouth bass is the best known and most popular game fish in North America. The Florida largemouth bass is the state freshwater fish. Found statewide, largemouth bass have excellent growth rates, particularly in the productive waters of central Florida. Florida is an outstanding destination to catch a trophy. A photo and measurements of your fish can be converted into wonderful fiberglass mounts, so you can release the lunker to fight another day.

March through April is the best time of year to catch bass, when fish move into shallow water to spawn. After spawning, many large females move offshore ready to start a feeding binge.

The best live bait is a golden shiner, fished under a float or free-lined. Typically, the shiner is hooked through the lips or back with a large hook, 2/0 to 5/0. A medium to medium-heavy rod with 14- to 20-pound test line is preferred, particularly when fishing in areas with thick vegetation or cover.

Plastic worms are the most dependable artificial bait for largemouth bass. A weedless Texas- or Carolina-rigged worm is especially effective with heavy plant cover. Bass favor various sizes, shapes or colors of worms depending on light conditions. Have both light and dark colors available, as well as several sizes of tapered worm weights from 1/8 oz. to 1/2 oz. Purple metalflake or red-shad worms with twirly-tails and plastic lizards can be very effective.

Most plastic baits are worked slowly along the bottom or through cover by raising the rod tip a few feet, then allowing the lure to sink. The line should be kept fairly tight to feel the strike. Typically, an angler will feel the bass “tap” the lure once or twice lightly. By lowering the rod tip and waiting only until the slack is out of the line before setting the hook, anglers greatly lessen the chance of injury to the fish due to deep hooking.

With active bass and dense underwater vegetation, jerkworms are excellent lures. Rigged without sinkers, these worms are jigged rapidly over vegetation, with brief pauses to let the worm sink slowly. Bass hit these baits hard, and a sweeping hookset is recommended.

Spinnerbaits are very effective in spring, usually fished slowly around drop-offs and cover. If a slow retrieve fails, try “buzzing”, i.e., retrieving the spinnerbait rapidly so the blades ripple the surface.

Crankbaits typically imitate baitfish or crayfish, and a steady retrieve is usually effective. The design of the plastic lip determines how deep the lure dives, so anglers can adjust their choice based on water depth. Popular colors are white, shad, firetiger (green striped with orange underside) and crayfish.

Topwater baits are exciting to fish, because the angler can see the strike. Topwater plugs that imitate wounded baitfish may be twitched to entice bass. Others are designed to make noise, and a faster, erratic retrieve may antagonize a bass into striking.

**STRIPE BASS, WHITE BASS AND SUNSHINE BASS**: Within Florida, striped bass are found primarily in the St. Johns River and its tributaries. Striped bass need long stretches of flowing water to reproduce successfully, and these conditions are rare in Florida. Stripers do not tolerate water temperatures over 75°F for long. During Florida summers, striped bass become less active and must find cool water springs or canopied streams to survive. Because of this, striped bass populations depend on annual stockings from FWC and federal hatcheries.
The best striper fishing occurs from fall through spring, when fish are actively feeding. Live shad are very effective. Stripers may weigh up to 60 pounds. Use heavy tackle with 3- to 4-oz. weights in high flow areas. In the St. Johns River, bridge pilings around Jacksonville, the Croaker Hole and the jetties at the south end of Lake George are good fall and spring striper areas, and the first few miles of the Wekiva River have several locations where striper congregate. Live menhaden, golden shiners, croakers or eels are good choices as bait. Lures that resemble baitfish, including heavy jigs, as well as sinking and floating lures in white, chrome or chartreuse also produce impressive strikes.

**Butterfly peacock**
Bright yellow and red coloring with distinct eyespot on tail fin
State Record: 9.08 lbs.

**PEACOCK BASS:** Butterfly peacock bass were stocked in extreme south Florida, after careful research demonstrated that temperature would limit their range. Rigorous procedures ensured that parasites and diseases were not stocked with them. Biologists sought not only to help control nongame exotic fishes that had accidentally become established, but also to provide a supplemental, high quality sport fishery. Hundreds of miles of urban canals in Dade and Broward counties now have self-sustaining peacock fisheries and are worth millions of dollars to the local economy.

Peacocks prefer live fish or fish-imitating lures, rather than plastic worms. Light tackle fished during the day around fallen trees, culverts or in the shade provided by structure can be very productive. Peacocks do not feed at night.

**Channel catfish**
No scales; whiskers around mouth; deeply forked tail fin with black dots on body
State Record: 44.50 lbs.

**CATFISH:** Catfish are one of the staples for anglers who enjoy eating their catch. Channel catfish are abundant throughout Florida, spawning in holes and crevices in flowing water. Channel catfish may exceed 40 pounds, although most are less than five pounds. White catfish, yellow bullhead and brown bullhead usually range from 1 to 2 pounds. Their “whiskers” are loaded with sensory cells that enable catfish to locate their food by smell. Take advantage of this by using baits with strong odors: chicken liver or gizzards, shrimp, cut mullet and commercial stinkbaits. Other baits work well too, especially earthworms, and occasionally freshwater clams.

Many catfish become active just before dusk and at night, and fishing success is best during these times. Fish on the bottom with a sturdy #2 to #4 hook and a heavy split shot sinker. Catfish spines may cause a painful injury, and anglers should take care when handling these fish. The FWC produces 200,000-300,000 channel catfish annually for stocking in urban lakes.

**Black crappie**
Deep mottled body with dorsal and anal fins similar
State Record: 3.83 lbs.

**BLACK CRAPPIE OR SPECKS:** Speckled perch are a cool-weather favorite in Florida and are excellent table fare. Crappie weighing up to 2 pounds are not uncommon. Good fishing can be found throughout the state. Unlike most other panfish, crappie spend much of their time offshore feeding on small fish. Consequently, one of the most effective techniques is to drift along, fishing with Missouri minnows or freshwater grass shrimp. A light #4 hook and small split shot below a float help keep the bait at the proper depth. In early spring crappie move inshore to spawn around heavy cover and can be taken with artificials. A 1/16-oz. to 1/8-oz. feathered or curly tailed jig in a bright color, like white, yellow, pink or chartreuse will often produce, and Hal-flies are a consistent favorite. Large crappie frequently spawn in slightly deeper water, so if you find small, bedding fish, look a little further offshore in deeper water.

**SALTWATER FISHES and ANGLING TIPS**

**Bonefish**
Silvery, with torpedo-shaped body and conical snout
State Record: 15.75 lbs.

**BONEFISH:** Bonefish have deeply forked tails that provide them with a great deal of power for chasing down prey in lush grass beds. Keen eyesight, a wary disposition and a skittish nature make these fish a prized trophy for many saltwater anglers. Bonefish primarily inhabit inshore shallows of the Florida Keys, often in water that is less than 1 foot deep. They travel in small schools prowling grass beds and sand flats for shrimp, crabs and other invertebrates. Average size is 3 to 5 pounds but fish weighing more than 10 pounds can be found in Florida. Live shrimp or a jig tipped with fresh shrimp are the best baits for conventional fishermen. Fly fishermen patiently pole through shallow flats stalking these elusive fish. Bonefish are very seldom eaten and should be carefully released.

**Tarpon**
Large upturned mouth and very large scales
State Record: 243.00 lbs.

**TARPON:** Tarpon have a distinctive dorsal fin ray that extends into a long filament and a large upward pointing mouth. They are primarily inshore fish, preferring shallow estuaries around mangrove forests, salt marshes or hard-bottom/seagrass communities of the Keys. They can tolerate a wide range of salinities, and as juveniles, enter freshwater rivers and impoundments. Tarpon have the ability to gulp air and remove oxygen by means of a lung-like tissue near their swim bladder. This “rolling” effect at the surface is one way to spot tarpon while fishing. Anglers catch tarpon that weigh 40 to 150 pounds on average. Because tarpon grow slowly, they do not mature until 7 to 13 years of age. Typically tarpon spawn between May and September in...
offshore waters. Crabs and mullet are the tarpon’s favorite foods, but they also take shrimp and pinfish. Tarpon are not eaten, but anglers who purchase a tarpon tag may harvest them for a mount.

**Common snook**

Distinctive black stripe on sides
State Record: 44.19 lbs.

**SNOOK:** Snook are identified by their black lateral line and protruding lower jaw. Limesides are found in coastal and brackish waters, along mangrove shorelines, inlets, deep holes by seagrass beds, seawalls, jetties and bridges. They congregate in large schools during the summer in deep passes and inlets to spawn. All snook begin life as males, but when the fish are between 18 and 22 inches long some become females. Snook are found on both coasts of Florida from central Florida south, because they cannot tolerate water temperatures below 60˚F. They orient themselves to face moving water and wait for prey to be carried down the current. Snook jump clear of the water, burst into long runs, streak up current and strain your arms and gear to free themselves of the hook. Use live pinfish, small mullet, shrimp, or sardines free-lined or fished off the bottom with a fish finder rig. They take a large variety of lures based on water conditions. Beware of the snook’s razor-sharp gill covers! Snook make excellent table fare.

**Grouper:** Grouper are bottom fish that range from several pounds to 700 or more pounds. They vary in color with massive under-slung jaws, chunky bodies, a tenacious attitude and large, broad, powerful tails. Adults inhabit rocky bottoms, reefs and drop-off walls in water over 60 feet deep; young occur inshore in waters around seagrass beds, mangrove forests and hard-bottom communities. All grouper are born as females but can change sex later in life to become male. Gag and red grouper are the most widely distributed of the Florida grouper species. Goliath and Nassau grouper are protected from harvest in Florida waters. Goliath grouper are the largest grouper species and attain weights of 600-700 pounds and lengths of 7 or more feet. Black, Warsaw, snowy and yellowfin grouper along with scamp, rock hind and red hind grouper are also found in Florida waters. Grouper spawn between January and May with some of the more tropical species spawning year-round. Grouper fishing is usually done from a boat with baits near the bottom. Heavy tackle and heavier leader are required to bring grouper to the surface because they are seldom far from a rocky crevice. Live fish or dead cut or whole bait are the choice baits to lure these fish from their hiding spots. Grouper are very tasty meals.

**Spotted seatrout**

Distinctive canine teeth that protrude from upper jaw; silver with black spots
State Record: 17.44 lbs.

**SPOTTED SEATROUT:** Spotted seatrout have a distinctive pair of canine teeth that protrude from the upper jaw. Seatrout seek refuge in seagrass meadows, mangrove-

**Redfish**

Distinctive eyespot at base of tail fin
State Record: 52.31 lbs.

**REDFISH (RED DRUM):** Redfish are one of Florida’s most popular sport fish and the state’s most widespread estuarine fish. They are easily recognized by the spot or spots at the base of their tails. In winter, redfish are found in seagrass, over muddy or sand bottoms, or near oyster bars or spring fed creeks. Redfish are prodigious spawners that produce tens of millions of eggs each year. Spawning season occurs from about August through December, depending on the coast, in passes, inlets and lagoon estuaries around the state. During spawning season, redfish use special muscles rubbing against their air bladder to produce a “drumming” sound for which they are named. Red drum “tailing” in shallow water while searching for crabs, are pursued by anxious fly-fishermen. Floating a live shrimp under a popping cork is the most common way to fish for redfish. They will also chase down crabs, mullet, pinfish and killifish (mud minnows). Casting soft-bodied jigs, spoons and even top-water plugs will catch the attention of these powerful estuarine musicians. Redfish make great table fare.

**Permit**

Dark dorsal and anal fins similarly shaped and aligned above each other
State Record: 56.13 lbs.

**PERMIT:** Permit are deep-bodied fish with a very deeply forked tail that gives them the speed to chase down crabs and other invertebrates on seagrass flats. Permit are often confused with pompano, but pompano are not as deep bodied and rarely grow larger than 6 pounds. These coastal fish inhabit tropical grass and sand flats, artificial reefs and offshore wrecks. Spawning occurs primarily in early summer and again in fall. Permit have a specialized plate at the back of their mouth that helps them crush hard-shelled crustaceans and mollusks. Armed with this knowledge, anglers cast live crabs to schools of permit with the hope of catching one of these line stripping fish of the flats. They also take shrimp, clams and occasionally small fish. Permit are most commonly caught in south Florida where guides say they are more difficult to catch than tarpon and bonefish. This member of the jack family can reach 40 inches and 50 pounds, but more common catches are in the 25-pound range. Most anglers do not eat permit, but they make a tasty meal.
### Cobia

**Broad horizontal brown stripe; sharklike appearance**  
**State Record:** 130.06 lbs.

**COBIA:** Cobia are long, slim fish with a broad depressed head. The lower jaw extends past the upper jaw, and they have a dark lateral stripe that extends through the tail. These fish are also known as ling, or lemonfish, and they somewhat resemble remoras. Cobia are found in nearshore and inshore waters with inlets and bays. Cobia are frequently found around buoys, pilings and wrecks in these areas. They spawn in spring and early summer. Medium to heavy tackle is required to land these fish which average 30 pounds. Large specimens in the 50-80 pound class are frequently caught and cherished by the lucky angler who outmatches these powerful fish. Live crabs and small fish are good baits for cobia. Keep bait near the surface or, if cobia are deeper, add just enough weight to get the bait down and still retain its movement. Cobia are excellent table fare. Many anglers anticipate their return to summer waters after their northward spring migration.

### Red snapper

**Typical snapper shape, with pink coloration over entire body**  
**State Record:** 46.50 lbs.

**SNAPPER:** Most snapper are bottom fish with varied shapes, sizes and colors, a terminal mouth, and broad tail. Florida has 15 species of snapper, including mangrove (gray), lane, mutton, yellowtail and red. Snapper are found near mangroves, seagrass beds, hard bottoms, wrecks and coral reefs. Large individuals are found further offshore. Snapper eat small fish, shrimp, crabs, cut bait and squid. These tasty fish provide a challenge for a wide variety of anglers. Snapper range from 1-pound lane snapper to 40-pound plus cubera snapper. Yellowtail snapper are common over grassbeds, reefs and sandy areas near reefs. Unlike most snapper, they are found higher in the water column and take chunks of fish for bait. Mutton snapper are common over grassbeds or mangroves with larger individuals occurring on reefs. They feed on crabs, shrimp and other crustaceans but will take a fly. Red snapper are most common on the continental shelf in northern Florida near structure. Mangrove snapper are common throughout Florida in many habitats and will take soft-bodied jigs, bucktails and spoons. Lane snapper are found in grassbeds and shallow reefs.

### Cobia

**Broad horizontal brown stripe; sharklike appearance**  
**State Record:** 130.06 lbs.

### Bluefish

**Sharp teeth and a straight lateral line**  
**State Record:** 22.18 lbs.

**BLUEFISH:** Bluefish are greenish blue on their back, with silvery sides, and a large mouth filled with prominent, sharp teeth. Young usually are inshore during the spring and summer and move offshore to join adults during the fall and winter. Large numbers of bluefish migrate to Florida from northern stocks during winter. Surf and pier anglers on the east coast catch larger bluefish than fishermen on the west coast. Bluefish travel in large schools following baitfish. All members of a given school tend to be about the same size because they are cannibalistic. Spawning occurs offshore in spring and summer. Average size is around 3-5 pounds. These fish are a bit oily for some people.

### Black sea bass

**Three-lobed tail fin with dark body**  
**State Record:** 5.06 lbs.

**SEA BASSES:** Sea bass are typically found along structure, associated with reefs and rubble offshore, although smaller specimens are found in inshore finger channels. They are common to 1.5 pounds (13 inches). They spawn January through March, and females become males when they get older. They are bottom feeders, consuming small fish, crustaceans and shellfish. Black sea bass are a very tasty fish to eat.

### Sheepshead

**5-6 broad vertical dark gray bars; human-like teeth**  
**State Record:** 15.13 lbs.

**SHEEPSHEAD:** Look for sheepshead inshore around oyster bars, bridges, pilings and artificial reefs. Use live shrimp, sand fleas or fiddler crabs on a small hook fished on the bottom. Be sure to set the hook on the first tug.
Fishing Capital of The World

Use the fold out map to get an idea of all the great recreational fishing opportunities that Florida has to offer. To help ensure you have a safe and enjoyable outing and that Florida maintains its status as the Fishing Capital of the World, we encourage you to utilize the following check list:

- Select a location with the fish species and access that you need.
- Check on-line or local sources to learn about the fisheries' present status, regulations and weather conditions.
- Load up with the proper tackle, lures and bait for your target species and other fishes you might encounter to provide alternative angling experiences.
- Ensure you have adequate water, sunscreen, insect repellant and snacks to keep your trip enjoyable.
- If boating, file a float plan, ensure you have appropriate life jackets or floatation devices for the entire group, as well as properly functioning signaling and navigation equipment.
- Verify that you have the proper fishing license (MyFWC.com/license) and boat registration if needed. License funds help provide access, law enforcement, fish stocking and critical habitat management to sustain quality fishing and boating for generations to come.

Whatever your reason for going fishing, Florida’s fisheries await you.