

FL Gulf Fishing Limits

Big Bend / Crystal River · Recreational
FWC data — July 2026

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Inshore Game Fish

Spotted Seatrout

Size	15–19" slot (total length). 1 over 19" per vessel (or per person from shore).
Bag	5 per person (Big Bend); 6 per vessel cap.
Season	Open year-round. New regional rules Apr 1, 2026.

Red Drum (Redfish)

Size	18–27" slot. Over 27" released.
Bag	1 per person, max 4 per vessel (Big Bend).
Season	Open year-round. No harvest in federal waters.
Gear	No gigging, spearing, or snatching.

Snook

Size	28–33" slot (Gulf regions).
Bag	1 per person.
Season	Gulf closures: Dec 1–end of Feb & May 1–Aug 31.
Permit	Snook permit required to harvest.

Florida Pompano

Size	11" fork length minimum.
Bag	6 per person.
Gear	Hook & line, cast net, or beach seine only.

Flounder

Size	14" total length minimum.
Bag	5 per person.
Season	Closed Oct 15–Nov 30.

Sheepshead

Size	12" total length minimum.
Bag	8 per person. (15/vessel cap Mar–Apr.)
Season	Open year-round.

Black Drum

Size	14–24" slot. 1 over 24" per person allowed.
Bag	5 per person.
Season	Open year-round.

Tarpon

Size	Catch-and-release only.
Bag	0. Harvest tag only for IGFA record.
Season	Year-round. Tarpon tag required to possess.

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Nearshore & Reef

Red Grouper

Size	20" total length minimum.
Bag	2 per person (within 4-grouper aggregate).
Season	Gulf: closed Jul 1–Dec 31.

Gag Grouper

Size	24" total length minimum.
Bag	2 per person (within aggregate).
Season	Gulf: limited season — verify at MyFWC.com .

Red Snapper

Size	16" total length minimum.
Bag	2 per person.
Season	Gulf private-angler: short summer/fall windows.

Mangrove (Gray) Snapper

Size	10" total length minimum.
Bag	5 per person (within 10-snapper aggregate).
Season	Open year-round.

Spanish Mackerel

Size	12" fork length minimum.
Bag	15 per person.
Season	Open year-round.

King Mackerel

Size	24" fork length minimum.
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Bag	2 per person.
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Season	Open year-round.
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Cobia

Size	36" fork length minimum (Gulf).
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Bag	1 per person, max 2 per vessel.
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Season	Open year-round.
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Gray Triggerfish

Size	15" fork length minimum (Gulf).
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Bag	1 per person.
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Season	Gulf: open Mar 1–May 31 & Aug 1–Dec 31.
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Crabs & Lobster

Spiny Lobster

Size	Carapace >3" (measured in water). Gauge required at all times.
Bag	12 per person (outside Monroe Co.).
Season	Regular Aug 6–Mar 31. Sport season last Wed/Thu of July.
Rules	Permit required. No rec. trapping. No egg-bearing females.

Stone Crab

Size	Claws only: 2■" propodus min. Whole crab may not be possessed.
Bag	1 gal claws/person, max 2 gal/vessel.
Season	Closed May 2–Oct 14 (harvest Oct 15–May 1).
Rules	Take claws & release crab. No egg-bearing females.

Blue Crab

Size	No minimum size (recreational).
Bag	10 gallons whole per person.
Season	Open year-round.
Rules	Max 5 traps/person. No egg-bearing females. Snares illegal. Pull in daylight only.

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Good to Know

- **Measuring:** Total length = nose to tip of tail (pinched). Fork length = nose to fork of tail.
- **Slot limit:** Fish must fall within the range — both undersize and oversize go back.
- **Vessel limits:** Some species cap total fish per boat, no matter how many anglers aboard.
- **Permits:** Snook and Tarpon need permits on top of a saltwater license. For-hire captain/crew get zero bag limit for several species.
- **Gulf state waters:** Extend 9 nautical miles from shore; federal waters begin beyond, with separate rules.
- **Default rule:** Any species with no listed limit: 2 fish OR 100 lbs per person per day, whichever is greater.
- **Lobster near Crystal River:** The regular season (Aug 6–Mar 31) applies here — the 2-day July sport season is mainly a Keys/reef event.

Disclaimer

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