

**RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS  
FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS**

Species	Minimum Size Limit (unless otherwise indicated)	Closed Season	Recreational Daily Bag and Possession Limit
<b>SHELLFISH</b>			
Stone crab	Minimum 2¼" claw	5/16 - 10/14	
Spiny Lobster	More than 3" carapace. Divers must measure in water.	4/1 - 8/5 There is a special two day non-trap recreational season to be the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday in July	Six/person and no transfer at sea between boats. (During the two-day special season, 12/person off Florida except six/person for Monroe County-Florida Keys).
<b>COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS</b>			
Cobia (ling)	Minimum 33" fork length	None	Two/person
King mackerel	Minimum 20" fork length	None	Two/person for all vessels
Spanish mackerel	Minimum 12" fork length	None	Same as state limit but not to exceed 10/person.*
<b>REEF FISH</b>			
<u>Snappers</u> Red snapper	18" total length (effective from June 4, 1999 until the 1999 season closes)	Season opens January 1 and closes when recreational quota is projected to be reached. The 1999 season closes 12:01 a.m. on August 29.  (A March 1 season opening has been proposed for 1999.)	Four/person
Vermilion lane	10" total length  8" total length	None  None	(Included in aggregate reef fish limit) (Included in aggregate reef fish limit)
Gray	12" total length	None	Ten/person in aggregate (includes all snappers except red, vermillion, and lane).
Mutton	12" total length	None	
Yellowtail	12" total length	None	
Queen	None	None	
Schoolmaster	None	None	
Blackfin	None	None	
Cubera	None	None	
Dog	None	None	
Mahogany	None	None	
Silk	None	None	
Weuchman	None	None	

<u>Groupers</u> Red Yellowfin Black Gag Scamp Yellowmouth Rock hind Red hind Speckled hind Misty Snowy Yellowedge Warsaw	20" total length 20" total length 20" total length 20" total length None None None None None None None None None None	None None None None None None None None None None None None None	Five/person in aggregate of all groupers.
<u>Protected Groupers</u> Jewfish Nassau grouper	Harvest prohibited Harvest prohibited		
Greater amberjack	28" fork length (recreational)	None	
<u>Aggregate Reef Fish Bag Limit Species</u> Vermilion snapper Lane snapper Gray triggerfish Queen triggerfish	Lesser amberjack Ainaco jack Banded rudderfish Hogfish	Goldface tilefish Blackline tilefish Anchor tilefish Blueline tilefish Tilefish	Twenty/person of all listed species aggregate (i.e., all reef fish species not otherwise subject to a bag limit, except for sand perch and dwarf sand perch).
OTHER SPECIES			
Red drum	Harvest prohibited in federal waters.		
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (* = new regulations effective July 1, 1999)			
<u>Tuna</u> Bluefin	27" CFL	Bag limits are subject to subquotas by size and permit categories, change seasonally, and are reduced to zero when subquotas are filled. Telephone the NMFS Highly Migratory Species Management Division's toll-free 24-hour information line for updates on bag limits and quotas: 1-888-USA-TUNA (1-888-872-8662).	
Bigeye Yellowfin Albacore Skipjack Blackfin Atlantic bonito	27" CFL 27" CFL None None None None	None None None None None None	No limit Three/person* No limit No limit No limit No limit
<u>Billfish</u> Blue marlin White marlin Sailfish Longbill spearfish	99" LJFL 66" LJFL 63" LJFL* Not applicable	None None None Not applicable	No limit No limit No limit Possession prohibited*
Swordfish	29" carcass length or 33 lbs dressed weight	None	No limit
<u>SHARKS</u> Atlantic sharpnose Other sharks	None 54" fork length	None None	One/person* One/vessel in aggregate*

Prohibited Sharks - Harvest Prohibited			
Atlantic angel		Basking	Bigeye sand tiger
Bigeye sixgill		Bigeye thresher	Bignose
Caribbean reef		Caribbean sharpnose	Dusky
Galapagos		Longfin mako	Narrowtooth
Night		Sand tiger	Sevengill
Sixgill		Smalltail	Whale
White			
CFL = curved fork length - tip of the upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.			
LJFL = lower jaw fork length - straight-line measurement of a fish from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the caudal fin. The measurement is not made along the curved of the body.			
CORAL AND CORAL REEFS			
Allowable octocorals	Attached substrate within 1" of octocoral is allowed.	Season closes when quota of 50,000 colonies is reached.	Six colonies per day.
Live rock	Harvest and possession of live rock is prohibited (except for permitted aquaculture operations).		
Other marine life organisms	Marine life organisms from the EEZ harvested or possessed by Florida residents or landed in Florida are subject to Florida's Marine Life Rule. Contact Florida for more information.		
ADDITIONAL REMARKS: Persons on qualified charter or headboat trips in excess of 24 hours may possess two days' bag limits of reef fish species, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel.			
Stone crab	Claws may not be removed from egg-bearing females. Illegal to land whole crab. Measures apply off Florida's west coast and the Keys.		
Spiny lobster	Removal of tail prohibited at sea. See commercial regulations for trap use. No spears, hooks, or piercing devices. No taking of spiny or slipper lobsters that are berried (egg-bearing).		
Cobia (ling)	The two-day bag limit allowance for charter vessels and head boats <u>does not</u> apply to cobia.		
Red snapper	Red snapper have a recreational quota of 4.47 million pounds, and the red snapper fishery will close when the recreational quota is projected to be reached.		
Allowable octocorals	Allowable octocoral means an erect, nonencrusting species of the subclass Octocorallia, except the seafans <i>Gorgonia flabellum</i> and <i>G. ventalina</i> , plus the attached substrate within 1" of an allowable octocoral. Note: An octocoral with attached substrate exceeding 1" is considered to be live rock and not allowable octocoral.		
Tuna - bluefin	Tuna permit holders are required to report by telephone all recreationally caught bluefin tuna. Call 1-888-USA-TUNA (1-888-872-8862) and select the catch reporting option. For information about fishing under the NMFS Tag and Release Program when bag limits are closed, call 1-800-437-3936.		
Tuna - others	All tunas must be landed in round or eviscerated form with one pectoral fin intact. Head removal allowed. Caudal fin must be intact on bluefin.		
Billfish	No retention unless taken by rod and reel. Sale prohibited. Head, fins, and bill must be intact through landing. Those people conducting a tournament involving score keeping or awards for Atlantic highly migratory species (whether or not retained), must register their tournament with the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Attention: Tournament Registration, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149. The registration must be in writing, at least four weeks prior to commencement of tournament fishing. A tournament registration form is available upon request from the above address or can be requested via FAX (305-361-4219).		
Swordfish	Dressed = gutted, headed, and finned.		
Sharks	Dogfish are not included in the shark limits. See commercial regulations for complete list of sharks under management. Sale prohibited without permit; sharks not retained must be released uninjured. Limits allowed in both groups. Illegal to remove the fins and return remainder of shark to sea.		