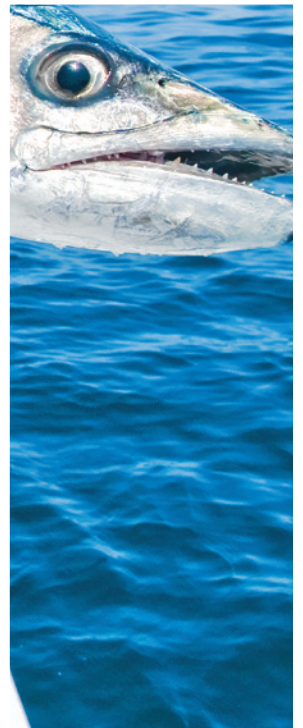
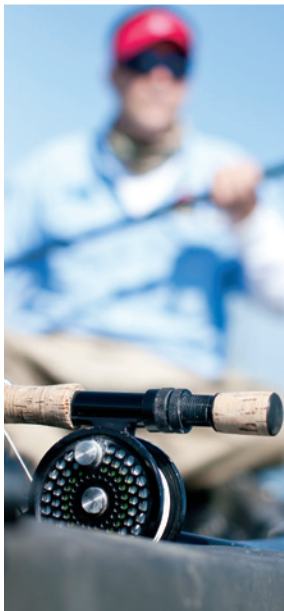
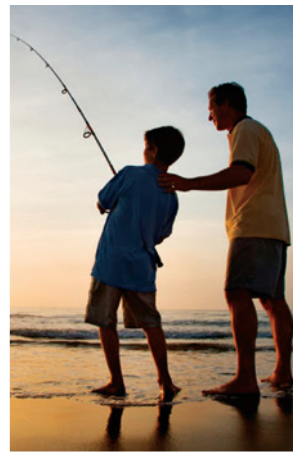




FISHING

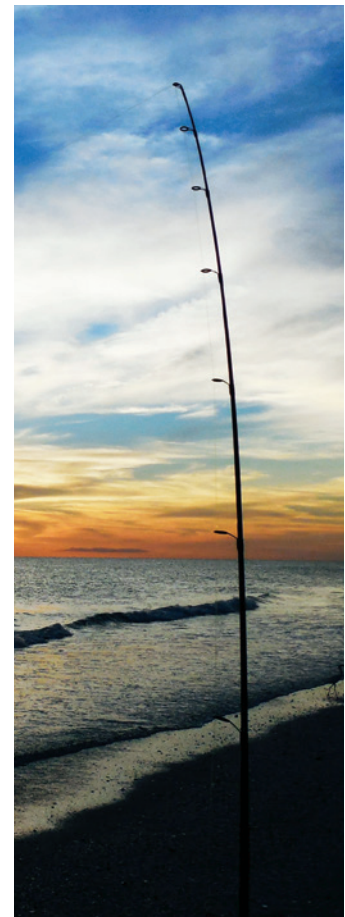


SARASOTA • MANATEE • CHARLOTTE

The Florida Gulf Coast is a paradise for fish. Freshwater streams and rivers flow from Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte County into a bay protected by the barrier islands. It's a perfect-sized estuary teeming with a diverse wildlife ecosystem of birds, fish and mammals.

Area freshwater streams, rivers and lakes hold bass, panfish, catfish and more. As freshwater enters the tidal area, species tolerating the brackish water, such as snook, jack, and tarpon can be found. Out into the bay, snapper, mackerel, seatrout, grouper, drum and many other species will be found in the saltwater haven.

With so many options for fishing, where to start can be a difficult choice. Use our fishing guide as a resource to help you catch the next "big one."

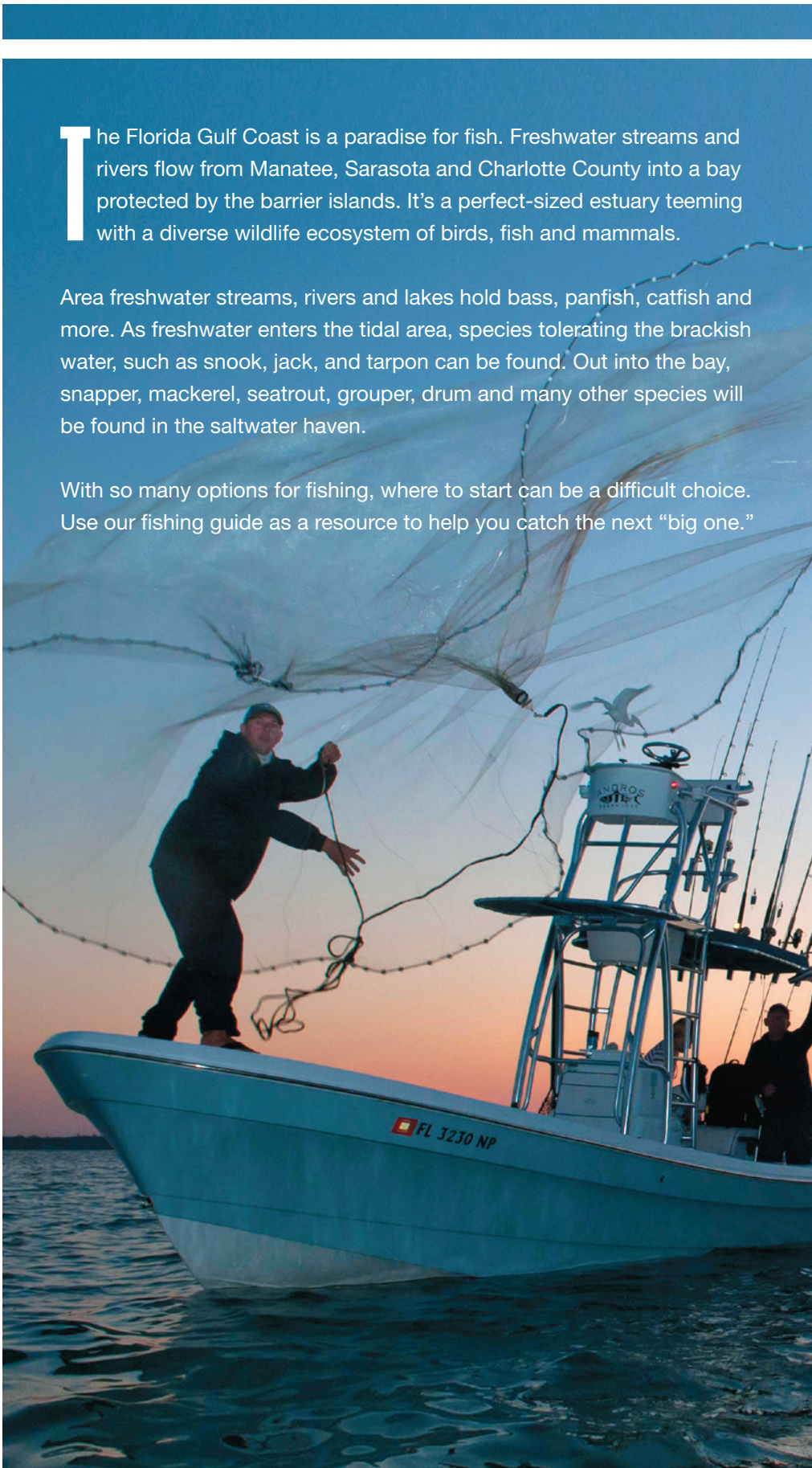


SALT WATER

Most visiting anglers opt to cast in the bay or offshore as saltwater fishing offers multiple environments with different species of fish favoring different spots. Seagrass beds are home to seatrout, redfish, and bluefish. Elsewhere snapper, jack crevalle, sheepshead and black drum can be found near piers, bridges and other structures. Offshore, reefs and wrecks are popular hangouts for grouper, amberjack, and snapper.

FRESH WATER

Freshwater fishing in Myakka River State Park or Oscar Scherer State Park is a fun option, and can also appeal to visitors looking to also explore other eco-recreational activities. Anglers targeting panfish can find bluegill, speckled perch, and redear sunfish. Largemouth bass are a popular fish in Florida freshwater. Tilapia, an invasive species, must be removed if caught, but many consider this a tasty fillet.





WHAT TO CATCH



INSHORE

Spanish Mackerel

Spanish mackerel can be found throughout Florida coastal waters when the temperature exceeds 70 degrees. These fast, aggressive fish can occasionally be caught off beaches and piers. When cooked Spanish mackerel is flaky, moist and has a rich flavor.



Flounder

Gulf flounder are brown fish with both eyes on the left side of the body and strong canine-like teeth. These fish are found on sandy or muddy bottoms and also occasionally on rocky reefs. They are considered excellent to eat.



Redfish

Redfish, or red drum, are found in the winter in seagrass, over sandy/muddy bottoms, oyster bars or spring-fed creeks. A popular sport fish, redfish go after a variety of bait including shrimp, crabs, mullet and pinfish.



Spotted Seatrout

Spotted seatrout are found inshore around seagrass meadows and above oyster bars. Seatrout are a delicate fish so return unwanted or under/oversized fish immediately to help maintain a healthy population. This fish is considered good to eat.

Tarpon

One of the most challenging inshore sportfish, Tarpon are powerful fish found in Florida during the summer months. These fish can easily grow to more than 100 pounds. Not a great tasting fish, tarpon are almost exclusively catch and release.

Black Drum

Black Drum is the largest member of the Drum family. They have a high-arched back and teeth capable of crushing oysters and large scales. Black Drum are bottom dwellers found in bays and around oyster beds. Black Drum is decent table fare.

Snook

Snook can jump out of the water and make long runs, which means they are a fun fish to have on the line. They can be found in brackish water along mangrove shorelines, seawalls and bridges. Be sure to remove the skin when preparing Snook, which is considered excellent to eat if prepared correctly.

Sheepshead

Sheepshead look similar to the Black Drum and have distinct vertical black stripes, and prominent teeth for eating crustaceans. They are considered good to eat, but have sharp gill covers to look out for when cleaning.

OFFSHORE

Grouper

Grouper is a family of fish that are some of the most popular to fish in the Florida Gulf Coast. Adult grouper inhabits rocky bottoms and reefs more than 60 feet deep. Grouper spawn between January and May.

Amberjack

Amberjack are often found around rocky reefs and wrecks, in about 60 to 240 feet of water. They are some of the largest of the jack fish species, and feed on squid, fish and crustaceans.

Sailfish

Sailfish have an upper jaw elongated like a spear, and a large dorsal fin in the form of a sail. They feed on small fish and squid, and are known for fast runs, and acrobatic jumps.

Dolphin

Dolphinfish, also known as Mahi Mahi are a bright greenish blue and yellow fish. These fast swimmers live no more than five years and eat squid, flying fish and other small fish while moving through weed lines offshore. Dolphin is a popular seafood item.

SOURCES: www.fishwatch.gov, www.myfwc.com

TACKLE & BAIT



Although fish can be caught on virtually any rig, a versatile Gulf Coast Florida fishing rig typically utilizes a spinning rod about six-foot-six to seven-foot-six in length, with light tackle. If you are using your own rig, be aware that saltwater can quickly erode and rust parts of the rod and reel. Be sure to clean and take care of your equipment immediately after fishing. Be very careful about getting sand on the reel, as it can get into the gears.

Shrimp

Shrimp, about an eighth of an ounce to a half an ounce is often the ideal bait to use and will catch many saltwater fish.

Baitfish

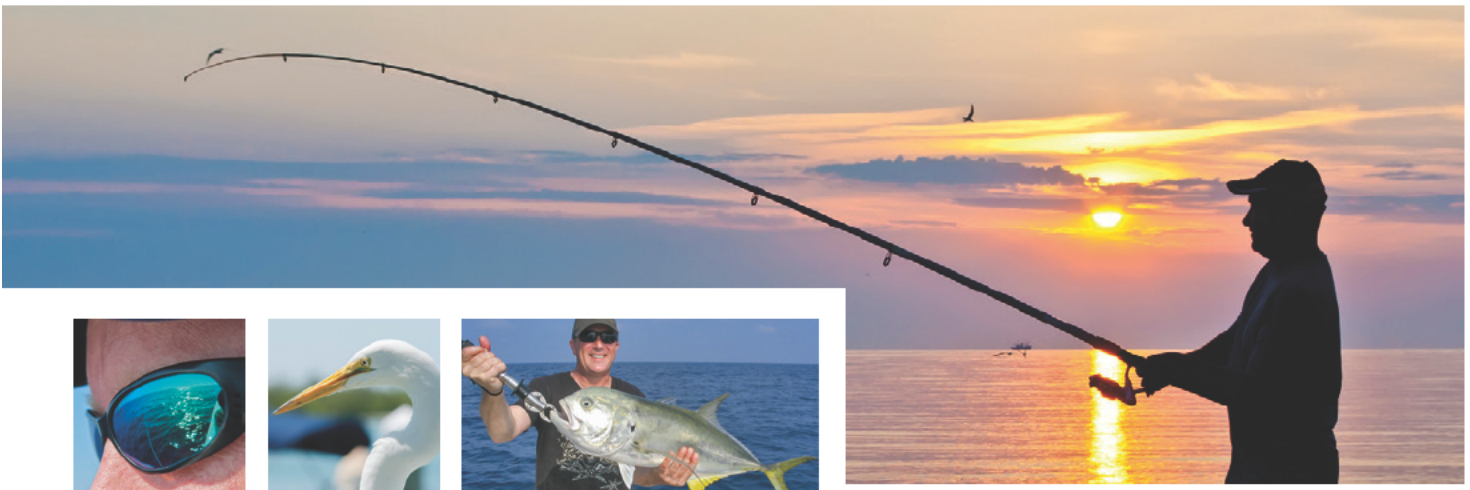
Several species of baitfish, such as pinfish, sardines and minnows can be netted from the Gulf of Mexico, particularly during the warmer months. Bait shops often also sell species of baitfish.

Cut bait

Dead fish can catch dinner too. Undesirable fish, such as ladyfish, can be cut into chunks and used to catch snook, sharks and more.

Artificial lures

Artificial lures such as a soft plastic on a jig can look just like the real thing to a fish. These lures are often even scented. Other lures, including metal jigs, spoon fishing lures, plug lures and spinnerbaits can attract and catch fish.



AN EXCELLENT PLACE FOR FISHING

Shore

Fishing from the shore is an easy way to get a line in the water and there's several places to go. Depending on the time of year, tide and a few other factors, hitting the right place at the right time can mean a major payload. Visit a local shop such as CB's Saltwater Outfitters (941-349-4400) on Siesta Key or New Pass Grill and Bait Shop (941-388-3050) on Lido Key to learn about current hot spots. When out on a beach or pier, look for schools of baitfish and/or birds diving as indicators of fish in the area.

Boat

With a motorized boat you can cover much more ground, but follow boating etiquette and obey vessel speed regulations. Tides, water temperature, depth of water, wind and even moon phases play a role

in a day's success. When looking for a spot to fish, keep an eye out for reefs and seabeds, rock and wood structures. Area fishing reports help identify how and where to fish, and several can be found doing an online search. Boats can be rented at outfitters such as CB's or at Cannons Marina (941-383-1311)

Kayak

A Kayak can be the best of both worlds — giving anglers the ability to paddle further from shore while sneaking where boats won't fit. Though not able to travel nearly as far or as fast as a motorized boat, fishing by kayak can be a quieter and more eco-friendly experience. Consider renting or even taking a kayak tour from outfitters such as Almost Heaven Kayak Adventures (941-504-6296), All About Water (239-887-2545), or Bay and Gulf Adventures (941-893-7221)

BOAT/KAYAK LAUNCHES

		Salt/Fresh/Brackish	Boat Ramp	Canoe/Kayak	Fishing	Bait	Fish Cleaning Table	Restrooms	Picnic Tables	Open 24 Hours
Bradenton										
1	Fort Hamer Public Boat Ramp	1605 Fort Hamer Rd	B	●	●	●	●	●		●
2	Jiggs Landing	6106 E 63rd St	F	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3	Lake Manatee State Park <i>20 HP Motor Restriction</i>	20007 State Rd 64	F	●	●	●		●	●	
4	Manatee Avenue Causeway Kayak Launch	Manatee Ave West (SR 789)	S		●	●		●		
5	Manatee Avenue Causeway Public Boat Ramp	Manatee Ave (SR 789)	S	●		●	●	●		
6	Parrot Cove Marina	11510 36th Ave West	S	●	●					●
7	Ray's Canoe Hideaway <i>Small Boats Only</i>	1289 Hagle Park Rd	B	●	●	●	●	●	●	
8	Robinson Preserve Canoe / Kayak Launch	1704 99th St Northwest	S		●	●		●	●	
9	State Road 64 Public Boat Ramp	3020 Manatee Ave East	B	●	●	●	●			●
10	Warner's Bayou Kayak Launch	5800 Riverview Blvd	S		●	●	●	●	●	●
11	Warner's Bayou Public Boat Ramp	5900 Riverview Blvd	S	●		●	●	●	●	●
Bradenton Beach										
12	Coquina Beach (north)	SO Gulf Dr (SR 789)	S	●	●		●	●		●
13	Coquina Beach (south)	SO Gulf Dr (SR 789)	S	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ellenton										
14	Highland Shores Public Boat Ramp	353 Shore Dr	B	●	●	●		●		●
Englewood										
15	Lemon Bay Park	570 Bay Park Blvd	S		●	●		●	●	
16	Ainger Creek Park	2011 Placida Rd	S	●	●	●	●	●		●
17	Indian Mound Park	210 Winson Ave	S	●	●	●	●	●	●	
18	Oyster Creek Park	6791 San Casa Rd	S		●	●		●	●	

Holmes Beach																				
19	63rd Street Memorial Park	6398 Marina Way	S	●	●				●			●		●						
20	Kingfish Public Boat Ramp	752 Manatee Ave	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●					
Longboat Key																				
21	Overlook Park	140 Gulf of Mexico Dr	S		●	●								●						
Manasota Key																				
22	Manasota Beach Public Boat Ramp	8570 Manasota Key Rd	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●					
Myakka City																				
23	Lake Manatee <i>20 HP Motor Restriction</i>	23745 County Rd 675	F	●	●	●						●								
Nokomis																				
24	Laurel Road East Canoe and Kayak Launch	Laurel Rd East	F		●															●
25	Loreto Boat Ramp	800 Loreto Ct	S	●	●															
26	Nokomis Beach Public Ramp	901 Casey Key Rd	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●					
27	North Venice Jetty Park Primitive Boat Ramp	1000 Casey Key Rd	S	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●					
North Port																				
28	Marina Park	7030 Chancellor Blvd	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●					
29	Dallas White Park	5900 Greenwood Ave	S	●	●	●						●	●	●	●					
Osprey																				
30	Blackburn Point Park Public Boat Ramp	800 Blackburn Point Rd	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
31	Oscar Scherer State Park <i>No Motors</i>	1843 South Tamiami Trl	B	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
Palmetto																				
32	Bishop Harbor Primitive Ramp	Northwest end of Bishop Harbor Rd	S	●	●															●
33	Emerson Point Park	5801 17th St West	S		●	●						●	●							
34	Riverside Park Public Boat Ramp	Riverside Dr and 9th Ave West	S	●	●	●						●	●							
Placida																				
35	Gasparilla Marina	15001 Gasparilla Rd	S	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●					
36	Placida Park	6499 Gasparilla Rd	S	●	●	●						●								●
Port Charlotte																				
37	Butterford Waterway Park	13555 Marathon Blvd	B	●	●	●						●								●
38	El Jobean Boat Ramp	4224 El Jobean Rd	S	●	●							●								●
39	Port Charlotte Beach Park	4500 Harbor Blvd	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●					
40	South Gulf Cove Park	10150 Amicola St	F	●		●			●	●		●	●	●						
41	Spring Lake Park	3520 Lake View Blvd	B	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
Punta Gorda																				
42	Darst Park	537 Darst Ave	B	●	●	●														●
43	Harbour Heights Park	27420 Voyageur Dr	B	●	●	●						●	●							
44	Hathaway Park	35461 Washington Lp Rd	F	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
45	Lashley Park Marina	120 Lashley Ct	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
46	Ponce de Leon Park	3400 Ponce De Leon Pkwy	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
47	Riverside Park	8320 Riverside Dr	B	●	●	●														●
Sarasota																				
48	Centennial Park	1059 North Tamiami Trl	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
49	Ken Thompson Park	1700 Ken Thompson Pkwy	S	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●						
50	Sout Lido Park	2201 Benjamin Franklin Dr	S		●	●						●	●							
51	Bird Key Park	200 John Ringling Causeway	S		●	●								●						
52	Myakka River State Park	13208 State Road 72	F	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
53	Phillip Creek Estate Park	5500 S Tamiami Trl	B		●							●	●							
54	Pine Craft Park	1420 Gilbert Ave	B		●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
55	Vamo Primitive Boat Ramp	700 Vamo Dr	S		●	●														
Siesta Key																				
56	Turtle Beach Public Boat Ramp	8918 Midnight Pass Rd	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
Terra Ceia																				
57	Terra Ceia Bay Highway 19 Access Point North	US 19, at Terra Ceia Bay	S		●	●														●
Venice																				
58	Higel Marine Park	1330 Tarpon Center Dr	S	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
59	Snook Haven Park <i>Small Boats Only</i>	5000 East Venice Ave	B	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●						
60	Venice Marina Boat Ramp Park	215 East Venice Ave	S	●	●							●	●							
61	Casperson Beach Park	4100 Harbor Dr South	S		●	●						●	●							

FISH FACTS

- More than 500 native species of saltwater fish are protected and managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC.)
- FWC manages 200 species of freshwater fish.
- Nearly 1.4 Florida residents saltwater fish in Florida each year.
- More than 1 million nonresidents saltwater fish in Florida each year.
- Florida saltwater fishing generates \$7.6 billion dollars in economic impact each year, and is responsible for 109,300 jobs.

SOURCE: www.myfwc.com



TAKING A CHARTER

Offshore

If you want a trophy deep-sea denizen, go off shore fishing with a charter. Fighting to reel in behemoths such as a cobia, king mackerel, black fin tuna, grouper and even sharks can be a battle of a lifetime, and you could need the full day to do it. Consider 6 to 8 hour trips from charters such as Siesta Key Fishing (941-244-3474) , Outriggers Charter Fishing (941-809-2211), and King Fisher Fleet (941-639-0969).*

Inshore

Inshore fishing means less traveling but no less fun. Popular fish such as snook, Spanish mackerel, and spotted sea trout are not only fun to fight, but delicious to eat. Charters such as Wolfmouth Charters (941-720-4418), Magic Fishing Adventures (941-345-7788), Flying Fish Fleet (941-366-3373), and King Fisher Fleet (941-639-0969) offer anywhere from 4 to 8 hour trips.*

**NOTE: Many charters offer both inshore and offshore options.*



TOP SPOTS TO FISH

Englewood, Manasota Key and North Port ●

Lemon Bay Park in Englewood is good for wading, but be sure to have the proper equipment, or consider renting a kayak. Stump Pass State Park on the south end of Manasota Key is a good fishing spot as the tidal currents from the pass bring in schools of fish. North Port canals will have brackish water, and in the winter season should have snook and small tarpon.

Placida ●

For non-boaters, long fishing piers made from the old rail bridge on both sides of the Boca Grande Causeway offer ample opportunities for species including snook, redfish and sheepshead. A smaller pier accessible from the parking on fishery road partially crossing Coral creek adds additional opportunities.

Port Charlotte ●

Great fishing in El Jobean on SR 776 at the Myakka River pier. Several bait and tackle shops are also nearby. Port Charlotte Beach Park, a public Charlotte County park, also has a long pier reaching into Charlotte Harbor. Both offer a plethora of species, including some monster snook, reds, sheepshead and seatrout.

Sarasota ●

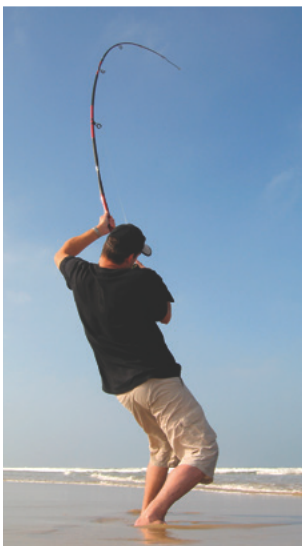
Sarasota has several locations that are great for fishing by foot. The bridges and seawalls of Bird Key Park, Siesta Key Bridge, and New Pass Bridge between Lido Key and Longboat Key are both popular spots. Meanwhile, fishing from the beach is productive when the tide is right, especially in locations like North Shell Road, on Siesta Key, and South Lido County Park.

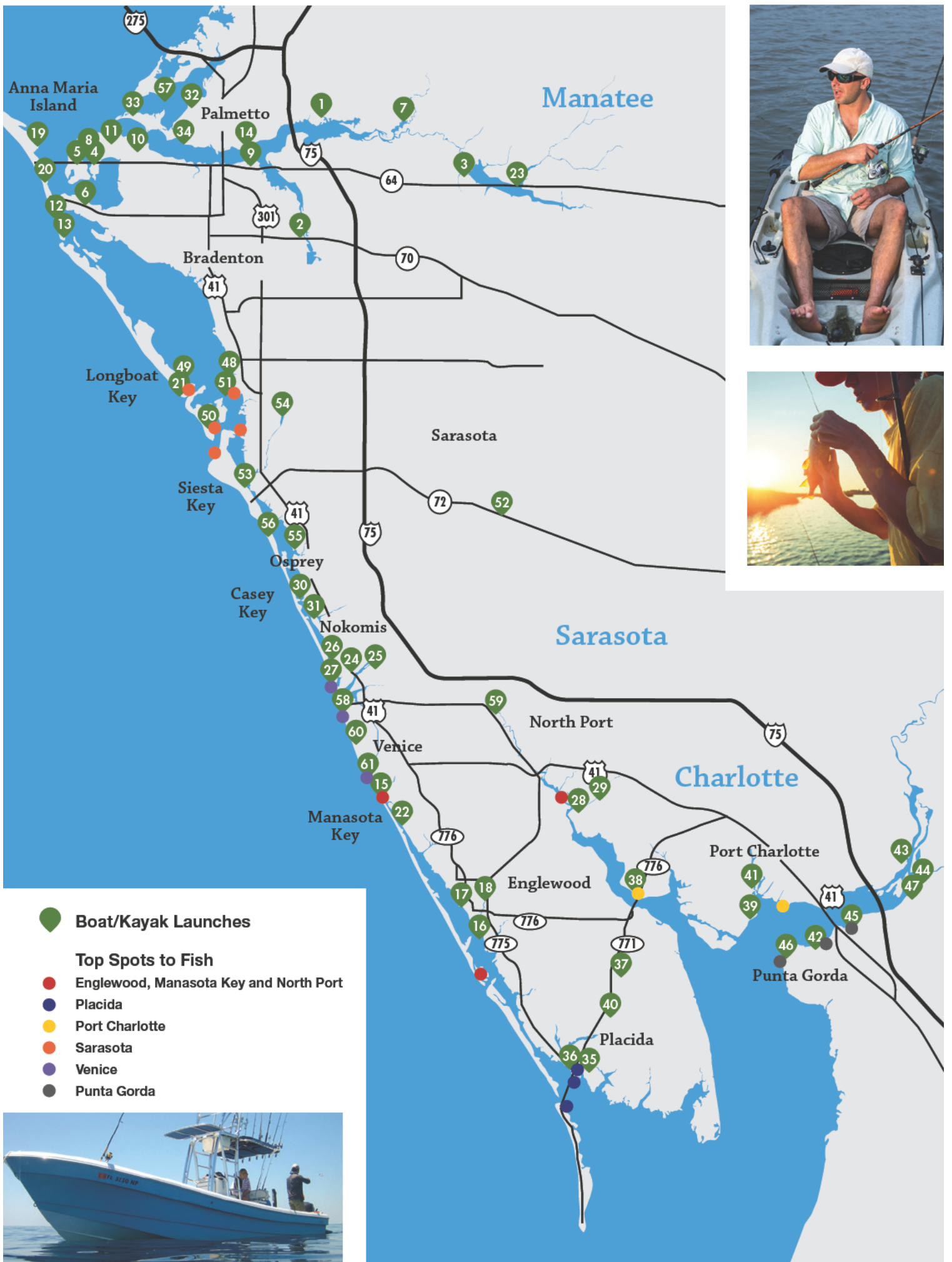
Venice ●

Rocky structures, such as the Venice Jetties or the groynes at Caspersen Beach are great fishing habitats and therefore decent places to fish, but you might want to consider bringing some extra tackle. Venice Pier is another special place to fish, as it is one of the longest piers in the area, and is next to a local restaurant, Sharky's on the Pier.

Punta Gorda ●

Piers and fishing docks are widespread in this beautiful small city. For easy, no-cost parking, check out the piers at Gilchrist Park and Lashley Park or the multiple docks connected by boardwalk at Ponce de Leon Park. Typical catches at these parks include Sheepshead, snook, spotted seatrout and redfish.





RULES REGULATIONS

A fishing license is required for both Florida residents and visitors, though licenses are provided if you take a charter. Licenses can be purchased at an outfitter or by calling 888-347-4356. If you intend to keep fish, be aware of bag limits, size regulations and season restrictions. Check www.myfwc.com for regulation information.



FISHING FACTORS

Tidal currents can attract bait and small fish, which brings in larger fish to a location. Check the high and low tides before fishing and ask a outfitter or a guide about where to fish on a incoming or outgoing tide.

Water temperature will determine what species of fish are available and in what location they can be found. When the water gets too cold, try fishing in a creek or consider moving out to deeper water with temperatures still warm at lower depths. A sudden front bringing in cool or warm weather can also affect fishing. Typically just before a front comes through fishing will be good. Shortly after a front passes fishing can be poor.

Dawn and dusk are often the best time to put a line in the water if other factors are good too. However, depending on the season and migration patterns of different fish, any time of day can be a good time to fish.

TOURNAMENTS

Capt. John Breuggeman Memorial Grouper Tournament

When: Winter 2015 (January)
Web: captainjohnb.com
Phone: 941-474-6586

IFA Redfish Tour

When: Spring 2015 (March 7)
Web: ifatours.com
Phone: 941-266-5338

Sarasota Sertoma/Southern Kingfish Association King Mackerel Tournament

When: Spring 2015 (April 23-25)
Web: fishska.com
Phone: 800-852-6262

20th annual Coastal Conservation Association Florida's Sarasota Photo All-Release Challenge

When: Spring 2015 (Last weekend of April)
Web: ccaflorida.org
Phone: 941-270-0895 (Adam Miller)



Sarasota Tarpon Tournament

When: Late Spring 2015
(May - 5 week tournament)
Web: sarasotatarpontournament.com
Phone: 941-356-8470

Historic Spanish Point Inshore Slam Fishing Tournament

When: Spring 2015
Web: historicspanishpoint.org
Phone: 941-966-5214

Sarasota Slam HBA Fishing Tournament

When: Summer 2015 (August)
Web: sarasotaslamm.com
Phone: 941-907-4133 Ask for Leslie

Suncoast Saltwater Shootout

When: Fall 2015
Web: suncoastshootout.com
Phone: 941-809-3505 or 941-955-9588

SCS Fall Classic, Inshore Tournament

When: Fall 2015
(First or second weekend in October)
Web: www.sarasotachristian.org
Phone: Betsy 941-371-6481 ext. 222

Englewood Open Spearfish Tournament

When: Fall 2015
Web: englewoodopen.com
Phone: 941-270-2040

VISIT
SARASOTA
COUNTY FLORIDA'S GULF COAST

SarasotaCountyFishing.com

800-522-9799

Printing paid for by Sarasota County Tourist
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charlotteharbortravel.com
800-652-6090