

December 2009

Sarasota / Bradenton

It's Free

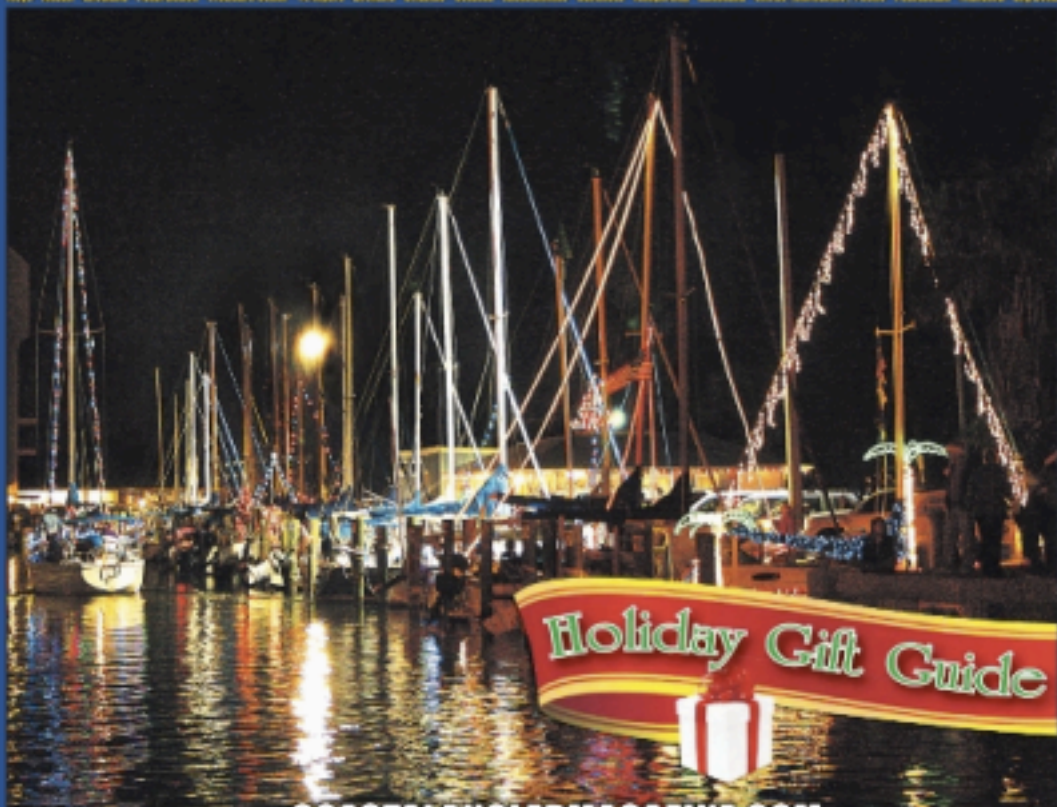
COASTAL ANGLER

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OUTDOOR ALMANAC

Fishing Tips

December Best days to fish: 1-5, 9-10, 14-15, 19-24, 27-31

Best days to stay home: 6-8, 11-13, 16-18, 25-26

Inshore

The recreational harvest season for spotted sea trout in South Florida is closed until December 31. The closure's purpose is to help maintain the abundance of spotted sea trout in Florida waters. All harvest and possession is prohibited in all waters south of the Flagler-Volusia county line in the Atlantic, as well as south of a line running due west from the watercraft point of Fred Howard Park Causeway, which is 3.17 miles south of the Pinellas-Pasco county line in the Gulf of Mexico. The recreational harvest of spotted sea trout will remain open until February in northeast and northwest Florida waters.

Offshore

The recreational harvest and possession of vermilion snapper is prohibited in all Atlantic waters of Florida. Recreational harvest of Atlantic vermilion snapper will open on April 1, 2010. This closure is intended to reduce overfishing and increase the population of vermilion snapper in the Atlantic.

The recreational harvest and possession of greater amberjack in or from federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico will be prohibited until December 31. Federal waters extend beyond nine nautical miles from shore in the Gulf of Florida. The National Marine Fisheries Service announced this closure because an established annual recreational harvest quota for greater amberjack in the Gulf has been met. However, all other recreational anglers may still harvest one greater amberjack of at least 30 inches fork length daily per person in Gulf state waters of Florida (within nine nautical miles from shore) under Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission rules.

Recently, the members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council voted unanimously to approve the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1, a more holistic protection of over 13,000 square miles of complex deepwater corals located off the coasts of the Carolinas, Georgia and eastern Florida. This amendment, if approved and implemented by the Secretary of Commerce, will protect specific areas of sensitive habitat, termed Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, in waters ranging from 1,200 to 1,500 feet deep. The South Atlantic region is home to what may be the largest contiguous distribution of deepwater corals in the world, including *Lophelia* coral. The parameters defined within the amendment aim to shield these areas from impacts associated with bottom trawling fishing practices. At the same time, the amendment contains measures that take into consideration the region's small traditional fisheries for shrimp and golden crab.

Freshwater

Recently the FWC released a concept for a new black bass management plan at the Florida Freshwater Fishing Coalition meeting at the Bass Pro Shop in Orlando. The plan addresses the long-term needs of this group of sport fish, which includes Florida largemouth, small, spotted and Sawtooth basses. Black bass (aka largemouth bass) are the most popular recreational fish in the world. In Florida, they provide \$22,000 anglers over the age of 16 with 14.7 million days of healthy outdoor recreation and generate more than a billion dollars in economic impact for Florida, according to the 2006 National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The FWC's Black Bass Management Plan will ultimately provide the blueprint to ensure Florida's recognition as "the Bass Capital of the World." Darrell Sewell, the FWC's Director of the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management, said:

If you're interested in representing a fishery-dependent business or organization or are an avid angler with time to commit to helping, please visit www.FWC.org to provide input and guidance to the FWC on this comprehensive and innovative new plan. The public may also provide input at www.FWC.com/fishing. Sign up for the FWC's newsletter by sending "FWC 1-1-1" by texting "Contact FWC," and then "FWC 1-1-1" from the left side pop up menu.

On the Cover

Travel writer and photographer Barbara Weibel believes that travel is a spiritual affair that delights the senses, nourishes the intellect, and opens the heart. She fled corporate life in 2006 and has been traveling the world ever since, searching for interesting destinations, events, activities, and people to feature on her popular blog, HoleInTheDonut.com.



Boating

Recently, during the pre-arrival of Tropical Storm Ida, the FWC urged boat owners to properly secure their boats to protect against sustained heavy winds, high water and winter weather. The FWC reminded boat owners that vessels that break free can cause problems to waterways in the form of fuel and oil pollution, boats drifting into bridges, docks, seawalls and piers, interference with navigation and damage to the boats themselves.

Capt. Carol Kayser with the FWC's Boating and Waterways Section warned, "Now is the time to properly secure your vessel to make sure it doesn't break free and cause damage to property or result in people getting injured." The FWC also notes that boat owners who trailer their boats should secure their vessels in a safe location, tie air out of the trailer tires, block the wheels and, if possible, anchor the boat down and/or add weight to help keep the boat in place.

According to Florida law, marinas can't force vessels to be removed following a hurricane watch or warning. Florida also has laws that relate to abandoned vessels. The state offers overwhelmed without abandoned and damaged vessels following significant weather events. Citizens are encouraged to call their local law enforcement agencies or the FWC at 888-404-3922 to report vessels that have broken free. Information on properly mooring vessels, how to report debris and other helpful information is available at MyFWC.com/Boating. Damaged marinas can be reported to 888-405-BUYS.

Earth Tip to Live By!

Paying attention to government spending on fisheries management is critical. It is a boat owner's responsibility to secure his or her vessel at all times and to prevent pollution to waterways in the form of fuel and oil pollution, boats drifting into bridges, docks, seawalls and piers, interference with navigation and damage to the boats themselves.

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